



# Roots & Branches

**Vol. 17 No. 2**

**APRIL 2019**

**Website:**

[www.abgenealogy.ca/wetaskiwin-branch](http://www.abgenealogy.ca/wetaskiwin-branch)

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**EXECUTIVE**

**President:** Alice Hoyle  
**Vice President:** Vacant  
**Secretary:** Lorraine McKay  
**Treasurer:** Leroy Koop

**BRANCH MEETINGS**

3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month,  
 except July, Aug. & Dec.  
 7:00 pm at LDS CHURCH  
 5410 – 36 Ave

**BRANCH LIBRARY**

At City of Wetaskiwin Archives  
 4904 – 51 Street  
 Tues. Wed. Thur.  
 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

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**ROOTS & BRANCHES**

is published three times a year  
 by and for the members of  
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 It is emailed to members and  
 posted on our website.

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## EDITOR'S CORNER

Did you notice a new logo on our front page? Thanks to the creative genius of Lyn Meehan who brain-stormed with Wetaskiwin Branch members, we have an image that celebrates Wetaskiwin's history.

This is the logo's first public appearance. The AGS Conference syllabus and our display table at the conference will show it to the larger audience.

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The destruction by fire of the Wales Hotel last month to fire made me consider what might happen if my house burned to the ground. It is possible that original documents and heirlooms would be lost.

Would all of the genealogy and history that I have on my computers also be lost?

No! Because everything that I have scanned, entered or saved has been copied to an external hard drive and lives off site at our daughter's house. Also the written histories have been distributed to family members. So they are not lost.

We should all take a moment to consider the safety of the precious information that we have worked hard to accumulate.

I know that many of you have your family trees online and some use the Cloud to save your information. Let's take steps to place original documents in a safe place, too.



*Happy Easter to Everyone!*

## PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS

Alice Hoyle

It looks like we made it through the brutal month of February, and we can now look forward to spring and the renewal that the season brings to us.

As evidenced at the March general meeting, we will have a large contingent of Wetaskiwin branch members attending the AGS Conference at the end of April. I think we can be very proud of the fact that over 50% of our members will be attending!!

The creative members who are preparing our display for the conference have been busy, and will be ramping up their artistic energy leading up to the AGS Conference. I look forward to seeing the final results.

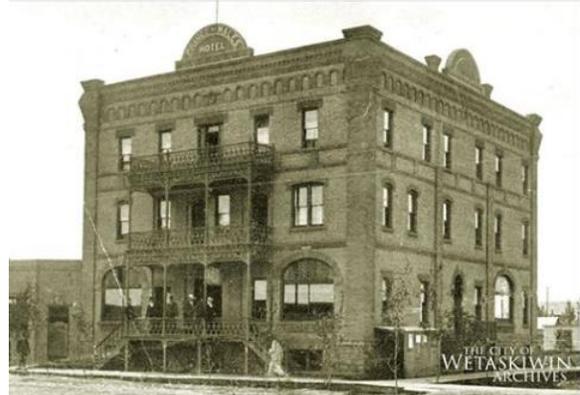
Our new logo will be showcased in Sharon's upcoming newsletter and our display at the AGS conference. Since we got the email from the City of Wetaskiwin, advising that we could not use a water tower icon in our advertising, we needed to come up with 'something' that represented Wetaskiwin area. Thankfully, we have the amazing talent of Lyn Meehan behind us and she worked with our branch to come up with something that would relate to our area.

The solution: "Siding 16". When the CPR built the railway from Calgary to Edmonton they gave each of the 'sidings' a number, and Wetaskiwin's designated number was "16". This meant it was the 16<sup>th</sup> railway siding north of Calgary. Sidings were used as a spot for the locomotives to pull off the main line, allowing for two-way traffic on the railway. Every ten miles there was a siding; every twenty miles there was a station and a water tank. After the railway came to Wetaskiwin, immigration to this region increased tremendously- ..→ Page 3

**A LANDMARK GONE**

On March 19, 2019 the City of Wetaskiwin Archives posted on Facebook:

Today is a sad day...the old Wales Hotel is burning to the ground, and we are losing another historic building in Wetaskiwin. The Prince of Wales Hotel was the fourth hotel to be built on the west side of the tracks in downtown Wetaskiwin between 1903 and 1904. It was perhaps the first building to have electric lights installed during construction, since electricity was new to Wetaskiwin in 1904, and every room had an electronic call system. During prohibition (1916) it closed down, but after the war ended in 1918, the province officially turned it into a convalescent hospital for returned soldiers. The main Community Hospital moved into this building in 1922 and it served as Wetaskiwin's only hospital until 1932. In 1934 it was repaired and renovated and re-opened as "The Wales Hotel".



Photos also from City of Wetaskiwin Archives Facebook page.

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**.....President's Ponderings cont'd**

Our very special thanks to Lyn Meehan for all her work in creating this new logo for our branch. We are pleased to have such a unique reminder of our heritage.

Our branch members have certainly outdone themselves when it comes to 'Outreach' – part of the Strategic Plan as formulated at the September, 2018 AGS Retreat and Board meeting. So far this year, we have made four presentations. Further details will be in a separate report in this newsletter. ----->

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**.....President's Ponderings cont'd**

Thanks to all who have contributed so much to the betterment of our branch. Our membership numbers are steady; in fact we have 3 new members this year! Welcome to Gregory, Carol and Wendy – we hope you benefit from your membership in our branch. Thanks to Claudia's monthly presentations, we are continually learning more about genealogical research, technology, DNA, and other topics relating to genealogy.

Looking forward to the AGS Conference!

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## MEETING PROGRAMS

Claudia Malloch

**JANUARY 15, 2019**

### LOOKING FORWARD, REACHING BACK

As we begin this new year, it seems like a good time to review our family history files to be sure they will remain accessible and available in current formats. Nothing is more frustrating than trying to open photo or genealogy programs that we have from years ago only to find that they won't open on our present computer. Do we have VHS tapes of movies that should be converted and moved onto a more modern format? Even CDs and DVD's may need to be copied to a safer format? Do our audio and video files still work well on our present computer? Perhaps it's time to do some housecleaning to be sure we don't lose valuable items because time and technology have made them obsolete.

We enlisted the help of our technology guru, Dan DeWolf to assist us in bringing our family history safely into the future. He gave very pertinent information...and has also volunteered to help us individually.

**FEBRUARY 19, 2019**

### THE FAMILY HISTORY GUIDE

February's program introduced a wonderful resource called "The Family History Guide" <https://www.thefhguide.com/>

Their web page says it is the world-class family history learning system used by learners in over 150 countries and approved by FamilySearch. Learn what's there for you. That's what many of the members attending this meeting wanted to do.

For example if you are you researching a particular country? Click the "Countries" tab and choose a country to be taken to pertinent research information for various areas of the country.

**MARCH 19, 2019**

### "PERILOUS ASSUMPTIONS:

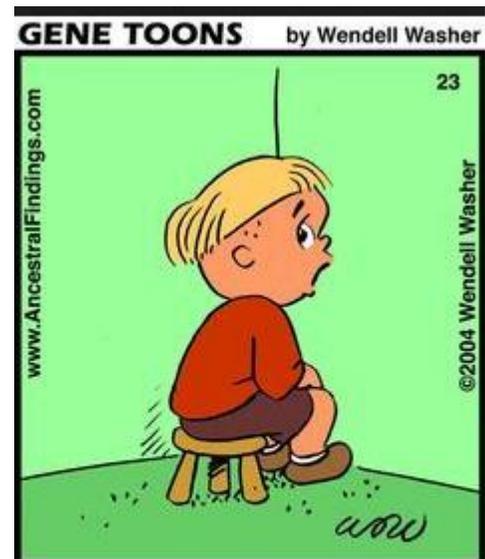
### REVISITING THOSE FIRST FINDS:

Kris Rzepczynski"

Great information on going back and looking at the information we first found when we were beginning our family history, and how Kris follows four case studies in his own family, and how he filled in many blanks by going back to the beginning. A very useful and interesting presentation.... a recorded session from RootsTech

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### UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTH DOING GENEALOGY ??



But Mommy, all I said was 'You're my first generation ancestor!...



## "OUTREACH INITIATIVES"

Alice Hoyle

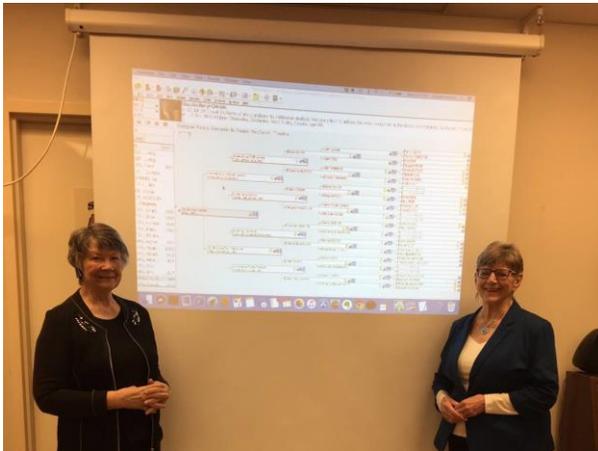
A 3 part Strategic Plan was adopted at the September, 2018 AGS Retreat/Board Meeting. The first part of the plan was "Outreach" – a goal for the branches to reach out to their communities; to provide more awareness about genealogy and the search for our ancestors. Our branch has bought into this.

On February 15<sup>th</sup>, Claudia Malloch and Alice Hoyle made a presentation at 'Seasons' – the retirement residence in Wetaskiwin.

a) how to begin your genealogical research and

b) how to record your family history.

The residents who attended were very enthusiastic, and the Fun Manager, Janice Pocatello is working with the residents to record their stories as written documents and as an oral history that she will record digitally.



On March 21<sup>st</sup> and March 23<sup>rd</sup>, Claudia and Alice gave presentations at the Wetaskiwin Public Library on 'Getting Started with Ancestry'. The Yellowhead Library System has made [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) available to its library patrons – to be used within the library only.

We thought that since this was the first time the Wetaskiwin Public Library had this database available to it, a good idea for us to give a presentation on how to use Ancestry, what information was available, how to save the information that patrons find.

The people who attended were very keen on learning all the 'ins and outs' of this database; the library staff on duty those days were very helpful, and we thought the presentation was very well received.

On March 27<sup>th</sup>, Claudia and Alice drove to Ma-Me-O Beach to make a presentation at the Pigeon Lake Public Library. The topic was "Getting Started with your Genealogical Research". We again divided the presentation into two parts:

a) how to start, how to record your findings, etc. and

b) how to use FamilySearch.org.

This was a 2-hour presentation, so we had ample time at the end for questions from the attendees. We were warmly thanked by those in attendance and we felt it was a very successful evening.

At each of these presentations, we handed out folders with material on how to get started (pedigree charts, family group sheets, tips on researching, a list of free websites to use, etc.) as well as information on our branch, AGS, the Family History Center, and how to use FamilySearch.

It's been a busy 2 months, but hopefully some of the people we talked with will either start their research, continue their research, or be inspired to join our branch, come to the FHC, or in some way start working on researching and recording their family history.

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## A HISTORY THAT LIVES ON

BY JOHN H. ALTHOUSE

*“What makes a book memorable is the message it etched in the readers’ minds.”*— Tista Ray

“Putting pen to paper,” writing for an audience is a selfless act and an act of bravery. It is selfless because in sharing a piece of writing, you give a little of what you have learned and who you are. It is an act of bravery because on the way to the finished piece you often discover one or more myths about writing that you must confront, attack, and vanquish.

These include, to name but a few, the conception that you are not a writer, that you possess no interesting family members, or that you do not know anything worth writing about. These conceptions if unchecked have destructive potential to cause the disappearance of more family history and genealogy than all the wars waged in Europe combined. In writing a piece for publication, you also display bravery because you lay bare in public who you are openly on paper. For all those who choose to read our piece, it provides an unobstructed glance into the author’s mind, heart, and soul. Ultimately, it is the hope of the writer that in writing and publishing a piece of writing related to genealogy or family history that it will attract notice, strike a familiar chord, and perhaps even move the reader in a positive direction in some aspect of their own genealogy.

The AGS “Genealogy for Children and Youth Project” was made to be an Alberta-based project. I have focused upon this since I began this project. Unfortunately, when it comes to a history lived in Alberta, the history of my family aside from two rather brief flings in this province only dates from 1956.

So, I have had to keep my eyes open for resources that might develop the concepts which I felt needed to be included in these resources and that might interest and engage children. I have been on the look-out for articles and photographs that would work well with youth and still have a decidedly Albertan connection. [I have included a number of these in the first and second resources of this initiative.]



Some time ago, I read the article by Mavis Nelson titled “The Sinking of the Empress of Ireland 100 Years Ago” in *Relatively Speaking* Volume 42 Number 3 – August 2014. This article spoke to me. I knew that if adapted, it would be a good fit in the project. As the project moved forward, I recognized that it would best fit within “In Search of Your Immigrant Ancestor” our resource for young people aged 12 to 14.

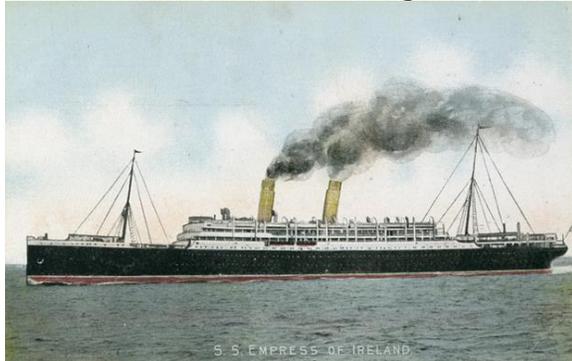


I have used the story of Mavis’s subject Agnes Desideria Anderson as the central figure of a case study and the exercises that follow it.

The photograph of Agnes provided an image that could make the topic of an immigrant real and relevant: she was as a child much as they are. The young people

might be drawn to compare her reality with theirs and recognize how different these two realities were.

The ship, Empress of Ireland, on which she traveled later would have a tragic fate.



This could be used to illustrate the dangers involved in traveling that our immigrant ancestors faced. In addition, it could provide a subject for research and extension. Knowing Agnes's history might lead young people studying the unit to begin a dialogue on their own immigrant ancestors and the childhood in the family in the past.

Late last year, I contacted Mavis and asked if I might use some details from her article as well as the photograph of Agnes Desideria Anderson as a part of the third resource for children and youth. I also sent her copies of the pages for the resource that I had created in order that she might fully view how her precious words and photograph would be used. I had decided that I would focus on Agnes on three pages of the resource [pages 10 – 12]. Page 10 "A Case Study of Immigration" would contain Agnes's photograph along with a short piece outlining her journey to her new home in and Canada. I would complete the page by providing the activity to be carried out in association with the activity, one related to potential sources of information about all immigrant ancestors and their voyages, and yes, well beyond.

Page 11 provided a sheet for information gathering by students as part of the activity. There were two tables on the page. The first provided places for students to "list five pieces of information that you would need to know about Agnes's life after she came to Canada." The second provided places for students to "list five records or documents which could provide or help you locate this extra information on Agnes as she grew, matured, and lived her life."

As it could be possible that an adult facilitator might not have an extensive background in genealogy, I provided page 12 which provided sections titled "How Genealogists Do It" and "The Documents We Use in Our Research." These could be used as a potential check for the student answers and to provide information that had not been brought to light by students during the activity.

Mavis quickly replied and indicated that she approved of the way I had incorporated her ideas and materials into the resources and gave me permission to go ahead with these pages. Her article had struck a chord with me and I suspect a positive but different chord with others.

Had Mavis not written her article, I would not have been aware of this personal history and had not been able to use it in our resource. I am thankful that she allowed me to use this episode of her family's history for our resource as it truly enriches this work. A sage once stated that imitation is the highest form of praise and in this case that is exactly what was intended.

Thank you, Mavis. By sharing your writing, you have provided ideas for others to examine, hopefully, promoting them to act or to add to and build their banks of genealogical knowledge and skills in some way that provides direct benefit to them. In a genealogical group, it is the collective

knowledge of its members are its greatest resources.

This is what sets genealogical groups apart from the less personal major genealogical websites and provides benefits that these sites cannot. However, it is only when members share what they know, what they have used, and how they have developed a part of their family record that we maximize the potential of these groups.

So, take a lead from Mavis, write about your family history, the craft of genealogy, and resources that advance your research, and doing so help fellow genealogists and family historians.

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John Althouse's booklet is now in our  
Branch library  
in the Genealogy for Youth section.  
Check it out.  
It is never too late for us adults to learn  
something new either!

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### **A FEW TIPS FOR POTENTIAL FAMILY WRITERS**

By John Althouse

1. Start small: your branch newsletter is often in need of articles. The editors of these newsletters are quite friendly and may offer the odd suggestion to help you to improve and perfect your articles. Articles for newsletters may often be smaller and less formal than those included in journals. Begin by writing an article for your branch newsletter. [Another smaller project that you might use to start is to create a family history newsheet for a family that you are researching, relating a few stories,

posing questions about brick walls as someone in the family might know the answers, and provide a list of events and resources that might be of interest to others in your family.]

2. When you write an article for a specific audience, write it as though you are writing it a specific person within the demographic of that audience. For example, if I was writing for teens in the family, I would write the article as I would tell it to my cousin's son Brendan. That will make the work more personal and less stiff.
3. When you feel comfortable working on smaller projects, take on a more ambitious project perhaps writing for the society journal, a local newspaper, or other work. Our branch newsletter *Relatively Speaking* requires articles related to genealogy and family history with a decidedly Alberta flavor as do other journals in their specific interest area.
4. I have come across many genealogists, intent upon writing the massive volume of family history as their first project. Yet, they do not begin by writing smaller pieces. As you write smaller pieces, you will gradually increase your level of difficulty, build your writing skills and learn to control your writing gremlins and handle problem areas. If you can do this in these smaller works, you will be able to do it in the large project.
5. Write often and write regularly. Perhaps, keep a journal to write in at a specific time each day. Write down your discoveries and observations. You do not need to complete a piece each time, simply record your ideas and allow them

to ferment and brew. The good batches you will return to later, the poor ones you will not. You may even find that some separate pieces are related in surprising ways, and you may choose to meld them together in some manner. Above all, write, write, write! I know that Wetaskiwin Branch has already found a wonderful way of having its members write small pieces on specific themes that appeared in two anthologies which they published and thus shared with others sharing their interests. I encourage you to continue this practice employing other themes in the future and building on what you have discovered in these projects.

### **How Do I Know If My Writing Is Reaching Others?**

1. The Kenneth Young Award is available for articles in AGS branch newsletters written by AGS members. The award is presented in three categories The Award for Best Local Content, The Award for Best Original Article, and The Award for Best Overall Newsletter. The winning article is republished in a *Relatively Speaking*. Winning such an award might indicate success in your genealogical writing. [But remember only a very few writers win this or any award.]
2. Listen to those people you know, they often will indicate that they enjoyed a piece you have written or may note one or more pieces of information. This shows they are finding value in your articles. Better yet if it initiates wide-scale discussing and / or action perhaps in the form of a genealogically related project [as your branch members have recently done in relation to the crisis involving your city archives].
3. It may occur that after an article appears in print, some of its readers may contact you to ask if they might publish it [in whole or in part] in another publication. This also is an indicator that your writing is making an impression and more universal appeals to those beyond your branch and society. Even local newspapers may ask for articles with a decidedly local flavor.
4. Genealogical newsletters and journals keep lists of periodicals and journals entering their genealogical library. There is not room to list all articles from the publications entering these libraries. So, generally, only the best articles are listed. If your articles are listed in these sections, this may well indicate that they have been successful.
5. Public libraries also often list new genealogical newsletters and journals entering their collection in the "Genealogy" section on their website. Again, these sites list only select articles. Appearing on these sites may be another sign that your writing is making a positive impression.
6. People seek you out for your knowledge on a topic based on the content of one or more of your articles. You are asked to speak, make presentations, or do workshops on the topics you have written about.
7. Create an informal writing group [held over coffee] or perhaps something more formal formed of members interested in family history writing in which you share writing ideas and even share your emerging writings with each other. Here, we have a special interest group called "Postscripts" that meets every

two months in which we do this. We have been in existence long enough that we are quite comfortable in and accepting of suggestions others provide about our writing attempts.

Be gentle. Critiquing involves pointing out not only what the problems are with a piece but more importantly what is right with each article. Unfortunately, there is often much more of pointing out errors and too little of pointing out what is done well.

One method that can work well in building confidence in writers and providing positive feedback is called **two likes** and an area for work. At the end of examining a piece of writing have each member in the group provide two ideas that they found particularly effective or well-done in the piece stating these using the pronoun "you" and one area that one could show improvement in stating this using "we all could improve our...". Be specific rather than general. This gentler method leads to more writing growth and improvement than the more common "death by red ink" method.

When we write, we share our gifts and knowledge as genealogists and contribute to the groups and individuals we are associated with who have given us much. Our writing also provides "benefit" to genealogy in general and may reach far beyond where we are currently situated.

Most importantly, the history articles that we write about our family members from the past keep them alive in spirit: all that they loved, enjoyed and valued. These writings if preserved can be used to inform future generations of family

about their past. These histories of their ancestors can result in those who read them acquiring a better understanding of the events leading to their own situation and a better, more grounded image of themselves.

Yes, indeed, your writing of family can make history live on! What greater gift, what greater tribute can you provide for them? When it comes to your family history and genealogy research – write, write, write, and then write some more!

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## USING NEWSPAPERS

Sharon Aney

When we began our genealogy we were advised that the important pieces of information are birth and death records. But a poem tells us that the really important information about a person's life hides in "the dash" between the birth date and death date.

*By Linda Ellis, Copyright © Inspire Kindness, 1996, [thedashpoem.com](http://thedashpoem.com).*

Finding "the dash" is difficult once we have moved to the times beyond the memories of our living relatives. Sometimes we have a journal or letters to refer to. But often we do not.

Where can we look to find out more about the life, accomplishments, reputations, idiosyncrasies, and perhaps surprises of people who were earlier residents in our gene pool?

Newspapers hold the possibility of you learning more than you thought you could.

I knew that my father-in-law loved to golf and that he used to play in tournaments in

his youth, long before I appeared on the scene. I decided to look into the sports pages of the Saskatoon and Yorkton newspapers. Besides recounts of his many wins there were editorial comments to describe his personality and reputation in the community:

- playing through a downpour of rain on a rain-drenched course ..... Seel and Aney prepared for the game by wearing oil silk jackets and pants over their golf togs. Lawson and Anderson were not so well prepared and were thoroughly drenched.
- Cliff Aney, Yorkton's only representative to the Willingdon Cup Trials July 18, 1950.
- Aney was wild as a hawk off the tee,
- Cliff Soberg rates Cliff "The Horse" Aney as the toughest opponent .....
- Mr. Clifford Aney, that big, happy – go-lucky, cigar-smoking, Swift man (he worked for Swift Canadian Meats) emerged the victor. But Sir Clifford had no easy time of it.

I would think that his ancestor, George Washington Aney was also thought of as a genial person, one who could take a bit of teasing by members of his community. I was able to access this newspaper through the Sparta Wisconsin Historical Society.

The April 29, 1879 issue of the Sparta Herald: ..... announced that

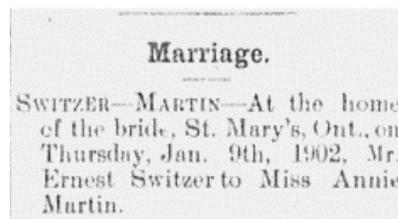
“Geo. W. Aney is a happy father. A big boy has arrived and taken up permanent quarters with him”.

(Incidentally this is the only documented record we have of the birth of Earl Aney)

Again Sparta Herald: March 18, 1882:

“Dr. Phillips of this village performed a very delicate and successful operation on a hare-lip for a son of Mr. G. W. Aney. The boy is three years of age and now has as much lip as anybody.”

Descriptions of specific events can provide interesting details. Newspapers used to treat weddings as items of importance in the community. Sometimes a column reported “just the facts, Ma’am”.



This is a clipping from the

Wetaskiwin Times of January 9, 1902.

But sometimes a long article described the whole wedding party, the gowns of the bridal party in great detail and a list of attendees from near and far. You never know.

Obituaries can be another source of extended family information. On December 18, 1934 Sparta Herald reported on the death of Wilmina Aney:

Word was received on Thursday, December 6 by Mrs. C. O. Hebard, South Water Street, and brother, Emery Urich of the death of their sister, Mrs. G. W. Aney, the third one now laid rest of the four daughters of Mr. & Mrs. John Urich, who moved from Ohio and were early pioneers of Wilton, where with five children they settled on a Slayton Creek farm two miles north of that Place. The four younger children: Chas Urich, now of High Prairie Alberta, Canada, Mrs. Clark Hebard of Sparta and two little deceased sons were born at the Slayton Creek home.

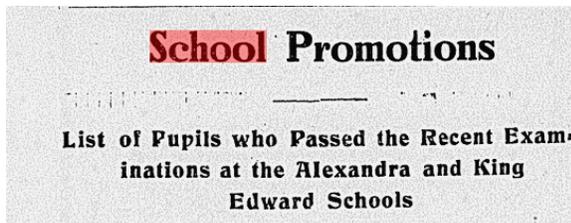
The two Sparta relatives and Charles Urich of Canada are the only living ones left of the John Urich family. A

son, Orlo who bought the home place from his parents when they moved west, was finally in a blacksmith shop with Levi Rathbun in Sparta. When his farm was sold he located near Conrad, Montana, where he died.

Everything except the names of Wilmina's parents was news to me at the time. She had moved to South Dakota almost 50 years earlier, so keep in mind to look for papers in current and former places of residence.

Your ancestor's achievements also may be found in news of local events such as music recitals, school graduations and promotions, 4H, business ads, athletic teams, etc.

Don't forget to look at the town topics and social columns which often record activities, visitors and travel and others social gatherings of the citizenry.



However, one must keep in mind that local coverage was often subjective, with mothers of the bride gushing over their daughter's lovely wedding gown, and sports writers being enthusiastic about local athletes.

As Mark Twain commented, *“Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as you please.”*

Even if your ancestor was not mentioned by name, coverage of local events such as extreme winter weather, floods, the coming of electricity would lead you to know that

they were affected, and perhaps their circumstances were changed.

World Wars I & II were well covered, being of great local and national importance. The names of “our boys” were mentioned with pride in many articles about their training, departure, injury or death, and more happily, their returning home.

Where can we find these newspapers?

➤ The Wetaskiwin Times newspaper and others from many Alberta communities  
<http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/newspapers/>

➤ Our local City of Wetaskiwin Archives, has archived Wetaskiwin Times newspapers as well as clipping files such as obituaries.

➤ Never forget the local archives, historical society and library of the community where your ancestor lived. They may have old newspapers on microfilm, which is a good excuse for a road trip.

➤ <http://www.cangenealogy.com/>  
Dave Obee's site has a wealth of resources besides newspapers

➤ [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) / wiki Search for “newspapers”

➤ <https://news.google.com/newspapers>

You might also strike gold by doing a google search for newspapers for a province, state or city of your interest.

➤ [WashingtonDigitalNewspapers.org](http://WashingtonDigitalNewspapers.org).

➤ <http://montananewspapers.org>

➤ <http://news.ourontario.ca/timmings/search>

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*There is a fine line  
between a packrat  
and a family historian!*