



# ROOTS & BRANCHES

Alberta Genealogical Society

*BRINGING THE PAST ....  
TO THE PRESENT .....  
FOR THE FUTURE! ©*

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

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APRIL, 2021

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## EXECUTIVE

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

## BRANCH MEETINGS

Third Tuesday of the Month.  
Via Zoom until the end of June

## BRANCH LIBRARY

Closed until further notice  
due to Archives closure  
If research is required contact  
[wetaskiwin@abgenealogy.ca](mailto:wetaskiwin@abgenealogy.ca)

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## **ROOTS & BRANCHES**

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

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- **Historian**  
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- **Youth**  
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## **FAMILY DISCOVERY CENTER**

Closed due to Covid-19  
Until further notice.



# **GENFAIR 2021**

**Saturday, April 24, 2021**

This event was a virtual adaptation of the Genfair that our branch had planned for 2020. This first virtual conference by the Alberta Genealogical Society was a resounding success. A record 154 people attended. It only looks easy when meticulous preparations are part of the event. Thank you, Alice...for all the work you have done. It has made the Wetaskiwin Branch look very good!

We recognize and thank Dr. Karen Aberle, Sandi Ratch and Claudia Malloch for speaking to us on history, research and sharing as essential components of genealogy. Their presentations were exceptional!

## **AGS AWARDS- Congratulations!**

A **Special Mention Award** was presented to **Alice Hoyle** for Wetaskiwin Branch's planning of two Genfairs, (2020 cancelled) and for hosting first ever virtual GenFair in 2021.

The **Kenneth Young Newsletter Award** for **Best Local Content** was given to Sharon Aney, the editor of our Roots & Branches newsletter. Congratulations to the **8 members** who were co-authors of "Our Covid-19 Pandemic Experience 2020" in the September, 2020 issue. The judges deemed it to be of great social and historic significance.

Our member, **John Althouse** received the **Peter Stavely Award** for excellent material in the Relatively Speaking May, 2020 issue "Where Main Street Meets Railway Avenue".

## **PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS**

Alice Hoyle

April has arrived and with it a renewed hope that more people will be vaccinated against Covid-19 and that at some point this year, there may be some semblance of normalcy once more.

Saying that, however, one has to ask what normal will feel and look like. We have passed the one-year mark of pandemic living; wearing masks seems to be the accepted norm; staying at home has now become the norm for a large segment of our population. Will the changes that evolved because of the pandemic now become a part of our everyday life?

A large percentage of the population have been working from home. Studies have shown that aside from the fact that they are missing the social aspect of work, a good percentage of people say they want to continue working from home, even after the pandemic concerns have lessened. At this point in time, there are more questions than answers.

Some of our branch members, along with a few interested members of the public, have been meeting virtually with Paul Edginton of the City of Wetaskiwin regarding the Archives. Paul presented a proposal to City council in March. This met with their approval, and Paul is now working with a management company from Edmonton to facilitate the 'assessment' that the City seemed to think is needed.

When you read this, GenFair 2021 will be a page in our history book. We are fortunate to have 3 knowledgeable and enthusiastic presenters who will start off the day. Registration numbers are very impressive – perhaps being able to attend a function in April, and not having to drive to where the function is being held has been an incentive

to attend. I can certainly recall several April AGS conferences when a snowstorm created havoc for those travelling.

I hope you are all preparing your Covid 19 stories for the booklet Sharon has proposed. This record of what we all experienced will be a lasting memory for future generations, and a reminder for all of us about how we managed through these stressful times.

The next AGS Board meeting will be on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

All of our branch meetings until the end of June, 2021 will be virtual meetings via Zoom.

I hope you are all doing well. Stay healthy, be safe.

## **EDITOR'S CORNER**

Sharon Aney

My daughter commented recently that her friends are amazed when she mentions my "computer competence", compared to that of their mothers. I have to say that whatever skill I have, was enhanced by my researching and sharing genealogy.

My research skills increased as I learned to explore resources on the internet. I learned how to digitize photos and documents. I learned how to use Word and Power Point in order to share my family stories. Via our meeting programs I learned to get behind the front page of various programs to make them more useful. I learned how to save it all in a cloud. This pandemic year I learned how to Zoom!

I think that we genealogists should be very proud that we are so conversant with the world of technology. We might not be able to challenge our grandchildren with a Tic Tok video, but we can share with them, in different ways, the unique history of their family.

## MEETING PROGRAMS

These meetings were held via Zoom.

### JANUARY 2021

Claudia, our program co-coordinator, trying find a way to present a program at our Zoom meetings, has learned how to share videos with us. We watched two at this meeting. Thank You!

- using Pinterest for genealogy, which was very interesting as most members already used Pinterest for various hobbies.
- How to use clickable maps on the Familysearch.org website.

### FEBRUARY 2021

Claudia presented 2 videos via Zoom.

- how to search Ancestry databases more effectively by using Focus options to zero in on the country, ethnicity, etc. of your research, and by using Ancestry's filter options for searching names.
- Diane Southard gave a brief description of the differences and uses of DNA: YDNA, MDNA (mitochondial) and Autosomal.

### MARCH 2021

Reports from 2 RootsTech attendees:

**Claudia:** Those who had their family on FamilySearch.org Family Tree and were also registered for RootsTech were able to connect during the event. She had over 4,000 suggested family connections and spent much of her time following the leads.

**Alice:** attended eleven sessions on German research, and found them to be excellent. Videos of RootsTech presentations can still be found on Youtube and RootsTech.org.

**Claudia** then shared 3 videos:

- How to Change your Downloads Folder
- 5 Ways to Make Things On Your Screen Larger

- Finding records using the Images Search Tool on the FamilySearch.org website.

### APRIL 2021

This month a good friend of our branch, Dan DeWolf, presented several short videos with hints that will make our research and computer experiences more efficient and productive.

- 3 Ways to Use Gmail Smarter
- 2 Factor Authentication for Added Security
- How to Split PDF pages
- Google Keep for note taking
- How to Link multiple Word documents into one PDF

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*IT DOES NOT MATTER  
HOW SLOWLY YOU GO,  
AS LONG AS YOU DO NOT  
STOP .....  
CONFUCIUS*

~~~~~

**In a cemetery in England :**  
Remember man, as you walk by,  
as you are now, so once was I.  
As I am now, so shall you be,  
remember this and follow me.

To which someone replied  
by writing on the tombstone:  
To follow you I'll not consent,  
until I know which way you went.

~~~~~

## **BEDA (BEATRICE) RONN HANNA (1871 – 1957)**

From the **WOMEN OF ASPENLAND**  
Exhibit at Wetaskiwin Heritage Museum  
<https://wetaskiwinmuseum.com/exhibits/women-of-aspenland/>



When Beda (Beatrice) Ronn arrived in Wetaskiwin in 1897 the qualities that were to endear her to this community were already beginning to unfold. She would become the remarkable pioneer woman who was an untiring worker, a problem solver, and always there to help anyone in need.

She was born to Per Jonsson and Bricken Ronn in 1881 at Undersvik, Helsingland, Sweden. The Ronns came to the United States in 1884, to Alberta in 1895 and finally to Wetaskiwin in 1897 with their family of five daughters and two sons. Times were difficult for the new settlers and the Ronn children had to find jobs for themselves early in life.

Beatrice was working out when she was 13 years old and she got \$2.50 a month! Later she worked in Macleod and Cranbrook, British Columbia. While in Cranbrook she was invited to visit friends at Frank, but she

couldn't get off work. So it was that she narrowly missed the Frank Slide of 1903. The mother, father and four brothers of her friends were killed, but three daughters survived.

In 1904 Beda and Lou Hanna were the first couple to be married in the new Bethlehem United church situated at 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 48 Street in Wetaskiwin. The church's carol bells rang for the first time on their wedding day. Their five children were all born in Wetaskiwin: David, Lillian, Gordon, Doris and Hazel.

Around 1910 Mrs. Hanna and the children went to live on NE 10-46-25W4th, seven miles (11.3 km) west of Wetaskiwin, where Mr. Hanna's parents also resided. Mr. Hanna had been appointed bailiff in 1900 and remained in town in that position.

When the children were attending the country school Mrs. Hanna started doing practical nursing in the community. She had many calls, too, from the town doctors wanting her to nurse their patients. The older children finished public school and the family moved back into town in 1919. Mrs. Hanna began to do regular nursing from this time on.

Daughter, Doris recalls "When we moved into the city, Dr. Shillabeer would pick her up and take her out in the country to help him deliver babies. She would stay with the mother and child for several days. She really became a mid-wife through experience, and if the doctor couldn't stay for the birth, or arrived too late, it was up to Mother and he would tell her what to do. She would help out at the hospital when they were short-handed and this was all free – gratis"!

During the early years, if there was no undertaker available she often helped the

bereaved by preparing the body of the deceased for burial”.

Her children remember a big garden their mother was able to grow when they were on the farm, and the excursions to the Battle Lake area where the wild berries were plentiful. All the berries and garden produce were preserved for use throughout the winter.



Beda was a member of the Scandinavian Welfare Society for 47 years and particularly active when they were raising funds to help the poor and needy in the country west of Pigeon Lake. She joined the Wetaskiwin Women's Institute in 1927 and became one of its most active and popular members. She was an untiring worker in the various projects they sponsored.

Baby clinics were organized under her capable leadership, as were Red Cross and Blood Donor Clinics. She was a member of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church and Past Noble Grand Dame of Crescent Rebekah Lodge #6, I.O.O.F., and received a life membership in the Order of the Royal Purple Lodge.

When Wetaskiwin was hit by floods in the spring of 1948, Mrs. Hanna was one of the Red Cross workers who brought hot soup, sandwiches and coffee to the men trying to dam up the flow of water from the west

country into the city. They got stuck and had to be rescued. For Mrs. Hanna, then 68 years old, this exciting conclusion to their errand of mercy was just another challenging experience.

Surrounded by all of their children and all but one of their nine grandchildren, Mr. and Mrs. Hanna celebrated their Golden anniversary in 1954 at the church where they were married. Nearly three hundred friends and relatives came to honour this long-time Wetaskiwin couple, regarded with affection by a grateful community.



Beda (Ronn) Hanna passed away in July, 1957 at the age of 76.

"It would appear that Mrs. Hanna was a born nurse. She had experience as a small child in her own home when her twin sisters were born, and also when one other brother had blood poisoning. Then she went to visit a schoolmate when she was only 16 and stayed on to care for a pair of twins that arrived while she was there."

Wetaskiwin Times, March 1951

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*It helps if you envision  
"auto correct"  
as a tiny elf in your phone,  
who is trying very hard to be  
helpful, but is in fact ...  
quite drunk!*



## *Masking Up for Covid-1*

Lee Koop

When the Covid-19 pandemic arrived in Canada, I was bound and determined to wear a mask, any mask, not only to protect myself and others from contracting the virus, but to let others know they should keep their distance from me, even if they weren't wearing a mask. I was taking this seriously.



I began wearing a mask as soon as it was suggested by government and health officials, around the middle of March 2020. The only one I had in the household was an industrial dust mask which I had bought at Canadian Tire a long time ago. At that time I was doing some dry walling and thought I needed some protection. I found out

that the mask fogged up my glasses too much, especially when breathing hard or bending over. Luckily, I had saved several. While wearing this mask during the Covid-19 pandemic, I found that breathing lightly and not speaking helped in keeping my glasses somewhat clear of fog. A plus for this mask was the metal strip on top which allowed me to fold the mask close to my nose, thus lessening the amount of breath moving to my glasses. A negative was having to remove my hat every time I put on or took off the mask.



I wore this mask until the Alberta Government made masks available for all Albertans.



During the early stages of the pandemic various individuals and organizations were making fabric masks. A few that I tried were just too small for my long face and all of these masks did not have a wire to form the top of the mask – around the bridge of my nose. Thus more fog!



Of the fabric masks I saw, this one was most unusual, in that it was in two pieces. It had no nose wire and was awkward putting on and taking off, but it fit my face. Pictures are worth a thousand words.





Alas, the Alberta Government masks finally arrived. I decided to drive through the Tim Horton's drive-through for my free masks. When I got to the window I felt cheap, so I bought two tins of Tim Horton's French Vanilla Cappuccino instant coffee for my wife, Carole, at \$8.00 per tin. This mask took over from my dust mask.



Early in 2021, with Covid-19 variants becoming a concern, health officials suggested wearing two masks for additional protection. I had noticed people wearing an Alberta mask under a cloth mask. I thought that would be frustrating having to put on two masks, one at a time, especially when removing masks was always necessary when driving. So, I asked my wife, Carole, to stitch two Alberta masks together for me. It's no more difficult to double mask than single mask. That is what I wear today.



~~~~~  
*Double negatives  
 are a No-No in English!*  
 ~~~~~

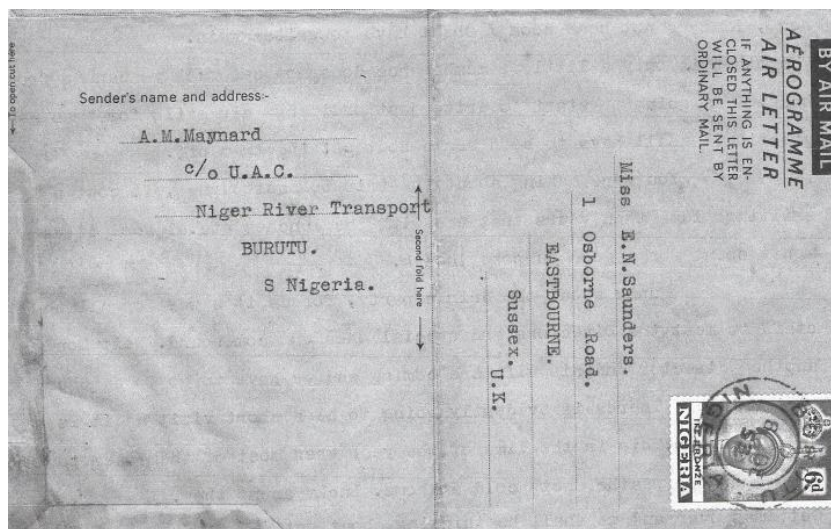
## MOTHER'S LETTERS

Bob Maynard

My mother wrote this letter from Nigeria to her aunt in Eastbourne, England in December of 1953. She was with my Dad because he worked for the United Africa Company, a building company from 1948-58.

My brother David and I (mentioned in the first paragraph) were attending Mayfield College, a boarding school in Sussex, England. I was 8 years old. Although

Mother mentioned Christmas in the letter, she and my father stayed in Nigeria. David and I spent Christmas with our foster parents and then we returned to our different boarding schools. I did go back to Africa for winter and summer holidays until 1958. David never did go back.





Dec 7th 1953

Dear Auntie

Very pleased to get your letter on Sat, sorry I did not make it clear that I received one from you a day or so after my birthday. Glad that David had written to you, makes me think that he is growing up when he writes on his own like that. We heard from him on Thurs but Rob had not written and D only said about their football and about the pictures they had seen. I heard from Dib on Sat and she said that they break up school on the 18th so it will not be long now and Rob will have been to school for a whole term. Yes it is nice that we have got somewhere for the holidays where he is properly cared for and that he likes it there so much. Actually he is better off than David.

I have not had a reply from Swan and Edgar and so think that they must have sent by sea mail but you should have received yours by now, if I do not hear soon I shall have to write again.

The other is only a little remembrance does not see much we can do from here. I am going to start to write just ordinary air mails for Xmas greeting I shall have to soon see about getting them off.

You were asking about the trip to Eastbourne, it cost a few shillings less than yours that was with the lunches etc. I feel it was money spent for a good purpose though.

Funny about the drinks party, for us it a way for all the staff to meet the Directors and special ones who comeround. Next Monday another director and his wife are coming and we have to go to a Sherry party midday. There is evidently going to be a short visit as it is no an evening do. This is the time of the year when most of them seem to come when the weather gets cold at home. Lucky aren't they. Get Xmas over and we shall be thinking about getting our passage ready

Continued on next page.....

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for our next leave. Once we are in the new year the time will soon  
slip by again. Have you got the new carpet down yet, suppose that you  
will have by Xmas. Who will you get to help you put it down.  
Glad that Alan has been down to see you and that he seems to be getting  
alright. Wonder what sort of place it is that he does to.  
It is nice to feel that you have not to move from your comfy spot.  
Especially now that the Lady is there herself. Sounds as if she has a  
busy time with her music. Do you hear her playing much. *Have not left  
space to finish*  
It is Bill's birthday tomorrow. Have been able to get him a tie.  
We had a full weekend as the people came down from Warri, some UAC and *lots of love from us both*  
*all very nice -* some government for cricket and tennis. They stayed with various ones.  
Then sometime there will be a return match. Seemed funny but nice with  
extra ones here. When they arrived we put on tea at the club then we had  
informal evening lasting until 3 am. *First fold here*

I have had these letters for many years. When my Mother died in 1985 I got a few. When my father died in 1993 I was given more..... about 500, all written 1939-1958 by my mother and father while in Africa. She wrote about daily life to her aunt and family. Also she wrote about her school days; she was born in 1905. I am slowly getting them digitized onto the computer.

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## RESEARCH REQUEST - VIAU-HEANEY

by Leroy Koop

On March 29, 2021 the branch received a request through our website from Cathy B-P from Calgary. She wrote:

"I'm looking for some information on my grandparents (and great grandparents) who lived in Wetaskiwin in the early 1900s; Elizabeth and Patrick Heaney. Their children were Doris, Aileen, John (Jack) and Gerald. In 1916 Elizabeth lived at 102 Landsdowne St with her parents Joseph & Katherine "Kate" Viau. I'm also trying to find where my g-grandfather Joseph Viau is buried. It may be in Wetaskiwin."

Assuming Cathy was not an AGS member, the AGS Surname Database was checked first. Here is what was found:

|                            |                                      |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Patrick Joseph Heaney      | d. 11 (14) Oct 1944, Edmonton Centre |
| Elizabeth M. Heaney        | d. 7 Aug 1981, Edmonton Centre       |
| Doris Black nee Heaney dtr | b. 1920 d. 1990, Edmonton North      |



John Heaney

son? b. 1830? d. 8 Feb 1939, died in Oyen interred in Esther  
3 John records appear to be same guy

Josephus Viau

d. 21 Nov 1919, Wetaskiwin

Katharina Viau

b. 1866 d. 11 Jul 1955, Wetaskiwin

Wilfrid Viau

son b. 1896 d. 7 (8) Aug 1955, Wetaskiwin

### Death of Joseph Exildas Viau.

We chronicle the death of a respected citizen of this place, in the person of Joseph Exildas Viau, who died at New Norway on Friday, November 21st, from heart failure, at the age of 60 years, 7 months and 22 days. His remains were tenderly laid to rest in the R. C. cemetery on Sunday, November 23rd. Deceased was a native of Montreal and emigrated to this country 28 years ago when he took up his residence in this City. For a number of years he was engaged as an engineer in the Wetaskiwin Electrical Light Plant. He was a good citizen and will be much missed by a large circle of friends. He leaves to mourn his loss a wife, one daughter and two sons, respectively Mrs. P. J. Heaney, Wilfrid and Leo. The bereaved have the heartfelt sympathy of the community in this their hour of sorrow. Nov. 26, 1919

The City of Wetaskiwin Archives was then checked for newspaper obituaries. One was found for **Joseph Exildas Viau**. He died on 21 November 1919 in New Norway of a heart attack. He was buried in the R.C. Cemetery. Joseph had worked at the Wetaskiwin Electrical Light Plant. Further research on Find-a- Grave found him buried in the old Sacred Heart Church Cemetery.

Joe Viau's wife, Katherine, and son, Wilfred died a month apart in 1955 and are buried in the old Wetaskiwin Cemetery.



Cathy questioned why Joseph and Katherine's daughter Adeline wasn't mentioned in Joseph's obituary. She said: "Joseph's daughter Adeline died in childbirth. What is interesting is that she isn't named in Joseph's obituary even though she died in 1921. We were told that her husband left and didn't take the child. I have no idea what happened to the child either."

Since Adeline was not listed the 1921 death date was marriage and death registration Alberta Archives website, it married A. J. Vogel in 1909 at birth to their daughter, Cecilia months later. (Several other Cathy. She plans on ordering research on Find-a-Grave buried together in the same Joseph Viau; namely, the Vogel remarried in 1912.



anywhere in the 1911 census, questionable. Using the indexes on the Province of was discovered that Adeline the age of 18. She died giving in 1910. The daughter died 5 PAA indexes were passed on to some of the certificates.) Further found Adeline and Cecilia cemetery as Adeline's father, Sacred Heart Cemetery. A. J.

Researching the Peel's Prairie Provinces website, **Adeline Viau and Cecilia Vogel** produced several articles to do with Joseph Viau and his son, Adolphe. The management at the Power Plant in Wetaskiwin requested a pay raise of \$10/month for Joseph in one article and a reduction

to an 8 hour work day in another. Adolphe was employed at the Wetaskiwin Times when he joined the army. He died overseas.

Canadian Censuses were searched. In 1871 Joseph Viau, a 5 year old, is found with his parents Gideon and Roseanna (Rosalie) Viau living in Quebec. Joseph next turned up in the 1891 Census in Saskatchewan, married to Katherine, childless and a hotel keeper. Joseph next appears in the 1906 Alberta Census with a family of 5 children; the first 4 born in Saskatchewan and the last, Leo, born in Wetaskiwin, Alberta in October 1901.

Patrick and Elizabeth Heaney and 3 children are listed in the 1926 Alberta Census living on Garwood Cres. in Wetaskiwin. Sometime between 1926 and 1944, the year Patrick died, the family moved to Edmonton. Elizabeth passed away in 1981.

Local history books did not produce any results for the names Heaney and Viau other than mentioning (*Siding 16*) that Adolphe Viau (Vieu) died overseas during the war.

Alice searched the following:

VIAU – Nothing in Bittern Lake, Gwynne, Freeway West, Pioneer Pathways, or

Siding 16

Nothing in any of the Camrose BMD's

Nothing in the Moore Funeral Records

HEANEY – Nothing in any of the above local history books

On April 5, 2021 Cathy wrote, "I've been organizing and downloading all the docs you've sent me! Thanks so much."

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## **RESEARCH REQUESTS – Alice Hoyle**

### **TOST, ERIC AND AMALIA AND THEIR CHILDREN:**

I was contacted through the AGS website and asked for information about the above family who the researcher knew had a write-up in Pioneer Pathways local history book.

I personally have these books in my collection; the researcher said that if the information could be found digitally, they would be happy with that as well.

After searching several websites that I was sure had the books online, I came up with a blank. I scanned the pages from Pioneer Pathways and emailed them to the researcher.

### **SVENSEN, GILBERT AND GENA/SONDMOR, INGEBORG/GREINER/BUSSARD:**

The original request for information was about a cemetery described as "Grant's Crossing Bridge over the Battle River" and the researcher gave me a land location. Apparently, 2 ancestors (Svensen and Sondmor) were thought to be buried there. I searched the County of Wetaskiwin map for the land location; realized it was a quarter section next to people my husband and I know.

I phoned our friend and he told me there used to be a small cemetery on the land location I was given, but the grave markers had disintegrated a long time ago, and the area was being farmed by the landowner. There is no indication at present that a cemetery existed there.

This research continued to evolve: the researcher asked about burials in the Catholic Cemetery. An enquiry to two of our branch members resulted in me being able to tell her about possible access to the cemetery (the researcher, who lives in Winnipeg, had indicated she might drive to Wetaskiwin this coming summer to look at the graves, etc.).

The information I got also confirmed the burial of some of the Greiner family in the Catholic Cemetery in Wetaskiwin. I was then asked to supply information about the Greiner family and the researcher suggested that one of the women had married someone with the surname Bussard. A search of local history books gave me more information to send her, along with obituaries and burial records for several of the family members.

It was a successful research journey, and the woman was very happy with all the information I emailed and/or mailed to her.

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