



ROOTS & BRANCHES

Wetaskiwin Branch
Alberta Genealogical Society

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

Website: www.abgenealogy.ca/wetaskiwin-branch

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April, 2022

VOL. 20 #2

EXECUTIVE

President: Alice Hoyle
Vice President: Lorraine McKay
Secretary: Pam Cooke
Treasurer: Leroy Koop

BRANCH MEETINGS

Third Tuesday of the Month.
Possibly via Zoom

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due to Archives closure

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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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Rosella Plaquin
- **Youth**
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LDS FAMILY DISCOVERY CENTRE

Thursdays 1 pm – 4 pm

PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS

Alice Hoyle

I'm reminded of the words from a song
"What a Difference a Day Makes: 24
Little Hours". We carry on with our lives,
confident that everything will be the
same, but sadly, that doesn't always
happen.

We have just experienced a snowstorm
and a big dump of snow: this after
having a warm, lovely weekend that
gave us promise for Spring to be here.
Surprise!! Mother Nature had other
plans.

When I last wrote a "President's
Ponderings" article for the branch
newsletter, no one could have
envisioned a world when one power
hungry nation would invade its
neighbour – just because they could.

In a world where the lives of so many
people are in jeopardy, and where their
family history is being eliminated, it's
even more important that we make sure
our own history is recorded.

The presentation at our April meeting
was right on topic in this regard. I found
her style to be casual but informative;
the presenter gave a wealth of
information and suggestions for anyone
interested in creating their own 'family
story'. Thank you for providing this
information, Claudia.

I hope you are looking forward to Spring
and the promise of renewal that season
usually brings. May you all be well, stay
well, and allow hope and renewal to
enter your everyday lives.

~~~~~

## AGS AWARDS

*Thank you to the AGS board considering that the September, 2021 issue of Roots and Branches was worthy of the Kenneth Young Award for the Best Overall Newsletter for 2021. It could not have happened without the active participation of you, our members! Thank You!*

*Sharon Aney, Editor*

## EDITOR'S CORNER

Sharon Aney

I have asked our branch members to share what they have learned about an ancestor or a family through "research".

Why would we research beyond the names in census records and databases? Because our ancestors have lived a life! Since they are not able to tell their stories, it is up to us to find their stories and to share them. The lives of us, their descendants, have a basis in those lives.

In the 7 articles submitted to this issue, you will notice that unique information has come from many different sources.

I am always appreciative of our Branch members' accomplishments and that they share them with us!

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On February 24, 2022 I felt a strange and unnerving connection between history and the present day. I had just spent some time re-writing a story about my Polish grandfather fighting against Russian aggression to Poland in 1920, when

Again! One hundred years later, in 2022 the world was turned on its ear as Russia is the

aggressor once more, this time against the country of my other ancestral branch: Ukraine. Although I do not know of family connections in Ukraine, the action has stirred deep distress.

As the weeks pass, I am chilled by the brutality of Russia's President Putin, proud of the courage of the Ukrainian defenders, in deep sympathy with the millions who have fled to the safety of other countries, and heartened by the generosity of the people in the western world who have risen to the assistance of Ukraine and its people.

This photo by Reuters news agency in the early days, breaks my heart – ordinary folks of any age ready to defend their country! Would I be that brave?



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**Re: 1950 USA census:** from Amy Johnson Crow .....*"But, something I wanted to share is something I've been having too much fun with - and plan to use myself as I dive into my own research. Ancestry has a new tool for the census release, the 1950 Census District Map Finder - which will help us more easily find our ancestors. It's brand new, but I've made a video for you all to see it and have as much fun as I have. [Click here to watch.](#)"*

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MEETING PROGRAMS

January: "Goals For 2022" (genealogy or otherwise)

Some of the goals were:

- Be more involved with our genealogy research
- Regain our health
- Catch up and organize our paperwork; get photos organized and into albums
- Try to find a family member who would take over our genealogy research in the future
- Make a family cookbook; create more greeting cards; communicate more with people
- Be more diligent about European research
- Be involved with the community, with the Archives being a focal point
- Live a more mindful life; live a slower, calmer lifestyle
- Try to encourage family members to accept DNA testing results that affect them, as well as the person who did the testing and found out the results

We all agreed that it was a pleasure to hear what everyone was planning/hoping to accomplish in the new year.

February: Videos

- 1) "Organize your Digital Files in 3 Easy Steps" - keeping similar documents and photos, etc. within the appropriate files.
- 2) "Write Faster with Word Editing Tips" - Using Microsoft Word options to assist with creation of our word documents.
- 3) "How to View Those Negatives in your Life" - how to use your cell phone to view negatives of photos and hopefully identify the people/places on the negatives.

March: re - RootsTech

Members who had virtually attended RootsTech presentations reported:

Mavis - took in several presentations on Swedish genealogy and found them very useful.

Claudia - found 3 presentations by Dian Southward on DNA to be very helpful

Alice - took in interesting and helpful presentations: Scottish, My Heritage, Ontario Archives, 1950 census, Prussian Records, Austro-Hungarian Empire, German Emigration.

April - "Family Stories in 30 Minutes or Less", a webinar by Brenda Hudson.

She shared some writing tips, and 3 techniques for people to begin writing their family stories:

Springboards - asking ourselves what we want to know

Stepping stones - describing a specific moment or event

Captured moments - based upon a photo

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**KEEP CLAM AND PROOFREAD!**

*Hospitals are sued  
by 7 Foot Doctors  
Boy, are they tall!*

*Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges  
You mean there's something  
stronger than duct tape?*

*Juvenile Court to Try  
Shooting Defendant  
See if that works better  
than a fair trial!*


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THE IMPORTANCE OF OBITUARIES

by Leroy Koop

Obituaries are usually the last written document of the deceased. Although events furthest away from the death date may be suspect, much information is often available to a genealogy researcher.

**DEATH OF
EARLY PIONEER**



Cartwright, Man.—By the death of John Gimby the west has lost another pioneer and patriot. Born in Toronto, or as it was then called "Muddy York," on February 10, 1829, he moved to Owen Sound in 1849. Here he married his cousin, Rebecca Gimby, and together they faced the blizzards of the west in 1877, settling near Winnipeg in what was then known as the Caledonia Settlement. Three years after he came to this locality and settled on the banks of a stream which today is known as Gimby creek. Here his wife died in 1891, and about three years later he was married a second time, to Mary Somersall, also of Owen Sound. Thirteen years ago he sold his claim on Gimby creek and went to reside in Wawanesa, from whence he passed away on Sunday, February 17. The remains were brought back to be laid by those of his first wife and were accompanied by his son and grand-daughter, C. M. Gimby and Nurse Gimby, both of Edmonton, Alta., who had been caring for him during his illness. He leaves to mourn his loss a wife and three sons, Mrs. Gimby, of Wawanesa; C. W. and Fred, of Edmonton, and George, of this village. Deceased was for many years a member of the Methodist church, his name appearing second with a number of others in forming what is now known as Cartwright Methodist church, in 1837.

Obituaries often give family names of the deceased for 3 or 4 generations; parents of the deceased, the deceased and spouse; and children and grandchildren of the deceased. Death date, birth date, marriage date and age of the deceased may be included as well as where the events took place. If you're really lucky you may get the "key" to your research.

I was asked to find out information on my brother-in-law's great-great grandmother named Rebecca. The only information he had of her was the first name and that she was married to a John Gimby. John was born in Ontario in 1829 and died in Manitoba in 1918. This information came from a family pedigree chart published by an extended family member.

Researching John Gimby in Canada in Canadian Censuses 1861 to 1891 only showed Rebecca as John's wife with the assumed surname of Gimby. John and Rebecca's life together began in the mid 1850's before civil registration in Ontario and with no available marriage church records. From the Manitoba Vital Statistics it was determined that John died on February 17, 1918. Having that information led to the newspaper obituary.

The displayed obituary was from the Winnipeg Free Press, March 1, 1918. The "key" to continued research on Rebecca was; "...he married his **cousin** Rebecca Gimby...". Was Gimby her married or maiden surname? The article also states that after Rebecca's death in 1891, John married a Mary Somersall. The Manitoba Vital Statistics show that John Gimby married an Annie Mary Cadman who previously, as Annie Mary Somersall, had married Joseph Cadman. Since the obituary writer was using Mary's maiden surname, it was assumed that Rebecca's maiden surname of Gimby was also used and that John and Rebecca were possibly first cousins.

With a maiden surname of Gimby, Rebecca's parents were discovered as being William and Sarah (nee Stafford) Ginby (not Gimby) and that Rebecca was born in October 1827 in Marsh Parish, Cambridgeshire, England.

Thanks to a newspaper obituary this research came to a successful conclusion.

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## ***HEINRICH ANDREAS KOOP, "The Show-Off"***

by Leroy Koop

My great-great-great grandfather, Heinrich Andreas Koop, was born about 1806 in the village of Muntau, Molotschna Colony, South Russia (north of the Black Sea)<sup>1</sup>. As an adult he was known as a successful farmer. In 1839 Heinrich, his wife Anna, 4 sons and 1 daughter moved to a new village in the colony named Landskrone<sup>2</sup>.

Heinrich belonged to the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde (small fellowship), a small religious group that had separated from the main Mennonite faith in 1812<sup>3</sup>. The Kleine Gemeinde appeared to be more strict in its daily life mandates.

The Agricultural Society was formed in the Molotschna Colony to improve agricultural life. Johann Cornies was appointed the chairman of this society in 1830. Mr. Cornies was a smart farmer himself and experimented different techniques on his land. Through the society he promoted reforms in agriculture, such as crop rotation, summer fallowing and tree planting in farm yards. He further introduced new methods in building construction<sup>3</sup>.

These two identities, the Kleine Gemeinde and the Agricultural Society, resulted in some hard times for Heinrich. As a prosperous farmer Heinrich welcomed the new agricultural reforms. He also followed the society guidelines in building construction, so much so that he had "a fine set of buildings"<sup>4</sup>. What exactly he did to his buildings was never mentioned. Perhaps he carved a wooden rooster, painted it with many vibrant colours, and installed it on the barn's roof peak. Maybe he simply painted '*Heinrich Andreas Koop Farm*' on the gable of the barn in large bold print. Or maybe he simply painted the trim of the barn doors and windows in white. Whatever he did, the Kleine Gemeinde religious leaders were not happy. The Kleine Gemeinde ministerial opposed Heinrich's use of the new construction methods being implemented by the Agricultural Society on the grounds that "it was too ostentatious and not humble enough"<sup>4</sup>.

On February 6, 1849 the Kleine Gemeinde brotherhood dealt with the behaviour of Heinrich Koop. Heinrich must have promised to fix things as the meeting ended without punishment to Heinrich<sup>5</sup>.

At the brotherhood meeting on April 17, 1849, Heinrich was "called into account because of his unscriptural business and conduct and was separated from the fellowship"<sup>6</sup>. Apparently Heinrich became sickly and on September 3, 1850 he approached the church leaders for reacceptance. On October 1, 1850 Heinrich Koop was received back into the fellowship<sup>7</sup>.

Heinrich Andreas Koop died sometime before May 27, 1851 when his wife proclaimed banns for marriage with Heinrich Wedel<sup>8</sup>.

A hundred years later as a youngster in southern Manitoba, when automobiles were available, I heard stories that many Mennonites of the Kleine Gemeinde faith had refused to buy vehicles if they were too "showy". I heard stories that the Mennonites would actually remove any chrome or glitter or simply paint over it.

After learning about Heinrich, it all made sense to me. Currently southern Manitoba Mennonites still display beautiful farm yards and do not have problems with driving fancy vehicles or using the biggest farm equipment available.

1. ***Russian 1835 Census of the Molotschna Villages***, January 3, 1835; pages 2200; English Translation, November 1995; by Genealogy Committee of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society
2. *ibid*; page 3600
3. ***Mennonite Historical Atlas, Second Edition***; 1996; page 125; by William Schroeder & Helmut T. Huebert, Winnipeg, Canada
4. ***Saints and Sinners - The Kleine Gemeinde in Imperial Russia 1812 to 1875***; 1999; page 176; by Delbert F. Plett, Q.C., Steinbach, Manitoba
5. ***Leaders of the Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde in Russia, 1812 to 1874*** - Volume Six, The Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde Historical Series; Chapter Two - Ministerial Journal 1848-1862 recorded by Reverend Johann Dueck (1801-1866), Muntau, Molotschna Colony; 1993; page 452; by Delbert F. Plett, Q.C., Steinbach, Manitoba
6. *ibid*; page 453
7. *ibid*; page 458
8. *ibid*; page 461

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LAWRENCE NYSTROM'S FAMILY by Daniel Hodgson

I started the genealogy research as a favor to my sister. I come from a mixed family. My half-sister, Trudi has a different biological father than me. However, we do share the same mother.

What started out as a simple favor to an older sibling would soon become a personal curiosity. I first assumed that I would be able to bring together my sister's family tree within a month or so. My searches soon ballooned to approximately 5 or 6 months.

I started the search with my half-sister's biological grandfather, Lawrence Nystrom. Lawrence did eventually settle into the Humboldt County area of California. Trudi's grandmother, Nellie Hanson was known affectionately as "grandma Nellie".

Many years have passed so not a lot is known about Nellie & Lawrence's meeting. My best guess is that Nellie met Lawrence in Alberta sometime in the 1940s. Lawrence's family did live in Wetaskiwin, Alberta for a time. Most records suggest that Lawrence Nystrom was born in Meeting Creek, Alberta. Lawrence Nystrom's father, John Emil Nystrom has an interesting story.

John Emil Nystrom would sometimes go by Emil Nystrom. The Nystrom last name, or surname, is Swedish in origin. John Emil Nystrom according to most records was born in the U.S. state of Illinois. Emil Nystrom's Canadian World War I draft/attestation papers show he was born in 1874. The county that Emil Nystrom was born does not keep birth records going back that far. Emil's father was a John Peter Nystrom.

John Peter Nystrom was born in Sweden. Some records suggest that John Peter Nystrom came over from Sweden in the 1860s. Most historical accounts hold that during the 19th century there was some socioeconomic & religious disruptions in Sweden. John Peter Nystrom's sister, Johanna Nyberg has been recorded as having passed through Illinois. The Vasa archives is a collation from the Swedish immigrants that settled in Illinois. The Nystrom family further settled into Nebraska.

Lawrence Nystrom's father, Emil Nystrom did have a homestead plot. I managed to unearth paperwork for this homestead with the state of Nebraska archives. I do not know what became of Emil's homestead. Records suggest that an Alfred Pearson of Gothenburg, Nebraska helped out with the homestead legal issues. Emil Nystrom would later follow a further Swedish migration northward into Canada.

Emil Nystrom appeared to have settled into the Alberta province of Canada. Most records suggest Emil's settlement into Alberta between 1905 & 1910. Alberta did not even become an official province until 1905. One of the local Albertan history books, known as The Golden Trail, of Camrose, lists Emil. On page 31 Alfred Pearson & Emil Nystrom were amongst seven trainloads of settlers coming from Nebraska.

Emil Nystrom's probate papers list a Bessie A. Lamnel as his niece. Bessie along with another niece, Mrs. Marcella a Hansen of San Diego, California was mentioned in his will. Emil's four daughters were also listed:

- Eileen (Iolene) Taylor (nee Nystrom) of Edmonton, Alberta
- Barbara Ireland of Mission, BC
- Doris Roth of Wetaskiwin, Alberta
- Florence Lanaway of Raven, Alberta

Lawrence Nystrom was laid to rest in my hometown of Eureka, California. Here are Lawrence's family burial details:

- Lawrence Nystrom ([Lawrence Magnus Nystrom](#))
- John Emil Nystrom ([John Emil Nystrom](#))
- Nellie Hanson ([Nellie Hanson](#))

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## **ANCESTRY DNA MATCHES**

by Leroy Koop

I was contacted through my Ancestry DNA account by Ms. K. who stated she was new to genealogy research. Ancestry DNA had contacted her with the conclusion that Ms. K. and I had a <1% DNA match, and that we were 4th - 6th cousins. Ms. K. wanted to know how we were related. At first I thought that we probably had the same first letter in one of our ancestral surnames. However, I had never really looked at my DNA matches to any great extent, so I decided to compare our ancestral trees.

This was leading me to a different kind of genealogy research.

Ancestry gives a list of common surnames between the two trees being compared. Ms. K.'s tree and mine had the following 8 common surnames (62 persons): Friesen (16 people) Loewen (10 people) Martens (8 people) Penner (10 people) Rempel (7 people) Toews (2 people) Wiebe (7 people) Wiens (2 people)

Of these I only found an Isbrand Friesen and a Helena Penner common to our trees. Among other children, this couple had two sons, Klaas, my ancestor and Wilhelm, Ms. K.'s ancestor. Next I compared the two ancestral trees. Here's an edited version of my tree:



I highlighted Ms. K.'s and my common ancestors in yellow.



Working from right to left I numbered the generations starting with "0" for the sibling generation; "1" for the 1st cousin generation and so on. I was in the 6th cousin generation and Ms. K. was in the 7th cousin generation in her tree. I concluded that Ms. K.'s mother and I were 6th cousins and Ms. K. and I were 6th cousins once removed.

Ancestry also gives an indication where the ancestors originated. Ms. K.'s and my distant ancestors emigrated from South Russia/Prussia/Ukraine area.

Of course this kind of research of DNA matches only works if both parties have attached a family tree to their DNA.

~~~~~

"You never fail until you stop trying."

— Albert Einstein

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**ALF COOKE, 1864-1915**  
**FRENCH FOREIGN LEGIONNAIRE      'A COURAGEOUS SPIRIT TO FIGHT'**

By Pam Cooke 2022

I met my first Cooke relative in 2012 in Beamsville ON (see Roots and Branches, Sept 2017 for the complete story), and heard the story of my great, great Uncle Alf who joined the French Foreign Legion and died of typhus in La Fleche France at the age of 52.

Cousin Kathy shared many family photos including this portrait of Alf and she showed me a box of Alf's letters from the front.

Photo of Alf Cooke, →  
From the Collection of Kathy, Beamsville ON

"Homage de la Nation" the certificate honouring Alf's sacrifice was sent to Alf's brother, my great grandfather FG Cooke, in Eastbourne England. After FG's death in 1938, the certificate found its way to Beamsville ON in the Niagara region, where his son Gordon had emigrated circa 1907.



Gordon's grandson Bill Eggert, having grown up among the fruit orchards and early wineries of the Niagara region moved to the Okanagan in 1989 to found his own winery, Fairview Cellars in Oliver. The original certificate now rests there, having travelled from France to England to Canada, first Ontario, then to BC over the last 100 years. It is wonderful that it is still in the family and has survived its journeys.

I was eager to meet as many Cooke relatives as possible, after discovering that my father who thought he had no living relatives, had three first cousins who grew up in the Niagara region, down the road from where he settled as an adult, in Toronto.

In 2012 my husband was in Kamloops for a conference, so we made the detour to Penticton and Oliver and were joined by our two sons.

We met brothers, Bill and Chuck Eggert, and came home with a case of wine, purchased with the newly acquired family discount!

Chuck, Pam and Bill 2012, Fairview Cellars, Oliver BC



The certificate says:

To the Dead of the Great War  
(Aux Morts de la Grande Guerre)

To the memory of (A La Memoire)  
Cooke, Alfred Theodore  
Soldier of the 1<sup>st</sup> Foreign Legion  
(Soldat aux 1st Regiment Étranger)

Died for France (Mort pour La France)  
26 January 1915  
Hommage De La Nation (National Tribute)

(Signed) R. Poincare,  
Le President de la Republic  
The Grateful Nation  
(La Patrie Reconnaissante)

The Original Certificate, at Fairview Cellars, Oliver BC  
from the collection of Bill Eggert 2x great nephew to Alf Cooke  
Held by Nigel Wildcat, 3x great nephew to Alf (2012)

*The photo on the certificate is part of the famous Arc de Triomphe, Paris France, which was built between 1810-1836 to honour those who fought and died for France. The French Foreign Legion was founded in 1831 to allow for foreign nationals of any age to join the French Army.*

Alf is buried at the Broadwater and Worthing Cemetery, West Sussex, England. It has a large group of members who maintain and promote the cemetery, as well as publish an interesting newsletter. Luckily, one of the members, interested in the story of his headstone, chose to research and write about Uncle Alf.

I have attached the article from "The Broadsheet" which was discovered on an internet search.

# THE BROADSHEET

ISSUE No.9  
WINTER

2011

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THE VOICE OF THE FRIENDS OF BROADWATER AND WORTHING CEMETERY

## A COURAGEOUS SPIRIT TO FIGHT

BY CHRIS GREEN

In the south-east corner of cemetery plot C20, there is a headstone that records the death of Phoebe Beatrice Cooke in 1900. To this has been added an inscription that her husband Alfred Theodore Cooke died whilst serving in the (WW1) trenches with the French Foreign Legion.

Alfred Cooke was born in 1864 in Stockton-on-tees. His father, Charles was a schoolmaster. Within the next few years the family moved to Eastbourne. In 1892 Alfred came to Worthing as a professional architect and surveyor, and it was said that he was responsible for a new departure in the style of buildings in Worthing. He designed the Proscenium in the Theatre Royal, which was situated in Ann Street. For a long time he was a partner with J.G. Cogswall having an office at Shelley Lodge, Liverpool Gardens.

At Christchurch, Worthing on Ladysmith Day 1900, he married his wife to be, Phoebe Blake. The news of the relief of Ladysmith had just been received and the organist played the National Anthem prior to the ceremony. It was the intention that the couple should live at Shelley Lodge, which he had designed. Sadly his wife died within six months of marriage, then aged 20.

Devastated, Alfred lived with his sister Julia for a short time, but decided to leave the town for a new life abroad. In the Transvaal, he purchased an estate between the White River and Crocodile River where he resided for several years. On the outbreak of war in August 1914, he had a burning desire to serve his country in its hour of peril. At this time he was aged 51. He returned to England but was horrified to find that he failed to gain permission into Lord Kitchener's army.

He crossed the Channel and joined the French Foreign Legion. He underwent a short period of training in Paris and then was sent to the Front. He was the crack shot of his section, which numbered 250 men, and fighting near Peronne he gave evidence of the accuracy of his fire. In a letter which appeared in *The Times* he stated that "he was placed on guard immediately he arrived on the Front. As incredible as it may seem at the end of two hours he was inside a lean-to and instantly fell asleep. I was so exhausted, even

though the bullets were cracking against the wall from the German trenches and the shells bursting”.

The letter continued “I shall never forget Christmas Day when the message 'Peace on earth and goodwill towards men' was accompanied by a volley from our line, lasting from 2am to 4am and from 6am to 8am. Slowly the dawn rose and there I was with my rifle between two loopholes, the ground white with frost, and so the great contrast – I was feeding a tame robin at my feet with breadcrumbs, the only Christmassy thing on that Christmas morn. My chum and I agreed not to fight that day and looking through the loophole I saw two Germans carrying a plank. I took careful aim and pumped three shots in. I saw the plank fall – that was all”.

In another letter to *The Times* on 21 January he recorded “Within a few feet of the German trenches were two wheat sacks. Four men volunteered to burn them. About 2am orders were passed along the line that none were to fire until ordered. Looking through the loophole, I saw the blaze and knowing nothing of the raid, I woke the sergeant and reported it. How that fire grew! It seemed that the four crawled through the darkness, each with a bottle of paraffin, and fired the stacks. The whole landscape illuminated and it was 30 hours before the last embers died out and the four got through a tornado of bullets. I shall not forget our return in silence through the long trenches as we got well away – a red sky, a lacework of frost, and our dark columns of multi-coloured knapsacks marching in loose order. On the return we passed through one of the great battlefields, where there were graves of two and three, then ten or more – we came to an extra large row, the command rang our 'present arms' and so we paid the last tribute as we marched passed”.

Alfred's military career was short lived after he contracted typhoid fever. He died on 26 January 1915 at La Fleche, France.

*In the early days of this war, those at the Front were able to write about their experiences. However, censorship gradually took over. After the Battle of the Somme in July 1916 with its vast number of casualties, which affected morale at home, details of soldier's experiences were not allowed to be published.*

*Downloaded from the Internet by Pam Cooke, 2012  
Cut and pasted from "The Broadsheet"*

~~~~~

*A widow wrote this epitaph in a Vermont cemetery:
Sacred to the memory of my husband John Barnes
who died January 3, 1803
His comely young widow, aged 23, has
many qualifications of a good wife, and yearns to be comforted.*

~~~~~

## ***MY SURPRISE DISCOVERIES***

Terry Komives

Oh my, my genealogy research has produced some whopper revelations and surprises.

My husband's grandfather immigrated to Canada from Hungary in 1928 with his wife and 2 children following in his footsteps one year later. When corresponding with a cousin about her mother's exact birth date we laughed when we reached the conclusion that she was born exactly 9 months after the family reunited in Canada. What a wonderful blessing and reunion!

But sadly, when researching the Hungarian church records for further family information I discovered that there were actually 5 other children that had been lost to cholera and other medical issues before the family immigrated to Canada. These details were never relayed to anyone in the family so my discoveries came as quite a shock to the only living son.

When perusing the Hungarian film images I would often come across the birth record of a child, only to discover the birth of another child with the same first name a few years later. I pondered these findings thinking these must have been clerical errors until I attended a neighbor's funeral about 5 years ago. In the funeral bulletin there was mention of 2 sons named Stanley. Thinking this was a typo I questioned the daughter about this only to find out that this was an old European custom; if a child died in their younger years it was customary for a child born a few years later to be given the same first name. A light bulb came on and my earlier findings finally made sense. This explained the two Eva's and the two John's I had found.

During the 1873 cholera outbreak in Hungary hundreds of people died. When looking for ancestor death records I was dismayed to find the death records of 4 children from the same family all within the space of one week. First the death of one child, then two days later the death of another, then turn the page to find that another child had succumbed to the disease. A few weeks later there is the death record of her husband. This poor woman had lost most of her family in the blink of an eye; the only bright side was the birth of another child between the deaths of the children.

I cringe when I hear that parents are not vaccinating their children for various diseases. How I wish they would study the research I've done and reconsider their choices. We have science backed medicines to help us live, they did not! An interesting outcome of my research is when a young mother dies and her widow is left to care for the young children. Keep digging, usually within a few weeks to a few months he has remarried a younger woman.

Now on to my great grandfather. Back in the late 1890's he married a woman in Montana and just a few short years later he married my great grandmother in Vancouver. I have looked in numerous files and court house documents but have not been able to produce a divorce decree from his first wife. There were a few birthdays that were never discussed and some anniversaries that were never celebrated. I still wonder if there ever was a divorce.

In researching my great great grandmother I found a Kansas census where she was housekeeping and looking after a widow's children. To my surprise I found her future husband lived just a few houses down from her employer. It may have been just a coincidence and we'll never know for sure, but my imagination sniffed out a romance!

I learned from my years of research is that it is okay to go back and research your sources. Take another look at those hundreds of images on Family search. Genealogy researchers will tell you to keep a list of sources/places you've searched so you don't repeat yourself. I disagree with this idea. I've found multiple discoveries by relooking at records I've already searched. When looking at these images during various stages of my research I have had a different understanding of the records dependent on my previous findings.

Why did people move around so much in the late 1800 and early 1900's? Was it a sad and hard decision to leave your homeland or were things so bad you gladly left? Unfortunately there are so many questions we never asked when we had the chance, now we can only speculate on their reasons and decisions.

Something I've often pondered is "Where would I be if my ancestors hadn't settled here?"

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COLLEAUX IN HENDERSON DIRECTORY

by Sharon Aney

In 1965 I met Victor Colleaux. He was a kind gentleman, courteously listening to the experiences of a "green as grass" university student rather than telling his own stories. In 1968 he established the Victor and Lethe Colleaux Scholarship to the University of Saskatchewan. Over the years the numbers of awards increased. Recently, out of curiosity, I looked into the U of S website and found that in 2020 there had been \$75,000.00 worth of scholarships awarded! Wow! How could he have accumulated such a fortune in Saskatoon?

I turned to the Henderson Directory of Saskatoon, for clues. The first issue available was for 1921. In 1921 and until 1926 V. Colleaux was the manager of the Tire Bargain House. In 1926 he also managed the Albany Hotel. One year later, in 1927 – he had purchased Tire Bargain House and also was Manager of General Automotive Supply Co. Ltd., still being manager of the Albany Hotel, where he now resided. The following year, 1928, he had purchased the Albany Hotel and, now a married man, continued to live in it with his wife, Lethe. By 1936 he owned both Albany and Yale Hotels, and he continued to live in the Albany. In 1938, he was also owner of the Windsor Hotel. In 1944 hotel ownership ended; the hotels were listed as having other owners. Victor, his wife and his mother were living at the much fancier Bessborough Hotel, which was also the administration address of his General Automotive Supply.

In 1954 his occupation was listed as "retired"... apparently having sold the last business venture, General Automotive Supply. He would have been in his early 60s at that time. I found no further entries in Henderson Directories for him. Widowed, with no direct heirs he invested his estate into a scholarship foundation.

PS – lest you think that Victor Colleaux was a saint, further research into the Saskatoon newspapers of the prohibition years (1920s) indicated that he faced several court cases regarding possible breaches of the laws around liquor sales. For many years he was President of the Saskatoon Hotel Keepers Association, and he was instrumental in developing provincial liquor laws for Saskatchewan.

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## ***NANCY (WARD) SAMSON***

**WOMEN OF ASPENLAND** Exhibit at Wetaskiwin Heritage Museum      Information compiled 1996.



Nancy Ward Samson was born at Hobbema, Alberta, on December 26, 1914 to James and Mary Ward, the oldest of twelve children. The family lived in log houses, both on the Samson Reserve and at her paternal grandfather's place near Bashaw.

When Nancy was eight years old, she went on the train to the Indian Residential School. She got off in Edmonton, where staff members met her and other children, and drove them to the school in St. Albert. It served the Protestant children and was operated by the United Church of Canada. The parents were welcome to visit at the school and were put up overnight when they came.

Nancy had few problems at the residential school. The students worked half-days and attended classes half-days. She worked in the laundry, cleaned dormitories, helped in the kitchen, and mended clothes. The only time she remembers being severely disciplined was one fall when the children were carrying cases of plums from a truck to the kitchen. She, along with others, were pulling out the plums and eating them as they walked. It was noticed that quite a few plums were missing so the principal lined the children up in his office. "Did you take the plums?" was the question. "Yes," was the answer. "Which hand did you use to take the plums?" They held out that hand and got a strap on it. It was the only strap she ever got.

The students stayed at the school all year except for six weeks' holiday in the summer. It was very hard to leave home again to go back to school, and Nancy cried on the train taking her back. However, when the staff met them and they were on their way to St. Albert, there were no more tears.

Native students were forced to leave school at age eighteen. Nancy had finished grade nine with one year at Alberta College. There was no opportunity in those days for any more schooling.

The fall after leaving school, Nancy's parents and John Samson's parents began talking about them getting married. The Samsons wanted Nancy as a daughter-in-law, and the Wards were pleased to have John as a son-in-law. They asked the young couple if they wanted to marry each other. As everyone was happy with the union, they were married December 12, 1933, just before Nancy's nineteenth birthday.



To this couple were born ten children, six of whom are still living. Their first home was built of green logs plastered with mud. Mr. Samson, Sr. made a table and benches. The curtains were made from printed flour sacks, as were the sheets and pillowcases. Nancy and John worked together in the farming operation. She cut brush, stooked, chopped wood, hauled water, raised a garden, and cared for her large family. They managed to scrape up \$34 for a Singer treadle sewing machine and Nancy continued to use it for the rest of her life.

After the children were in school, Nancy began work as casual help at the Hobbema Hospital, and soon moved up to feeding the babies who were patients. Her gentle manner endeared her to all. She took the Community Health Representative training and continued to work in the health field until her retirement in December, 1979. Community health was very important to Nancy and she took the initiative to get road ditches cleaned, old cars hauled out of yards, and stray dogs put down. She worked very hard to make the reserve a better place to live and was dedicated to her people.

In 1967, Nancy, Mrs. Emma Minde, and Theresa Wildcat formed the Four-Band Homemakers Club. They did a lot of sewing and quilting. The quilts were donated to fire victims.

They saw a need to give the people of the community the news, such as births, deaths, weddings, and who was in the hospital in Ponoka or Wetaskiwin (The local hospital had been closed in 1963). The Bear Hills Native Voice newspaper was born. The women collected the news items which were typed and the paper was run off on a Gestetner. There was no charge for the paper at that time. It continued to be published by volunteers for several years, and later became a business. The name was never changed.

Retirement meant changing focus: she now had time to pursue her arts and crafts, sew, and enjoy the grandchildren. The Samsons built their lovely log ranch-style home in 1980. The logs were pre-cut. John said it was like puzzle: every log was numbered and he had to put them together correctly. It is a four-bedroom home with attached garage. The garage, however, has never had a car in it. It became the sewing room, craft room and almost a museum. Both John and Nancy have done many Native crafts.

Nancy Samson has been a lifetime resident of the Samson Reserve. She has shaped her own family, her community, and indirectly the Native people of Alberta. Beneath her quiet demeanour lies great strength. Nancy and John Samson have been leaders in the growth and prosperity of their community.



Five generations: The Samsons with great grand-daughter, Cindy, daughter Bernice, Nancy, Sophie Samson, and great granddaughter, Tia.

<https://wetaskiwinmuseum.com/?fbclid=IwAR0kinXhskQG2IIRzBxS96Rxcg007oIhbeeDspugsaBs146KZ2NKkfLc31sq>

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If you want the rainbow, you've got to put up with the rain.