



# 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 2023

VOL. 21 #2

## EXECUTIVE

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

## BRANCH MEETINGS

Third Tuesday of the Month.  
Except July, August, December  
**In person or Zoom to be  
determined monthly**

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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.

## **COMMITTEES**

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- **Programs**  
Claudia Malloch
- **Publicity**  
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- **Historian**  
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## **BRANCH LIBRARY**

Opening soon at City Archives!  
If research is required contact [wetaskiwin@abgenealogy.ca](mailto:wetaskiwin@abgenealogy.ca)

## **LDS FAMILY HISTORY CENTER**

Thursdays: 10:00 am - Noon  
Thursdays: 5:30 pm – 8:00 pm

## **PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS** Alice Hoyle

It is apparently Spring, but here in central Alberta it doesn't feel like Spring, and it seems we have skiffs of snow off and on most days. Does Mother Nature like to play tricks on us? Or is it just the fact that "this is Alberta"?

Frequently, when I note a particularly unusual weather pattern such as early frost, instant Winter (as in last November), late Spring weather, etc. I can't help but wonder about our ancestors who came to this area of Canada. Did they know about the unpredictable weather? Did someone who was already here tell them what they had to be prepared for? How did they deal with that early frost in late summer? – it wasn't as though they had the weather forecasts we have today.

Obviously, they were able to overcome these weather obstacles: they stayed, they battled the weather oddities, they prospered.

When I am faced with overwhelming obstacles in my life, and I am at the point of 'throwing in the towel' I stop and think of my ancestors. They came to this country knowing that they probably would never see their family again. They left their homes, their farms or their professions – often arriving in North America with less than \$100 to their name.

Whatever obstacles we face today – they are 'small potatoes' compared to what our ancestors faced.

I hope you are able to overcome any obstacles you face, whether those obstacles are personal challenges or challenges you face in your genealogy research. Keep on carrying on!

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## EDITOR'S CORNER

Sharon Aney

We are delighted to report that our Genealogy branch library will reopen soon!

The location will be at the City Archives ... in the same building as before, but in a different section of it. City Archives will be managed by the Wetaskiwin & District Heritage Museum society. The building has a new owner and the big name on the building is "Elevation Fitness".

It has been 3½ years since we were suddenly forced to remove our resources when City Archives was closed. Museum staff is still sorting through the archive resources, but we have moved our materials into the room which has been designated as "Genealogy Library". We will keep you posted.

Thank you to the members of our branch who moved our resource materials out in November, 2019, and to our President, Alice, who kept them safe during these past years.

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Kudos to Claudia and Lee, authors of the two major articles in this issue - for demonstrating great strategies for research, and the results that came from using them. Good examples for us all.

## MEETING PROGRAMS

### JANUARY 2023

**Dr. Karen Aberle**, Curator & Executive Director of the Wetaskiwin & District Heritage Museum joined our meeting and updated us on the contract between the City of Wetaskiwin and WDHM which states

that the WDHM manage the City of Wetaskiwin Archives for the next 5 years.

**Member sharing** – did we accomplish in 2022 what we had hoped to one year ago? Happily those who had health concerns did improve significantly!

Whether planned last January, or not, members reported accomplishments.

- Completing a quilt for each grandchild
- Having an exhibit of his genealogy in the Millet Museum
- Designing and installing her mother's burial marker with a family ceremony in Ontario.
- 2 members welcomed the birth of a great-grandchild.

### FEBRUARY 2, 2023

Due to technical issues the program was cancelled, and will be rescheduled to a future meeting.

### MARCH

A Legacy Family Tree Webinar by Elizabeth Shown Mills, "*Trousers, Black Domestic, Tacks & Housekeeping Bills: Problem Solving with "TRIVIAL DETAILS"*" She encouraged researchers to not only gather data but analyze and define the problem

### APRIL

*Genealogy A to Z: A Trivia Adventure by Thomas MacEntee (2023)*, Legacy Family Tree Webinars

The webinar highlighted an alphabet of many useful genealogy terms, books, and websites. The accompanying A to Z syllabus was mailed to WGS members.

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## THE WOMEN OF ASPENLAND

Re-printed with permission from the  
Women of Aspenland Exhibit at  
Wetaskiwin & District Heritage Museum  
<http://www.wetaskiwinmuseum.com/>  
Information compiled in 1997.

### DOROTHY (SMITH) JANZEN



Dorothy's family emigrated from Gloucester to the Wabamun area. One of twelve children of the Smith family, she was born January 20, 1908. Her childhood was spent on the homestead. When she was about ten, the family moved to Edmonton. Dorothy completed grade eleven at Strathcona Composite High School. After high school, she went to Alberta College and graduated from Business Course 9, where she earned pins for top marks in Shorthand (250 wpm), spelling and typing.

Prior to her marriage to dentist W.E. Janzen, she worked as a legal secretary and volunteered as a campaign manager for several mayors and M.P.s in civic and federal elections. In Vancouver during the early '30s, she had worked as a supervisor in a lithography plant. She moved to Wetaskiwin when she married Bill Janzen.

Dorothy was an energetic, community-minded person. She was brought up with the idea that idle hands were the tools of the devil. Thus her hands were never idle, and she often did two things at one time. Besides all her household chores of canning, cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing, and gardening, Dorothy knit and crocheted, sewed quilts, made clothes for her family and others, made candles, ceramics, hats, and did beadwork, embroidery and needlework items and furnishings in her home.

In her younger years, Dorothy was very active with horseback riding, swimming, snowshoeing, and skiing. She belonged to the bowling league, golfed and danced. In the 1950s she and Johnny Trout taught square dancing in Central Alberta (Bawlf, Lougheed, Ponoka, etc.) At this time she also explored her interest in art. She began learning to draw and paint by taking art classes with the Wetaskiwin Art Club. She then took classes from the Faculty of Extension, earning a diploma.

In classes in Edmonton and at the Banff School of Fine Arts, she studied with W.L. Stevenson, Prof. Harry Wohlfarth, H.G. Glyde, Nicola Bjelajac, Harry Savage, Maria Ruth Svenson, Daniel Began, Paul Braid, Gissela Filsberg and others. In the mid '60s, she began teaching for the Wetaskiwin Community Art Club in the basement of her home and then taught for the Faculty of Extension for more than a decade.



Dorothy was still teaching occasionally until shortly before she passed away at the age of eighty-eight. Showings of her paintings were held at the Extension Gallery in Corbett Hall, Caelin Gallery in Wetaskiwin, Hermansen Greenhouse Gallery at Pigeon Lake, Candler Art Gallery in Camrose, and the Wetaskiwin Public Library. In 1992 the Wetaskiwin Art Club had a showing of her tapestries and paintings. In 1983, she was presented with the Alberta Achievement Award honoring her work on the school board, and as a teacher and artist.

Dorothy rarely had an idle moment. She was always eager to learn. "Active and involved" summarize her nicely. She always made time to do things in the community, from sewing for the soldiers during World War II to painting backdrops for fashion shows and community events. She enjoyed working on her tapestries or having a good game of bridge.

Dorothy sang in the Anglican Church choir and served as a volunteer in several organizations. She earned life memberships in the Red Cross, Women's Auxiliary of the Anglican Church, IODE, Wetaskiwin Art Club, and Alberta School Trustee Association.

In her twenty-nine years with the Wetaskiwin School Board, she served on the salary negotiation committee, was a member of the Provincial Executive of the ASTA, was Zone 4 Representative, and served on the Education Council from 1976 to 1992. While on the School Board, she was instrumental in convincing the government that Wetaskiwin needed a vocational wing on the High School. She spearheaded its construction and that of several other schools.

Dorothy initiated a study of the effects of colour and light on students' learning. She was proud to hear that considerable use has been made of that study in the design of other schools. In 1987, she was honored with the Alberta Achievement Award for her service as a school trustee and her work as an artist. She also served on the U of A Senate's task force on the Faculty of Extension and in four conferences on Curriculum Development in Alberta. The City of Wetaskiwin honored her with the City Culture Volunteer Award in 1989 and the Wetaskiwin Citizen Recognition Award in 1990.



She passed away on May 17, 1996. At her funeral, the minister called her "one of the colorful five percent." She had become one of the town's characters. At age eighty-eight, she still drove her car to Ma-Me-O Beach, no doubt annoying the other drivers on the road with her changing speeds as she took in the state of the crops and the colors.

The store clerks must remember her, too, because she could drive a hard bargain. In her later years, she enjoyed wielding her cane as a pointer and in admonition. She was also fiercely independent, as the entire Smith family was, and did not easily let others do things for her.

*"Don't be pushed around by the fears in your mind.  
Be led by the dreams in your heart."  
— Roy T. Bennett, The Light in the Heart*

## A LEGACY OF LOSS

by Claudia Malloch

Southvale, a small rural community nestled amidst the rolling green, wooded hills of central Nova Scotia, no longer exists. It was the home of my paternal grandmother and her family for 3 generations; a place of families, marriages, births, deaths, tragedies...and secrets.

Most of those secrets were unknown to me, until Elmira Taylor started me on a long, convoluted journey through her life, and the lives of those involved with her, to disclose memories long hidden and now, mostly forgotten.

Many of those secrets have been revealed through the hints and records beginning on FamilySearch and extending from Southvale to Massachusetts and Maine. Join me as a 15 year old girl, followed by many family members, uses difficulties and a change of venue as the backdrop to paint the canvas of their lives.

Elmira, the eldest of 5 children was born to Walter and Christianna Stewart Taylor at Southvale in 1878 and was 13 years old at the time of the 1891 census. In 1893, Elmira went to the United States to work as a Domestic at the age of 15. There is no evidence of where she went nor if she knew anyone there.

Headlines in the Evening Mail Newspaper show the tragic news that would have been relayed to 18 year old Elmira in late October of 1896.

### "AN EXTRAORDINARY DROWNING ACCIDENT

*Regarding the extraordinary manner by which Walter Taylor, teamster for Edwin Dickie lost his life, an Upper Stewiacke correspondent of the Truro News gives the following additional particulars: " On Saturday evening Mr. Taylor went out to his home to attend to some duties which required attention, and then later on went to a friend's house, some little distance away. In the evening he was returning home, driving a young horse, and as he was driving on to the bridge that spans the mill pond by George Higgins' mill, it is supposed that the horse got frightened, perhaps at the roaring of the water as it flowed rapidly over the mill dam nearby, and fell a distance of some feet and backed up, knocking the railing off the end of the bridge, and sending the team into the water, which is very deep. Of course the whole case is only supposition, and many other causes of the accident can be imagined, but this probably the most plausible and likely. Mr. Taylor's absence from his home occasioned no alarm as he was so often away, and no serious thought was given to it; but Sunday morning as his nephew, Rufus Taylor, was passing by, he caught sight of the horse, and part of the body. George Fulton, coroner, held an inquest on Sabbath afternoon and the jury brought in the verdict of accidental drowning. It is supposed that the accident took place between 8 and 9 o'clock p.m., as two men gave evidence of having passed over the bridge at 9 o'clock and they noticed that the railing was broken. When found the deceased's arm was thrown around the horse's neck."*

How would she have been notified? By telegram, by letter? Telephones weren't an option at that time. What would the impact have been on her, and on her family at home? This death left her 45 year old mother with 5 children still at home ranging from the eldest, James, 15, to the youngest, 3 year old Reuben.

Elmira next appears in September 22, 1899 when, at 21, she became the bride of 30 year old Arthur L. Mayall in Boston, Massachusetts where both were living at #9 Winthrop Street. It is a first marriage for both. Elmira is working as a domestic and Arthur as a plumber. The 1900 US census shows Elmira's 16 year old sister, Jane, living with them.

The hints on FamilySearch and [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) led me to other marriage records for Elmira...but no mention of Arthur's death, nor of a divorce.

I located a marriage to Frank W. Modery on 14 Aug 1904 in Old Town, Maine. His parents were both born in Germany. He is 41 and Elmira is 26. Frank is a teamster and Elmira is now a nurse. Both show this as their first marriage and that they are single.

Surprisingly, death and cemetery record show that Frank W. Modery died on May 1, 1920 and is buried in Hudson Village Cemetery, Hudson, Maine. There is no mention of a wife. I was beginning to wonder if Elmira was a serial spouse killer!

Enter my cousin, Patty, from Ontario whom I contacted for backup in finding any record of a divorce petition concerning Elmira Taylor and Arthur M. Layall. We were both successful in locating records that shed a lot of light on this family.

The divorce information resulted from a search of newspaper sites where this notice was posted in the Boston Daily Globe, page 17 on May 9, 1901:

*"Elmira and Arthur L. Mayall were married in 1899, and lived together for 11 months. On account of sickness she was obliged to go for a time to the hospital. When she came out she found that Arthur was making a bit too friendly with her sister".*

This caused trouble, which was finally settled by Elmira going to work as a cook in a restaurant. More trouble followed. Arthur wanted his wife to give up her wages on pay night, and when she demurred he struck her with a broom.

Another time he blacked both her eyes. When a copy of the libel had been served on him, Arthur asked Elmira where her black eyes were. *"You will have to show them in court,"* advised he. As she said nothing in reply, he offered to give her another pair to be used as evidence, and then angrily declared that he would give her a mark that she would carry to her grave. The case was kept open for corroborative evidence.

That certainly indicated that a divorce had taken place. It wasn't until the 1920 US Census that Arthur showed his marital status as divorced. However, in light of her marriage to Frank Modery, it is likely the divorce was granted by 1904.

The number of divorces granted in that era is surprising because to obtain one you had to prove that your significant other had committed adultery, abused, or abandoned you.

There is no record that I've found for a divorce from Frank Modery, but there is an item that may have contributed to difficulties in the marriage: *"Frank W. Modery and Charles J Modery Bankruptcy re Modery Brothers, Old Town, Maine. Maine Newspaper dated 18 March, 1908, page 11."* All property and rights of property were surrendered.

Before Frank's death, Elmira Taylor married Dudley Brown Sheck on 29 June, 1915, in Somerville, Middlesex, MA USA. He was 38 and Elmira was 39; they both show this as their first marriage. The groom is a route salesman driver and the bride is a nurse. Both show their residence as 7 Warren Avenue, Somerville.

Sadly, their marriage was of very short duration. It should have been nearly time for Elmira's "happily ever after"; but this was just another opportunity for the tragedy reported in the 26 December, 1916 issue of The Boston Globe, page 12.

*"SHECK - By accident, Dec 26, William D. B. Sheck, 40 yrs. Funeral services at his late home. 310 Washington St., Somerville, Saturday at 2 pm. Relatives and friends invited."*

Dudley Sheck's Death record shows that he died in the ambulance on Pier 43, Hoosac Tunnel Docks. He was a teamster, born in New Brunswick, Canada. The cause of death was "(A) Multiple injuries including crush of the chest with associated internal damage and Hemorrhage caused by a horse-drawn vehicle accident."

What a heartbreaking conclusion to the Christmas season and to their less than two years of marriage.

Six year went by before she again appeared. There is a Permanent Residence to US application showing she has been in the US from 1894 to 10/4/18, and last residence was Old Town, Maine. She is described as 40 years old, a nurse who can read and write. She is 5'2" tall, medium complexion with brown hair and blue eyes, 143 lbs. (As she was 39 in 1915, she's holding her age well). It is likely that Elmira just crossed the border to New Brunswick to formally apply for permanent residency. Approval was granted on 10/24/18 showing she had passed her Medical Exam.

"Almara" Sheck then married Frank M. Drake on 12 August, 1922 in Old Town, Penobscot, USA. He is 22 and a labourer; she is 40 (still) and is a Nurse. It is Frank's first marriage and, Elmira's second; she is shown as a widow. They were married by a Justice of the Peace in Old Town, Maine. The marriage is followed just over three months later by this newspaper clipping:

*"Death of Frank M Drake on November 27, 1922 after a 10 day battle with Typhoid Fever. Buried in the Lawn Dale Cemetery, Old Town."* His death record shows him as married and a Laborer.

This sad succession of marriages for Elmira Taylor left me searching for more. It is unimaginable how she must have felt, particularly following the last two.

There were no records showing children born to Elmira with any of her spouses. Perhaps the reason for that was in one more record brought to light by Patty's search on Ancestry.com which changed the complexion of several things.





Remember little Reuben Taylor? He was the youngest child in the family when Walter Taylor drowned in 1896. In the 1901 Census of Nova Scotia, he is shown as the three year old son of Walter and Christianne Taylor.

The Ancestry record shows Reuben as the son of Elmira Taylor and an unknown father. Elmira would have been 15 years old when Reuben was born. There is no record of the circumstances. I've so far been unable to locate a death record for Christianne; however, the 1911 census shows Reuben, 18, living in a house with a Margaret Taylor (who was probably married to Walter's half-brother) and shown as a Servant so it is possible she has already died.

Reuben appears in the US 1910 Census as a 16 year old lodger who had immigrated to the US in 1909, is working as an Oiler in a paper mill and can read and write.

Reuben's Attestation Papers for the 193 Battalion Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force, dated 29 March, 1916 at Truro, Nova Scotia, show his birth as 20 September, 1894, is 5' 7" with a clear complexion, grey eyes and brown hair, weighing 140 pounds; his next of kin is shown as his aunt, Mrs. Lily Butcher of Upper Stewiacke, Colchester County, Nova Scotia. Lily would be Lillian, Elmira's youngest sister who married John Charles Butcher in 1905. If Reuben had been the son of Walter and Christianne Taylor, Lillian, born in 1887, would have been his sister, not his aunt.

On 2/19/20 Reuben is shown as an Alien Passenger Applying for Admission to the US. He is single, a Laborer who can read. He is entering from Halifax, Nova Scotia with his destination being Old Town.

Circumstances must have taken Reuben to Somerville, Mass., USA because that is where he is shown as having died on July 15, 1925 of Pulmonary Tuberculosis, due to service in the 193rd Battalion. The Death Record names Elmira S. Drake residing at 82 Stillwater Avenue, Old Town Maine as his Mother. Location of the cemetery is Old Town, Maine, USA. This was located on Ancestry.ca under Canadian War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty) 1914-1948.

It's impossible to know when Reuben learned that Elmira was his mother; evidently it was before his death. What kind of a relationship did they have? Was Reuben's birth when she was only 15 have involved complications that made it impossible for her to have more children? When did Elmira die? Certainly after 1925 but, at this point, I have been unable to locate a death record for her, nor any further marriage records in either the US nor Canada.

One more member of this Taylor family has not been mentioned until now. He doesn't show up on any census record, nor can I find a death record for him. Malcolm Murdoch Taylor was one child who was born when births were being recorded by the Province; shortly after his birth, this stopped for several years. His birth record shows him being born to Walter Taylor and Christianna Stewart on 13 December, 1875, Stewiacke, Colchester, Nova Scotia. Baby Maxwell must have died before the 1881 Census because he is not on it, nor is there a death record available. Those records were available from 1864 to 1877 and didn't begin again until 1908. Somewhere in that time frame, baby Maxwell, the first born, left his Southvale home forever.

The tragedies and loss didn't stop with Elmira's life; each member of the family had their share of grief.

July 24, 1905. Boston, Mass. *Death of baby Walter C. Peterson aged 6 months 13 days, son of James W. Peterson, and Cassie J. Taylor both of Upper Stewiacke, NS. Cause of death: Maramus - 2 months. Place of Burial: Everett (Woodlawn).* (Marasmus is a severe manifestation of protein-energy malnutrition. It occurs as a result of total calorie insufficiency.) Baby Walter was their first child. Cassie J Taylor was the sister living with Elmira and Arthur Mayall in 1900. She married James Peterson in Boston November 27, 1901.

"June 12, 1936. *Death of James J. Taylor of Brooklyn, NY. Born June 16, 1882. age at death 53 yrs, 11 months 26 days. Has lived in US 31 years, in city of NY 8 years. Shown as married but wife's name was not given. Parents are Walter and Christy Stewart of Nova Scotia. Worked as Contractor-Roofing and Waterproofing: Cause of Death: Accidental Drowning at 69th Street Pier, Brooklyn. N.Y. Bay Burial: Forest Hills Cemetery, Boston, MASS. June 15, 1936*

June 12, 1980 Susan Taylor (MacDonald) Obituary, Somerville, MA (*Newspaper clipping*)  
*Funeral: Saturday, June 14, Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church....Wilson and Fudge Funeral Home, 28 College Ave, Somerville. Burial at Puritan Lawn Cemetery, Peabody*  
*Husband: late Archie MacDonald. Children: Harold A. and Roy F both of Somerville and the late Walter & Allan MacDonald.*

The following newspaper article shows the death of her son, Walter.

*"July, 1968: Susan and Archie MacDonald's son, Walter MacDonald, age 43 of Somerville, Mass, was killed by a hit-and-run driver early on a Sunday morning while changing a tire on his car in the west bound lane of the Mid-Cape Highway at the Barnstable-Yarmouth line when he was hit. His wife, Barbara, who was in the car, said the other driver sped off without stopping, Walter was pronounced dead at the scene. Mrs. MacDonald was not injured.*

*Walter had been born in Somerville on Feb 16, 1925 and was a life-long resident of the city. He served six years on the Somerville Board of Alderman and for two years was its Vice President. For the past six years he maintained a summer residence in Yarmouth. He was employed by the Somerville Board of Appeals. For several years he was employed by the Welch Candy Co. Of Cambridge. He enlisted in the Navy in 1941 and served aboard a PT Boat in the Pacific during World War II. He is survived by his wife, Barbara P. Reister and leaves two step sons, his mother and three brothers, all of Somerville*  
*Funeral in the Broadway Winter Hill Congregational church, Somerville. Burial will be in Calvary Cemetery, Waltham."*

Information from The Boston Globe dated 22 July 1968 at [newspapers.com](http://newspapers.com)

At this point, all of Walter and Christianne's children, except for Lillian, had moved to the US. 18 year old Lillian had married 25 year old Charles J. Butcher on 12 April, 1905 in Upper Musquodoboit, Halifax County, NS. Their first son, James Franklin Butcher, was born 24 May, 1905 in Upper Stewiacke. This son died 5 June, 1942 at the age of 37 as the result of a ruptured appendix. He spent 11 months in Truro hospital after the appendix ruptured before he died. Lillian's husband, Charles, died at the age of 65 on 28 September, 1945, leaving Lillian a widow for 26 years until her death 27 November, 1971 at the age of 84 in Upper Stewiacke, where she is buried in the Riverside Cemetery.

That underscores the legacy of loss to Southvale, The Taylor family made up a large percentage of the population there. Over the years, Southvale became included into a larger community called "Goshen". Later still, this was known as Upper Stewiacke.

The little community of Southvale became a name lost in the mists of time and change...except for those who have found a connection with it, and its inhabitants, through the branches of their family tree.

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## **1931 CENSUS OF CANADA TO BE RELEASED ON JUNE 1, 2023**

NEWS PROVIDED BY **Library and Archives Canada** Mar 14, 2023, 10:00 ET <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/1931-census-of-canada-to-be-released-on-june-1-2023-825735338.html>

**GATINEAU, QC, March 14, 2023 /CNW/** - After the legislated 92 years in the vault, the highly anticipated 1931 Census of Canada will be made available to the public. Collected during the Great Depression and at a time of significant immigration, the census provides a snapshot of the more than 10 million people living in Canada in 1931. On June 1, 2023, Canadians can expect to browse the digitized census images by geographic district and sub-district on the [Library and Archives Canada \(LAC\)](#) website. Following the initial release, LAC will work collaboratively with [Ancestry®](#) and [FamilySearch International](#) to create an advanced searchable database for Canadians and those with Canadian heritage who wish to look for their ancestors.

In this collaborative effort to increase access to the 1931 Census of Canada, LAC has digitized all 234,687 pages of the census, and Ancestry will apply its state-of-the-art handwriting recognition technology to the digital images to create a full index of the entire census. FamilySearch will then review the computer-generated index to ensure a complete and accurate index of all fields at a level never achieved before. The images and indexes will be available and searchable online for free through [Census Search](#), Library and Archives Canada's new one-stop shop for national census records. The images and indexes will also be available on [Ancestry.ca](#) and [FamilySearch.org](#).

*Heredity is what sets the parents of a teenager  
wondering about each other.*

Laurence J Peters

## VOLUNTEER RESEARCH

### Luther B. McShane Report

by Leroy Koop

On January 26, 2023 the Wetaskiwin Branch of AGS received the following research request:

*I would like information on a Luther Burchnall McShane who is buried in Wetaskiwin City Cemetery, he died in 1914. I am hoping to find out if he is the same Luther Burchnall McShane who was married to a Sinia Jane Farmer. Are obituaries available for this time period? Death Certificates? Trying to figure out where the family lived and why they went to Canada. Family story is that he was in trouble with the law. Another story is about an arson at a nearby reservation. Thank you for your assistance. I understand and agree to that fees may be incurred and I am willing to pay for the above information. Thank you*

The Wetaskiwin Archive Obituary Collection was the first resource that was searched. A full obituary article for L. B. McShane and what appears to be a partial one for a Lina McShane were found. L. B. was described as "*one of the pioneer settlers of the Angus Ridge district.....a resident of the Angus Ridge district about nine years.....an affectionate husband and kind and loving father.*" He was the father of eleven. Since some family members had a distance to travel, a funeral date was unavailable at the time, nor was a cemetery mentioned for the interment. His death was calculated to be March 1, 1914.

The obituary for a Lina McShane stated that she resided with her son in Mayerthorpe, died in the Edmonton Hospital on November 14 (1929), the funeral was held in Wetaskiwin on November 18, and the interment took place in the Wetaskiwin Cemetery. The fact that the first name was Lina instead of Sina wasn't a concern as many persons' written capital "L" can be someone else's capital "S".

The search in AGS Name Database for cemeteries for the name McShane resulted in this:

Name	Dates	Age	Plot No.	Area	Land Description	Name 1	Name 2
MCSHANE, Luther B	- 01 Mar 1914	58y	C 77 2b	Wetaskiwin	NW-14-046-24-W4	Wetaskiwin Old Cemetery	
File No.: 1663 Record type: Cemetery							

No Lina or Sina McShane?

From the Moore's Funeral Burial Records index found on the Wetaskiwin Branch website Lina was found.

Moore Funeral Home Records, Wetaskiwin, Alberta, 1924 – 1937, Wetaskiwin Branch, Alberta Genealogical Society			12
Name	Date of Death	Age	
McShane, Lina	14-Nov-1929	63 yrs	

So, Lina or Sina McShane was brought back to Wetaskiwin after her death. Since Moore's index is between 1924 - 1937, it is not surprising that L. B. McShane doesn't appear.

The Moore's record is also in the branch's resources. Here is what it stated about Lina:

Name: Lina McShane  
 Ordered by: McShane Brothers  
 Charged to: Lina McShane Estate  
 Residence: Mayerthorpe  
 Place of Death: Edmonton  
 Age 63 years  
 Died: Nov. 14, 1929  
 Where Buried: Wetaskiwin  
 Date of Funeral: Nov. 18, 1929 @ 2:30  
 Minister: Rev. Elliott  
 Style of Casket: "Shipped from Connolly,  
 Edmonton"

136 FUNERAL RECORD AND LEDGER

Ordered by *McShane Bros* Charged to *Lina McShane Estate* Residence *Mayerthorpe*

Place of Death: <i>Edmonton</i>	Casket	Box	Flate	By Cash
Cause of Death: <i>Heart</i>	Hearse, <i>+</i>			<i>15.00</i>
Name: <i>Lina McShane</i>	Carriage			
Age: <i>63 years</i>	Crap, <i>+</i>	Glove, <i>+</i>	Ribbon, <i>+</i>	
Died: <i>Nov 14 1929</i>	Embalming: <i>-</i>			
Where Buried: <i>Wetaskiwin</i>	Grave, <i>+</i>	Digging, <i>+</i>	Trimming, <i>+</i>	<i>10.00</i>
Occupation: <i>Wetaskiwin</i>	Printing: <i>Services</i>			<i>5.00</i>
Residence: <i>Mayerthorpe</i>	Attendants: <i>4 auto</i>			
Where Burial: <i>Wetaskiwin</i>	Shroud			
Date of Funeral: <i>Nov 18 1929</i>	Chains			<i>30.00</i>
Minister: <i>Rev Elliott</i>				
Physician: <i>Wetaskiwin</i>				
<i>Style Shipped from Connolly, Edmonton</i>				

Cost: \$15.00 for hearse; \$10.00 for digging; \$5.00 for services and auto: total cost \$30.00  
 NOTE: Connolly-McKinley Ltd was the funeral home in Edmonton listed on the Death Registration.

Both L. B. & Sina McShane seem to be buried in Wetaskiwin, but where? From the Wetaskiwin Old Cemetery list of 2004 the following was discovered:

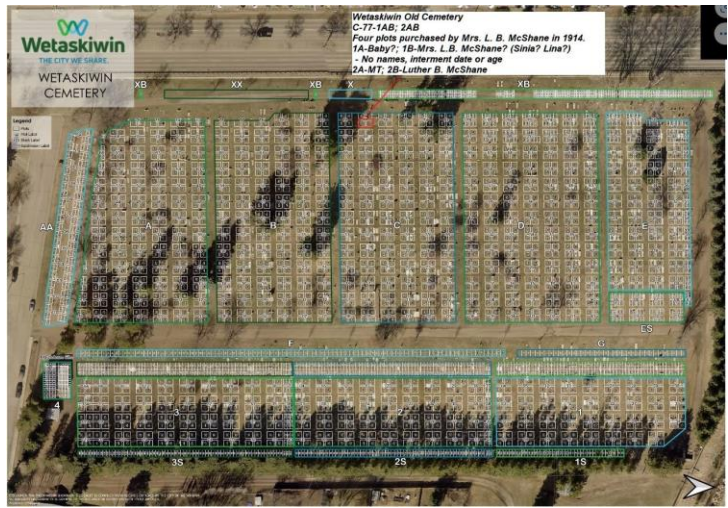
Sub Plot Number	Name	RSVD	EMPTY	FULL	CREMAINS	BABY	DOUBLEDEEP	Interment Date	AGE	REMARKS
C-77-1-A	MCSHANE	OCUPIED	OCCLU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO RECORD		Lot purchased by Mrs. L. B. McShane in 1914. Witching technique done in 2002 indicates a small grave in middle of lot is occupied - possibly ?BABY?, but no record of name of deceased.
C-77-1-B	MCSHANE	OCUPIED	OCCLU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO RECORD		Lot purchased by Mrs. L. B. McShane in 1914. Witching technique done in 2002 indicates lot is occupied with a full body burial, but no record of name of deceased.
C-77-2-A	MCSHANE,	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			RSVD by Mrs. L. B. McShane in 1914. Witching technique done in 2002 indicates lot is occupied with a full body burial.
C-77-2-B	MCSHANE, LUTHER B.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	01 MAR 1914	58	DIED Mar. 1, 1914 (Witching technique done in 2002 indicates lot is occupied with a full body burial)

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According to the information within the red square on the right, Mrs. L. B. McShane purchased 4 plots in the cemetery in 1914. In 2002 a "witching technique" was used to discover a "baby" body in C-77-1A; an adult body in C-77-1B, both without full names; no body in C-77-2A; and a full body in C-77-2B, that of Luther B. McShane.

Here's the location of the McShane plots:

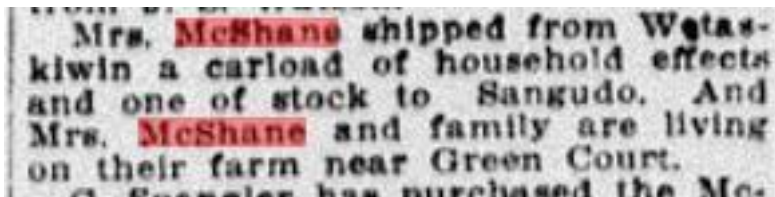
Here's L. B. McShane's monument from Find a Grave:



Two things came to mind; why were persons buried without names and what about a "*witching technique*" in 2002? Wasn't witching a process of long ago used in searching for underground water for well digging using a "Y" shaped wooden stick? But bones? Would "*witching technique*" in 2002 not be more like depth penetrating radar?

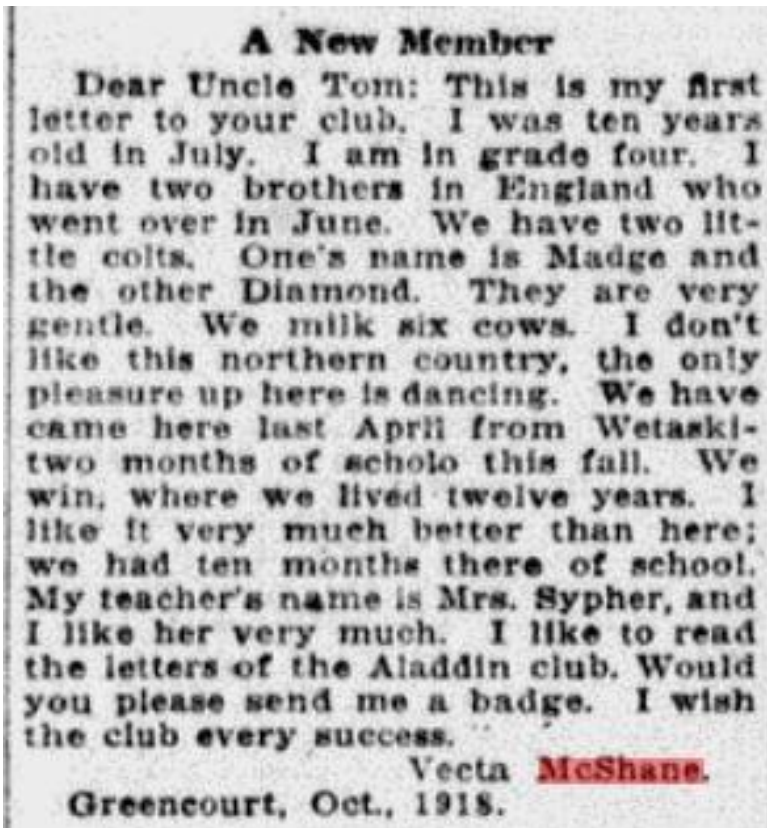
Although the research thus far would indicate that the adult bodies in the Wetaskiwin Cemetery are that of Luther B. and Sina McShane, further research was performed to determine that the Lina (Sina) McShane from the Mayerthorpe district was the spouse of L. B. McShane buried in Wetaskiwin. The Peel's Prairie Provinces website was searched for the name McShane. A couple of local district articles came to light.

The Edmonton Bulletin, April 24, 1918  
(CITY EDITION), Page 2, Item Ar00224



Green Court is 145 km NW from Edmonton along Hwy 43.  
Mayerthorpe is 136 km.  
Sangudo is 118 km.

The Edmonton Bulletin, October 9, 1918



(CITY EDITION), Page 2, Item Ar00222

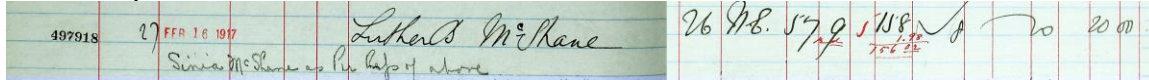
Uncle Tom seems to be a letter to the editor type of newspaper article. The author's name didn't at first register, but the fact that she states that she lived in Wetaskiwin for 12 years and that she was 10 years old was interesting. A later letter to the editor in 1922 showed her name, not as Vecta, but as Veda.

The 1916 Canadian Census shows a McShane family living in the Angus Ridge district with Sina as head and a daughter born in Alberta in 1908 or 1909 by the name of Ada. Looking at the census image, it is possible and probably correct in saying her name was Veda. Others who have researched this family show the name as Veda Alverta McShane.

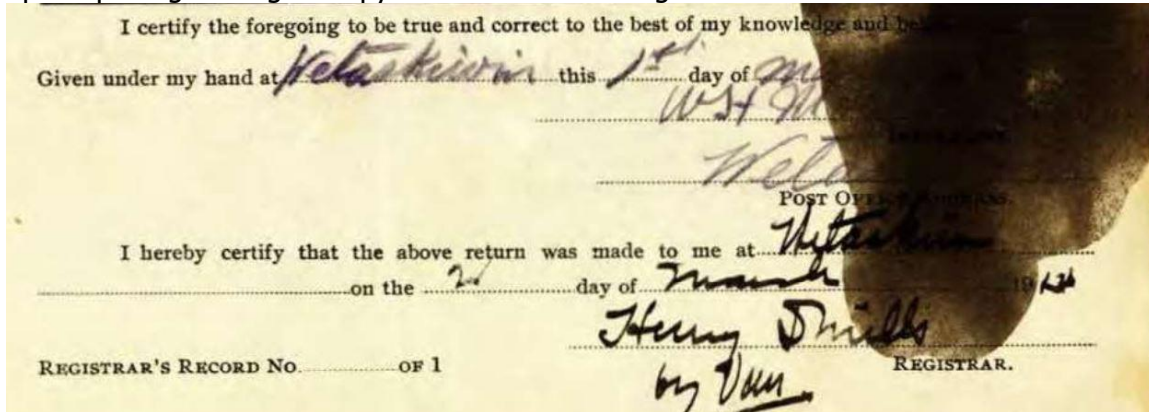
She appears to be the only L. B. McShane child born in Canada. It is possible that Veda's handwriting of her name looked like "ct" instead of a simple "d".

According to the Alberta Death Index Veda passed away on February 28, 1925 in Mayerthorpe. Is she the small body buried in C-77-1A, next to her dad?

The 1926 Canadian Census shows Sina McShane as head of the household on a farm west of Mayerthorpe on section 26-57-9-W5. Homestead records show that Luther B. McShane applied for the 1/4 section NE26 on June 27, 1913 and it was granted on February 16, 1917 to "*Sinia McShane as per Rep of above*" (Luther). Luther died in 1914. Sinia was obviously his beneficiary.

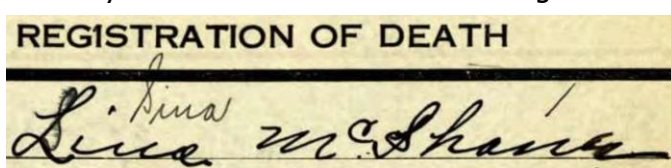


Death Registrations were ordered from the Provincial Archives of Alberta for Luther B., Sina and Veda McShane. The registration numbers were obtained from Ancestry.com. Luther died March 1, 1914 at Angus Ridge of apoplexy. The registration was filled out in Wetaskiwin. The hope was to find out who the informant was for Luther. With fingers crossed, here is what was found upon opening the digital copy of Luther's death registration:



It just proves one should not drink coffee at the same time as doing research with paper, or keyboard even. The best one can conclude is that the informant was Mrs. McShane?

The Death Registration of Sina McShane states that she died on November 14, 1929 at the Edmonton General Hospital of inanition and nephritis. She resided in Mayerthorpe. Connelly-McKinley Ltd. was the undertaker in charge and Sina was interred in the Wetaskiwin Cemetery.



Here's an example of people's writing skills and why the names Sina and Lina can lead to confusion.

The Death Registration of Veda Alverta McShane states that she died on February 28, 1925 on the farm near Mayerthorpe of lobar pneumonia. She was interred in Green Court. Her brother George McShane looked after the funeral arrangements. Veda's age at the time of death was 16 years 7 months 11 days. Using Legacy Family Tree her birth date was calculated as being July 17, 1908. She was born in Wetaskiwin.

The research seems to indicate that Sina and Luther are family, with both being interred in the Wetaskiwin Cemetery. Luther's plot is know for sure as C-77-2B. Although no conclusive proof, Sina may be interred in plot C-77-1B. Veda's Death Registration states her place of interment as

being Green Court, so who is buried between Luther and Sina in plot C-77-1A? An infant? Whose? Did Sina give birth in 1914 at the age of 47 and the baby died?

Apparently the Wetaskiwin Archive has gravediggers' records which may prove that Sina McShane is the spouse of the Luther B. McShane buried in Wetaskiwin Old Cemetery, and in fact is buried one plot to the north of him with an infant in between.

Too bad the archive is still closed.

Now for the part in the request about "*Family story is that he was in trouble with the law.*" What led the research on this topic was AGS's Name Database on Homesteads.

Surname	Given Name	Sec.	Twp.	Rge.	W_of the	Placename	PAA Ref.	Film	File
MCSHANE	Florence	3	57	9	5		Acc. 1970.313	2461	3246981
MCSHANE	George	3	57	9	5		Acc. 1970.313	2461	3246981

What was interesting was the fact that both names were for the same homestead; all information identical except for the first name. If both were filing for entry to the same land at the same time, one would think that both names would be recorded on one line. Ancestry.com had 13 pages of documentation on this homestead. To make things easier to follow and to keep oneself organized in research projects, make timelines. Here's the timeline for the George and Florence McShane's homestead SE3-57-9-W5.

### **Timeline Homestead SE3-57-9-W5 George McShane + Florence Cherrill**

- 1926** - April - Marriage of George McShane & Florence Cherrill
- 1926** - June 11 - George McShane Homestead entry application for SE3-57-9-W5 (Mayerthorpe, AB area)
- 1926** - October 20 - a lien on homestead by H. Keeley & Sons who supplied the lumber for the house construction
- 1926** - November 27 - Birth of Reginald George McShane at Balm, AB (George's newspaper obituary in 1973 revealed son's name Reginald; border crossing in 1943 his full name as Reginald George going to live with his mother Florence Bell in Washington State, USA)
- 1928** - June 27 - George McShane sentenced to 2 years imprisonment at Prince Albert, SK + 20 lashes for molesting 9 year old girl
- 1928** - June 28 - Geo. H. Cherrill, Florence's father, writes a letter explaining his involvement in establishing the homestead; lien against the lumber; George very shiftless; George infected Florence with a loathsome disease; requests that Florence take over homestead under her name
- 1928** - August 13 - Florence resided on homestead from August 1926 to April 1928; then on with her father on SE4-57-9-W5, Balm, AB
- 1928** - December 5 - George McShane's homestead entry from June 11, 1926 cancelled & Florence given permission to continue development
- 1929** - February 1 - Florence secured a divorce from George McShane



**1929** - September 23 - Decree of Divorce made absolute; Florence received alimony of \$30/month for herself & \$15/month for her child; Florence still living with father  
**1930** - January 14 - Homestead entry granted to Florence Cherrill for SE3-57-9-W5  
**1930** - April - Florence married James Bell; living in Ronan, AB (unable to find marriage index information)  
**1930** - July 10 - Florence Bell claimed a patent for the homestead  
**1930** - September 16 - Florence Bell received patent for SE3-57-9-W5, 158 acres  
**1931** - December 17 - Lawyer P.C. Thomson representing H. Keeley & Sons writes a letter to Department of Interior regarding the lien on the property for payment of the lumber supplied in 1926; George McShane only paid \$14 & approximately \$450 was still owed; Mrs. Bell to pay?  
**1931** - December 31 - Reply to Thomson's letter from Dominion Lands Administration; Mrs. Florence Bell paid the outstanding \$15 when George McShane's entry was cancelled; no money for H. Keeley & Sons was collected

Did further law actions evolve regarding the lien? More research required?

Both George and Florence emigrated to Washington State, USA, but not together. This timeline was sent to the client with George's incarceration in 1928 as the possible "*trouble with the law*" issue.

Now for the last comment from the request: "*Another story is about an arson at a nearby reservation.*" Luther McShane and family resided in the Angus Ridge area southeast of Wetaskiwin and only a few miles east of Maskwacis. Did indigenous people in the past use ritual fires for any reason which may have been considered arson at the nearby reservation? A fellow member of the Wetaskiwin Branch directed me to the following:

[The art of fire: reviving the Indigenous craft of cultural burning | The Narwhal.](#)

The first line of the article is:

*"Indigenous Peoples have managed their lands with fire since time immemorial". It goes on to say: "Cultural burns are different from planned and controlled burns called "prescribed fires," which are executed by government forest managers. Prescribed fires are primarily done to get rid of built-up "fuel" — from needles, grasses and twigs to shrubs, fallen branches and downed trees — and reduce the risk of uncontrolled wildfires.*

*Cultural burns, on the other hand, are done to fortify the land. Reducing the risk of wildfires is but one of the benefits of cultural burns, which aim to promote the growth of medicinal and food plants, such as mushrooms, berries and wild onions, and maintain the landscape for all species. Cultural burns are different depending on the objective, but most are low intensity, slow burns that are conducted when the wildfire risk is low, generally the spring or summer."*

So, indigenous people practiced cultural burning to improve their food supply, both in vegetation and wildlife. The white man came along and pretty well put a stop to cultural burning, even applying fines. Indigenous people are now trying to bring this burning back, as they strongly believe that cultural burning will lessen the wildfires we in North America have experienced in the last 5 years.

Farmers in the vicinity east of the reservation south of Wetaskiwin in the early 1900's may have witnessed a lot of smoke and flames. It would have scared many, not knowing what cultural burning was all about. Now **you** know!

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