



ROOTS & BRANCHES

1.
2026

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BRINGING THE PAST

TO THE PRESENT

FOR THE FUTURE! ©

Website: wetk-abgenealogy.ca

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The Wetaskiwin Branch
of Alberta Genealogical Society
respectfully acknowledges
Alberta's Indigenous People on whose
traditional territory we gather.

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.

Articles may not be reprinted
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of the author.

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EXECUTIVE: President: Nelda Layton
Secretary: Pam Cooke
Past President: Alice Hoyle

Vice President: Lorraine McKay
Treasurer: Leroy Koop

BRANCH MEETINGS: Third Tuesday of the Month. Except July, August, December

BRANCH LIBRARY Located at City Archives For access call 780-352-0227
(Heritage Museum)

WETASKIWIN FAMILYSEARCH CENTER Wednesdays: 6:15 pm - 8:15 pm
Thursdays: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm Closed July & August

PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS

Nelda Layton

I would like to pay tribute to our outgoing President, Alice Hoyle, who has served eight consecutive terms as President of the Alberta Genealogical Society – Wetaskiwin Branch.

Over the years, I have come to appreciate many of Alice's remarkable qualities, and I would like to share just a few of them with our membership.

Alice is a gifted researcher, deeply dedicated not only to her own genealogical work but also to supporting others in theirs. She is highly knowledgeable about genealogical resources, particularly in Canada, but also in many other parts of the world.

She is also a talented writer. Her "Ponderings" and numerous newsletter articles are a testament to her ability to inform, reflect, and engage.

Alice is a true leader. She has served our branch with diligence and grace, guiding meetings with wisdom and calm assurance. She leads with integrity, sound judgment, and a consistently positive approach in all her interactions.

Her deep understanding of AGS policies and procedures has made her a respected and trusted voice within the organization.

Beyond her many accomplishments, Alice brings warmth and humanity to everything she does. She has a wonderful sense of humour—I will always appreciate her smile and the twinkle in her eye. She is personable and communicates with diplomacy, kindness, and care.

And I would be remiss not to mention her incredible memory!

I am certain that members of the Wetaskiwin Branch could add many more qualities to this list.

Thank you, Alice, for your dedication, your wisdom, and your outstanding leadership over the past eight years. And thank you for continuing on with us as Past President.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Sharon Aney

Looking back at the many changes that have happened in my lifetime, I am most amazed at "technology". In so many ways it has made our lives more enjoyable and efficient. However, as with anything it can be, and has been, misused.

Social media has spread many mistruths and convinced people that some events have not happened...or that some did happen, in effect, changing history. How can the ordinary person detect these distortions??

At the risk of sounding like a Luddite (a person opposed to new technology or ways of working) I believe that there is still a place for the printed paper document. It is largely incorruptible. But paper documents may become more difficult to find as Archives and Libraries and Historical organizations are losing funding and membership.

I have no answers. But I try to do my bit by advocating and volunteering for the City Archives, and by researching and writing about local history events and places.

What can you do?

What can our genealogical society do?

2026 AGS AWARDS TO OUR BRANCH



PAM COOKE !

KENNETH YOUNG AWARD

BEST LOCAL CONTENT IN A BRANCH NEWSLETTER

For her article 'Chief Dan Minde:
Cree Name Ka Mahihkani Pimohtew or "Walking Wolf"
in the January, 2025 issue of Roots and Branches.

***CLAUDIA & NEIL MALLOCH RECEIVED A
25 YEAR MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE***

CITY OF WETASKIWIN PARADE OF PROGRAMS – MARCH 4



Nelda, Pam Lee & Carole enjoyed volunteering for this event, answering questions from attendees.

Our Branch and Wetaskiwin FamilySearch Centre shared a table.

MEETING PROGRAMS

JANUARY: Deferred due to the anticipated length of agenda discussions

FEBRUARY: Group discussion included divorces especially 100 years ago, family secrets, finding out that your parent(s) was married twice, not being able to find second marriage certificates or first marriage divorces, children born when husbands were away at war. If one decides to do DNA testing, they need to be open to the results and potential surprises. DNA can also mean "DO NOT ASK"!!

MARCH:

Members who had attended RootsTech presentations reported upon their impressions of them.

- AI is contributing to more accurate info in trees and hints. Full text search is more developed, AI research assistant finds missing persons
- Relatives at RootsTech is fun to use.
- Familysearch.org (free), allows you to search records on different sites and then you can decide if you want to pay for them.
- Alice liked *Death Documentation; When Nothing Means Something; New Englanders to Nova Scotia; Finding & Using Obituaries More Effectively.*

Alice also mentioned *Scottish Indexes.com* is free and *Scotland's People* allows you to look at record titles but charges a fee to look at the entire original document.

APRIL:



Members celebrated and recognized Alice Hoyle

- for her 8 years as President of our Branch,
- for her mentorship,
- for leading many Branch initiatives over 25 years,
- for her excellent representation of our Branch to AGS.

We are happy to learn that she will continue to volunteer with Wetaskiwin Family Search.

Carole & Claudia arranged Celebration snacks.



BRANCH EXECUTIVE: Back row: Lee Koop, Treasurer & Membership chair, Lorraine McKay, Vice President, Pam Cooke, Secretary, Alice Hoyle, Past President.
Front: Nelda Layton, President

**"VOYAGE FROM ENGLAND TO KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYA,
APRIL 26- @ MAY 17,1912"**

PAM COOKE

LETTERS FROM CHARLES FREDERICK COOKE TO HIS PARENTS

From the collection of Julia B., Edmonton AB

Introduction by granddaughter, Pam Cooke, March 2026

My paternal grandfather came from a family of adventurers. An uncle taught English to Russian nobility in Russia. Other uncles, fluent in Russian, worked for the consular service in Russia and Finland. Another uncle was a fruit farmer in the Transvaal, South Africa. His twin sister lived in Russia in 1910 for a year and his older brother had just purchased a fruit farm in the Niagara region of Canada. Their influence may have led him to accept a position in the Federated Malay States.



Charles Frederick Cooke (1888-1929), born in Eastbourne, England was employed as a clerk for the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank when he signed up for overseas service in Kuala Lumpur at the age of 24.

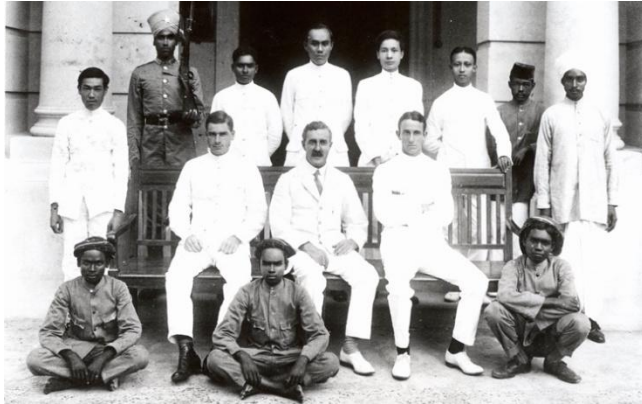
The next ten years were marked by many events. He signed up for the MSVR (Malay States Volunteer Rifles) from 1914-1915. He returned to England to enlist in the Royal Sussex regiment as a second lieutenant in 1916, was attached to the Labour Corps from 1917 to 1919 and was discharged in early 1920 with a final rank of captain.

In Kuala Lumpur he fell in love with a married woman Mrs. Hampshire, 14 years his senior, but married my grandmother Elsie Porter from Otford, Kent who he met in France when he was injured, and she was driving the ambulance who transported him (she had joined FANY or First Aid Nursing Yeomanry). They married in October 1918 and returned to Kuala Lumpur a year later, my grandmother in her third trimester of pregnancy. My father, Hugh, was born in January 1920, but the marriage was short-lived, and Elsie and Hugh returned to her home in England in August 1920 without Charles.

My grandparents and the Hampshire's both divorced circa 1922 on grounds of adultery. My grandfather died suddenly in 1929, and Mrs. Hampshire followed in 1931. I have little information about their relationship after their divorces. My grandmother remarried in 1929 and moved to the USA. She always told my dad that Charles had died a hero, killed in action in Singapore when Hugh was an infant. I only uncovered the real story when I joined Ancestry in 2012 and began to research my grandfather.

My husband and I travelled to England in 2015, visiting The National Archives in London, to obtain copies of my grandparent's and the Hampshire's' divorce. The full story "Deconstructing a Family Story, In Search of my Grandfather" was submitted to Roots and Branches in 2017 and Relatively Speaking in 2019. Luckily, family archivists in Beamsville, ON and Edmonton, AB have many family documents and photos which have allowed me to bring to life some of my grandfather's story. Charles's letters were found in an old leather brown suitcase belonging to Cousin Julia in Edmonton.

Footnote: *Charles' attitude to people of colour, the British social class system and the legacy of England's colonization throughout the world is reflected in his letter and discloses the beliefs of his era. I wonder if the missing pages were intentionally removed because of his comments. One can learn from this history and how it shapes our society and viewpoints today.*



Staff of Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, Kuala Lumpur, 1915 (Charles is seated on the right) from the HSBC archives

LETTERS FROM: CHARLES FREDERICK COOKE (1888 –1929), ENROUTE FROM ENGLAND TO KUALA LUMPUR, to work for the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank (modern day HSBC),

To Parents: F.G. and Kay Cooke, Eastbourne, England,
P. & O. S. N. Co. (Peninsula & Oriental Steam Navigation Company)

S.S. Morea April 26, 1912

Dear Mother and Father,

Left Victoria at 11 am yesterday about 9 men saw me off & others sent notes. The journey to Dover was uninteresting, & nothing to smoke as I was in a saloon! The sea was a bit choppy but not rough, I felt as fit as could be. Had a good look at the famous white cliffs of England as they say in books! We got to Calais in just about 70 minutes & started at about 2:50 for Marseilles. I was in a very comfortable carriage, the other occupant being a youngish man named Dodwell a partner of the big merchant & ship crossing firm of that name, quite a nice chap.

Just before we got to Amiens, the train stopped amid great excitement of various railway officials – a gear hose was on fire & of course it was our saloon. Out we had to get & push in where we could – luckily we got sleepers alright. Our language had to be restrained as our knowledge of the finer forms of French abuse was a bit vague – I just said one word! Have got a three berth cabin to myself as the boat is not full which is good business – it's the one we spotted on the plan.

I should say from what I've seen that we'll be a pretty quiet crowd on board as have seen no sporting or cheery souls as yet – none on the train anyhow. We went round Paris at about 6.35 from last night & arrived here at 6-53 a.m. this morning. The food on the train was quite good & also pretty stiff as far as price went, lunch 6p, dinner 8p, breakfast 2p.

The country just outside Marseilles is quite pretty, slightly hilly & quite a lot of very pretty trees – quite small. I got my first view of the Med. Sea about 6.30 a.m. & it looked lovely, in brilliant sunshine, and trees right down to the water. Am writing this letter in the music room quite a

cheery place. It's very easy to notice the difference in temperature, very hot here now, though quite nice. No more news.

Aden, Yemen, May 4th, 1912

Dear Mother & Father,

I posted my first letter just as we got to Port Said (*north end of Suez Canal, Egypt*) – which is a dirty sort of spot. When we anchored about 60 yards from the quay a lot of natives rowed out in small boats to take anyone ashore who wanted to explore the place. Four of us went and hired two double horsed traps for an hour – we went all around the outskirts of the place & then up & down some of the slums – my word, the various scents obtainable were choice. The only interesting sights were the weird costumes of the natives – they all (*page cut off*) any good.

We had dinner at the Eastern Exchange Hotel & then toddled aboard again. We did not leave till 4 p.m. the following day as The Isis the Brindisi (*Italy*) mail boat was late.

Had a good look at the Canal but it's a very uninteresting trip – passing between miles and miles of desert. We passed some sort of encampment, about five men with 15 or 16 camels. At about 10 p.m. the searchlight of an approaching steamer showed up – miles away. When we got within about two miles of it, we slowed down – gradually getting alongside one bank – then a boat was lowered which towed a rope ashore – the lascars (*South Asian, Arab, East African sailors employed on British ships*) fixed the end to a stone block on the bank & we stayed tied up till the boat passed – it was another P.&O. We passed another P.&O. homeward bound at about 11.30 p.m., they had tied up for us, the passengers made an awful din cheering when we steamed past. I noticed that our response was not so vigorous!

We passed through Suez early in the morning so I missed seeing it. On Wednesday when we started the Red Sea trip I got a little taste of what heat can be – since then every day of course has been hotter – the nights are the blue blank limit – both last & the night before were quite enough for me, slept with just a sheet – in the morning I could ring the water out of my pyjamas. We walk about the deck between 11 pm. and 1 am. in pyjamas – it's no good going to bed as it's more or less impossible to sleep.

Sunday May 5th, 1912.

We are due at Aden (*Yemen*) sometime tonight when about half the passengers tranship. I think we'll be about 35 in the 1st C., our table will be reduced to 4! We got up some sports which were not a success as everyone was too jolly slack. Did I tell you that one of the men at our table a man named Prickett, a subaltern, is a survivor from the "Oceana" (*collided with another boat and sank near Eastbourne on March 16, 1912*) – He travelled up to Town in pyjamas & met his mother by accident at Victoria!

I can still say I've been as fit as could be as far as sea sickness goes – but the intense heat takes some getting used to. I have a set speed for doing everything & if I exceed the limit I promptly get beastly hot – bending down putting on socks is a very warm game if you're not careful!

There are four or five very nice men on this boat – Hill at our table, a v. wealthy "Rubbin" is an awfully nice man, likewise a naval Commander named Ebard & others. There's a major fellow at our table sitting next to me who's quite amusing – grouses at everything he can & runs down the East in general – quite a nice man though.

People say it's alright going 2nd (class) on these boats – well I wouldn't care to try – the people are the limit & a drunken lot as well, as far as the men are concerned. Also being astern wherever you sit you get covered with smuts (*parasitic fungi*) as far as I could see.

I'm afraid there's very little news in this letter but we've been doing as little as possible since Wednesday. I just take enough exercise to keep fit & read & sleep the rest of the day or help arrange a sweep or something.

Thursday May 9th, 1912, Two days from Colombo, Ceylon

Dear Mother and Father,

Four or five of us went ashore to smell round Aden (*historic port city in southern Yemen*). It was quite late in the evening so we couldn't see very much – ran into a batch of British Tommies (*privates*) – who get a pretty rotten time I should think. Aden from a distance looks quite interesting, quite a small town, shops down to the quay side and very high parched hills a few hundred yards behind.

We only stayed about 1/2 an hr. as there was a slight breeze which blew clouds of dust about the streets, which coupled with the heat made things unpleasant – dust on a perspiring brow is nasty! Am writing this on deck "forrard" (I think that's a nautical expression) and there's quite a nice breeze though not quite like a Beachy Head (*seaside cliff near home at Eastbourne, England*) one! We had various sports yesterday. I failed to win anything, the events were just the usual board ship games v. boring after a time.

Am looking forward to Sat. morning when we reach Colombo (*Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon*), it'll be a pleasant change after our last stopping places. We have to post letters an hour before reaching any port so if I get time will tell you what I've done in Colombo later on Sat. Watched the natives coaling the ship at Aden, quite a weird sight, about 50 of the most filthy, hideous depraved looking cattle you ever saw in your life. They work making a sort of gurgling singing noise & all seem to be cursing each other all the time also they don't overdo the clothing part!

Four of these knaves stowed away and despite the usual search, before weighing anchor, were not discovered till next morning. The chief said he'd make them work for every mouthful of food they got. I bet they're bitterly repenting their little game as I watched them being shown their jobs to the frequent accompaniment of the chief officers boot!

10th May 1912 (*Charles and twin sister Berta's birthday*)

24 today my word. Nothing at all interesting happened since yesterday we had some sports – managed to win one thing & collared 15p. Hope there'll be some amusing people on the Delta!

May 1912 (Colombo, Ceylon)

FIRST TWO PAGES MISSING

..... the beggar –I let fly some of the choicest language I could command & eventually got the boy to proceed!

Had quite a good lunch in a very big room to the tunes of popular airs. Barlow the accountant is quite a nice man. After lunch we started in a motor for a station called Negumbo about 24 miles out of Colombo. It was the most lovely motor ride imaginable – the road overhung with beautiful foliage - palm, coconut, & banana trees. All the way we passed the weirdest sights in the way of natives and their carts – they use a kind of small bullock (*bull*). We came around a corner about 20 miles away from Colombo & found a coconut tree had just fallen across the road – luckily we were not going very fast. We all got out & Barlow told a native to find the head man of the village which was quite near. There was quite a crowd of villagers – one

produced an axe & soon cut the tree in half. The head man was sent for to sanction the cutting of the tree. I managed to get a photo – it ought to be very good.

We got to Negumbo about 4:30 & had tea at the "Rest House" quite near a river – the scenery was splendid. Started back at about 5:30 p.m. & my word we moved a bit & did 30 miles an hour most of the way & at times 50. Went back to the G.O.H. (*Grand Oriental Hotel, built 1875*) for a clean up as we were a bit dusty.

Wednesday 15th May 1912 (Colombo, Ceylon)

Ardron put up a dinner at The Galle Face Hotel (*built 1864, oldest hotel east of Suez*), a very big place about 50 yards or so from the sea, we went out in three rickshaws - it's about ten minute ride. The dining place was just like an ordinary big London Hotel except of course for the native waiters. The windows facing the sea were all open & a native band played waltz music – quite the latest London ones. There were about 10 or so "Morea" people there. After a v. good dinner we sat in a sort of corridor at an open window with coffee & cigars & listened to the band. Went back again in rickshaws to the G.O.H. & then got aboard a launch for the Delta (*switched boats*). Barlow came on board for an hour.

Am rather glad I'm still going on. I don't think Colombo is much of a spot for office work – too hot & they get no appreciable change all the year round. This is a very good boat & as steady as can be – though smaller than the Morea of course. I've got a cabin to myself again which is good – the boat's v. empty only 30 1st c. passengers, 29 men 1 old woman!!

Colombo harbour is very fine and full up with shipping of all kinds – three warships arrived and anchored quite near us. I did not think very much of Colombo Town but of course I didn't see the residential part.

So far have slept out on deck & find it's very much cooler, the only brick being the lascars (*South Asian sailors*) wash the decks at 6 a.m. Am getting quite fond of my morning cup of tea and apples which the steward brings along at about 6.30 a.m. – everybody seems to go in for it.

Four of us had some parlour tricks with glasses of water last night – putting a glass full of water on the back of your head, then bending down & picking up a towel in your mouth. It's alright as long as you don't jerk – if you do the water goes down your neck! We all got v. wet & broke a lot of glasses we'd looted from other cabins – likewise made some puddles on the carpet outside the saloon! I went to bed and found a huge great life belt under my mattress! Haven't discovered who did it yet!

About 9 men from the Morea are on this boat & most of them very nice – we're quite a cheery party. At present which is 8 p.m. we're just off Sumatra & are due at Penang (*located on northwest coast of Malaysia*) at about 2 p.m. tomorrow Thursday. Got two letters at Colombo one from Berta (*twin sister*) the other from Aunt Maude (*Palmer*). The food on this boat is even better than the "Morea".

Will write a line after we've left Penang & post it at Singapore.

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## **PRESERVING THE NATIONAL REGISTRATION FILE**

LIBRARY & ARCHIVES CANADA..... Posted online 2026-03-24

Please note that these records are not accessible due to their condition, and we are unable to conduct research in them on behalf of users at this time.

The National Registration File from the Second World War is now preserved at Library and Archives Canada (LAC), following the completion of its transfer from Statistics Canada. The records were delivered in batches throughout June and July 2025.

We are working with care to preserve these valuable records and are temporarily pausing public access during this process. Due to years of use and the deteriorating nature of cellulose acetate film, this important collection is in poor physical condition. To prevent further damage, the records must be stored in cold storage at -10°C. This will give LAC specialists time to develop a plan to ensure that digital copies of these records remain accessible in the future.

These records are a rich source of demographic information on Canadian individuals, even more detailed than census records. In August 1940, the Department of National War Services initiated a national registration of all persons in Canada aged 16 and older (with some exceptions). Newfoundland conducted a similar registration beginning in 1942.

Thank you for your patience as this process moves forward. We will be updating this page with new information as it becomes available, so please check back regularly.

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SETTLEMENT APPROVED FOR CANADIANS AFFECTED BY PAST 23ANDME DATA BREACH

Those wishing to file a claim for compensation must do so by June 25 deadline
CBC News · Posted: Mar 27, 2026 7:03 PM PDT |

A multimillion-dollar settlement has been approved in a class action claim involving Canadian customers of the 23andMe genetic testing company who were affected by a past data breach.

[The settlement](#) will provide \$3.25 million US for Canada-based victims of the breach, which saw [hackers gain access](#) to customers' data — including people in Canada — in 2023.

Any victim wishing to submit a claim for compensation must do so by 11:59 p.m. PT on June 25, 2026.

Instructions on how to submit a claim form are [available on the Canadian settlement website](#).

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## **"FAMILY HISTORIANS" ARE HISTORIANS.**

SHARON ANEY

Don't sell yourself short!

How many times has someone said, "Oh, you *just do family history!*"? ... implying that it is an inferior activity to being a "historian".

I believe that. "Family Historians" put the meat on the bones of reports by "Historians", while history gives context to the stories of our ancestors. So the two are complementary activities.

Would I get more respect if I was to research a topic like "Settling Western Canada?" citing only government economic data and policies?

True, as I am looking for the details of my ancestor's experiences as he claimed, settled, broke, and cropped the land, some of my information will come from government documents such as homestead and census records. But I will also be able to use local newspapers, local archives, and oral histories. They tell the actual back-breaking, sometimes heart-breaking stories of women and children working alongside the men doing the work of opening the land. For example, while my grandmother was picking roots on their new homestead, she laid her baby under a bush to sleep. When she could not find him near the bush where she thought she had laid him, she feared that her baby had been stolen by an animal ..... What terror! and what a relief to find him safe and sound under the bush she had laid him!.

Should I get more respect if I was researching a topic such as, "Diversity In Canada" looking at the situation of the past 50 years?

As genealogists we have found information of our ancestors coming to this land in the 1600s from France, in the 1800s from England, Ireland and Scandinavian countries, in the 1900s from the Slavic countries, adding language, customs and culture to each other and to that of the various indigenous peoples already living here. Diversity has been in our country for many generations. We know..... because those people were our ancestors.

"Immigration" is a word that easily slips off one's tongue. Historians have compiled many books of statistics of people leaving their traditional homeland for a new one in North America. But numbers do not describe the human emotions and experiences.

Immigration begins with "Emigration" ..... the decision to leave the "known and familiar" homeland. Famine and economic stagnation led the poor people of many European countries to leave their lands with the hope of free or cheap land in Canada and USA. Threats of wars and revolutions drove Mennonite families to leave Russia, taking months to travel across Russia, Europe, the Atlantic Ocean and finally to Manitoba, as recorded in a family history.

"Immigration" does not mention or describe separations as people could not afford passage for a whole family. It does not mention the illnesses and deaths of family members who had to be left in countries that were just a port of call. It cannot describe the various conditions that immigrants travelled in... sometimes taking months to cross the ocean....from the grinding poverty of steerage decks, to better class accommodations on the upper decks. "Family" historians find and record these travails.

Historians have documented wars over the past centuries, including lists of those who fought and of "thousands of soldiers who died". We know who some of those "thousands" were ..... our grandfathers and great-uncles. We rejoice with mothers who welcomed their sons home again. And we know of those who came home damaged physically, emotionally and mentally....again, our grandfathers and great-uncles. We can relate to the effect that those losses had on our families.

Historians could write of the economic disaster to banks, industries and governments during the 1930s depression. We know how our ancestors watched their farmland blow away, scrimped, saved, made do, and shared, and sometimes they lost all that they had laboured over for years. Our stories put a personal consequence onto the larger story of an economic disaster.

All of the incidents mentioned in the preceding paragraphs were taken from articles and discussions of the members of our own branch..... thank you in particular to Lee Koop, Alice Hoyle, Nelda Layton, Bob Maynard, Carole Koop and Claudia Malloch.

Historians and family historians do not only dig into old records. They work to preserve them. When Ukraine was invaded by Russia in 2022, historians at the University of Alberta (among others) rushed to digitize and preserve Ukraine's historic documents lest they be destroyed.

On the local level, members of our branch have advocated for the retention of the City of Wetaskiwin Archives. We were successful in that its management has been turned over to the Wetaskiwin & District Heritage Museum where information remains available for those seeking information about their families in the area. Some of our members continue to volunteer with our archives.

Realizing the value of personal recollection of events and places in their time, our Wetaskiwin branch members have recorded the effects of the world-wide Covid -19 pandemic of 2020 / 21 on our lives. These personal anecdotes will provide greater context to official government agencies' statistics.

We... Wetaskiwin Branch members, ... family historians! .... are historians!

~~~~~

I wish I had realized that *family history is a perishable commodity.*
It disappears with time as memories fade and as loved ones pass on.
I wish I had known that the most important aspect of family history
is *preserving a record of the present for the future!*

..... Guy Black

~~~~~

*Everyone's destination is to achieve a 'complete' and orderly family tree, a veritable impossibility. Therefore the journey with all its complexities, and with all its unexpected detours should be more important and ultimately more fascinating than the goal."*

.....Ron Smelski EEGS newsletter in 2001.

## **WOMAN OF ASPENLAND      SHIRLEY HOYLE CRIPPS**

Re-printed with permission from the Wetaskiwin & District Heritage Museum

<http://www.wetaskiwinmuseum.com>

Information compiled in 2010



Shirley was born on September 11th, 1935 to Joseph Hoyle and Mildred (Davis) Hoyle on a farm that is now Dorchester's Golf Course.

After attending several area schools, she completed grade twelve at Red Deer Composite High School, going on to the University of Alberta to obtain her teaching certificate. Starting in 1954, she taught at Pleasant Prairie, Lakedell, and then Winfield Schools.

She married Lorne Cripps on October 4th, 1958. The following year they bought a farm five miles east of Winfield. Here, they began with mixed farming but settled on raising a herd of pure bred Charolais cattle. This prompted Shirley to petition for the Charolais breed to be accepted by the Edmonton Farm & Ranch Beef Breed

Show. The movement opened the door for other new breeds.

In 1963, the couple began their family of three daughters: Christine, Rosanne and Maxine. Sadly they lost Maxine in 1973 at the age of seven.

Shirley has been actively involved with many community groups in the Winfield area, where she was instrumental in the building of the new hall and arena as well as being a 4-H Leader. On a provincial level, she has held office with a range of agricultural and recreational organizations.

In 1979, Shirley was elected to the Legislative Assembly representing the constituency of Drayton Valley, which extended as far east as Falun. Being appointed to cabinet in 1986 as Associate Minister of Agriculture was the highlight of her political career.

After leaving politics in 1989, Shirley made it her mission to tell the story of the 1947 discovery of oil in Leduc. To this end, she served as President and Executive Member of the Leduc / Devon Historical Society and the Canadian Petroleum Discovery Interpretive Centre finally became a reality. Her work has resulted in one of the best oil museums in the world.

Touring a plant at Pembina Oilfield –.....



Since 2005, Shirley has written five documents, based on motions passed at municipal and provincial meetings and at provincial conferences supporting fair access and equalized returns for charities working Casino events.

Serving as President of the Federation of Alberta Bingo Associations for ten years, Shirley continues to help community organizations to raise funds for their projects. She is currently President of Bingo Alberta. Today her volunteer work continues. However, her family and the farm where she and Lorne have lived for over fifty years are the focus of Shirley's contentment.