

# ***THE NEW LEAF***

***Newsletter of the South West Branch of the Manitoba Genealogical Society***

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**Some of the trails used by our ancestors travelling through Manitoba.  
From a map found in the Birdtail Country Museum.**

## 2013 BRANCH EXECUTIVE

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## COMMITTEES

Finance – Janice Cameron, Barb Andrew, Joyce Lidster

Meeting Advisor/Advertising - Sylvia Nicholson

Library Committee - Sheila Shearer (Chair), Barb Andrew, Vivian Privat

Education/Outreach Programs - Grace Desjardins-Green, Stacy Shackel, Paul Voorhis

Surname Index - Vivian Privat

Membership - Shirley Erskine

Research - Jack Dodds, Paul Voorhis

Branch Historian - Sylvia Nicholson

New Leaf Newsletter - Jack Dodds (Editor)

Cemetery Transcribing - Barb Andrew, Sheila Shearer

Webmasters - Barb Andrew, Sheila Shearer

You will have noticed that the executive of the South West Branch has changed. The AGM on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013 saw the following people elected.....

Laura Crookshanks - President, Wayne Blair - Vice President Administration, Grace Desjardins-Green - Vice President Operations, Janice Cameron - Treasurer, and Sylvia Nicholson - Secretary.

Best wishes to the people who have agreed to fill these positions and carry on the branch business.

## Coming Up

### **EAST EUROPEAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY 2013**

#### **SEMINAR**

***"FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY RESOURCES"***

***and***

***"RESEARCH IN THE FORMER RUSSIAN EMPIRE"***

**(includes Russia, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, parts of Poland and Ukraine, and other former Soviet Republics)**

**Date: Saturday, June 1, 2013 (full day and evening)**

**Place: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS)**

45 Dalhousie Drive, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

**Speaker: Kahlile Mehr**, MA, MLS, AG (Salt Lake City)

Kahlile worked thirty-five years at the LDS Family History Library in Salt Lake City, most recently as Slavic Collections Manager. He visited archives throughout Eastern Europe on nine separate acquisition trips and has published over twenty articles and books, as

well as presented papers at numerous international genealogical conferences.

**Topics:**

\*Getting the Most out of *FamilySearch*

\*Online Databases of the Polish State Archive

\*Finding Places in the Former Russian Empire

\*The Baltic Edge of the Former Russian Empire'

\*How Records are Acquired by *FamilySearch* from the Former Soviet Sphere

Topics 1, 2, and 5 include information that is also relevant for other areas of Eastern Europe such as **Poland and Ukraine (including Galicia and Bukovina).**

**\*For further information,** contact Eleanor at [eburch@westman.wave.ca](mailto:eburch@westman.wave.ca)

Shirley Erskine passed on obits, marriages and births compiled by Gladys Patmore to the Library Committee. Thank you, Gladys!

### **Program Topics for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter**

**March 3:** Sheila Shearer gave an interesting presentation on her recent trip to Japan as part of the Friendship Force Program. Her pictures showed a great deal about life in Japan as she was hosted by two different families and was able to see many interesting things in the country.

**April 3:** The program was "CERTIFICATES, REGISTRATIONS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS – WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?" Have you found or applied for a document with certain expectations and been surprised at the results? Sometimes we are looking for something and either find it, or not, but then are pleasantly surprised to find information we had no idea would be there. Sometimes there is information right before our eyes that we miss, until the relevance becomes evident at a later date.

**May 5:** Denise Bromley spoke on the subject "**Filing is not the problem, retrieval is!**" Denise spoke of the various software programs that are available: Family Tree Maker, Legacy and Reunion are three popular programs. She is currently using Legacy but has also used Family Tree Maker. Denise also gave handouts with examples of her filing system and suggestions about binders, files, dividers and labeling.

**June 5:** Grace Desjardins-Green reported that a **picnic and tour of the Hartney Museum** is being planned for **June 5, 2013 at 6 pm**. More details to follow but it is suggested:

Meet at the Sobeys West/Leon's parking lot at 5 pm for carpooling. Bring a dish to share (potluck), cutlery, plate and cup. Bring a lawn chair if weather is nice, otherwise Brad Coe will book an inside venue. After our meal we tour the Museum at 7 pm. Admission is free but a donation would be a nice gesture.

**\*\*There will be no meetings or programs during July and August.**

**The Program Committee** raised the possibility of holding special interest group meetings. If there was an issue or topic that 6 - 8 people are interested in (e.g. computer issues, specific genealogy programs) a date could be set for those particular people to meet. If you have any ideas, please contact Grace at [gab@mts.net](mailto:gab@mts.net)

**Cemetery Transcribing:** Barb Andrew and Sheila Shearer are looking for volunteers to help with transcribing. Linda Wakefield and Shirley Erskine volunteered to assist. The first transcriptions will be done on May 28, 2013. Call Barb or Sheila if you can help.



The South West Branch of the Manitoba Genealogical Society has its own website at <http://www.mbgenealogy.com/south-west-branch>. Members can log in and access meeting minutes and read the New Leaf newsletters as well as the general information available to the public.

**\*I've sure gotten old!**

"I've had two bypass surgeries, a hip replacement, new knees, fought prostate cancer and diabetes. I'm half blind, can't hear anything quieter than a jet engine, take 40 different medications that make me dizzy, winded, and subject to blackouts. Have bouts with dementia. Have poor circulation; hardly feel my hands and feet anymore, can't remember if I'm 85 or 92, have lost all my friends. But, thank God, I still have my driver's license. "

**\*\*THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: "Keep skunks and lawyers at a distance."**

**A Letter from Home (Dublin, Ireland) to Ottawa**

Dear Son:

Just a few lines to let you know I'm still alive. I'm writing this letter slowly because I know you can't read fast. You won't know the house when you get home - we have moved.

About your father - he has a lovely new job. He has 500 men under him. He cuts grass at the cemetery.

There was a washing machine at the new house when we moved in but it

doesn't work too good. Last week I put in 14 shirts, pulled the chain, and haven't seen the shirts since.

Your sister Mary had a baby this morning but I haven't found out if it's a boy or a girl, so I don't know if you're an aunt or an uncle.

Your uncle Patrick drowned last week in a vat of whiskey in the Dublin Brewery. Some of his workmates tried to save him, but he fought them off bravely. They cremated him and it took three days to put out the fire.

I went to the doctor on Thursday and your father went with me. The doctor put a small tube in my mouth and told me not to talk for ten minutes. Your father offered to buy it from him.

It only rained twice this week, once for three days and once for four days. Monday was so windy one of the chickens laid the same egg four times.

We had a letter from the undertaker. He said if the last payment on your grandmother's plot wasn't paid in seven days, up she comes.

Your loving mother, XXX

P.S. I was going to send you five pounds but I had already sealed the envelope.

**\*I very quietly confided to my best friend that I was having an affair. She turned to me and asked, 'Are you having it catered'? And that, my friend, is the definition of 'OLD'**

### Interesting Websites

London Middlesex member Wayne Vizniowski regularly sends information on the London/Middlesex branch. If you are interested in contacting Wayne with regard to research in Ontario, he can be reached at the following address...

JOHNSTONE - VIZNIOWSKI *family research*, PO Box 32, Arva Ontario, N0M 1C0, Ph. #519-660-0451 <http://londonmiddlesex.ogs.on.ca/gen-vizniowski.html>

Along with his news of the region he often sends information on interesting websites, including the following...

***Interested in Jewish history?*** Bill Gladstone, a Toronto-based journalist, author, publisher, public speaker and noted genealogist has written, among other publications, *A History of the Jewish Community of London Ontario* in 2011. See <http://www.billgladstone.ca/>.  
***May is Jewish Heritage Month in Ontario:*** <http://genealogycanada.blogspot.ca/2013/05/may-is-jewish-heritage-month-in-ontario.html>

**Six Best Free Genealogy Programs** <http://www.techshout.com/features/2013/22/best-free-genealogy-software/>

**1921 Census soon to be released** <http://thediscoverblog.com/2012/03/27/1921-census-countdown/>

*There is a big addition to the index for **Billion Graves Index** at FamilySearch:*  
<http://pfhn.wordpress.com/2013/04/14/big-addition-to-index-for-billion-graves-index-at-familysearch-org/>

**MGS Online Library Catalogue** - KOHA has a new look. Check it out!

Are you searching for a book and you want to know if it is in the MGS Library? Search the online MGS Library Catalogue at <http://koha.homedns.org/cgi-bin/koha/opac-main.pl>

A website that I have found invaluable is <http://www.ellisland.org/> It is an excellent tool for researching ancestors who came through the U.S. from Europe and Britain. It lists family, ports of departure, dates, destinations, ages, some descriptions, ships (often with pictures) and some other information and it's free.

Barb reports that the web site: <https://familysearch.org> requires a password now but there is no fee.

Linda Wakefield discovered the Canadian Headstone Photo Project at: <http://canadianheadstones.com/mb>.

Leafing Through The Branches  
With Shirley Erskine

**Lambton Lifeline (ON)**

**Vol. 30 #1 Mar 2013**

- \* In Memoriam – Doris May (Brock) Clements
- Alexander “Alex” Cowan Jr. (father of Jane Teskey)
- \* Programme – Pier 21 – Gateway to Canada 1928-1971
- \* Locating 20<sup>th</sup> Century and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Relatives: Which sources should I use?
- \* Grand Trunk Western Railroad
- \* Websites
- \* Mary Jane Hutton MD – First Female Doctor in Lambton County
- \* Queries
- Smith

**Bruce Bulletin (ON)**

**Vol.24 #1 Feb 2013**

- \* Queries
- Greyell and Ameck
- MacDonald, McLean, McLennan, McKenzie and Harrop
- Wright, Stewart, Clark, McAlpine, Shouldice and Strine
- Noble, Johnston, Cook, Baker and Lewis
- \* Kistner Query response
- \* One of the Oldest Settlers of Arran Dies

**PAST TENTS**

**Vol.33 #3 Dec 2012**

- \* Research
- Kinney, Barriger, Shirriff, Scott, Skinner and Glofcheskie
- \* Julian and Gregorian Calendars
- Vol.34 #1 Feb 2013
- \* Ancestor of the Month Arthur Cole Hill
- \* Webinars
- \* Hands of Time

**SASKATCHEWAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**

**Vol. 44 #1 Apr 2013**

- \* Sources Generally Used When Doing Genealogical Work Arising from *An Act to Amend the Indian Act* (S.C. 1985, c.27). Commonly Called “Bill C-31”, and *The Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act*, S.C. 2010 c.18, Commonly Called “*Bill C-3*” (Part III of a three part series.)
- \* Zichydorf Village Association
- \* Somewhere in Saskatchewan...
- \* Roxborough (Presbyterian) Church
- \* Prince Edward Island Fathers of Confederation
- \* The Work Colony of Eisenau the Founding of the Settlement of Prisaca Dornei in Bukovina
- \* Preserving Ye Olde Family Documents

**Celebrating 35 Years!**

**Submitted by Laura Crookshanks**

The Southwest Branch MGS held a very successful workshop on April 13, 2013 at Knox United Church. With about 60 participants, the sessions included Sound Genealogical Practices, Using Manitoba Archives & Vital Statistics, Irish History - Religion and Immigration, Genealogy - Basics & Beyond, Irish Research and Getting the most out of Census Records. Presenters included Elizabeth and Colin Briggs, Myrna Mackey, Kathy Stokes, Barb Andrew and Sheila



Shearer. There were book displays and sales, an opportunity to visit the Margaret E. Goodman Library on the lower level of the church and a presentation from Gord McBean of the provincial MGS Board on the current "Data Project". Everyone enjoyed the many door prizes, the lunch and nutrition breaks and the opportunity to network with fellow genealogists.

In conjunction with the workshop, the 24th Annual Heritage Dinner was held the same evening at Margo's Grill. Guest speaker Richard McIntyre entertained the group with beautiful pictures and stories of Ireland. The **Ruth Tester Award** was presented to Branch Past President Eleanor Burch, a very deserving recipient.

**\*\*As Eleanor Burch** was unable to attend the April workshop, she was presented with the Ruth Tester Award at the May meeting. Eleanor hales from Carberry and has been a hard working member of the South West Branch. She has just completed two terms as President and has volunteered in many capacities.

### Some participants of the South West Branch 2013 Workshop



This picture was sent by Gordon & Janice McBean to our branch. Other photos can be seen on the MGS Facebook page or

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151853672178206.1073741825.7054423205&type=3>

### **Pictures: How important are they to genealogists?**

As times change, habits change. In early times and lasting into the late 1900s, people used the postal system as the main means of communicating. Even in the 1800s letters were exchanged across continents bringing news from the “old country” to the new and vice versa. Letters brought news of family members, neighbors and local happenings and were often passed around to friends and other family members who were hungry for news about people and places known to them.

No less important were pictures, which parlayed information that even the best wordsmiths could not adequately describe. It is easy to say that your ancestors lived in a log, or wood, brick or sod house, but only a picture could give a true description of the dwellings, terrain, people and times they lived in, the clothing they wore, their physical features, family resemblances, etc.

You can often find pictures of people, records, gravestones and other images on Ancestry.ca as more and more people post images among their family trees. Data downloading has also provided a considerable amount of visual imagery from sites, such as Google Images, Peels Prairie Provinces, Manitoba, etc.

Although there seems to be more video and photographic imagery available these days (you can hardly take a breath without someone posting it on YouTube), much of this imagery is temporary and will soon be deleted.

People these days use email, Skype, cell phones, land lines, text messaging and other modern means of communication instead of the old postal system (now known as “snail mail”). Most of these messages are deleted soon after being read and few are printed for posterity. The days of finding treasure troves of old letters stored in the attic or under the bed, are rapidly disappearing and with people using digital cameras and storing information on hard drives, CDs, memory sticks, etc. old pictures are similarly becoming rare.

On the next page is a picture of an old family home. It is gone now and this may be the only existing picture. As families move or die out, old homes like this are torn down, vandalized, or fall apart, fading from memory and lost in time.

Several years ago I had the following query about Eaton homes. (Yes, Eatons did sell home packages).

*“Where would I find a copy of Eaton home kit catalogue re: the plans for the house presented to Sam Larcombe by the T. Eaton Co. in 1929. Any info and plans I found on the internet was by American companies. Hope you can help me. “*



I was unable to find anything immediately available about this house and it went off my radar until I received an email from this same person and cleared up the mystery.....

*"Since I emailed you I have found a source for some of Eaton home plans. Bernice Still came up with the plan for the Sam Larcombe home that the museum board was looking for to go with the display we have. The museum was given the first engraved key that was presented to Mr. Lancôme by T. Eatons after his home was built. Interesting stuff."*

The folks from the Isabella district are very fortunate that SW Branch member Bernice Still is passionate about preserving local history, and is collecting and recording old buildings in the area. In its October-November, 2003 issue, the **Manitoba Historical Society** wrote of her that, "Bernice Still of Isabella for the past 25 years has been gathering photographs, artifacts and information on nearly 300 farm and rural houses and occupants in southwestern Manitoba. Most of the homes are found in Birtle, Hamiota and Virden and all over the RM of Miniota. Each home has been meticulously recorded with photographs, hand-drawn floor plans and information she collected from interviews with local residents. Some of the homes are no longer standing and Bernice Still's collection is the only source of information on them." Since that article appeared, she has brought that total to over 400.

As you drive through rural areas of the provinces, you will undoubtedly see old abandoned farm buildings, each with a history that has probably been lost in the crumbling ruins that once were alive with families who had their own stories complete with triumphs, tragedies and everything in-between. Somewhere there are pictures, documents, old letters and other memorabilia belonging to that family. Are they in your attic, photo albums, or files - or are they decomposing in an old ash pile, local landfill or caught up in a bush among the old cream cans, rusting cars and other discarded trash?

One thing is certain. There are many changes in how our family history is recorded. The likelihood of finding boxes of old letters and pictures is becoming slimmer as time passes. Chances are that any future communications and photos will be found on computers, CDs, memory sticks and other electronic devices. As technology changes, it will be more difficult to recover this history and will present new challenges for future genealogists to find information that has not been documented on line.

As you enjoy travelling throughout the province this summer, you might think about taking pictures of some of the abandoned buildings that you see. It could be an interesting challenge to look into the history of those buildings and see what interesting stories they hold. If you don't uncover an interesting story, you can possibly use the pictures for artistic purposes.



This faded old picture circa 1910, may be the only picture of this farm house. The boy on the step is unidentified, but at least descendants of this family will have a more vivid idea of what the old home place looked like. This particular house was in the Brookdale area.

**Have a great summer**

**Don't forget the wind up in Hartney on June 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Meetings will begin again on September 4<sup>th</sup>.**