

## **GLEN LESLIE CHURCH & CEMETERY** **Acquires a “Volunteer Appreciation Bench”** **for Ross & Charlie Wales**

When Betty (Wales) McLaughlin passed away on October 1, 2018, the family was advised to list an organization that memorial donations could be made out to. As the Wales family was instrumental in the management of the Glen Leslie Cemetery and Church for years since its inception in 1914, what better place would there be to become the recipient of such generosity.

By coincidence, plans had been initiated to acquire a bench to acknowledge the countless volunteer hours provided by Ross and Charlie Wales. As such, the donations in Betty’s name were used towards the cost to fabricate and install a bench with a centre acknowledgment plaque.

Several family members gathered at the Glen Leslie Cemetery on May 14, 2019 for the dedication of the Bench. From left to right – Gail (McLaughlin) Forster, Bonnie (McLaughlin) LaValley, Joyce Wales, Debbie Wales. Gail and Bonnie are Betty’s daughters; Joyce and Debbie are Charlie’s daughters. (Note: Gail & Bonnie each wore a brooch from their mother’s collection.)



**Jack, Ross, Betty, Charlie, Annie, Alfred**

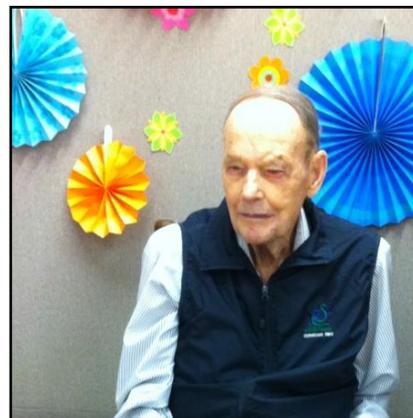
The Wales family had moved from Ontario to homestead in the Glen Leslie area. Ross had arrived in 1912 to file the homestead application and then returned to Edmonton. The following year, the family arrived at the homestead and lived in a tent until a log cabin could be built. Ross and Annie had five children, one daughter died as an infant, Alfred, Charles, John (Jack) and Elizabeth (Betty). By 1940, Ross and his sons had acquired more land and established a

sizable farming operation.

Ross and Annie were very involved with the Community and Ross assumed the responsibility of maintenance, fencing and beautification of the grounds for the Glen Leslie Church and Cemetery. He also ensured the plots were surveyed and managed the ledger of plot sales. In later years, Ross’ son, Charlie assisted him with these tasks. Ross passed away in 1963 at the age of 75; Anna passed away in 1972 at age 86. Both were buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery.

## Volunteer Appreciation Bench Ross & Charlie Wales

Charlie, the second oldest in the family, was born on December 18, 1914. He received his education at the Glen Leslie Church and later at the new frame school that was built slightly west of where the Church was located. In 1938, he married Jennett Anderson from Valleyview and they had five girls, Marilyn, Joan, Joyce, Sharon and Debbie. By now, Ross had retired and Alfred and Charlie managed the entire farming operation. Charlie followed in his father's footsteps and was very active in the management of the Church and Cemetery. He had a wonderful sense of humor and had many stories to tell of the Glen Leslie District. In February 2015, Charlie moved into a retirement home Wild Rose Manor in Grande Prairie where he resided until he passed away on May 1, 2016. Jennett passed away in 1965; both were buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery.



Charlie celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup>  
Birthday at the Golden Age  
Centre in Grande Prairie



Betty was born in 1919 and named after her two grandmothers, Elizabeth Moon and Alice Wales. She started school at the Glen Leslie Church with Dorothy Leslie as the teacher. In 1940, she married Neil McLaughlin. Shortly after Neil returned home from the war, they purchased SE-1-72-4-W6; land that had been the homestead of Dr. Annie Higbee and was located across the road from the Church and Cemetery. Neil and Betty had five children, Aileen, Ross, Gail, Bill and Bonnie. While living next door to the Church and Cemetery, Betty accepted the position of secretary for the Glen Leslie Cemetery Committee. Neil passed away in 1969 and was buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery. In 2003, Betty moved into the Wild Rose Villa/Manor where

she lived until she passed away on October 1, 2018. She was also buried in the Glen Leslie Cemetery. Betty was a remarkable woman; a woman who loved her family, loved her friends and loved the Glen Leslie Community. Betty's family continued her "giving" spirit by requesting that any donations to be made in her memory would be used to acquire a "volunteer appreciation bench" in the name of her father, Ross, and her brother, Charlie, who between the two of them, had managed the Church and Cemetery for 60 years.

Jerry Cadieux with 4 Season Contractors donated his time to prepare the site for the cement pad on which the bench would be placed. Billy Doll with Economy Concrete donated the cement and Trent McEwen donated a portion of his time that was required to fabricate the bench. As well, Wes Schartner with Suncrest Memorials donated the artwork for the plaque. This wonderful addition to the Church and Cemetery grounds was indeed a community effort to recognize the volunteer work of the Wales family.



Written by Wanda Zenner May 2019  
Photos – Wanda Zenner Collection