

## McKenna Family History Research Team Agenda

### 30 August 2025

**Opening Prayer** - Wendy McKenna

**Attendance:** Rich, Wendy, Todd, Liz, Kathy, Meishe, Cami, Mackenzie, Sister Mutt, Ruth

**Spiritual Thought** - Todd shared with us the significance of the tree in Jacob 5. The roots have to be strong for the branches to be strong. And strong branches help the roots stay strong. But the focus is on the whole tree. He also shared the imagery of the chandeliers in the sealing rooms are like trees. He expressed his gratitude for the strong roots that we have inherited.

**Team Introductions:** Each team member shared what motivated them to join this research team, and what they hope to contribute or gain from being part of it? Watch the [video](#) right after the prayer - it is priceless.

We reviewed the **Team Objective:** To establish a dedicated core of knowledgeable individuals who will collaborate on family history records research and DNA analysis, building expertise and shared resources in preparation for the June 2026 Ireland trip and for continued genealogical work beyond.

**Skills and Tools:** We showed some of the features in [www.HughMcKenna.org](http://www.HughMcKenna.org) and focused on the Research Team site where we will link to the minutes and video from each meeting. We also reviewed how to navigate in FamilySearch and how to access source documents and memories. We showed how to search a person from FamilySearch by clicking on the Search Ancestry link on the right. We also showed how to connect the records in Ancestry and FamilySearch

**Something I Learned/Felt/Did the Past Two Weeks:** Rich shared about their trip to Rio Wisconsin. They visited the Living Gospel Church in Rio which was founded in 1866 by some of Samuel's children. The congregation was very welcoming. The Pastor Karrie Landsverk gave a [great sermon](#) about finding peace in the unfamiliar. She had taken a four-week sabbatical and went to many different congregations with many different worship practices. After the service we went to the Ohio Cemetery in Rio and saw the graves of many of Samuel's descendants. In the 1894 letter from John McKenna to his cousin Thomas McKenna he commented that ""You see when I got the first letter from you, I was over two hundred miles from here up in the northern part of

the state. But your letter was forwarded on to me. I was up there visiting some friends from the old country, old neighbors lived beside us.”

We wondered where John went and who he was visiting over 200 miles away from Rio. In visiting the cemetery and searching FindaGrave, we learned that John McKenna’s older brother James died in 1865. His wife Catherine Henry then married [Jonathan Robinson Ferris](#). In a newspaper article about Jonathan, it said, “John R Farris will leave today for Northern Wisconsin, where he spends the holidays with relatives at Barron and Bloomer.” Also in a newspaper article about [Catherine’s funeral](#), it noted that their son Jonathan Robinson Ferris Jr. lived in Barron and another relative Mrs. Chas Taylor lived in Bloomer.

It turns out that Barron, WI is just over 200 miles away from Rio.

One of our closest relatives in the Y-DNA Big Block is Thomas B Sloan. Thomas has an ancestor [William B Sloan](#) who also lived in Barron, WI. Could these be the “friends from the old country, old neighbors lived beside us”? We will need to look for the Sloans in the Minterburn Presbyterian Church when we are at PRONI.

**Assignment:** Pick an ancestor you didn’t know anything about, review the information in FamilySearch, Ancestry and HughMcKenna and add something new to the records.

**Closing Prayer:** Cami Nelson