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Photograph taken Sep 2003 - see inside front cover

Chimook

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A.F.H.S. Program Schedule 2003

Main Program

DATE	TOPIC	PROPOSED SPEAKER
June 7, 2004	Volunteer Appreciation Night	SIG Presentations

Basics Program

DATE	TOPIC	PROPOSED SPEAKER
June 7, 2004	Getting Ready for Summer Research Projects	Kay Clarke

Picture on Front Cover

Left to Right: Mertie Beatty, Gordon Watts, Senator Lorne Milne and Lois Sparling.

Mertie Beatty was one of the plaintiff's for the court case to release the 1906 Census and Lois Sparling was the lawyer who argued the case.

Gordon Watts was one of the two people who were the driving force behind the census release campaign

Senator Lorne Milne was a strong supporter within the Federal Government for the release of the 1906 census.

Mertie and Lois are continuing the fight for census release with the 1911 census court case and Gordon continues with the internet campaign

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Chairman's Message

As I write my first message to you I can only look back to George's tenure as Chairman and hope that I can maintain the same standard that he set for himself and the Board.

My first job as Chairman is to honor our volunteers for the past year. A large number of volunteers were presented with certificates, pins and cards over the last two years at the Volunteer Appreciation Nights. I assumed it was merely a catch up time, however, after working with George and Mertie Beatty, I realize that we have a large number of volunteers who work in the background. We still need some core volunteers to help with the Website, the Chinook and membership renewal in the September and October meetings.

One of the rules for volunteer awards is that Members of the Board who are continuing to serve do not get an award. This year we have Mary Arthur, Helen Backhouse, Ronna Byam, Bill Campbell, Adrienne Horne, Gordon Hulbert and George Lake. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank them for all the work they have done and continue to do on behalf of the Society. They not only put time in for Board meetings but planning sessions as well and they also contribute a great deal of time to the committees they work on.

We started a process where the volunteers recorded their hours worked so we could recognise the hours when applying for grants. Some of the granting agencies expect the Society to contribute an amount of money equal to the awarded grant. In lieu of a money contribution they will attribute a dollar value to our volunteer hours. We need everyone to fill in their volunteer hours as we had 120 people recorded as having volunteered this past year however only 57 of those gave us their hours. The 57 who did report their hours worked approximately 6,500 hours but I know from personal experience that some of those people worked far more hours than they recorded. The Community Investment Program allows \$10 per volunteer hour for all eligible projects so please ensure that you give us your actual hours worked. John Holladay is the Board member who has taken over the volunteer coordinator position from Mertie Beatty so please forward your hours to him.

Over the next few months during our regular meetings we will be going through some disruption whilst the building is being upgraded. We have been informed that this should be completed by spring of 2005. The Board did look at other meeting venues but the present one offers us great value for money and is well located for most of our members.

The Special Interest Groups have been active over the past year despite the move of the Library and the disruption that has taken place there. The English SIG is being chaired by Ann Williams however the Computer SIG needs to have a new Chairperson(s) as Alan Cassley has joined the Board. We also need someone to lead the Beginners SIG, who doesn't need to have a great deal of experience. Ken Runquist would be happy to give some advice.

The Family Roots 2004 event being held in October is well under way to having the planning stages completed with the speakers and talks already determined. Most of the tables in the display area are now fully spoken for with some new companies participating this year. If events go as planned we will be having the National Genealogical Society of America in Calgary during the same period of Family Roots to carry out a digitization project for family papers. This has been arranged by Bill Mumford and we will have more details on the Family Roots website, hopefully in the near future.

Cheers,

Gordon Lane
Chairman

The Wilmot's Newcastle Hatchery

by Adrienne Horne

Samuel Wilmot

Without a doubt the most famous son of Samuel Street Wilmot was his youngest, Samuel, who was born on August 22nd, 1822, at the *Belmont Farm* in Newcastle. Because of his success, Sam was asked to write his autobiography for *Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography*, which after much delay was finally written. (1) This autobiography provides most of the following information but it is also supplemented with a letter written to the Editor of the *Canadian Statesmen*, by Mrs. Marjorie Gray. The Gray family owns the farm next to the Wilmot land and has farmed the land there for a hundred years. (2)

Sam "was educated in his early youth at Upper Canada College, entering it when the institution was just established, where he obtained prizes for efficiency in Classics and English studies". (1) His military duty during the rebellion of 1837/38 was as a Commander of a small troop of horsemen, as a home guard for the village of Nappanee. "This boyish troop when on night duty, captured rebel teamsters in the act of carrying arms and ammunition from the neighbourhood of Belleville, to their confederated, who had planned an attack on Kingston". (1)

Sam held the office of Justice of the Peace for about forty years. He was elected as Executive Head of the Municipality of Clarke and he also held the Reeveship for Newcastle. Sam represented both townships at the "Counties' Council of the United Counties of Northumberland and Durham". (1) But his fame would come with his work in the breeding of salmon. (1)

Sam's Life in Pisciculture

Sam was always connected to farming as he grew up on his father's farm in Newcastle, the *Belmont*. This interest led him to be the President of the *Township of Clarke and Durham Agricultural Society*, on and off for about thirty years. (1) As well as excelling in the Classics and English, Sam was also "an acute student of natural history and became fascinated by the spectacular runs of salmon that ascended Wilmot Creek (which ran past the house) each autumn and spawned in large numbers on the clear clean currentwashed gravel beds of the creek". (2) This led him to become interested in pisciculture and the process of artificial breeding of fish.

The Newcastle Hatchery

Sam's natural history education and experience with the Atlantic salmon that swam in Wilmot Creek allowed him to set up his own artificial propagation project in the early 1860s. At first this was done in the basement of the *Belmont*. Sam set up a wooden trough through which he piped fresh water, from a nearby spring in Wilmot Creek, into the basement. There he began his work on spawning salmon. Sam "attempted to simulate natural stream conditions" in his troughs. (2)

In 1866, Sam moved the operation to a building on the bank of the Wilmot Creek, just downstream from the house. (2) In that year Sam took "15 adult salmon from the creek and, despite the fact that poachers stole 11 of them, managed to hatch nearly 15,000 eggs in the following spring". (3)

The next year he received a government grant to build permanent buildings and to excavate rearing ponds. "A full scale fish culture operation was launched and thus became the Newcastle Fish Hatchery, which over the next fifty years produced over 155 million fish of a variety of species". (2) Some of the other species (other than Atlantic salmon) Sam successfully preserved were the black bass, lake trout and pickerel. (3)

Sam then built another building, called the *Reception Room* where mature salmon would freely move through the steep troughs from the creek to the building. The salmon were held here until their eggs and milt were taken. "The spent fish were placed in a long trough through which they were able to swim back into Wilmot Creek and out into Lake Ontario." (2) There were some salmon kept in the rearing ponds for public display. The fertilized

eggs were put into trays that were placed in troughs that had clean water flowing through them. The eggs would hatch in the winter and the fish were feed ground liver until they were ready to go into natural waters. (2)

Expansion

This operation made quite an impression on the government, so much so that Sam was promised more money for his fishing interests. To increase the supply of salmon eggs to the hatchery another *Reception Room* was built in the nearby Grafton Creek (8 miles west of Cobourg). “The Newcastle hatchery was founded on the optimism which the Canadian Government had shared with Wilmot, that plantings of the hatchery reared fish would restore the rapid declining Lake Ontario salmon population to its earlier abundance.” (2)

In 1870, Sam suggested that hatcheries be built in the Maritime Provinces. This was well received and in 1873, along with the Newcastle and Restigowche Fish Culture operations, hatcheries were also being built on the Miramichi River in New Brunswick. (2)

The design of the Canadian’s award winning working model of a hatchery was widely copied, where many of the current government and private hatcheries look very similar to the Newcastle Hatchery, which closed in 1914. “One of the first museums of natural history in Canada was developed at the Newcastle Hatchery”. (2) Wildlife (such as moose) and mounted fish species were on display in one of the original hatchery buildings.

With the great success of the Newcastle Hatchery, in 1863, Sam was given the job of Inspector of Fisheries, (2) and in 1873, the Societe D’Acclimations of France presented Sam with a silver medal, “for his efficient service rendered in that department of practical science”. (1) Three years later he was appointed Superintendent of Fish Culture for Canada, and held this post until 1895. (2) In 1879, he was elected President of the Provincial Association, and he presided over the first “Dominion Exposition of Agriculture, Arts, and Manufacture for Canada”, held in Ottawa, where he received a gold medal in connection with fisheries. For many years Sam was also the Commissioner of Fisheries for Canada. (1)

London’s Great International Fisheries Exhibition

As could be expected, Sam took an active part in the 1883 Great International Fisheries Exhibition in London. He became the Chairman of the Executive Commission in charge of the Canadian exhibit. Canada excelled in this event; they were “unique in [their] practical demonstrations of hatching fish eggs and growing young salmon”. They were able to grow their salmon six and seven inches long during the six-month exhibition. For this achievement Canada was awarded “The Gold Medal & Diploma”, it was said at the time, “Canada, by Wilmot’s system, was the best and most complete fish breeding establishment in the Exhibition”. (1)

In addition to the Gold Medal, Sam was awarded an honorary diploma “for the exhibit of hatching and growing young salmon from eggs brought from Canada”. Canada received a total of 31 gold medals and numerous amounts of silver and bronze medals. They ranked second overall for the Great International Fisheries Exhibition. Because of his great work, by 1886, Sam held the office of Chief of Fish Culture Operations for Canada under the new Dominion Government. (1)

Salmon Lose to Development

Although Sam’s hatchery was a success, there was too much change to the waterways around Lake Ontario, with all the mills and dams being built for the growing communities in the area, for the salmon to reach their spawning grounds. This, with the over fishing of the Atlantic salmon, resulted in the species never reaching its earlier populations and eventually becoming extinct from the lake.

Sam tried to fight the decline of the populations by developing *fish ladders* so that the fish could bypass the dams, allowing them to reach their spawning grounds. (3) However this did not work, and it was not until the 1970s when Lake Ontario saw salmon again, but this time they were Pacific species. (4)

The Electric Plant

Sam's other great contribution to his community was the Belmont Electric Works.

Another feature of the Newcastle Fish Hatchery was the dam above it from which the village of Newcastle drew its first electric power. In the year 1896, Samuel Wilmot installed an electric generating plant in connection with the Fish Hatchery; he secured a franchise from the municipal council of Newcastle to serve the ratepayers with electric energy. That same year the first electric power was delivered into the village of Newcastle. (2)

The first service of electric power for Newcastle consisted of 10 streetlights, which cost \$1.00 per light per year. There were also 80 house services, which were on a flat rate of 40 cents for each outlet per month. The power was provided from dusk until midnight each day. (2)

After Sam's death in 1899, his son-in-law, D.J. Galbrath, took over the operation of the power company. In 1911, the Seymore Light and Power Company bought the company. The power company went through many owners over the next century until it was finally taken over by the Newcastle Public Works Utilities Commission. (2)

The Belmont, the Hatchery & Wilmot Creek

After the hatchery closed in 1914 the building eventually fell prey to road construction. All that was left was "a row of antiqued but stately willows standing along the creek banks, and Wilmot Creek returned to nature's course". (2) Wilmot Creek and its surrounding grounds served as a recreational site for many years. It was a great place to picnic, with the lovely gentle rippling of the creek and the fun swimming hole. Where there was a rope hung from a tree over the creek so the children could swing out into the water. "Many learned to swim there, and many will recall the odd dip in the nude (after dark of course)". (2)

On September 13th, 1967, the Clarke Township Council and the Ontario Archaeological and Historic Sites Board unveiled a plaque in memory of Ontario's first full scale fish hatchery; The Newcastle Fish Hatchery, established by Samuel Wilmot over a century before.

The *Belmont* home had many owners since Sam Wilmot; the last known owners were Alfred and Lena Graham (1982), who had lived in the house since 1939. They were able to retain 24 acres of the original 400 acres of land. On these 24 acres lies the original spring Sam used to run the hatchery, with pipes still carrying water into the basement, where the first hatchery experiments were done.

In the early 1980s, Alfred Graham sold the land south of the hatchery to the road, to the Department of Lands and Forest. The area, now overgrown, is not a nice place to picnic anymore; quite unlike the way the Graham's maintained the land. The plaque that stood in memory of the great work that was accomplished here is now covered with overgrown and unattended land. (2)

There is no longer any sign of the hatchery. There is a small dirt road going from the house down to the creek, ending at a rickety bridge. The plaque and the creek are visible from this road but the site of the hatchery is not. To see the site one must venture into the overgrown wilderness trying to stay on the small animal trail. Ironically, there is now a "No Fishing" sign along the creek bank!

Sam's work made Wilmot Creek one of the most famous salmon streams in Ontario. (2) His extremely successful hatchery venture...

has earned for himself well-merited notoriety throughout Canada, and the United States, and also in parts of Europe. From a very small beginning which originated with himself as an amateur in his private residence at Belmont Farm, to the Science of Artificial Fish Culture through his personal enterprise, and official zeal, had become an established Industry throughout Canada. (1)

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Cass/Bangs/Denning,
Mary Ann

born 1834 near Vankleek
Hill, West Hawkesbury Twp.,
Prescott Co., Ontario/Upper

Canada, married Alanson Bangs 11 Feb 1856 in Vankleek
Hill, West Hawkesbury Twp., Prescott Co., Ontario/Cana

Mary Ann and her first husband moved to Wisconsin
about 1862. He died in 1865. She remarried to John
Denning about 1867 in Wisconsin, possibly Prairie
Du Chien. She lived in Rising Sun, Crawford
Co., Wisconsin, Iowa, and near Yorkton SK.

She likely died in Iowa. She, her
first

husband and first set of children were
Protestant. Her second husband and second set
of children were Roman Catholic.

So there's no point in putting a query
in or writing about your favorite
ancestor, eh!

Who were her parents?

Back in Volume 23 Issue #4 a Mrs
Gale Burke, long time member,
wrote about an ancestor of her's -
"Cora Nelson Spencer"

The Family says they were Stephen Cass, SUE,
(1803-1886) and Jerusha Abbey but I need proof.

The Chinook wended it's way to Green
River, Wyoming where a
cousin of Gale's read the
article.

Tharp, Josier S. born abt 1870 in Arkansas, USA,
married Katherine T. Stephenson 26 Nov 1894 in
Kingfisher, Oklahoma, USA

Last week Gale and
her cousin were
united after
looking for each
other for about 20
years!!

I have found him in the 1920 census in
Pawhuska, Osage Co., OK and in the
1930 census in Johnson, Dewey Co.,
OK.

Who were his parents? Where was
he living at the time of the 1900 and
1910 census?

Who are the Celts?

by Frank R. Morrow

Is the word pronounced with a soft 'C' or a hard 'K'? Are the Celts a race of people, is it a language, or an archaeological period, or is it a religion (the Druids were Celts)?

The answer to the first question may be found in the following. In early history, some 500 years before the birth of Christ, the tribes were called 'Keltai' in the writings of early Greek historians, & were placed in Southern Europe. Yes, as many European researchers will know, at one time the Celtic tribes covered most of Europe, & indeed, part of Asia.

The answer to the second question is left for the researcher to decide, depending on where the interest lies. One could answer, "All of the above." What is evident is that at some point in time the language was divided & became Geodelic, the origin of languages for Wales, Cornwall, & Breton, or Brythonic, the origin of language for Scotland, Ireland, & Manx. The primary difference between Ireland & Scottish language is the introduction of Norse into Scottish Gaelic (Celtic). Manx adopted English in the 1800's.

We do know that during peacetime the Celts were a farming people & intermarried with others, they were renowned for their bronze & iron work, but during wartime were fiercely proud & independent. It was during their struggle with ancient Rome that they were soundly defeated at the Battle of Telamon in 225BC. In spite of this defeat they left behind a noble legacy. The conquest by the Romans precipitated a movement of Celts to western France, England, Scotland, Wales, & Ireland. It may surprise many that the origins of Breton speech patterns derive from the Celts.

Breton, as many of you know, is that area of France that juts out into the Atlantic & prevents the UK from sliding south.

Prior to their defeat at Telamon, Caesar (who, incidentally, was born a Celt) referred to the pesky tribes to the north as Galli, Gallatae, Gauls, or Celtae. The latter being the name by which the various tribes described themselves. We do know that prior to their migration they left much evidence of their presence in the design of the crosses that decorate cemeteries, & in the archaeological digs that reveal magnificent bronzes & iron sculptures which are ascribed to this period & to the Celts.

Today, pure Celtish language is confined to the maritime fringes of north-western Europe. In only 3 regions, Ireland, Wales, & The Isle of Man, does this

language have official status. Today accelerated language splits occur due to modern communication methods.

Now that we are all conversant with the origin of the Celts, what of today?

Ireland has embraced Celtish (Gaelic). It has become mandatory in schools & is the official language of the Republic, where it is referred to as 'Irish'. Scottish Gaelic emanated from Ireland, & although once widespread is now rare. There was a deliberate attempt to stamp out Scots Gaelic in the early 1900's, however national fervour decreed otherwise. The Welsh (Geodelic) are probably the largest population of the original Celt language, & everyone is familiar with their spelling of place-names, which by decree is the Phonetic English version of Celts.

As mentioned earlier, the Irish have embraced Celtish. One only has to look under 'Celtic' in their phone books to be convinced. Irish has become synonymous with 'Celt'. To be Irish is to be a Celt. However, in fact one who has ancestors from Eastern Europe may well be descended from Celts. Those of us who have ancestors from Ireland know the contribution of the Irish to the rest of the world.

The Celts include such famous figures in history as Alexander the Great, Boadicea - Queen of the Iceni in England, who unsuccessfully led a revolt against the Romans, & who may be the subject of Mel Gibson's next project, Robbie Burns - the Scottish poet, Robert the Bruce - King of Scotland, St. Patrick - the patron saint of Ireland (who was actually from England), Napoleon Bonaparte - Emperor of France, William of Orange - King of England, Scotland, & Ireland. So if you are a Celt, you are in good company.

I started this exploration to determine whether to pronounce the word as 'selt' or 'kelt', the conclusion I came to is that just about everyone of us has an ancestor who was a 'Kelt'.

For those who are interested in researching the Celts further are directed to a publication of the University College of Dublin called Atlas of the Celts, ISBN 1-55297-541-X. This book may also be available from the University or the Calgary Public Library.

Sauveteur of the St. Lawrence: The Legend of Peter Fraser of L'Île-Verte

By Joyce L. Metcalfe and Dianne I. Martens

Dispelling a well-established family legend can be difficult, especially when that legend is probably more than 125 years old. In the case of our favorite ancestor, Peter Fraser of L'Île-Verte, such a myth was given even greater credibility when a 1929-30 tourism guide reported that he had been a colonel in one of Wolfe's regiments and was "about 25 years of age when he was given the island as a reward for his splendid conduct at the battle of the Plains of Abraham." Although myths often contain pebbles of truth, they can also be the shoals upon which a family's history can run aground. Peter's descendants have long repeated this fantastic story with pride, often ignoring signals that seem to point in another direction. However, Peter himself provided the buoys through which the true course of his life could be followed. An exceptional find of letters at the National Archives provided us with a treasured glimpse into our ancestor's heart and allowed us to discover a history more intriguing than ever imagined in the old family lore.

Peter Fraser was a young lieutenant, not a colonel, when he fought at Quebec – 16 years after Wolfe and Montcalm's battle on the Plains. He probably was about 25 when he settled on L'Île-Verte sometime between 1784 and 1786; but he had not, it seems, received the island as a glorious reward. For most of his life, Peter Fraser was simply a sauveteur – a salvager of ships that wrecked upon the St. Lawrence River. But he was also someone very special; and if you will allow us to be your guides back through the fog of time, we would like to share his story with you...

Late in the fall of 1775, a fishing schooner made its way from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Quebec City. It was guided by a remarkable young fisherman of about 16 who had already spent five years learning the shoals and rocks of the River. He may have signed on to fight for his King and volunteered to bring supplies to the garrison, but it is also possible he was just intending to sell his catch to the merchants in the city. Whether or not he sailed into the fray intentionally or accidentally, we do know that he was there when the Americans attacked and laid siege to the city over that infamous winter of 1775/1776. The tragic fate of Peter's schooner is revealed in a letter written to him by Carleton's second in command, Colonel Allen MacLean:

I was the person that carried you the orders from Sir Guy Carleton to lay up your vessel then loaded with Fish at Saint Roc and I at the same time did signify to you that it was his the Governor's intentions to take the Fish for the use of the Garrison [...] I also know that in consequence of the above orders, the vessel was laid up but was soon after destroyed with her Cargo by the Rebels.

Peter served out the siege as a lieutenant in the naval battalion, which included a collection of Royal Navy officers, other sailors, and the merchant masters and mates who found themselves blockaded in the port. Although there is no detailed record, Colonel MacLean went on to describe Peter's deeds during the siege as "highly meritorious," and he added that he did not know anyone "more justly entitled to be paid for his losses." It seems though that Peter was unable to collect despite MacLean's assurances.

After Peter returned to the Gaspé, his wartime losses continued to mount as American privateers regularly plundered the Gaspé fisheries. In 1778, while following orders to help blockade some privateers near Caraquet, he lost a second ship and valuable contract cargo when "the Crews of the Privateers boarded the Schooner and carried her off." A 1777 fishery census revealed that Peter operated 26 boats with 100 servants (crewmen and workers) at Percé. By 1784, a similar record revealed that his fishing enterprise had dwindled to only 4 boats.

Despite his losses, Peter continued to play a significant role in attempting to defend the Gaspé coast. In 1778 and again in 1779, he signed petitions to the government asking for naval protection for the fisheries and was made a captain in the Gaspé militia. In that capacity, he trained men, erected gun batteries and, “kept a large body of Men in arms partly maintained at his own Expence.”

The red-letter day for the militia occurred at Percé on June 4, 1780, when the American privateer *Fortune* attacked the fishing post. Peter’s own comments on the event are rather brief; but there are a few other accounts to be found in the records, including a letter written by Lieutenant-Governor Nicholas Cox and a story printed in the *Quebec Gazette*. Although Cox’s letter misidentifies the ship as the *Providence*, it confirmed Peter’s participation by indicating that the privateer had “fired many shot at Mr. Peter Fraser and his People who return’d the Compliment with their two four-pounders.” Cox also gave some indication of the intensity of the battle when he added that the post had “little ammunition left.”

After encountering the Percé guns, the *Fortune* withdrew to a nearby bay and was spotted the next morning by Captain Tonge of the British ship *Polly*. The *Fortune* had captured three schooners and, after spotting the *Polly*, apparently set one of the prizes on fire, allowed the second to go off to Percé, and ordered the third out to sea. The *Fortune* and the *Polly* then exchanged broadsides at close range. The *Polly* managed to fire a second broadside that did considerable damage and the *Fortune* “put before the wind and run for it.” The *Polly* pursued, but unable to catch the *Fortune*, eventually settled for recovering one of the prizes. Peter’s own account of the event reads:

My having from the batteries on shore beat of the *Fortune* Brig (an American Privateer) went of in a whale boat and retook a Schooner the property of Mr. John Cox which had been taken by said privateer some time before then.

The accounts are not clear enough to discern whether Peter set out from shore at Percé or whether the boat was launched from the *Polly*. It is also uncertain whether the schooner Peter recovered was the same one as the *Polly* or one of the other two. Noting their loyalty and bravery, Cox did recommend Peter and the men of the Percé Militia to Governor-General Frederick Haldimand. However, in his response, Haldimand seemed concerned over the consumption of ammunition and fell short of issuing the *mark of favour* Cox had requested:

It gives me Pleasure to hear your Militia is so well disposed, and have already given you so much Satisfaction. I am persuaded your Government of them will be a further Inducement to continue their Zeal & Attachment for their King & his Interests. I send you by this Opportunity, a Twelve Pounder with Ammunition and as your People, from want of knowledge and an Anxiety to do well, might be apt to overload the Gun, I have directed a proper measure to be sent.

Shortly after the battle with the *Fortune*, Peter was given another opportunity to impress the Governor-General. The schooner *Haldimand* engaged the privateer *America* in a small cove near Point St. Peter, and the battle was broken off when the British ship *Wolf* came on the scene. In another letter to Governor Haldimand, Cox indicated he discerned that the *America* intended to return the next morning and so sent out a boat of volunteers to the assist the *Haldimand*. Ignoring several details, Cox’s account then ends with: “The privateer after the Engagement landed Captain Raking and his People who are now on board the *Wolf*.” In this case, Peter’s account fills in some of the missing picture:

My going on board the *Haldimand* Schooner with a number of men fought against the *America* Privateer and assisted in getting the *Haldimand* off after she had been by necessity run on Shore - Whent the following night in disguise on board the *America* and brought Captain Rachin with the Crew of the *Mercury* on Shore.

If there is a lesson for researchers to be learned here, it must be that even eyewitness accounts can vary greatly and we can still be left cursing the brevity of our ancestors. Fortunately, Cox did include another recommendation to Haldimand in his letter, and this reveals a great deal about Peter’s selfless nature:

Every Exertion of the Inhabitants has been Chiefly oweing to Mr. Peter Fraser, who on all occasions spares neither himself, nor his property, in the latter, he has suffered on the Kings account but makes no demand on Government, if I dare, I would wish to recommend him to Your Excellency’s Notice.

There are several indications that Peter eventually won Haldimand's notice and served the British in a capacity greater than militia captain. In a letter of recommendation, John Schank, Senior Officer and Commissioner of the provincial adjunct to the Royal Navy, wrote that, in addition to saving "the property of several merchant vessels wrecked in the River," Peter had prevented the capture of some of the vessels under Shank's command. However, Schank deftly avoided implying that Peter himself served under his command by specifically pointing out that Peter was never paid or rewarded for his services.

Haldimand wrote a recommendation letter on Peter's behalf in March 1785 indicating that he had "employed [Peter] on various services by Land and Water" during the course of his command and that Peter had "acquitted himself to [Haldimand's] entire satisfaction." The true nature of Peter's employment by Haldimand and his military or naval status are a bit of a mystery. Haldimand's letter, however, does go on to also mention that Peter had "upon frequent occasions" saved vessels both the crews and cargoes of wrecked ships. Perhaps the most notable of these occasions occurred in October 1782.

Two British coal ships, *Christie* and *Speedwell*, were transporting 70 men of the 31st Regiment from Cape Breton to Quebec when "in a gale of wind with snow, both vessels struck upon the Rocks which run off Red Island opposite to Green Island." The two ships were battered hard by the high seas and sank. Darkness fell, the snow continued, and the men, who were crowded into four lifeboats, "stayed by the wrecks the whole of the night not knowing where to make the Land." The next morning, "with a sea so heavy that the Boats could scarcely live," the men in the lifeboats were relieved to see Peter Fraser and six of his men heading toward them in a boat from Red Island. After speaking with the men in each of the boats, Peter led the group "round the edges of Rocks in safety and landed the whole party on Green Island without the loss of a man."

True to his nature, Peter apparently did not stop at getting the entire group to dry land. "He made a fire for them to cook their provisions" and "after the party had recruited their strength He carried them to the main Land and Lodged them in the Houses of Green Island parish where he procured them every assistance the place could afford." In a sworn statement made on October 6, 1787, Lieutenant Robert Johnstone, of the 31st Regiment, expressed his gratitude and indicated that he believed, without Peter's help, "many if not the whole of the party would have perished."

The fate of these two ships near L'Île-Verte (Green Island) may have triggered Peter's quest for improving navigation safety on the St. Lawrence River. While in London trying to secure compensation for his losses, Peter made two proposals. The first was to the underwriters asking to be contracted to recover wrecked property, and the other was to the merchants trading with Quebec suggesting that particular sections of the St. Lawrence River be marked with buoys and that a fire be maintained on Green Island throughout the navigation season.

Peter initially presented this proposal at the end of March 1785; and it was quickly forwarded to government. By the end of April, it had received the approval of Lord Sydney and a recommendation from the King that it be "put in execution." By July 1785, the Committee in Council at Quebec had reviewed Lord Sydney's letter of direction and ordered Peter to "prepare the buoys and place them with all convenient speed."

Peter set the buoys and successfully maintained the fire for three summers (1785-87). In July 1787, he wrote to Lieutenant-Governor Brigadier General Hope:

The utility of a Light on Green Island having been proved by the Services rendered the Shipping for the last three years during which no Shipwreck has happened, It is now proposed to make the establishment permanent by building a proper House for the Light and a dwelling house for the superintendant thereof [...] The ground upon which the Light has hitherto been kept and on which the Houses are proposed to be built is my property purchased from Monsr. J. B. Cote Seigneur of Green Island, which I propose delivering up to Government for this public purpose upon being allowed whatever its worth is estimated.

Peter had probably acquired the land on the island because he had recognized its navigational importance. No doubt, he hoped to be well rewarded not only for the value of the land but also for maintaining the fire and buoys. For awhile, the project continued to grow in size. A commodore, who reviewed it, suggested further enhancements; proposals were forwarded to London in the hopes of raising funds via subscription; and the Committee of Council began exploring their authority to levy tonnage on vessels passing on the river.

Such ventures, though, seldom proceed without complications, and the lighthouse proposal would ultimately prove to be Peter's undoing. Although Peter was eventually able to recover the expenses he incurred for the buoys and the fuel for the fire, he was not able to convince Council to approve a salary for him. He had also apparently run up substantial debts with his friends that he could not repay; and he was unable to consider continuing his work on the project without the benefit of compensation. Afterward, Peter merely indicated that he had been "dismissed for the want of a fund to defray the Expense."

On March 14, 1801 at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Quebec City, Peter Fraser, son of Alexander Fraser and Mary Fraser, married Josephte Chassé. She was the daughter of Jean-Baptiste Chassé and Élisabeth Levasseur and a Catholic; a fact that had long presented an insurmountable problem to the formalization of their union. The couple had already lived together for several years and by then had produced five children, whom they made legitimate at the time of their marriage. It is probably more than coincidence that almost immediately after, on March 26, 1801, Peter applied for one of the land grants that were finally being made available to Britain's "other loyal subjects" – those who were not Loyalists but who had, nevertheless, contributed greatly to the British cause during the war. Later that year, Peter and his family received 4,000 acres in the Canton of Tring, although this land was of little use to a seaman.

It was his land on L'Île-Verte that was nearer Peter's heart; and in that regard, the government was about to deal him a very cruel blow indeed. In 1805, Trinity House was created and given the responsibility for constructing a lighthouse. It was to be the first lighthouse built along the St. Lawrence and was to be located on L'Île-Verte on a portion of Peter's land, even though compensation for the property had not been agreed upon. Despite Peter's protests, the lighthouse was completed on the site in 1809; and Peter could not contain his anger in a Memorial written that October:

Trinity House have taken possession of a part of his [i.e. Peter's] property with a degree of contempt and authority that he cannot reconcile to his feelings or interest.

By 1810, embittered by the dispute with government, Peter was perhaps no longer quite the same man. The change was to come to light late in the fall of that year, when he attempted to salvage the *Trio*, a "richly laden" ship that had been left stranded on a shoal near Mille Vaches. After Peter and his men had worked for a week to re-float the vessel, the ship's captain returned to the scene, violently deposed the group and accused them of plundering the vessel.

The accusation was dismissed when the arbitrators confirmed that Peter "did bona fide proceed to the said ship" with the intent to salvage it for the underwriters. However, the award given to him and his men was unusually small; and the arbitrators explained their decision:

On consequence of the frequent intoxication of said Peter Fraser, which rendered him in a great degree unfit in such circumstances to conduct said ship *Trio*, and made it doubtful whether the said Fraser could have contributed to the ultimate preservation of the same.

The discovery of the account of the *Trio* affair splashed across the pages of the *Quebec Gazette* was indeed a heart wrenching experience for us. In October 1811, Peter's opponents in the suit had published the Court's statement in an apparent attempt to discredit Peter. Reading on, however, we took heart that this had drawn the ire of one Robert Christie, who responded to the *Gazette* with his own letter. Mr. Christie disagreed with the arbitrators' assessment and argued that Peter and his men had essentially saved the vessel before the captain had returned. The letter provides us with a poignant description of the scene and Peter's ingenuity in attempting to salvage the vessel:

Mr. Fraser, in a late and inclement season of the year, with some of his tenants, leave their habitations on Green Island, in an open boat [...] and upon a wild and inhospitable coast, open to the sea, and exposed to frequent gales of wind [...] they find the *Trio*, high upon the shoal, totally deserted, with her sails loose and flapping, her hold full of water, her hatches open, and her deck strewn with merchandise, the apparent vestiges of plunder, her anchors on her bows, her rudder knocked away, but her hull otherwise perfectly sound. Mr. Fraser, not having sufficient hands to clear the ship by pumping, judges it more expedient to scuttle her at low water, taking care to caulk up the aperture at return of tide; by this means, after three or four tides, the water is drained from her hold, and at high water the *Trio* is completely afloat. Mr. Fraser, after securing the ship at anchor, to prevent her driving further at high water, sets his men to work at a temporary rudder, for the purpose of

steering the *Trio* across the river [...] the people would frequently have abandoned the *Trio*, had not Mr. Fraser, by encouragement, and the example of his own perseverance, which few less robust than he, could have supported, prevailed upon them to stand by the ship.

In one letter written in 1809, Peter Fraser indicated that he had “rendered assistance to upwards of forty vessels in distress” for which there had been little reward from government. He had been a successful fisherman, a brave and loyal officer, and even perhaps a navigational visionary who wrecked upon the shoals of government. Despite our efforts to counter the published myths in the past, to those who rediscover those documents he will likely re-emerge as one of Wolfe’s colonels. Others, after learning of the *Trio* judgment, might tend to dismiss him as a drunken fool. But for many tall ships that made their way along the treacherous St. Lawrence and for some of the men who sailed them, the truth was that Peter Fraser was their *Sauveteur* – their rescuer. To us, he will always be our favorite ancestor.

DONATIONS to the AFHS LIBRARY

Nancy Carson
The One-Room School in Canada, Jean Cochrane
The Famine Ships – Irish Exodus to America, Edward Laxton
The Diary of an Irish Countryman 1827-1835, Cin Lae Amhlaoibh
Discovering Your Irish Ancestors, Dwight A. Radford and Kyle
Betit
The Story of the Irish Race, Seumas MacManus
The Great Hunger, Cecil Washham-Smith
Passage to America, Terry Coleman
The Scots-Irish, James G. Leyburn
Discovering Your Scottish Ancestors, Linda Jonas and Paul Milner
A History of Wales, John Davies

**Calgary, Alberta, Her Industries
& Resources**

extracted by Sarah Sorensen

Compiled and edited by Burns & Elliott, Calgary, Alberta, NWT, March 1885, reprinted by Glenbow in 1974

If members of your family lived in Calgary 20 years before Alberta became a province, chances are you may find their names in this book. The following lists the indexes from this book. It is a delightful little book, full of ads for saddles, wagons, a brewery and many other necessities.

It starts with a description of the Provisional District of Alberta, Calgary and its surroundings. Personal and business sketches are provided of early residents and companies in Calgary at that time. Under the heading “Oldtimers” we find Sam Livingston and descriptions of other early residents of this area. There were four churches at that time and also arrangements were made for schooling of the children.

This very complete little handbook of Calgary in 1885 is available in the AFHS Library. The catalogue number is 971.23.BURN 1885

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL - 2004-2005

Alberta Family Histories Society

The Membership year is September 1 to August 31

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(Tax Receipt available for a \$10 minimum donation)

The money donated to this fund will be invested and interest earned will either be re-invested or used to sustain a Board approved project. The principal will be preserved as much as possible.

Please turn to Page 16

2. In order to better serve our members it is helpful to know something of your genealogical interests. Please tell us of your research interests. (Mark as many as apply)

Canada: Province(s) _____

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3. Our Society operates entirely on the volunteer labour of our members. Please indicate below where you can help us in the coming year and our Volunteer coordinator will be in touch with you

Yes

No

4. Details of monthly meetings are published on the Society's website and the Dist-Gen electronic mailing list. Do you wish to be reminded personally of the monthly general meeting by a volunteer?

no thanks

by telephone

by email

New members who join between April 1, 2004 and August 31, 2004 do not need to pay an additional fee, but we request that you complete and return the form above for our records.

Fees not paid by November 1st annually will result in removal of the Member's surname list from the web site, suspension of library borrowing privileges, and stoppage of *Chinook* subscription.

Cod Au Gratin

contributed byu Gordn Lane

2 lbs fresh or frozen cod fillets
(cod can be substituted for basa or any other fish)
4 tbsp butter
salt
2 cups milk
(or more)

4 tbs flour
pepper
12 oz sharp cheese
grated

Place fillets in casserole dish or individual baking dishes.

In a saucepan, melt butter, add flour (a little at a time), salt and pepper. Gradually stir in milk and cook over low heat until thick.

Pour sauce over filltets. Bake at 375^o for 10 to 15 minutes.

Remove from oven. Cover fillets generously with grated cheese. Heat in oven until cheese melts. Serve immediately.

Note: Fish is placed uncooked in casserole dish. This will allow fish to remain firm and moist as it will be cooked only once. If doubling up the recipie only increase the cheese by 8 oz.

Blueberry Maple Crisp

contributed by Lois Nicholson

from the Drury Lane Steak House, Aulac, New Brunswick

4 cups blueberries - fresh or frozen
1/2 cup maple syrup
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 cup cornstarch
1 cup flour
3/4 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup butter, softened (can use margarine)
1 tsp. almond extract

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Combine blueberries, maple syrup, cinnamon and cornstarch and put in a lightly greased 9 inch square baking dish.

In a bowl blend flour and sugar and cut in butter and almond extract to form a crumbly mixture. Sprinkle flour mixture over berries and bake for 30 minutes until lightly browned and bubbly around the edges.

Best served with vanilla ice cream. Serves 6-8.

Aunt Lizzie's Lemon Tarts

contributed by Adrienne Horne

Juice & grated rine of 3 lemons.
Yolks of 9 eggs & whites of 2 eggs.
Pinch of salt.
Very hot oven.
Bake at 400 f for 15 mins or until golden]

2 heaping cups of fruit sugar (white).
1 small cup of butter.
Small tablespoon full in each tart.
Put lemon mixture into unbaked tart shells.

From Elizabeth Wilmot (1845 - 1936); Newcastle, Ontario

Clam Chowder

contribute by Alan Peers

5 or 6 Strips of bacon
4 1/2 cups of water, use all the clam liquid as part of water
1 cup of diced celery
1 cup of cream
1 tsp. Salt
1 1/2 tsp. Flour

1 onion, chopped
4 cups of diced potatoes
1 cup of milk
2 - 7 oz cans of baby clams
1 tsp. Pepper

Chop bacon and fry in pan. Remove & set aside. Drain clams. Put potatoes, celery, onion, clam liquid and water in pot. Cook until potatoes are tender. Add bacon and clams to potato mixture and bring to a boil. In 1/4 cup of water mix the flour and shake well, so that there is no lumps, add to the potato mixture stir it well. Lower the heat to simmer, before the milk and cream are added. Slowly adding the milk and cream to potato mixture, so that it does NOT curdle. DO NOT BOIL.



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To place an order

To become a registered demonstrator

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Next Scheduled Event:

Tuesday, June 8, 2004 at 6:00 p.m. - Father's Day/Masculine Stamp Camp. \$15 to make and take home 5 cards and a gift. Learn plaid making and other techniques using pastels, watercolours and inks suitable for use in scrapbooks and cards.

Room is limited at all workshops so be sure to phone early to R.S.V.P. and receive the address and driving/parking information.

A LADY WITH SPIRIT

By Gloria Moore

My aunt, Mrs. Edna Lillian Doolan (nee Doyle) was born on the 10th of September 1893, and passed away on January 22, 1998, at the age of 104. The oldest of three children born in Carman, Manitoba, she loved life and was always smiling and laughing. She earned her living as a seamstress and milliner (hat maker).

At the age of 20, she moved to Calgary and worked for the Hudson's Bay Company as a milliner. During the Great War (1914 to 1918), Edna worked in the Canadian Pacific Railway's Ogden Shops in support of the war effort.

She met her husband Leslie Charles Cooper Doolan during the war when he was recuperating from his war wounds. They were married in 1920 and lived in Calgary where Leslie worked for the Dominion government in the Land Titles Office. Their daughter, Dorothy Evelyn Doolan, was born in 1923. Of course there were loads and loads of diapers to wash in those days, so the clothes line was always full. Edna recounted that local boys came over one night and took the diapers off the line. She decided to fix them. The next night the clothes line was full of dirty diapers. Needless to say, the boys immediately found other ways to amuse themselves.

In 1930, they were transferred to Banff where Edna worked for a friend, Mary Gammell, making Hudson Bay blanket coats for the Banff Springs Hotel. Leslie worked at the Park Administration Building.

During their years in Banff, Edna had many stories to recount about the local bear population, but the best one follows. She had prepared a pot of stew and put it in the back porch to cool. A black bear decided it would make a great meal so decided to break into the porch, making off with the pot. Hearing the commotion, Edna, not known for her timidity, immediately grabbed her broom and took after the hapless four-legged thief, recovering the priceless pot minus the stew, of course.

In 1945, Edna and Leslie returned to Carman. During the years 1946 to 1952, when daughter Evelyn was teaching figure skating in Carman, Edna together with many other moms, spent countless hours cutting, pinning and sewing costumes for the Ice Carnivals sponsored by the Carman and Community Recreation Association.

Edna was always very active and talented in crafts of all kinds. She could "cook up a storm" as her daughter says. She was a Charter member of the Rebeccah Lodge, sang in the United Church choir, and was a member of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Following the death of her father, Edna and Leslie moved in with her mother and looked after both her and the house until her mom had to be admitted to hospital. Edna could no longer manage her care.

At the age of 87 and now a widow, she continued to prepare all her own meals (and for anyone else who just happened along) even though she walked with two canes. She said it didn't bother her; it just took a little longer to do things.

In her 91st year, she was pictured on the front page of the Winnipeg Free Press, sitting in her favourite livingroom chair with a multitude of clothes on under her coat, wool hat, scarf and boots. There had been a bad spring ice and snow storm which had knocked down some 3,000 hydro poles in southern Manitoba. She refused to leave her home and waited out the weekend storm, bundled up in her favourite chair.

She refused on one other occasion to leave her home as well. It was during one of Manitoba's terrible spring floods when her house, on the banks of the Boyne River, was surrounded with water.

The dictionary describes "lady" in this manner: "A well bred woman, title of the wife of a Knight, mistress of a house, a worthy woman." Our family was extremely fortunate to have had her as a part of our lives for so long. She was truly a lady, but one with a lot of spirit ... a worthy woman indeed.

Going Home: Family History Research in Sunny Saskatchewan

By Lois Sparling

Whenever the members of the Celtic Special Interest Group are slow to volunteer to give a talk to our group on their trips to "the Old Country", I threaten to tell them about my research trips to exotic Saskatchewan. My husband and I were both born in Saskatchewan as were our parents. Our grandparents were all pioneers of that province - or of that part of the Northwest Territories as it was called prior to 1905. We have all experienced 40 below (but it's a dry cold), grasshoppers in their hordes, meadow larks, blizzards, oceans of wheat, walking on top of hard crusted snow, crickets chirping, Canada geese honking, sunburn, frost bite, saskatoon berry pie, the constant wind. We speak the language of the Prairies: coulees; sloughs; toques; the Briar; the Crow Rate.

A Saskatchewan story with apologies to those who won't "get it": Seeding was delayed by a wet spring. Then it didn't rain when the crop needed it. The grasshoppers ate most of what did come up. The balance of the crop did well through July but hail wiped it out. The farmer stood in his ruined field, shook his fist at the sky and shouted "Goddam the CPR".

For most of us, Saskatchewan family history research is twentieth century research. My first ancestor to settle here was my maternal grandfather, Alfred Wilder, who arrived in Yorkton with his family on his fourth birthday in 1899. He and his family came from Iowa by train - the sort of hardy, experienced American farm family that made successful pioneers on the Canadian prairies. The Wilders are recorded in both the 1901 national census and 1906 census of the new Prairie Provinces. I also found Alfred's maternal grandmother and uncle in the 1901 census. That was a surprise. The National Archives' online index to western land grants (1870 - 1930) gave me the legal description of their land. However, before that was available, I searched the 1901 census for them at the Calgary Public Library on microfilm; the entire Assiniboia East District three times before I found them. The enumerator did not get Great Grandpa's name quite right. This careful, indeed, agonizing review had the benefit of impressing upon me that most of their neighbours were of Hungarian origin.

The Saskatchewan Archives Board provided copies of the actual homestead application and supporting affidavit. Alfred's eldest sister's husband swore the affidavit in support of Great Grandfather Wilder's application. Both of Alfred's parents lived to ripe old ages. My grandmother kept newspaper clippings. She had

reports about their 50th wedding anniversary, celebrating them as pioneers and, in due course, their funerals. She also kept letters and photographs. The local history book for the area in which they settled included a detailed account of their lives and the lives of many of their descendants.

Research sources:

1. I am fortunate to have had a grandmother who took a great interest in the extended family of her husband as well as her own. She corresponded with many of her in-laws and salvaged the old stuff no one else wanted when her mother-in-law passed away; old stuff such as their 1877 wedding photograph in a gilded frame, a set of pressed green glass dessert dishes which are now of considerable value, and her father-in-law's personal Bible containing Sunday School cards, a piece of lace, a pressed flower and a page listing family births, marriages and deaths.
2. Because my grandmother kept up contacts, I am able to correspond with and visit cousins who have their own family stories to tell. These people often remember me as a small child and all are/were very fond of my grandmother.
3. Old family Bibles often contain sections for the recording of birth, marriages and deaths. None have survived in my extended family as far as I can tell. However, the page inserted into my great grandfather's small Bible contained that information for the family.
4. I already knew generally where to look for the Wilders in the 1901 and 1906 census. If I hadn't, this information is in the National Archives' online index of western land grants:
http://www.archives.ca/02/020111_e.html
5. Digitalized images of the census returns for the 1901 national census and the 1906 Census of the Northwest Provinces can be accessed at the National Archives web site, Archivianet:
http://www.archives.ca/02/0201_e.html. These censuses are also available on microfilm on the fourth floor of the Calgary Public Library main branch downtown. Transcriptions and indexing is ongoing by volunteers. See our own AFHS web site at <http://www.afhs.ab.ca/data/census/1906/index.html> for the 1906 census and Automated Genealogy at <http://automatedgenealogy.com/census/NationalSummary.jsp> for the 1901 and parts of the 1906 censuses.
6. Local history books have been published for most Saskatchewan communities and surrounding rural areas. These generally include the histories of individuals and families still in the area and sometimes those gone but still remembered. Many of these books were prepared as a centennial project in 1967

and therefore written by an earlier generation. Large collections of local history books are in the collections of the Saskatchewan Legislative Library in Regina, the Saskatchewan Archives Board, the Prairie History Rooms of both the Regina and Saskatoon Public Libraries, the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society's library in Regina and at the National Library in Ottawa. Other collections of them are in the University of Calgary Library, the Calgary Public Library, the Glenbow Museum library and, of course, the local public libraries around Saskatchewan. Our own Alberta Family Histories Society library has a few as well. Once you identify books of interest, you can usually get them through inter-library loan. The Calgary Public Library has inter-library loan forms and a couple of reference librarians whose job it is to locate and obtain books for patrons. You need at least a title and author. The ISBN helps a lot. For example, *As Far As The Eye Can See* is a local history book about Weyburn and area. It was compiled by the Weyburn R.M. #67 History Book Committee in 1986. It was published by Focus Publishing Inc. The ISBN is 0-919781-09-8.

7. The Saskatchewan Archives Board has part of its collection in Regina and part of it in Saskatoon. You can email or write them for photocopies of homestead applications. The Regina office of the Saskatchewan Archives Board can be contacted at (306) 787- 4068, info.regina@archives.gov.sk.ca or University of Regina, Regina, SK S4S 0A2. The web site is: <http://www.saskarchives.com/web/index.html>

8. Local Saskatchewan newspapers are accessible on microfilm through inter-library loan from the Saskatchewan Archives Board at a cost of \$11 for 3 reels. Some early newspapers such as "The Saskatchewan Herald" and "The Moose Jaw News" are on microfilm at the Glenbow Library and Archives. The University of Saskatchewan has the online Saskatchewan News Index 1884-2000: <http://library.usask.ca/sni/>. It is always worthwhile to look for obituaries in the local newspaper up to a week or so after the known date of death. Other events that may well have inspired lengthy articles, including married names of daughters, maiden names of wives and places of birth, are 25th and 50th wedding anniversaries. Articles about weddings are likely to give the bride's maiden name and the names and homes of friends and relatives from afar who attended or sent greetings.

The presence of Alfred Wilder's twice married grandmother near Yorkton in the 1906 census sparked the hope that she had died there. I wrote to the City of Yorkton to inquire whether there was a record of her burial. I applied to the Province of Saskatchewan Department of Health for her death certificate. No record of her burial and no registration of her death

were found. Ever an optimist, I asked the Saskatchewan Archives Board to look for an obituary in the Yorkton newspaper. Even if she had gone back to the United States, she left family in the area. No such luck.

More research sources

9. The local town or municipal district often operates one or more cemeteries in the area. The City of Yorkton staff in charge of the cemetery may be reached at (306) 786-1750 or P.O. Box 400, 37-3rd Ave. North, Yorkton, Sask. S3N 2W3.

10. Copies of birth, marriage and death registrations can be purchased from the Director of Vital Statistics, Sask. Department of Health, 1942 Hamilton Street, Regina, Sask. S4P 3V7. Their form is available online or by phoning their toll free number 1-800-458-1179.

The web site is:

http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/ps_vital_statistics.html.

11. The early Yorkton newspaper was "the Yorkton Enterprise". The Saskatchewan Archives Board has issues from 1902-1981 on 79 reels of microfilm. Unfortunately for my research, there are issues missing between 1902 and 1904.

The time came when a research trip to eastern Saskatchewan seemed like a fine way to spend our summer vacation. Our teenage children, who would have objected strenuously to such a holiday, were dispatched to an Armed Forces boot camp (the elder) and a gentler church camp (the younger). My husband and I hopped into the car and drove east.

Advance preparation included contacting the Weyburn fire department about the burial records of the Weyburn cemeteries. The fireman responsible for this task quickly located Alfred Wilder's gravesite. However, he could not find a burial record for my aunt, Lois Genevieve Wilder, who died in 1932 at the age of four. Since I have pictures of her gravestone, he said he would drive out to the cemetery to find it the next day. A couple of hours later he emailed me again to say he had found her record the database under an incorrect surname.



Other preparations included using the internet to locate local libraries, museums and still functioning court houses. My mother set up interviews with surviving cousins of a certain age. I also emailed the Saskatchewan Archives Board in Regina to let them know that I was coming and what I would be looking for.

For those who have not visited Saskatchewan in the summer, note that sunscreen, insect repellent and a headscarf for longish hair are a good idea. Pens are banned from the Archives so bring pencils and a good eraser. Only Canadian coins work in photocopy machines. The Saskatchewan Tourist Board would be overjoyed to provide maps. Since I planned on interviewing relatives, I bought a tape recorder and microphone. I wish I had spent more for better quality. I also took my camera and film. I like to take lots of pictures: of gravestones, cemeteries, grain elevators, ghost towns, my Mom's high school, the church where my grandmother used to take my mother to hear Tommy Douglas preach, prairie flowers, old farm machinery, cousins, grasshoppers, street scenes, the indentation where the first house on the homestead was built, the scraps of prairie wool (i.e. the wild grasses on land that has never been cultivated), the abundant bird life, the fields that stretch to the horizon, shelter belts, magnificent old barns, ancestral homes, things that haven't changed in 80 years and things that have changed.

12. The City of Weyburn cemetery pages on the 'net are at:

<http://www.city.weyburn.sk.ca/modules.php?name=Sections&op=viewarticle&artid=22>.

The firemen's database is now searchable online.

13. Saskatchewan Tourism is online at: <http://www.sasktourism.com/> or may be reached by old-fashioned mail at 1922 Park Street, Regina, Sask. S4P 3V7 or by telephone at 1-877-237-2273.

The Regina branch of the Saskatchewan Archives Board is located near the University of Regina and the Saskatchewan Centre for the Arts at 3303 Hillside Street. It has homestead records, old directories, local histories, microfilm of newspapers published for communities in the southern part of the province and much more. I focused a lot of my time on its collection of photographs. I found an official picture of the 1960 Court of Appeal that included my father as Registrar. Some day that will be an historic treasure, but it did not cause my heart to flutter with excitement. I did not find any other pictures of my relatives. However, I am pleased to report that I found very old photographs of the Yorkton railway station and the hotel where the Wilder family likely stayed upon their arrival from Iowa in November 1899. The Archives staff made high quality copies of these pictures for me.

Our first foray into the countryside was to the south-east of Regina. Our first goal was Talmage. This was a hamlet where Alfred Wilder was the grain agent for the Standard Elevator Company when my mother was very young. It no longer exists. The former location is easily found because it was at a 90-degree turn in



the road. I checked the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool maps for the 1924 elevator system to confirm my information. The abandoned railway tracks and remnants of a couple of buildings are all that there is left to see.

Our next stop was Weyburn where we had lunch and stepped into the local museum. The first big surprise was finding a large picture and write up about Alfred Wilder's first cousin, Les Wilder, on the wall of local heroes along with the likes of W.O. Mitchell. This display explained that Les was important to the development of baseball in the area and a popular sportsman. My second surprise was the magnificent collection of silver objects of all sorts collected by a local farmer after the Second World War and donated to the City of Weyburn on his death. It is a very large and impressive collection.

The Weyburn Cemetery is located on a small hill on the edge of town. It is well tended and has mature trees to provide some shade. Little Lois' Wilder's grave is there. Nearby are the side-by-side graves of her parents, sharing a single gravestone. The cemetery maintenance workers were more than willing to chat with my husband about the old timers buried there and the story behind the silver collection on display in the Weyburn museum. On our way out of town, we stopped to take pictures of my mother's high school and the large provincial mental hospital where my grandfather worked briefly.

Yet more research sources

14. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool maps are online at: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~skwheat/>. In addition to the 1924 elevator system images, there are maps from 1947 to 1984.

15. The museum we visited almost by chance in Weyburn was the Soo Line Historical Museum on Highway #39 East. Admission is \$5.00.

16. W.O. Mitchell is a popular Canadian author. Weyburn is believed to be the setting for his beloved books "Who Has Seen the Wind" and "Jake and the Kid". I recommend that anyone who has not yet read

these two books do so if only to absorb the atmosphere of southern Saskatchewan during the 1920s.

We drove to Melville the morning after a spectacular fire that burned down one of the grain elevators there. The fire made the national news. The grain elevator and its contents were still smoking profusely when we arrived. We visited the cemetery in the afternoon. This was bad timing since it meant the sun was shining behind all those east-facing gravestones. I did not know which of my relatives had been buried there. We asked the cemetery maintenance workers to direct us to the cemetery office or a map. They sent us back into town to City Hall. The City Hall clerk who knew about such things showed us the index of those interned in that cemetery and made copies for us of the most interesting burial records. Back to the cemetery. My husband settled in under a shade tree to read while I located, photographed and wrote down the gravestone inscriptions of Alfred Wilder's parents and many of his siblings and cousins.

My mother's first cousin on the Wilder side retired to Melville. He is active with the local museum. He has inherited his family's photograph collection. We went through it together and compared notes. He also arranged for me to visit an elderly cousin on the farm. She, too, had lots of old family stories and photographs.

My last stop was in Yorkton to check at the Court House for probate files for one or both of Alfred's parents. No such luck. We did not have time to visit the Western Development Museum at Yorkton. Its theme is the people who settled in Western Canada and is highly regarded.

Research sources

17. You will have to find your own elderly cousins to interview. Be sure to go visit them before they pass on. Bring along paper and pen for notes as well as a good quality tape recorder and extra tapes. Don't forget to send a thank you note soon after your visit. For advice and lists of questions for family history interviews, try Biography Assistant online at: <http://genforum.genealogy.com/my/>.

Books on the subject include the McLaughlin Guide - "Interviewing Elderly Relatives".

18. The City of Melville may be contacted at Box 1240, Melville, SK S0A 2P0. City Hall is located at 430 Main Street. The Melville Heritage Museum is located next to the St Paul Lutheran Home on Heritage Drive, west on Highway #10.

19. The Yorkton Court House was opened in 1898. It is located at 29 Darlington Street East, Yorkton, SK S3N 0C2. The telephone number is (306) 786-1515.

20. The Western Development Museums of Saskatchewan are located in Yorkton, North Battleford, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon. Each has its own theme. Like all good living museums or historical villages, it is a learning experience to explore them for the atmosphere and artifacts from your ancestors' eras. They are dandy places to take photographs to add pictorial interest to your family histories, especially when you lack family photographs for a time, place or subject you wish to highlight. <http://www.wdm.ca/>

My grandmother's father homesteaded in Assiniboia West District in 1903. My great grandpa, Uriah Gettins, was a Welshman who worked as a conductor for the CPR. It was a good job that allowed his family to live comfortably in North Bay, Ontario. The 1901 census revealed his annual income and the fact that they had a live in maid. However, Uriah wanted to be a landowner. He entered his homestead and did some work on the land in 1903. Then he brought his family out in the early spring of 1904. Great Grandma Gettins was not impressed, but lived on that homestead the rest of her long life. My grandmother, Reta, was a babe in Great Grandma's arms. Reta grew up loving wide-open spaces. In her own elder years, she would complain about the Ontario forest making her feel closed in.

I found my Gettins ancestors in the 1906 census the same day that that census was released to the public, online, by the National Archives. All around them in the census were the friends and future sons-in-law I had heard about and often met as I was growing up.

My great aunts and cousins had significant roles in writing the history of their childhood community. We therefore already had two copies of Eskbank: Gone but Not Forgotten. Only the Gettins sisters who moved away as young women are still alive. However, many of my grandmother's nieces and nephews retired to Moose Jaw. Arnold and Eileen Torgerson were happy to be my guide. We sued to visit them on their farm and play with their youngest daughter, Jill. I remember them well. Like my grandmother, they are keenly interested in family and history. They are also healthy, active and mentally sharp in their 80s.

We stayed at the Temple Gardens Mineral Spa Resort Hotel in downtown Moose Jaw. A lovely park with a stream and swans is across the street. The Moose Jaw Public Library is also nearby. I dropped in there to see what it had in the way of local history books. Then I walked over to the Court House to look for relevant probate files.

Due to illness and vacations, there was only one clerk on duty that day at the Moose Jaw Court House. She had been called in from her own Court House in

Assiniboia and so had to close that Court House to cover the Moose Jaw Court House. She did not know where the old records were kept. I explained my situation, that is, that I had come all the way from Calgary specifically to look at these probate files and would not be able to return another time. Touched by my plight, she telephoned a Moose Jaw Court House clerk at home for directions, locked me outside the office and went down into the unfamiliar basement of the Court House to retrieve the probate files for Uriah Gettins and his only surviving son, Trevor Gettins. She made copies of some of the documents for me, including Uriah's actual will with his signature.

We attended an open-air concert in the park that evening. Cousin Arnold plays the fiddle in a popular local old time band called the Mortlach Fiddlers. The Mortlach Fiddlers are kept busy with over 200 engagements per year at jamborees, informal concerts in parks, gigs in old folks homes and the like. Arnold learned to play the fiddle as a little boy from his father.

Next day we drove northwest from Moose Jaw to Eskbank and Eyebrow. At one time, Eskbank was a hamlet with several grain elevators, a general store, school, hotel and a few houses. When it was abandoned, the buildings were burned to deprive the rat population of these fine homes. Oddly enough, Eskbank continues to be marked on maps of Saskatchewan. I remember the Gettins homestead as being on a hill overlooking Eskbank. The hill turned out to be more of a gradual rise in the land. The Gettins homestead is still in the family so we dropped in unannounced on my second cousin whom I have not seen since he was 3.

The original house was demolished and buried with most of its contents in the 1960s. Uriah's shelterbelt is still standing. Better yet, the graveyard of old farm machinery is intact. Cousin Arnold and I had a great time looking it over. Arnold identified the ancient equipment while I took photographs. This is a "century farm" - 100 years in the same family. The provincial government put up a commemorative plaque after our visit.

Arnold and Eileen Torgerson know everyone in the area. Arnold was the Reeve for decades. He also knows the history of every quarter section of land. He pointed out Great Uncle R.J.'s land. R.J. Gettins died in 1918. He pointed out where my great grandparents and their children found shelter from a snowstorm as they traveled north from the railroad to their homestead on April 1, 1904. We stopped at a village to see the high school they and my mother attended. The building was moved there from Eskbank and set up as a seniors' community centre. We saw a couple of farmers working at the remaining Eskbank grain elevator. They bought it to use to store their own grain.

Of course, Arnold knew them well so we drove over. He showed me the grain elevator agent's office next to the elevator. Its interior walls were lined with tin in case of fire. The men discussed whether this last remaining elevator had been the Standard Grain Elevator where my grandfather was stationed when he met and married my grandmother, or had it been the demolished one to the west.

Uriah Gettins, his wife Sophia and all three of their sons are buried at the Eyebrow Cemetery. I vaguely recall visiting my great grandparents' graves with my grandmother when I was small, but I remember a more overgrown place. Perhaps it was the lilac bush largely covering the gravesites I remember. It has since



been cut out. The stump remains. There is a fine view of the horizon on three directions from this cemetery. I took a picture of Eyebrow's new concrete super-elevator, the type which has replaced the old wooden ones which marked every village and town in Saskatchewan until relatively recently. Finding the Eyebrow restaurant closed, we dropped in for lunch with relatives of Eileen Torgerson

The Torgersons' collection of family heirlooms and papers includes many treasures. One of particular note is the Eskbank school trustees' minute book. Arnold's mother was the last secretary-treasurer when the school closed for good, so she kept it. Previous secretary-treasurers of this school included William W.P. MacLaughlin, MP and Ben Hyde, MLA. Another gem is R.J.'s address book that includes the names and addresses of Welsh first cousins during World War I.

21. The Moose Jaw Public Library is located at 461 Langdon Crescent, Moose Jaw, SK S6H 0X6 (306)692-2787. Its catalogue is online at: <http://www.palliser.lib.sk.ca/>

22. The Moose Jaw Court House is located at 64 Ominica Street West, Moose Jaw SK S6H 1W9 (306)694-3602.

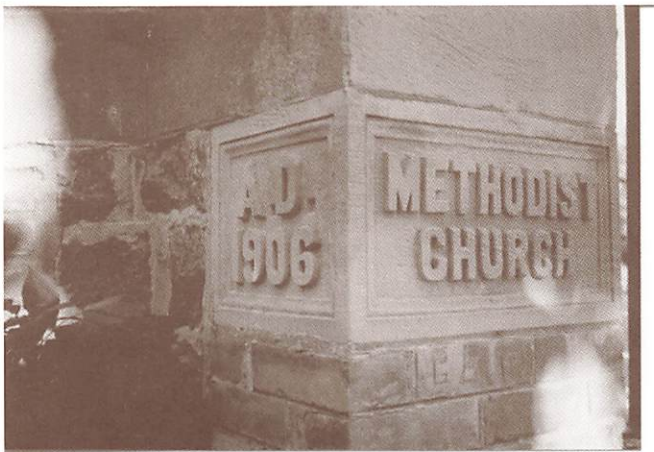
The theme of the Western Development Museum in Moose Jaw is transportation. This would have been relevant to Uriah's career as a railroad man. However, we opted to visit with more relatives instead.

My grandmother, Reta Gettins, attended Regina College for her high school. The University of Regina Archives holds the records of Regina College. When I paid them a visit, they were dismayed to find that they did not have a file on my grandmother. However, I was able to identify her in several school photographs. In addition to student records and photographs, this archives has the old handbooks setting out the curriculum and fees.

23. The University of Regina Archives is located on campus in the Dr. John Archer Library. They may be reached at (306)585-5314. The web site is: <http://www.uregina.ca/library/libraries/Archives/>

During our first family history research trip to Saskatchewan, we stopped at Grenfell, east of Regina. This is where my paternal grandfather, Herbert G. Sparling, had his first law practise. Grenfell was a thriving town in 1910 when he was called to the Bar, married his fiancée and was ready to establish himself. The main street of Grenfell looks like it has not changed much since then. We have family photographs from that time but were not able to pick out the Sparlings' house or his office. We did find a truly magnificent Methodist Church that was built in 1906, according to its cornerstone.

Writing to the Grenfell museum for help identifying the places shown in my old photographs is on my To Do List.



24. The Grenfell Museum is located at 711 Wolseley Ave. The mailing address is Box 1156, Grenfell, SK.

25. To find local museums in Saskatchewan, check out the Museums Association of Saskatchewan web site at: <http://www.saskmuseums.org/museums/>.

Back at the Saskatchewan Archives Board branch in Regina, I consulted the microfilm of the Grenfell Sun for 1910. Newspaper research takes a long time. However, this was an eventful year for the young H. G. Sparling. I also suspect he was a friend of the proprietor and editor. He was in partnership a prominent lawyer and churchman, B. P. Richardson. Mr. Richardson was a governor of the Methodist Regina College that my maternal grandmother attended. The law firm advertised weekly. Every trip out of town for court appearances made the news. On May 5, 1910, the Grenfell Sun announced that Herbert was chosen as the Methodist Sunday School Superintendent. On May 12, 1910, it was coyly reported that: "Mr. H. G. Sparling went west to Wilkie on very important business." On May 19, "Mr. & Mrs. H.G. Sparling arrived in Grenfell on Sunday evening from Wilkie, Sask." Another item on my To Do List is to bring in more microfilm of the Grenfell Sun issues from 1910 to 1912 through inter-library loan.

The Saskatchewan Archives Board in Regina has Henderson's Directories and biographical dictionaries on its shelves. In addition to being helpful for finding people, the Henderson's Directories are great for providing thumbnail sketches of the communities at that time. Grandfather Sparling was prominent enough to be included in Saskatchewan and Its People . These books and directories are also available in the Calgary Public Library Local History Room on the 4th floor of the main branch downtown. Since Herbert was a lawyer, he may also be tracked in the annual Canada Law List, found in law libraries and some academic and public libraries across the country.

26. Henderson's Directories for western Canada are gazetteers as well as business and household directories that were published starting in 1885.

27. Old Canada Law List volumes can be found in the University of Calgary law school library and the Court House Library.

28. The Story of Saskatchewan and Its People by John Hawkes was published in three volumes by The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company in 1924. A copy is in the Calgary Public Library Local History Room and online at:

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~cansk/SaskatchewanAndItsPeople/>.

My Favourite Ancestor: Robert Black

By Dorothy Blunden

Every family has its “special story” – ours is the story of the gypsy fortuneteller. (Told to me by my Grandmother Dorothy Black Kitchen and confirmed by her sister, my Great Aunt, Jessie Black Shield).

One day in the year of our Lord 1908, or 1909 (this was the only part the girls were not certain about), Robert Black was crossing the common in Sunderland, England with several of his business friends when a gypsy woman confronted them. She seemed to single out Robert and offered to tell his fortune if he “crossed her palm” with silver. Robert wasn’t interested, but his friends urged him to see what she had to say. Robert relented and gave the woman her “siller.”

She studied his hand for a few moments and then predicted the future for the proud, non-believing, young, gentleman. In a short time he learned that ... his fortunes would change...he would follow a young man across water...live under canvas...and end his days in darkness. Robert went home amused and told his family what the gypsy had said.

About a year later Britain was in a recession. Hauling contracts were hard to come by. Robert Black had to sell his horses and wagons and lay off his employees. He was no longer the wealthy man he had been. His fortunes had changed.

In 1910, William Black, the son and heir, and Jack Clark, son-in-law, left for Canada to seek employment. The two young men encouraged the family to follow. In 1911, daughters Elizabeth (Clark) and Jessie (Black), along with grandson Robert, sailed on the *Empress of Ireland* **cont. Pg 27**

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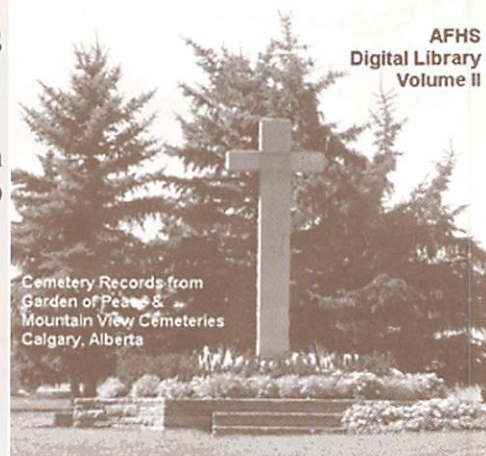
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My Favourite Ancestor: Robert Milton McCool

By Larry McCool

As I sit at the keyboard, looking ahead to the new millennium, my thoughts go back to an uncle of mine that at the age of six looked ahead to the year 1900 and the century that was to follow.

He had been born at Pilot Mound, Manitoba, and with his family had moved back to Ontario so that he and his older siblings would have the opportunity of receiving an education. He was not a strong robust boy, but a slim lad very prone to ill health. His parents' doctor had advised getting him out of this part of the country and his Dad had decided on land in the Northwest Territories that was available for homesteading. The question here is – what was this lad thinking and what did he see in his future? He hoped for a good healthy life and, other than that, his memories as he later related to us were not much more than that.

Would he have believed that 11 years later he would return from his father's funeral and at the age of just 17 he would find himself the oldest "man" on a large farm, on which there was a substantial mortgage, a widowed mother and two younger brothers and three younger sisters? To think of anything happening other than hard work and poverty in this man's life beyond this point would be dreaming, but – this MAN would prove his metal.

To ease the burden he, along with some neighbors, formed a small co-operative to buy farm needs and supplies. This proved moderately successful, starting with a shipment of binder twine and progressing to the point where a small co-op store facility was arranged. He worked at this store part-time while still running the farm. As his younger brothers became older and capable of handling things, he moved on to full-time work in the store and advanced to managing the store for a short time.

He, through some "odd" circumstances, was nominated for a seat in the Alberta government and, after the election of the first UFA government, found himself on the way to Edmonton as a member of the Legislative Assembly for Alberta. Another term followed, but eventually the UFA lost out to the Social Credit Party and he came back home. The UFA movement was still a part of this man and he helped organize "Co-op" groups in many areas of Alberta. When the UFA decided to open a retail outlet in Calgary, this man was called on to help with the organization and later to become manager of the Calgary Store. He advanced to assisting in the

opening of other stores in Alberta and finally decided that enough was enough, he would retire. Retirement was short lived as he and a former acquaintance started a real estate firm in Calgary. For many years, during the early part of Calgary's growth, he was active in the real estate trade, especially he was known as a "straight shooter" and was trusted by many retiring farm people in the choice of their retirement residences.

He would never have envisioned flying to Edmonton in less than an hour, for it took the better part of three days for the freight train carrying his father's settlers effects to travel from Calgary to Crossfield. This trip is another story in itself, but is well documented by a tape made many years ago where he told of his arrival in the west and his "odd" nomination for parliament.

You may have wondered why I have not identified this person, but have only given the clue of Crossfield. Many of the old-timers will know his identity long before now, but I will add just a couple of things that may help the younger set. A couple of streets in the town of Crossfield were named after this pioneer family, and a stained glass window in the United Church is dedicated to this man's parents. He died in his 95th year and we, as members of his 'clan', remember him with great respect as "Uncle Mickey."

He was Robert Milton McCool. A frail lad who left Ontario to ease the burden of his health, he lived to be a well known and well loved member of the community

cont. from Pg 26

bound for New York and a new life in Canada. In 1912, Robert, his wife Ellen and daughter Dorothy followed in William and Jack's footsteps. They left from Liverpool, England, aboard the same *Empress of Ireland* bound across the water for Montreal and then on to Calgary.

When they arrived in Calgary, Robert, Ellen and Dorothy stayed with the Clarks. The house was small so Robert applied to the City of Calgary to build another small house on the same lot. Permission was denied. The lot was too small. Robert had a solution though. He put up a tent and he and Ellen moved in. They built the first part of their house within the walls of the tent and when the tent came down, city officials were too busy to tell them to take it down. The house was built on the lot, but Robert had indeed lived under canvas.

When Robert Black died in 1927 he was blind.

**Highlights from Exchange
Periodicals
AFHS Library May 2004**

extracted by Lorna Stewart

**AUSTRALIA/ NEW
ZEALAND**

Victoria Genealogical Society, Vol
26 #7 Sept 03

**Masters of their trades: WW1
Australian War Workers in
Britain
Early Victorian hospital
records**

Victoria Genealogical Society, Vol
26 #8 Dec 03

**Census of New South Wales –
November 1828
Census in the Port Phillip
District**

New Zealand Society of
Genealogists, Vol 35 #285 Jan 04

**Late 18th century surveys of
Scotland and England
Researching probate records
in the US**

CANADA

East European Genealogical
Society, Vol 12 #2 Winter 04

**Austrian Military Record
Types and Research Tips**

United Empire Loyalists'
Association, Vol XLII #1 Spring
04

**Fredericton's Parson Cooke
Amos Ansley UE**

Alberta

Alberta Genealogical Society, Vol
32 #1 Feb 04

**The Mesznego records
A wee trip to Scotland**

Medicine Hat and District Branch
AGS, Vol 25 #1 March 04

**A great lady
Marriage 2002-2003 Medicine
Hat News**

British Columbia

Kelowna and District
Genealogical Society, Vol 20 #3
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**Norden, a guide to Scandinavian
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Index to the 1901 Census
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The following books were made
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England Historic Genealogical
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Genealogical Projects Registry on
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**New York in the Revolution as a
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Gazetteer of the State of New
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Membership in the Society is open to those interested in family history and genealogy, and may be obtained through the membership secretary of the Society at 712-16th Ave NW, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2M 0J8. Membership fees are due 1st September each year. If a new member joins on or after 1st April then that membership is valid until the September of the following year.

Meetings are held the first Monday of every month (second in the case of a holiday) at Southminster United Church, 3818-14a St., S.W., Calgary, Alberta.

Objectives of the Society

The Society is a non-profit organization formed in 1980 to promote and encourage an interest in family history research worldwide. The activities of the society are funded by membership fees, fund-raising projects, donations, bequeaths and corporate sponsorship.

The objectives of the "Alberta Family Histories Society" are as follows:

- To promote the study of family history and genealogical research;
- To encourage and instruct members in accurate and thorough family history research;
- To assemble, preserve, print and publish information relevant to family history study;
- To raise funds for any of the foregoing objects, and to accept donations, gifts, legacies and bequests;
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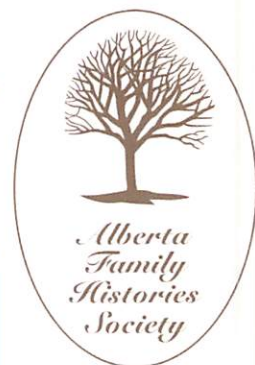
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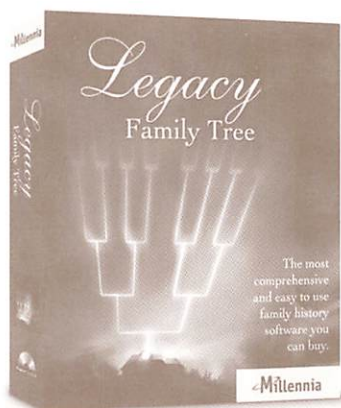


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