

YESTERDAY'S FOOTPRINTS
Alberta Genealogical Society
Lethbridge and District Branch
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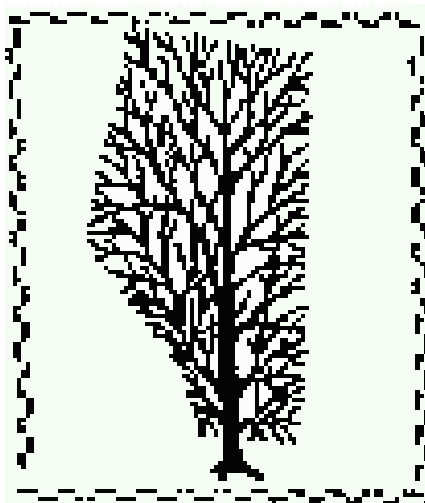


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Editor's Corner



If you want to submit articles, genealogy humor, interesting websites or have any queries you want us to print feel free to contact us. You can drop off your submissions to our library or phone (403) 328-9564 or send an e-mail to lethags@theboss.net.

Susan Haga, Newsletter Editor

Lethbridge A.G.S. Branch Hours

Library Hours: Tues., Wed. & Friday 1:30–4:30 p.m. Meetings are 3rd Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. September through June. Visitors Welcome! Our library will be closed July and August and December but can be open on request.

See our website at:

<http://lethbridgeags.theboss.net/Exec.htm>

Address: 1:28; 909 – 3rd Avenue North.

Phone: (403) 328-9564

Membership Dues

Regular individual or family (Includes 1 Branch)--\$50.00. Seniors (65+) individual or family (Includes 1 Branch)--\$45.00

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Doug McLeod
Vice President	Susan Haga
Treasurer	Pat Barry
Secretary	Phyllis Burnett
Membership	Pat Barry

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Past Presidents	E. McMurchy, Pat Barry, Phyllis Burnett & Winn Evans
Advisory Group	

President's Message

Hi and welcome to the first issue of “Yesterdays Footprints” for 2010. I hope everyone will attend the monthly meetings and, as well, the AGS GenFair and AGM in Medicine Hat in April.

I would like to comment a little on obituaries (obits). I have been indexing the BMD's from the Vulcan newspapers on microfilm. So far I have done 1913 to 1944. It is amazing how much or how little information you can get from these. I have seen obits that were almost a whole column long and ones as short as one line. Some have given quite a family history and others have no history at all. This is still the case with today's obits. This is not to say that the birth and marriage notices are any better. They are not.

An important note to remember: Do not take what you read in the obit as the gospel truth, as you don't know who wrote it. It might be the direct next of kin or it could be a child, brother or sister who may not be in the best of condition to be doing it. It could be someone not even connected with the family. I know from personal experience what it is like to sit with the funeral home and try to think of what to say.

This brings to mind what our late president, Ken Young, was known to say – ‘Do your own obit and do it now’. Thus your family has one less thing to worry about.

Changing the subject now. After talking to Phyllis, I see we may have a few new volunteers working in the library. Thank you and welcome aboard. We can always use more (hint, hint). Doug

Monthly Meetings

Our Annual meeting was held February 18 and no elections were conducted this year. Rod McLeod gave his presentation on “Giscome, the rise and fall of a lumber town.”

Belinda Crowson of the Galt Museum & Archives is coming to give a presentation on Thursday, March 18th at 7:00 p.m. on her latest book *We Don't Talk About Those Women: Red Light District in Lethbridge 1880-1944*.

On Thursday, April 15th at 7:00 p.m. Ronna Byam is giving a presentation on Grosse Isle. Grosse Isle was a quarantine station for the Port of Quebec 1832-1937.

We will hold an Open House during Historical Lethbridge Week on May 4, 5 and 7 from 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Pat and Carol Barry have agreed to bring their family history collection to have on display. On June 5, 2010 we will be holding our garage sale at Pat and Carol Barry's and at the end of the day we will relax with a nice barbecue. Everyone can start looking through items they have that they would like to donate that fall into the category of clean and useful. No clothing, purses, shoes or any ‘personal items’ will be collected.

Lethbridge Family History Center Hours

Fall/Winter Hours: Monday 9:00-5:00 p.m., Tuesday-Thursday 9:00-9:00 p.m., Fridays (closed), Saturday 9:00-1:00 p.m.

Family History Classes:

Tuesday March 9—7:00 p.m. Researching Ontario Records--Ronna Byam

Thursday, March 11-7:00 p.m. – Digitizing 35 mm Slides (and copying from microfilm readers by using your digital camera)—Ritchie Whitehead

Thursday, March 25-7:00 p.m. Organizing Your Digital Photos--Jessica Coupe

Wednesday March 31—7:00 p.m. Using Census Records—Anne Baines

Thursday April 15—7:00 p.m. –Operation Petticoat (Finding elusive female names)—Val Duncan

Wednesday April 21-7:00 p.m. The Golden Hour of Family History—Lois Russell

Thursday April 29—7:00 p.m. Colonial America Research (New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Maine, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia)—Val Duncan

Ways in Which Genealogy and Family History Can Attract a Younger Demographic

As Andrew Wait, Senior Vice President and General Manager at Ancestry.com stated during his presentation The Changing Face of Ancestry.com, the current demographic is as follows:

Genealogy currently has 13 million active researchers – up from 9 million in 2005. Over 185,000 are 25 years or younger (this translates to only 1.4%).

So what does it take to move a field like genealogy in its perception by the public from boring to hip? Here are some ideas:

- Create an “under 30” club at your local genealogical society. Many non-profits especially opera and symphony societies have experienced tremendous growth by allowing younger patrons access to the same benefits of membership as others but only at a lower membership price and with special events geared towards their interests.
- Use younger genealogists as role models and spoke persons. In your organization’s materials, including printed versions as well as on-line, make sure to include a balance of young and old.
- Go to the schools where the younger set rules. Along with exposing school-aged children to various professional fields, make sure your local district includes

genealogists and family historians in such outreach efforts.

- Focus on ancestors when they were in their teens and 20s. Those “whippersnappers” with solid genealogical research and scholarship skills should be allowed to lead and not relegated to just following. Doing so is probably the best way to create a win/win situation for all of us in the genealogy field.

Genealogy can only continue to expand by attracting new participants. And the exchange of information, techniques and methodologies between old and young will help keep genealogy a vibrant and engaging pursuit. (Thomas MacEntee of GeneaBloggers.com—January 30, 2010)

Ten Reasons to Join a Local Genealogy Society

Even if your ancestors didn’t live where you do, joining a local genealogical society can be a lot of fun and help you in your research. Find out how to sharpen your skills and make colleagues in the hobby.

So why, you ask, did a simple genealogical society membership impact my life as a genealogist? Here are ten reasons:

1. **I was no longer alone.**
Until I discovered the network of local genealogists, I was researching within a vacuum. I had no idea there were more than 300 genealogists within a few miles of my home. I could now share my passion with other like individuals. More important, I plugged into a network that alerted me to the latest products, news, and educational opportunities locally and nationwide.
2. **I learned new research skills.**
The guest speakers at monthly meetings and annual workshops taught me how to prepare a research plan, how to evaluate evidence, and techniques to discover new sources.
3. **I learned how to evaluate genealogical software.** One of the most frustrating decisions for a genealogist is deciding upon the right software for their specific needs. Our society created a Computer Interest Group and sponsored educational seminars and hands-on-learning workshops. Without their guidance and instruction, I would have floundered within the world of computer genealogy.
4. **Improved my skills in reading old handwriting.** My personal research

included transcribing old documents, but until I became involved in a society project. I didn't realize that my skills were elementary.

5. I learned from other members.

Our society encouraged members to share their latest breakthrough or discovery at our local meetings. This sharing was not only fun, but gave me ideas on how to solve my own brick wall research problems.

6. I gained an appreciation of other societies. While abstracting or indexing records, I realized that volunteers in other areas might be indexing some records pertinent to my own ancestry. Genealogists helping one another in this manner are one of the most significant gifts we receive within this unique hobby.

7. I gained experience in using a new record type. I volunteered to be the "society genealogist" which meant I answered research inquiries. Many of the questions could be answered through city directory research. Since my ancestors were mostly farmers, I did not have experience with this record type. Had I not volunteered to answer the society's mail, I may never have learned the value of directories.

8. I developed leadership skills. As an active and involved member, you will ultimately be given opportunities to participate in the leadership of the organization. While serving on committees and board member positions, I developed skills that would be valuable in future state and national leadership roles.

9. I did not find a cousin, but someone else did. I'm always amazed at the odd connections that are made at meetings. For example, someone will casually mention they are researching a Watson family in Kentucky. Another member will answer that they are too. After comparing notes, they discover they are related six generations back into time. Members will also find others researching the same geographical area and can help each other with resources, etc.

10. I developed lifelong friendships. Common interests create friendships, and I have gathered many through genealogical connections. Can you imagine what it might be like if you didn't have an understanding genealogical friend to call when you make a major discovery or solve the problem you've been working on for several years?

How to Find a Genealogical Society

There are hundreds of genealogical societies throughout the United States. To find one, near you, visit the Society Hall developed by Ancestry.com and the Federation of Genealogical Societies. The Society Hall is an excellent place to begin your search, with contact information on over 500 societies. The Society Hall also features a Calendar of Events arranged chronologically. There may be a genealogical activity planned in your area that you can attend, or one on your vacation route.

The Historical and Genealogical Society Pages, arranged geographically, are also an excellent resource for locating a society near you.

The fourth edition (1999) of The Genealogist's Address Book by Elizabeth Petty Bentley gives contact information on over 25,000 libraries and repositories, including genealogical societies.

The Federation of Genealogical Societies also has a Guide for the Organization and Management of Genealogical Societies. It has advice on how to start a society and keep it running.

Beyond the Local Society

The personal benefits of joining a local society are quite different than reasons to join out-of-state or other types of genealogical organizations. When you cannot attend local meetings, the obvious benefit is receiving the society's publications. One of the primary goals of local societies is to index, abstract, or transcribe local records and publish the results in their journals and/or online.

If you have roots in Wood County, West Virginia, for example, you may want to join the Wood County Genealogical Society in order to receive notice of their publications and projects. And just because you do not reside in Wood County, does not necessarily mean you could not participate in extraction projects. Some non-local members participate by using microfilm of photocopies of records. (Kathleen W. Hinckley, Genealogy.com)

A Missing Father and a Smudged Address

Before my great-great grandfather, Robert Nathaniel Stockwell, married my great-great grandmother, he had first married and had three children with a young woman named Emma Wren who was born around 1851. Emma's life was short and, although we considered her family, we knew little of her story:

Emma married Robert Nathaniel in London, England in 1875. Her three children were born in 1876, 1877, and 1879. One year later, Emma died in Leeds. The key obstacle in tracing Emma's story was that she did not list a father on her marriage certificate, leaving us unable to discover her parents or her birthplace. All we had were records of these

five life events (her marriage, three children, and subsequent death) spanning a period of just five years, none of which fell during a census. For years, we were left with this dead-end on our family tree, and the enduring mystery of Emma's story.

No father: a dead-end or a clue

Puzzled by the absence of a father's name, it occurred to me to consider the absence of a father, not as *missing* information, but as a clue itself. Why would Emma not list a father? Was he unknown? Had he died? Other marriage certificates have listed fathers as deceased, but this one was blank.

With indexed census records available on-line, in an attempt to find a lead, I compiled a list of all Emma Wrens born around 1851 from the 1851, 1861, and 1871 censuses. This resulted in around 20 different people with varying last name spellings of Wren, Wrenn, Wrend, and Uren. I then followed their families and lives through the various censuses, searching for someone who had no father or who had reason to not list one by 1875. I eliminated any Emmas I could account for in 1881 (when Emma had already died) or who had previously married someone else. This discovery-by-elimination process left me with a short-list of potential Emmas. These Emmas were living away from parents with other relatives, working as servants in other homes or living in poor houses or asylums. I also had on the list one Emma who seemed out-of-place listed as the new-born daughter of 66 and 57 year old parents. Further research was required.

Addresses: the next clue

The breakthrough came when my mother found an image of the original marriage certificate recently made available on Ancestry.com. Prior to this, we only had a transcript on which the address where Emma was living at the time of her marriage was smudged and partially illegible. On the new image, it was completely clear: 276 Fulham Road.

Everything on a certificate can be a clue, so I investigated this address more closely. Why was Emma living there? Who was she living with? First I looked up the address with Google maps. I had believed that Emma and Robert had lived some distance from each other on the same street. Much to my surprise, although Emma was at 276 Fulham Road and Robert was at 429, the houses were exactly across the street from each other. Was this how they had met? With the new streetview option in Google maps, I could even look at the house where Emma was living in 1875.

Although 1875 was not a census year, could I learn anything about Emma by finding this household in 1871? To locate this precise address in the census, I pulled out some maps and consulted

the enumeration area description that prefaces each census book. One way to access these descriptions is to use the "Browse this Collection" option in the census section of Ancestry.com. Once you have selected the county, parish, and sub-registration district, click "view description of enumeration district" to find the enumerator's hand-written description of the area they covered.

At last, I located the address. Living at 276 Fulham Road was a family of drapers with the last name Nell. My breath caught when I saw at the end of the household list a 20-year old with the name "Emma Wren".

She had eluded previous name searches as she had been indexed as "Wen". She was listed as a draper's assistant, with the birthplace of Hereford, Herefordshire.

Piecing together the story

With this new information, I was quickly able to connect her with a family in Hereford in the 1851 census. This was the 2 week-old baby listed as the daughter of a 57 year-old mother, Sarah, and a 66 year-old father, William. I wondered whether Emma was actually a granddaughter to Sarah and William, and child of one of the grown children living at the house, possibly the 22-year-old daughter, also named Sarah.

With the birthplace now known, we found and ordered the birth certificate. The mother on the birth certificate was "Sarah Wren". But instead of "William" being listed as father, the section was again blank. Additionally, the certificate did not offer the usual married and maiden names for the mother, but just the one name: Wren. The information on the birth certificate – and more importantly the information that was missing – confirmed the story. Emma Wren's mother was the 22 year-old Sarah; who her father was, was either unknown or unsaid.

While Emma's father remains a mystery, her birth no longer is. The discovery of her mother, grandmother, grandfather, aunts and uncles has added to her story and to the branches of our family tree. (Submitted by Diane Bosman)

Researching Newfoundland Ancestors

Newfoundland was the first area in North America explored by Europeans. Leif Eriksson landed at "Vinland" in the year 1001 A.D. The archeological remnants of a Viking settlement can be seen today at L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland. Newfoundland was also England's first overseas colony, claimed for Henry VIII in 1497 by John Cabot. Europeans were attracted by the area's rich fishing grounds, and despite England's claim, many western European countries, including France and Spain, continued to fish there for the next hundred

years. Not until Sir Humphrey Gilbert formally took possession of Newfoundland in 1583 for Queen Elizabeth I did the English begin to gain a foothold on the island. The French, who had established a fort and settlement at Placentia in 1662, were England's primary competitors for fishing rights. With the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the French were forced to relinquish their settlements—although the English gave the French fishing rights on specific areas of the coastline.

Unlike in other British colonies, settlement was not encouraged in Newfoundland. The government, as well as the fishing merchants of southwest England, wanted to maintain Newfoundland exclusively as a fishing colony. The British also used Newfoundland as a training ground for its Navy. Early settlements, such as Sir John Guy's of Cuper's Cove in 1610 and that of George Calvert (later 1st Baron Baltimore) in Ferryland in 1623, failed for several reasons, including harsh winters, poor soil, and ongoing struggles with fishing merchants' dominance.

Although some settlers remained, these early colonization failures strengthened the resolve of British authorities to restrict settlement. The last royal charter (1637) would not allow settlers to "build any houses whatsoever or plant or inhabit within six miles of seashore." With these restrictions people who made their living from the sea could not live along the coast. Such restrictions would not be lifted until the early 1800s.

Fishing in Newfoundland was migratory for much of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; boatloads of West Countrymen would fish for the spring and summer and then return to England. Seasonal fishing eventually gave way to temporary settlement, where men would fish during the summer and stay a winter or two. These "temporary" settlers eventually became permanent colonists. The city of Waterford, Ireland, was soon a major port for English ships to obtain supplies and labor. By the mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, even more Irish servants were being recruited to work the fisheries. Many of these recruits came from the southeast counties of Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny, Tipperary, and southeast Cork.

Descendants of Newfoundlanders today can often trace their English and Irish origins to the counties of southwest England and southeast Ireland. Originally a British colony under minimal governance, Newfoundland was granted representative government in 1832. Economic and political struggles continued into the twentieth century, culminating in Newfoundland's admission to Canada in 1949.

Genealogical Research

One might assume that because of its volatile history Newfoundland records are scarce, but this assumption is untrue. Many records, from the early colonial period to the present, have been preserved. However, anyone conducting Newfoundland research will find the usual frustrations of genealogical research. Fires, for example, have devastated some communities, leaving considerable gaps or no records at all.

Genealogists are fortunate to have two excellent online sources, the Newfoundland Grand Banks website, <http://ngb.chebutco.org>, and the Newfoundland GenWeb site, <http://nl.canadagenweb.org>. Each site offers transcribed original documents – from census records to wills. Some Newfoundland records have also been filmed by the Family History Library.

Repositories

Descendants of Newfoundlanders will eventually discover that all research roads lead to St. John's. Although much can be done from a distance, a wealth of genealogical material is only available in Newfoundland.

The Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL) is the official archive for all government records. Researchers should make PANL their first stop. Located at The Rooms, this new state-of-the-art facility has church, vital, land, probate, military and early court records. Extensive manuscript holdings contain family genealogies, community collections, mercantile data, and records of non-government groups and associations. The Archives staff will conduct research in its pre-1892 parish and vital records. One must supply the ancestor's place of residence and religious denomination, however, or the staff will not be able to process a request. For more information on holdings and services, visit www.therooms.ca/archives.

The Maritime History Archives at Memorial University collects and preserves materials on Newfoundland's maritime history and culture. One important collection is the Keith Matthews Files. Dr. Matthews researched all persons who worked in the fishery from 1500 to 1850, extracting over 7,000 names from censuses, shipping lists, parish registers, and others documents from Newfoundland and Great Britain. The Archives also contains British Empire crew agreements and vessel registers; Lloyd's Captains Register (1851-1948); diaries and journals; muster rolls; Irish, English, and Newfoundland parish registers; mercantile records; and student research papers on community and family histories. The Archives provides limited research services for a fee. For more information, visit www.mun.ca/mha.

Church Records

Civil registration in Newfoundland did not begin until 1891. Since many of our ancestors settled in Newfoundland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, we must turn to church records and other sources to fill the gaps.

Church records in Newfoundland generally do not begin until the mid-nineteenth century. The records of some communities, such as St. John's, Trinity, Harbour Grace, and Bonavista, date from the eighteenth century, but many parish registers have significant gaps. Good record-keeping depended on local clergy, some more diligent than others. In addition, clergymen in Newfoundland were responsible for a wide area and sometimes unable to visit remote locations. Other communities have lost records due to fire. The Provincial Archives at St. John's houses microfilm or photocopies of the records of two hundred parishes. Original registers are still held by local churches. A parish finding aid, organized by denomination, can be found at www.therooms.ca/archives/family_history_collections.asp.

Two additional important collections are housed at the Provincial Archives. The Vital Records Collection contains transcriptions of pre-1892 baptisms, marriages, and some burials—largely Protestant church records. An online index, organized by community is at www.therooms.ca/archives/ci.asp. This collection was also filmed by the Family History Library in the 1980s and is available through local family history centers.

The All Newfoundland Births 1840-1915 is a collection of birth records for individuals who required an official birth certificate but could not find their own baptism or birth through civil or church records. The collection contains extracts from family records, sworn affidavits, delayed birth registrations, and baptisms not found in church records. This latter collection is also available through the Family History Library.

Census Records

The first island-wide census was taken in 1836. The population counts still exist but only the returns from the communities in the Notre Dame Bay have survived in nominal form. Censuses conducted prior to 1836 are for specific areas of the island. Other censuses were taken in the nineteenth century but only statistical data survived. Twentieth-century censuses have fared somewhat better. Listings of all household inhabitants were taken in 1911, 1921, 1935, and 1945. parts of the 1921 census are missing, and only fragments remain for 1911, but these later censuses are intact. All extant census records from 1675 to 1945 have been transcribed and can be found online at the Grand Banks and Newfoundland GenWeb sites.

Cemetery Records

Older Newfoundland cemeteries have greatly deteriorated due to harsh weather and general neglect. Thanks to organizations such as the Family History Society of Newfoundland and Labrador (FHSNL) and other volunteer groups, stones in many surviving cemeteries have been transcribed. Cemetery transcriptions can be found on the Grand Banks and Newfoundland GenWeb sites. FHSNL has created a searchable database of transcribed cemetery records and will check this data for a small fee. Another resource is Stonepics, an organization whose "mission is to photograph all Newfoundland headstones, memorials, and monuments." One can purchase a single gravestone photo or a CD with images from several cemeteries. Consult www.stonepics.com for a name index and list of cemeteries.

Some Newfoundland Resources at NEHGS

Consult our online catalog for a complete list of holdings on Newfoundland and Labrador.

- Atlantic Canada Shipping Project and Memorial University of Newfoundland, Ships and Seafarers of Atlantic Canada [electronic resource] (St. John's, Nfld.: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1998).
- Crosbie, Gertrude. Births, Deaths, Marriages in Newfoundland Newspapers, Vols. 1-6 1825-1877 (St. John's, Nfld.: Memorial University, Maritime History Archives, 1986).
- Crosbie, Gertrude. Births, Deaths, Marriages in Newfoundland Newspapers, 1810-1890 [electronic resource] (St. John's Nfld.: Memorial University, Maritime History Archives, 2004).
- Cuff, Robert H., Melvin Baker, and Robert Pitt, eds. Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography (St. John's, Nfld.: H. Cuff, 1990).
- Howard, Mildred. Royal Gazette and Newfoundland Advertiser, 1810-1845; Vital Statistics and Items (St. John's, Nfld.: the author, 1986).
- Howard, Mildred. Vital Statistics and Items from Newfoundland Newspapers, 1831-1872 (St. John's, Nfld.: the author, 1983).
- Punch, Terrence M. Genealogist's Handbook for Atlantic Canada Research Boston: NEHGS, 1989).
- Seary, E.R. Family Names of the Island of Newfoundland (Toronto: Published for Memorial University, 1971).

- 1921 Census of Newfoundland [microform] (St. John's, Nfld.: The Archives, 19), 18 reels.
- The Newfoundland Ancestor: Quarterly Journal of the Family History Society of Newfoundland and Labrador (St. John's Nfld.: Newfoundland and Labrador Genealogical Society, [1987--]).

Online Seminars at

www.NewEnglandAncestors.org

(Researching Your Newfoundland Ancestors, Part I and II, narrated by Judith Lucey printed in New England Ancestors--Holiday 2008.)

British Release of the 1939 National Identity Card Database

Those of us researching in England, Wales or Scotland will be interested in the recent release of the 1939 National Identity Card Database.

The 1939 National Identity Card Survey was undertaken at the outbreak of the Second World War and took place on National Registration Day, Friday, September 29, 1939. The details collected for each person included: sex, date of birth, marital status, occupation, whether member of armed forces or reserves.

The 1939 Identity Card database formed the basis of the NHS Central Register which the NHS was set up in 1948. The data remained secret until challenges to the Freedom of Information Act at the end of 2009 and early into 2010. It has now been announced the release of data for individuals who have died and are recorded as deceased.

The 1939 National Identity Card database can complement genealogy research using the 1911 Census, most of which will be released up to and including 2012. The 1921 Census is due to be released 2022. The 1931 Census was lost in a fire in 1942. There was no census in 1941 due to the Second World War.

For England and Wales, the service is handled by the NHS Information Centre – see <http://www.ic.nhs.uk/news-and-events/news/nhs-ic-launches-the-1939-register-service>. This website provides a link to the request form which has to be printed and signed – and accompanied by a cheque for 42 (pounds) as a search fee – and sent to the NHS IC address at Southport.

For Scotland, the service is administered by the General Register Office for Scotland, and the fee is much less, at 13.00 (pounds) per request. (Luxegen Genealogy and Family History, February 12, 2010)

Researching in Ireland

Census of Ireland

The household returns and ancillary records for the

censuses of Ireland of 1901 and 1911, which are in custody of the National Archives of Ireland, represent an extremely valuable part of the Irish national heritage. All 32 counties for 1911 are now available on this site. The National Archives of Ireland have decided to make the material immediately available.

Famine Irish Passenger Record Data File (FIPAS), 1/12/1846 – 12/31/1851

Records for Passengers Who Arrived at the Port of New York during the Irish Famine, created 1977-1989, documenting the period 1/12/1846-12/31/1851. Can search by name, age, and destination, passenger port of embarkation, manifest identification number and passenger arrival date.

Freeholders Records

(Public Record Office of Northern Ireland <http://www.proni.gov.uk>)

Freeholders' records are lists of people entitled to vote, or of people who voted at elections. A freeholder was a man who owned his land outright (in fee) or who held it by lease which could be for one or more lives (for example, his own life or for the lives of the other people named in the lease).

From 1727 to 1793 only Protestants with a freehold worth at least 40 shillings a year were legally permitted to vote. Between 1793 and 1829 both Protestants and Catholics with 40 shilling freeholds could vote, but in 1829 the franchise level was increased to 10 pounds, so 40 shilling freeholders were no longer allowed to vote. This last measure increased the influence of landlords by effectively confining membership of Parliament to the propertied or monied classes.

Before 1872 Ballot Act introduced the secret ballot, voters were required to stand up and declare publicly their electoral allegiance. Their fear of going against the landlords' wishes resulted in a substantial number of candidates returned being either landlords or their relations or supporters.

Freeholders' records provide a range of information about land ownership and may contain all or some of the following:

Name of freeholder, Address of freeholder, Location of freehold, Description of freehold, Name of landlord, Address of landlord, value of freehold, Names of other lives, Date and place of freeholder's registration, Occupation of freeholder, Religion of freeholder.

Some of the records survive in their original form, while some are transcripts. Some are in manuscript while others are printed or typed. (Information from Public Record Office of Northern Ireland website)

Death Records

Our society is extremely sensitive about the death of any of its members. Still, the records kept after a relative passes can be a useful tool in uncovering your family history. Below is a list of more than 20 possible sources of information on an ancestor's death.

Some of these might be difficult to access and may require proof of close kinship or a relative's written permission before anyone will talk to you.

1. The attending physician issues a **Death Certificate** either before or after an autopsy. It provides the time, date and cause of death. The undertaker, insurance and pension companies, probate courts and a variety of other agencies require it to initiate the civil process. A copy of the certificate may be in the family papers, the files of any of the agencies or the hospital that issued it.
2. There may be a **Newspaper Article** about the death, if it was the result of an accident, a crime or was in some way newsworthy.
3. **Obituaries and Death Notices** were not common in big city newspapers until well into the 20th century, except for prominent people, but were very common in the smaller local newspapers.
4. Local papers also frequently wrote a **Report on the Funeral** with a lot of family history. Be sure to check several editions after a death for any relevant reports.
5. The municipal and/or provincial/state government, depending on the jurisdiction at the time, handled the Civil Registration of deaths. To have any hope of finding the record if it is not indexed, you must know the date of death.
6. If you know the church that the deceased attended, there is a good chance of finding a burial record in the **Church Register**. These may still be in the building or in central (or diocesan) archives.
7. Cemeteries kept **Records of Burials**, although many are missing because they were stored in the caretaker's private home. Some records are online or located in archives.
8. **Tombstone Transcriptions**, which can be found at local libraries, or on the tombstones themselves, are popular sources for family historians, although they aren't always reliable.
9. Meticulous **Funeral Home Records** stay with a business even if it is sold to another owner. The Directory of Funeral Homes in the United States is available at
10. www.fsnfuneralhomes.com/United-States-Funeral-Homes. In Canada, you can find out what funeral home serves the area you are interested in at www.generations.on.ca/funeral.htm.
11. **Coffin Plates** were popular at one time. Traditionally, these are engraved with the name of the deceased and the years of birth and death. Although originally attached to the coffin, funeral homes often removed the plates prior to burial. Now they might be among family heirlooms or in local museums.
12. It is customary in some areas to prepare formal **Death Notices** to send to family and close friends. You might be lucky enough to find the one you are looking for in the family papers of a relative.
13. Many families keep a **Family Bible** where they record the vital events in the lives of their relatives. A relative might have one or it might be stored in local archives.
14. **Family Correspondence** and other **Family Papers** likely include information on a death. Don't forget to check the records of relatives and friends, especially in-laws, for this type of information.
15. **Diaries and Journals** of family relatives, friends and neighbors can be valuable sources. Many of these turn up in local archives if they leave the family.
16. There is a very good chance that **Scrapbooks** from the time and place of your ancestor's death will have some record of the passing. Most local archives have a good collection of these.
17. If your ancestor worked for a large company or was a member of a club or association, there is a chance that the association's **Newsletter** published the death.
18. **Wills and Probate Documents** are in the public domain and provide good family history information. The county-level judiciary usually keeps them, but in some jurisdictions they are turned over to provincial/state archives after a specified number of years.
19. If your ancestor had life insurance through a regular insurance company or through a fraternal organization, like the Knights of Columbus or the Forresters, the insurance carrier will likely have voluminous **Insurance Records** that may be difficult to plow through, but also might have that elusive piece of information.
20. **Land Transfer Records** note the change of ownership of the land in the event of a death and they will often have a copy of the instrument of transfer (will, etc.).
21. If your ancestor died in a military conflict or was executed, there is sure to be an official **Military or Judicial Record** of this fact.
22. Don't neglect **Local Histories**, they are usually full of pearls and the histories of some churches may well have the information you are looking for.

23. If the local archives has the papers for the local cabinetmakers shop, it may well include the **Coffin Ledger Entry** for your ancestor's coffin.
24. Other indicators of a person's death can be disappearance from **Censuses, Poll Books, Assessment Books, Voters Lists** and a host of other documents that tried to keep track of the population. This may only mean that they moved, were in jail or hospitalized, but still follow up on these leads.

There are many free websites designed to support this kind of research. Several of the broad-based ones may be useful, albeit as long shots: www.obitcentral.com has thousands of links to online obituaries, cemetery inscriptions and death notices. The website www.findagrave.com lets you search 4.1 million grave records and www.interment.net has more than 3.2 million records online. There is also www.ancestorsatrest.com, which is a relatively new site that brings together many different types of death records.

If, after all of this, you are still up against a brick wall, don't give up. You likely need more information about the individual before you can use many of these resources. Redirect your research to find that information first. Some people do disappear usually because they want to. They change their names, fake their backgrounds and do all kinds of things. And it seems it's done just to frustrate you. In the grand scheme of things, however, very few people vanish, so keep on searching with a stout heart and a gleam in your eye. (Patrick Wohler is a certified genealogist—*Family Chronicle*—September/October 2007).

Let Obituaries Speak to You!

Every genealogist should know the importance of seeking out obituaries for valuable clues to other resources. An obituary is a notice of the death of a person, often with a biographical sketch, most often published in a newspaper, but these days more frequently on the Internet.

Obituaries have a lot to tell you if you take the time to analyze them. First of all, an obituary is many things, and not just a notice of someone's death. It is a public record, although not necessarily an original record or a primary source.

An obituary or a funeral notice may actually be an advertisement for a mortuary or funeral parlor, complete with a graphical border. It also is an announcement of funeral or memorial services, and this can provide a geographical location where to seek other information. There is usually a reason, such as family connections or former residence in the area, where services are held and interment is performed.

Obituaries have been published for centuries in various formats, from handbills to newspapers, periodicals to the Internet. Since it was created as a result of information provided by some informant who may not have had all the facts or who may have been under emotional stress at the time, the information in an obituary may not be 100 percent correct. The facts should, therefore, be verified for accuracy.

The accuracy of the information included is as reliable as the knowledge of and the information provided by the informant(s).

There may have even been reasons for information to have been withheld or falsified. As an example, a younger age may have been given for the deceased if the person was sensitive about that subject. In addition, the nickname of the person may have been used in an obituary, rather than the given name, because that was how the person was commonly known.

Accuracy also depends on the person who took down the information, the person who transcribed it, an editor's attentiveness to detail and a typesetter's accuracy. Upon my father's death in 1980, for example, a representative of the funeral home interviewed my mother, brother and me for the obituary. The representative took down the information by hand. At that time I was living in Chicago, and he abbreviated Chicago as Ch'go, a common abbreviation. Unfortunately, when the obituary was published, my place of residence was listed as Fargo, Illinois. Someone had tried to interpret the abbreviation and failed. And while there is a Fargo, Illinois, some future researcher seeking details about my life will draw a complete blank there. These are just a few reasons why it is essential that you personally corroborate the information in an obituary with other original evidence.

Perhaps you remember how you diagrammed sentences when you were in school. In effect, you were dissecting sentences by drawing lines, writing in phrases and clauses, identifying parts of speech and connecting the sentence pieces with conjunctions and prepositions. You were placing all the pieces into a logical structure that could be visualized and thereby more easily understood. You can do the same.

Obituaries really do speak to you. They can communicate a wealth of clues for your research. Some of these include:

- Name and age of the deceased.
- Date, location and sometimes cause of death.
- Names of parents, siblings, spouse(s) and sometimes maiden names.
- Names and/or numbers of children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews.
- Place(s) of residence of living relatives.

- Names of and notes about deceased relatives.
- Where and when deceased was born.
- When deceased left their native land, perhaps even the port of entry and date.
- Naturalization date and location.
- Places where deceased was educated.
- Date and location of marriage and name of spouse (sometimes maiden name).
- Religious affiliation and name of church or temple.
- Military service information (branch, rank, dates served, medals and awards).
- Place(s) of employment.
- Public offices held or political appointments.
- Organizations to which the person belonged.
- Awards received.
- Events in which the person participated.
- Name and address of funeral home or church where funeral was to occur.
- Date and time of funeral.
- Name(s) of officiating clergy.
- List of pallbearers.
- Date, place and disposition of remains.
- Statement regarding any memorial services.
- Directions regarding donations or memorial gifts.
- Obituaries can speak to you and lead you to other evidence.
- They can also challenge you to recheck other materials that you have already found. When two evidentiary sources don't agree, it is important to examine them to establish if they are independent (not derived from one another) and to weigh the quality of that evidence. An obituary is never a primary source of information. There are opportunities for errors to be introduced or for important information to be omitted.
- You can dissect any obituary. Underline the pointers or clues and make a list of what resources could be used to locate more definitive and reliable information. Then figure out where you would look for the information. This approach is sure to help you attune yourself to those obituaries and how they speak to you. (George G. Morgan is president of Aha! Seminars, Inc. and is an International genealogical lecturer. This article was printed in *Discovering Family History--Preview Issue 2008*.)

FAMILY HISTORY CONFERENCES

National Genealogical Society is holding their annual conference in the Salt Palace in Salt Lake City from the 28th of April to May 1st 2010.

For complete details see www.ngsgenealogy.org and click on Conference and Events. Then select Annual Conference then choose Attendee Registration. In the main body of the resulting screen is a link titled Registration Brochure. There will be over 100 speakers on the theme of 'Follow Your Ancestors Trail'.

Full conference registration is \$175 US before March 8th and \$210 thereafter. Single day registration is \$95 and \$100 after March 8th.

GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

Sponsored by Drayton Valley Branch of Alberta Genealogical Society

Saturday March 13, 2010
At Pembina Education Consortium
5056-50 Ave, Drayton Valley, AB

Speaker: Deanna Bullock
BA from BYU, Family History/Genealogy MA, U of A British Social History

9:00 a.m. Registration

9:30-10:30 a.m. I have family papers, where do I start
11:00—12:00 p.m. Mapping for Genealogists
12:00—1:00 p.m. LUNCH provided
1:00-2:00 p.m. Using Google in Your Family History Research
2:15-3:15 p.m. Google Books and PERSI – tapping into the power of print.

Fee: \$15.00 to Drayton Valley Members AGS only
\$20.00 for Non-members

Register with your payment, to Drayton Valley Community Learning by March 9, 2010.
Send fee to Drayton Valley Community Learning
Box 6321, Drayton Valley, AB, T7A 1R8

No refunds for cancellations after March 9, 2010.
For more information e-mail Miriam Roberts at meiriona@telus.net or phone 780-542-2215

Tables Turned

“When I was younger I hated going to weddings. It seemed that all of my aunts and the grandmotherly types used to come up to me, poking me in the ribs and cackling, “You’re next.” They stopped that after I started doing the same thing to them at funerals.” (Missing Links April 4, 2001)

GENFAIR 2010
Alberta Genealogical Society
“Living in the Past Lane”

Friday, April 23 and Saturday, 24, 2010

Hosts:

Brooks & Medicine Hat Branch

Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre
401 – 1st Street S.E.
Medicine Hat, Alberta

Friday 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Registration, Wine & Cheese in the Studio Theatre
at the Esplanade

Archives at the Museum and Archives in the
Esplanade open to GenFair Registrants

Saturday – Registration 8:00 to 8:45 a.m.;

Seminars 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Alberta Genealogy Society Annual General
Meeting 12:45 to 1:45 p.m.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Bev & Ken Rees Social Networking for
Genealogists (Plenary)

Philip Pype Identifying & Preserving
Your Photos

Uwe Krickham German Towns & Maps

Deb Philips Introductory Genealogy

Susan Haga Analyzing Our Ancestors
Handwriting

Bev & Ken Rees Legacy Genealogy Program

Irwin Easthope How to Google Your
Family History

Valerie Duncan Getting the Most from the
LDS Websites

Commercial Vendors, Special Interest Groups and
Branch Displays in Main Lobby

Saturday Banquet & Award Presentation–7:00 p.m.

Royal Canadian Legion Branch #17

Catering by McElquinn

Guest Speaker: Rev. David Carter

Author: Behind Canadian Barbed Wire

(Story of POW camps in Canada, including at
Medicine Hat, AB.)

Interesting Websites

New Brunswick Vital Records

<http://archives.gnb.ca/APPS/GovRecs/VISSE/?culture=en-CA>

More genealogy records that have recently become
available online.

US: The Oregon State Archives has released a new
search database of over 100,000 settlers who lived
in Oregon prior to statehood. Most of the
information in the database is from the period 1800
to 1860. The database was constructed backwards
in time starting with information collected from the
1850: and 1860 federal censuses of the Oregon
territory. This information was then supplemented
with additional records including marriage records,
death records, probate records and other official
and semi-official records. Information was also
incorporated from various publications and
secondary sources. Access is free.

<https://secure.sos.state.or.us/prs/personProfileSearch.do?earlyOregonian=true&searchReset=true>

US: Hamilton County, Ohio (which covers the city
of Cincinnati) has put online over 1 million probate
court documents dating back as far as 1791.
Included are birth records, death records, marriage
records as well as estate records and naturalization
records, etc. Access is free.

<http://www.probatect.org/courtrecrdsarchive/bukcats.aspx> (Submitted by Eleanor McMurchy)

Norfolk England Parish Registers

<http://pilot.familysearch.org/recordsearch/start.htm#p=waypoint;s=waypointsOnly;c=1416598;w=0>

The Pilot site for FamilySearch has just put
online the digital images from their Norfolk Church
of England Parish Registers microfilms, 1538-
1900.

This site does not show a transcribed index of
names but a list of the Parishes of Norfolk comes
up on the left hand side for you to choose from and
after you have chosen a parish, the events available
allow you to choose from baptisms, marriages,
burials and others. A time period then appears. It
provides the convenience of having a film brought
in from the Family History Library in Salt Lake of
your Norfolk parish.

Genealogy Humor

A little boy was attending his first wedding. After
the service, his cousin asked him, “How many
women can a man marry?” “Sixteen,” the boy
responded. His cousin was amazed that he knew the
answer so quickly. “How do you know that?”
“Easy,” the little boy said. “All you have to do is
add it all up, like the Minister said: 4 better, 4
worse, 4 richer, 4 poorer.” (Rootsweb Review 28