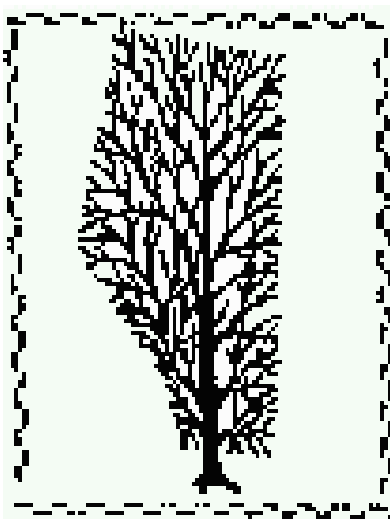


**YESTERDAY'S FOOTPRINTS**  
**Alberta Genealogical Society**  
**Lethbridge and District Branch**  
**Vol. 31, No. 2**  
**May 2014**  
**ISSN 0836-5318**



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## Editor's Corner



If you want to submit articles, genealogy humor, interesting web sites 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](mailto:lethags@theboss.net) Susan Haga, Newsletter Editor.

### Lethbridge A.G.S. Branch Hours

Library Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 1:30-4:30 p.m. Meetings are 3rd Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. September through May. Visitors Welcome! Our library will be closed July and August and December but can be open on request. See our web site at:

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

**Address: 1:28; 909 – 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

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Vice President	Susan Haga
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## President's Message

Are you thinking about going to the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) in Edmonton or to the Glenbow Museum in Calgary? By all means, do it. Last July I spent a day at the Glenbow. What a great place. There is a fee to get into the Museum, but if you are going to the Archives, there is no charge. You can take your laptop, camera or scanner in. I took over 120 pictures of written/printed information. A word of advice – if possible plan ahead. Research their website to find the file (font) numbers that you want to look at. It makes it a lot easier and quicker for them to find and you to look at.

This April before GenFair I spent the day at the PAA. This is another great place. They have Alberta records of BMDs, some divorce records, will probates, newspaper records, Henderson Directories, homestead records and etc. Check their website. The staff and volunteers are knowledgeable, helpful and very friendly. There is no charge to enter the reading room, but you can NOT take in your camera, cell phone, scanner or any bag or purse. You can take a laptop in but not its case. There are lockers outside the reading room that cost 25 cents which you get back when you leave. Again plan ahead. In our resource centre library we have two books that index the Alberta BMDs that were registered from 1890 until 1905 (I believe) and give you the PAA file numbers. Great books if you are researching early Alberta.

GenFair was a one day affair in Edmonton this year. There were only a couple vendors and a good number of static displays by various branches and special interest group including our own Henning Mundel and his research on the 'Mayflower'. Well done Henning.

For those that were not at the AGS AGM that followed GenFair, our Susan Haga was announced as the President of AGS – Congratulations Susan. I repeat myself again – Thank you to all the volunteers. Have a safe and enjoyable summer – do a little genealogical research as well!!  
Doug McLeod, President

### Monthly Meetings

On Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. we had David Tyler, Director of the Raymond Family History Center, and he came and gave us a very interesting presentation on German Research. On Thursday May 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. Jessica Coupe, from the Lethbridge Family History Center gave us an informative presentation on Quebec Research.

### Lethbridge Family History Center Hours

Summer Hours: The Lethbridge Family History Center will open for summer hours on June 10<sup>th</sup>. It will be open Tues: 9:00-5:00 p.m. and Wed 1:00-9:00 p.m.

## **Parish Registers: Manitoba**

Heritage Canada has put more digital records online and one of the records that you may find helpful is the parish records for Manitoba.

Government registration of vital statistics (baptism, marriage and death) for Manitoba did not begin until the late 1800s. Included in this collection can be found parish registers and other church records from various churches in the province of Manitoba.

There are 3 microfilms: H-1344, H-1812, H-1813. Make sure that you read the first few pages before you start your search. It looks like they are in alphabetical order, but in case you do not find the person you are looking for, you will have to go page by page to see if the person is there. Many of the records include the people of the Red River Settlement.

These Manitoba parish registers can be found at <http://heritage.canadian.ca/> (By Elizabeth Lapointe at 5 Genealogy Canada) (Submitted by Eleanor McMurchy)

## **Engaging Children with Genealogy and Family History**

No doubt, genealogy is fun. So, why not share the fun with children, either in your family or in your community? This article will suggest ways to engage young children in genealogy and family history, either as a one-time, hands-on activity or as a continuous way of life (or anywhere in between). And who knows, one of these kids might be the next family historian of his or her family.

### **Genealogy around the Dinner Table and Beyond**

The simplest way of engaging children with genealogy is to bring it up on a daily basis, during dinner time, as part of the daily “How was your day?” conversation. “If I just discovered the maiden name of my great grandmother, why not tell it to my kids? Don’t forget to tell about the research, not just about its outcomes. Keep it simple and fit it to their level of interest and knowledge. Use that opportunity to explain terms related to genealogy (i.e. census, birth certificate, second cousin once removed), family history (e.g., place of residence, immigration, occupation), and even general history. Introducing kids to the very concepts of family tree and family relationships is easy with family trees of their loved characters, like Harry Potter or the Simpsons Family (you can find these online); they will sure be captivated with these trees!

Take advantage of holidays or other celebrations (often with the younger generation of the extended family, and share family holiday traditions and anecdotes. Holidays are a great opportunity to introduce family recipes. You can bring to life old family recipes and use the kids’ imagination to discuss how it was made in the pre-

electricity era. In a potluck family gathering, set a theme of “family dishes” to involve others and gather more family recipes.

Expose the kids to historical items you have handy, and they’ll feel like going back in time: old coins and old books (also look for dedications), family-inherited jewels and religious artifacts, historical working tools, interesting documents and newspaper clips—every item has a history.

Family history can be shared with children of all ages via games and other hands-on activities. For example, family photos can be turned into a Memory game (aka Concentration, Pairs); you can either do it by yourself (or, even better, with your kids), play a customized-version online (e.g., [matchthememory.com](http://matchthememory.com), [myheritage.com](http://myheritage.com)) or on your smart phone (e.g., Photo Memory Game in the App Store), or order printed versions of the game (e.g., [printerstudio.com](http://printerstudio.com), [matchthememory.com](http://matchthememory.com), [myheritage.com](http://myheritage.com)). Other classic games might also be transformed into a family theme, for example: Go Fish (easy version: four identical cards of each relative; advanced version: series based on four different persons from a certain family branch), Trivia, Monopoly (finally a chance to buy your uncle’s property in the Hamptons), word puzzles, word search, etc.

### **Use Facebook for Keeping in Touch with the Extended Family Youngsters**

Besides real-life meetings, you might use social networking sites for communicating with the family youngsters. Facebook, being the most popular, is a great choice. It’s easily accessible, it allows both synchronous and asynchronous discussions, and it enables you to enrich your updates and stories with photos, videos, documents, hyperlinks, and much more. Initiate a Facebook group and keep it open to approved members only (due to privacy issues).

Use it to relate to daily events with family-related anecdotes, run contests (e.g., “The oldest photo in your album”), or present family-related riddles (for example, “Who was the person in our family who was married for only 10 days?” Share research successes (or failures), present interesting documents and upload historical/current photos. And let others share too, as this is a great tool for collecting more data. Keep this group frequently updated with lots of fun stuff, and be sure that its members will tell their parents or grandparents who are not connected to Facebook about it.

### **Let Them Research**

Today’s children can easily learn the technology needed for handling genealogy research. Teach them some genealogy basics (e.g. Soundex, content and format of different records), and they will be great research assistants. Let them

search for their ancestors' immigration records or decipher information about their family from a census page. While doing that, demonstrate proper genealogy (e.g., evaluating sources, transcribing and summarizing documents, citing evidence, keeping a research log).

### **In-Class and Community Projects**

Genealogy should not be kept only in the close/extended family. It is a vehicle to run educational projects within classes or within community. In these instances, genealogy has three main advantages. First, it will teach children the basics of scientific inquiry in a fun way; secondly, it can be combined in almost any aspect of the curriculum; lastly, such projects, if handled properly, might result in real contribution to the genealogy community as a whole.

If you are a teacher, the curriculum offers many opportunities for presenting genealogy. Take dates and calendars as an example. Calendars are part of the curriculum in many elementary schools (either in math or social studies), so you can present uses of dates in historical documents and expand your discussion towards old calendars. Here are some ideas for simple activities: kids will find the day of the week in which they or their parents were born, hence will physically interact with old documents; a competition can be held in class (or even in the whole school) looking for the oldest date presented from an authentic historical family document, bringing to life the stories of these documents; kids can be asked to calculate at what age their parents and their grandparents were married and/or had their first child, then a histogram can be collaboratively built to show generational differences; census pages can be used for fun math-related activities, exposing the kids to their local history. For older kids, calendar manipulations and conversions are a fertile ground for coding task in computer classes or statistics-related tasks in math classes, just to name a few examples.

Historical documents, either from the family or from the community, are great examples for geography (e.g., take a world map and mark the places of birth for the students, their parents, and their grandparents, each generation in a different color, to learn about distant places as well as migrating patterns), history (e.g., each student can build a timeline showing both life events and historical events, a showcase of micro-history; parents can come into class to tell about historical events from their point of view); and of course, for many reading and writing tasks (e.g., present the kids with biographic books, maybe even from their own community; ask them to write of their family history).

On a larger-scale (but not necessarily with older children), projects can be assigned within schools

or through other organizations to add true value to the genealogy community. The most obvious example is cemetery indexing. And no, do not be afraid of going with young children to the cemetery. With the right preparation, kids will see it as merely a standard field trip. Preparations should include at least the following: familiarity with tombs text and design from photos or printed examples (a fascinating educational topic by itself) and knowledge of the cemetery layout. Indexing a cemetery, or parts of it, might involve taking pictures of the tombs, writing down names or any other text, or documenting the grave location (maybe using geographic coordinates). You can use dedicated apps for that (e.g. BillionGraves.com), upload the materials to devoted websites (e.g., FindAGrave.com, interment.net, JewishGen's JOWBR for Jewish burials), or build your own spreadsheet with the data to be contributed to a local genealogical society. Such a project can span over a few years, either by breaking down the cemetery sections or by breaking down the indexing process.

Other ideas for large-scale projects for schools or communities (either one-time or on-going) might include: interviewing people from the community about historical events; deciphering documents from the local archives; building a (digital or physical) collection of artifacts reflecting the community history; collaboratively constructing family trees of the community's first generations or studying the migratory paths through which the community was formed; tracking historical residents of certain houses; etc. Such projects have at least three huge benefits: They bring community members together to learn and act collaboratively for meeting a certain goal; they add to the community historical knowledge among its current and future members; and, resulting with a real "product", they will be of great value to genealogists all over the country and the world.

If you have the passion to write, keeping your community's youngsters engaged with genealogy can be done via local newspapers and/or local organizations' newsletters. You can contact the editors and offer to write a short column (maybe on a regular basis), referring to local or national events relevant to the venue from a genealogical/historical point of view. Explain genealogy terms, but keep your writing easy-to-read. You can give kid-oriented presentations (hopefully hands-on) on special occasions (e.g., holidays, national memorial days, even mother's day), highlighting one's personal perspective.

So, if you want to involve kids in your family with their family history, or if you are passionate about involving kids in your community with genealogy—you can start acting right now. Don't forget to keep it fun, educational and professional.

The added value for bringing kids into the genealogy world is that often their parents will join too. (Arnon Hershkovitz, Ph.D.  
[www.familychronicle.com](http://www.familychronicle.com) May/June 2013)

### **Out of the Mouths of Babes!**

About 4 months ago I received a very intriguing e-mail from someone I had never met asking me if I was related to a young child named Rosalie who had died in Edmonton, Alberta many years ago at the age of 2 ½ years. He had found Rosalie on familysearch.org and when he saw that she was part of my family line he contacted me. He said that he had found her funeral record in a book titled, “Births, Marriages and Deaths” that was housed at a LDS Church in Edmonton where he attended church.

I responded to him immediately stating yes Rosalie was in fact my sister who had died when I was a baby when we were living in Edmonton over 50 years ago! Then a flood of e-mails started going back and forth between Brad and I. He said that he would mail me the original funeral document and keep a scanned copy there at the church. Sure enough about a week later I received Rosalie’s funeral document in the mail and a very nice letter from his man. I was excited because it had my parent’s address on it where they were living at the time of her death and their phone number as well as other pertinent information some of which I already had.

Brad then informed me that he had taken some of the information from her document and loaded it up on Findagrave where he had located her tombstone. He asked me if that was alright and I replied as long as he hadn’t put up any personal information such as the names of my parents and their address at the time. I also asked if he would check out who the Bishop of their Ward had been at the time for my own personal interest and he followed through and found that information for me. He then asked if I ever had a chance to come to Edmonton. I started laughing to myself and replied in my next e-mail “Why yes, I am on the Executive of Alberta Genealogical Society and have to travel to board meetings a few times a year.” Brad then commented on seeing a poster for our GenFair that would be held at the end of April and said that he wanted to attend and perhaps we could meet and then in his next line he wrote “But don’t be surprised when you see me because I am only a fifteen year old young man.” I was in shock and I could not believe it that someone of his age was not only into family history research but that he would go so far out of his way to contact me.

Brad then relayed the rest of the story about the vital records book coming into his hands. His father, who is a Bishop at an LDS Church in Edmonton, had found this vital records book and

his first instinct was to simply throw the book away! He thought after all of this time no one would care about these names! Then a thought occurred to him that perhaps he should take this book home to his son Brad and that he might think ‘that this is kind of cool’. The next day Brad received the book and was very relieved that his father had not thrown the book away.

Brad was so excited to see all of the interesting names. Some of the people were still in their Ward (congregation). Then a week or two later, his father casually mentioned that he had found even more records, but these ones were individual records. His father continued by saying he was just going to throw them out! Again Brad told him how important these records were and he began to think that his father was just trying to rile him up by telling him he was going to discard them.

So the next morning before school Brad made his father take him to his office in the church and get the records. Brad exclaimed “I kept them in my locker all day at school and waited anxiously to get them home so I could look at them.” When he got home, he thought about what he should do with these interesting death records. He contemplated just scanning them and making copies but then it occurred to him that he needed to do more than that. He said “I had the strong feeling that I needed to get these records back to the original families.” He knew how much he would love it if he received one of these records about his family members.

Brad knew right away how he was going to find them by searching for these deceased people on familysearch.org and then looked for their vital information associated with them. He looked at who had inputted the information and then sent an e-mail to them stating who he was, and how he had found them and that he wanted to get these records back to them. The very first person he was able to find in familysearch.org was my sister Rosalie’ and he was able to contact me regarding her, and he e-mailed me the scanned document. This young man has touched my heart so much!

Another record that he found was a Danish man, who had moved to Edmonton with his family many years previous. In the burial record it stated that there was some family living in Edmonton and some living back in Denmark. Brad found this deceased man online and saw that only one man had posted information for his family members. He contacted him and this man was so excited to hear about this record. Brad was really surprised to find out that he was still living in Denmark! The record was of his mother’s brother who had moved to Canada. He was so excited to get the document and said he had added it to his collection. He also told Brad that he was 70 years old.

The last record that Brad was able to make a connection with was to a Mother and Father of an infant son who died in Edmonton. They both really enjoyed receiving the record. They now live in BC and have not visited Edmonton in quite awhile.

Of the 30 records that Brad went through he was able to connect three or four back to the original families. He said that it was hard to find people to contact as not as many people have inputted information into familysearch.org for these people in quite a number of years and the other half wouldn't respond to his e-mails.

Gratefully I did get to meet Brad at GenFair in Edmonton, on Saturday, April 26, 2014 and was able to visit with him and his mother and learned that he started doing family history research when he was 13 years of age and at age 14 he became a volunteer in family history research in his Ward at the LDS church and is now continuing his family history research on his family line in Germany! (Written by Susan Haga and Brad Pierson)

### **The Early Censuses**

Contrary to popular belief the census returns of 1801-1831 and other population lists have a wealth of details for family historians. The decennial censuses from 1841 to 1911 are a cornerstone of every family historian's research. However, we tend to overlook the equally interesting earlier censuses. It's been suggested they are of little value, but we will see, there are many examples of local censuses, both official and unofficial, which can throw valuable light on our ancestors.

The first national population count occurred as a result of The Population Act 1800 which required overseers of the poor or notable householders throughout England and Wales (and schoolmasters in Scotland) to collect information from every household. Official forms were distributed to each parish.

Once the statistics had been collected, they were sworn before the local justice of the peace and sent to the Home Office. Sadly, these were usually destroyed afterwards, but fortunately rough drafts were often preserved in parish chests. Apart from the obvious need to count the population, censuses were taken to assess the state of the nation: the social need for housing, services for the poor, the collection of taxes and so on.

Simultaneously, the clergy were asked to provide evidence of all baptisms and burials in parishes for previous decades in an attempt to prove growth or decline in the population.

Curiously, the 1801 Census excluded the numbers of men serving in armed forces and convicts incarcerated in hulk ships. However, in 1803, the Privy Council ordered an official census to be taken, to identify men between 15 and 60

years of age, as a precaution against a possible French invasion. In some cases, this list included some males above 60 years old and a number of single women and widows. In most cases, the age, marital status and other information was also recorded.

The questions the enumerators asked were standard for each of the early censuses, although each one became more detailed than the previous one.

However, many enumerators gave more detail than they were asked for, much to the delight of family historians!

In 1801, enumerators were asked to provide statistical information on the number of inhabited and uninhabited houses in the parish; the number of families in the parish; occupational status-whether occupied in trades, agriculture or of independent means. Heads of household were named, primarily to ensure that none were missed or counted twice, whereas males and females in the household were only counted.

Over 750 parish listings of names survive in England and Wales for 1801 to 1831, but the information varies enormously. Despite the strict instructions, many enumerators took great pride in their form-filling and provided names and family groupings, relationships, and in some cases ages and even dates of birth, are included.

Questions four and five were filled in by the incumbent (clergyman) of each parish. The two tables he filled in showed the number of baptisms and burials, with separate totals for males and females. Totals were given for specific years over the previous century, and the total number of marriages from 1754 to 1800 was also given.

The censuses of 1811 and 1821 were conducted on a similar basis, except that in 1821 the enumerators were instructed to provide a breakdown of ages of all the individuals enumerated divided into categories 0-10; 10-15; 15-20;20-30 and etc.

The 1831 Census was far more ambitious. The range of occupational categories was greatly expanded and included a question about servants for the first time. Another first was that clergymen were asked to provide data on illegitimate births in each parish.

### **Holy Censuses**

Incumbents' visiting books were important early 'censuses'. They were either compiled to assist clergymen when visiting their parishioners, or to seek out all nonconformists on their patch.

Many of these censuses contain births, marriages, occupations, relationships, and even their standard of literacy in some cases. Gibson and Medlycott, authors of *Local Census Listings 1523-1930*, suggest lists made by the clergy may contain more detail than the official census itself, particularly after 1841, so investigate both sources.

In addition, Easter books and communicants lists recorded by the clergy may prove fruitful. Each person who received communion was supposed to offer two pence to the clergyman at Easter, and these amounts were entered into Easter Books. A few have survived before 1800, but their content can vary enormously. The 1701 Communicants List from Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire is housed in Staffordshire CRO.

It lists the names and ages of all inhabitants, as well as the status of any female head of household, i.e. whether she was widowed or single. Nottingham Archives Service also holds nine Easter books dating from 1696-1794. Other lists were made by enthusiastic local historians who studied their communities for their own interest.

When working back in your family history from the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the parish registers and parish chest material should always be the first port of call.

Sometimes an incumbent of a parish made lists of local inhabitants for posterity, in which he may have recorded details of each parishioner. These usually appear inside the front or back covers of the parish register books.

The Reverend John Till made one such compilation in Hayes, Kent in October 1790. This list, available at Bromley Reference Library, notes all parishioners, the names of lodgers and their occupations.

Some population lists found their way into the account books of the churchwarden or overseer—or even in notebooks that were found among the parish chest material.

### **Across the Country**

The Church of Scotland had to make sure that its inhabitants knew their catechism. Its 'examinations' of people of all ages, were recorded, often listing all inhabitants in the community, regardless of their religious preference.

You can find those examinations and communion rolls in Kirk sessions. A useful guide is M. Flynn's *Scottish Population History: from 17<sup>th</sup> century to the 1930's* (1977 Cambridge University Press).

By far the largest collection of ecclesiastical censuses before parish registers is that of the Archdeaconry of Stafford Census 1532/33. This was probably drawn up to list those entitled to prayers in return for a contribution to church funds, although this date appears to coincide with the Church of England surveys charting numbers of nonconformists in every parish and, unsurprisingly, many incumbents offered more than was required. Some contain names, ages, occupations and the length of time resident. Many survive in the House of Lords Record Office and many more are held at county record offices.

### **Military Census**

How the threat of invasion produced a population study in 1803. Due to the expanding French armies across the English Channel, the Defense of the Realm Act of 1798 called upon every parish to survey how many able-bodied men were available to call upon. This became known as the Posse Comiatus. With the emergence of Napoleon Bonaparte, this was repeated in 1803, as *Levee en Masse*, meaning literally amassed levy or mass uprising. The National Convention require that "Young men will go to battle, married men will forge arms and transport supplies; women will make tents, uniforms, and serve in the hospitals." The Act stated that troops were urgently required and that a list was to be made of all inhabitants to establish which of them would be eligible for the defense of the country, in particular those between 15 and 60 years of age.

Not all of these lists have survived, but the transcript above from 1803 in Barnstaple, Devon, shows every inhabitant and their age ranges in code a, b or c for under 15, 15-60 and over 60 respectively. The capital letters refer to streets. In addition to its original purpose, this list potentially provides an excellent opportunity to discover a whole family group.

### **Tax Lists**

Tax documents are also useful when searching for your early ancestors who owned land.

The Land Tax Assessments 1692-1832 contain lists of names of landowners and tenants who held freehold land in a parish or township. You can usually find them in the relevant county record office and currently many family history societies are putting their documents online.

An almost complete set of returns for 1798 exists, which covers the whole country at The National Archives, IR 23.

Surviving records give the names of owner and occupiers of the land, a description of property and the tax levied.

Land taxes returns doubled up as a means of registering eligible voters, i.e. those who owned property worth two pounds or more annually.

The Marriage Duty Act of 1695-1705 ruled that all births, rather than baptisms, marriages and burials, were liable for tax.

Annual taxes were also imposed on bachelors over 25 years of age and childless widowers, except for those receiving poor relief.

Ruthless tax collectors would insist on the incumbents' accurate recordkeeping, and to list all births, marriages and burials entered in the register and compare the names with inhabitants of the same parish. This, in part explains an increase in the number of entries in the registers at this time. Many of these lists survive in county record offices,

and the City of London Record Office holds assessments from 1695 of about 80 parishes.

Probably the best estimate of population prior to official census returns, are Hearth Tax Returns of 1662 to 1669.

Surveys were conducted to assess the number of hearths in each home worth more than 20s a year, and the people who owned goods worth more than 10 pounds. A tax of 2s for each hearth was paid each year in two installments, on Lady Day (25 March) and Michaelmas (29 September).

The returns are almost complete and surviving records are held locally, on TNA's website ([www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)) and ([www.hearthtax.org.uk](http://www.hearthtax.org.uk)). (Article found in Your Family Tree magazine—Jan 2012).

### **The Golden Age of Cemeteries**

Ah, spring. The time of year when wise family historians get out their cameras and notebooks and head out on a cemetery tour. Record all that you can. Celebrate the lasting memories of your relatives. And, before you leave, consider that we are probably in the golden age of cemetery visits.

The reason is simple. With cremation rates rising – now higher than 90 percent in some areas along the West Coast—it will become tougher and tougher for researchers to find evidence written in stone. The full-size monuments we love are so 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Instead, we are settling for tiny markers on tiny plots or on raised cabinets, often listing just the name of the person. If the ashes are scattered, or placed in an urn and given to the family, there might be no marker at all.

That would be a shame, and not just for family historians. People need a place to grieve and cemeteries offer that place. A cemetery is a place for quiet reflection, for memories, for contemplation and more. A cemetery helps us reach a sense of closure.

That's not to say that cemeteries are perfect. Old headstones can be impossible to read. Some contain information that is not correct. Headstones can even lead us astray; just because you find one, that doesn't mean the person is actually buried there.

But don't be discouraged. And don't be swayed by all of that cemetery information on the Internet, on sites such as Interment.net and Billiongraves.com as well as all those sites devoted to individual cemeteries.

Seeing it on the screen is not the same as being there. And when you head to a cemetery, some simple strategies will improve your chances of success. That success might come in many ways—not just in snapping a photo of a grave. Start with the cemetery office, if there is one. Find

out where your people are, and ask about notable people nearby. If the cemetery has a map, ask for a copy, and mark the location of your graves of interest. If there is a history of the cemetery, get a copy of that as well. All of these things help to add context.

At the graves, scout around, looking for names on adjacent plots. Sometimes you will find relatives you didn't know about.

One of the greatest research tools is, after all, the accidental find. And look at the plants on and around the graves; specific varieties might also indicate the family's wishes.

Take plenty of photographs. Start with a close-up of each headstone, from front, back and sides. Take a photo showing the grave in relation to other graves or worthwhile landmarks; they grow or get cut down.)

Also, take a moment to reflect. Family history is not just about collecting names and dates; it's about understanding people as well. Think for a moment about the people who would have been there—relatives of yours, probably—when the body was placed in the ground.

So why is this the golden age? Old markers are being worn away, and new ones aren't being added as routinely as they were before. This is the best of times for cemetery research, so don't delay—get out there! (Dave Obee—May/June 2013—Family Chronicle Magazine.)

### **Nonconformists & Their Records**

This is the history of your ancestors whose beliefs were different from the Anglican Church. Until Henry VIII broke away from Rome in 1534 and founded the Church of England the Catholic Church was the established church. However, many groups of people disagreed with the doctrines and practices of the newly formed Anglican Church and formed their own congregations.

Nonconformists (or Dissenters) were any persons who chose not to conform to the established church of the country, so anyone who wasn't an Anglican fell into this category. This included followers of the 'old faith' who became known as Roman Catholics (as well as recusants and papists) –Jews, Quakers (Members of the Religious Soc of Friends) and a growing number of Protestant nonconformist denominations, Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists. The Ecclesiastical Census of 1851 revealed that a quarter of people who attended a religious service did so at a nonconformist place of worship, so a surprising number of our ancestors fall into the category.

#### **Census Sunday**

From the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, the Church of England had to keep registers of baptisms, marriages and burials. There was no such



requirement for nonconformist denominations as they had no official nor government role and even where a congregation can be traced back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, register-keeping may not have begun until much later.

The degree of tolerance or punishment afforded to nonconformists (especially Catholics) varied according to who was on the throne. The holding of a religious ceremony or non-attendance at Anglican Church indictable offences, so it was far too risky for registers to be kept.

Most denominations had no central organization as each congregation was self-governing and registers were often regarded as the personal property of the minister, so they could simply disappear when the minister moved away or died. Therefore, until the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, survival rates of records and registers are patchy. However, where they've survived, you'll probably find more genealogical information than in their Anglican counterparts.

Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1754 was an attempt to do away with clandestine marriages. These were recognized by English Common law, but not by church (canon) law, provided that they were conducted by an ordained clergyman. The ceremonies often took place in non-religious buildings, such as the Fleet and Kings Bench Prisons, and were particularly attractive to members of Protestant sects as they didn't have to venture into a parish church to get married.

### **Fleet Prison**

There were some 200,000 marriages recorded at the Fleet Prison between 1667 and 1754—not all nonconformist—but if you know that your ancestors were nonconformist and can find no entry of marriage in the parish register, it's worth looking at these registers. They're held at The National Archives and available online via BMD Registers ([www.bmdregisters.co.uk](http://www.bmdregisters.co.uk)). The Act had a severe impact on nonconformists, as from 1754 all marriages except those of Quakers and Jews, had to take place in the parish church at a ceremony performed by an Anglican vicar. This was the only way of ensuring the validity of the marriage and the legitimacy of any children born to the couple.

Many nonconformists outwardly obeyed the law, but also celebrated a marriage ceremony according to their own faith, a record of which is less likely to survive for reasons given above. The calling of banns was introduced in 1754, and to avoid having to attend the parish church to hear them read on three consecutive Sundays, many nonconformists chose to marry by license. Any surviving bond or allegation should be deposited at the relevant diocesan record office. When civil registration was introduced in 1837, nonconformist places of worship, which had been licensed for over

a year, could apply to become marriage venues. However, until 1898, a Registrar of Marriage from the relevant register office had to be present to authorize the civil (legal) part, while the minister or priest performed the religious ceremony. It was also possible to marry at a register office from 1837, and some nonconformist couples chose this method, followed by a religious ceremony at their own place of worship.

You should find all nonconformist marriages included in the General Register Office Index. An entry in the Church of England register was accepted as proof of marriage or birth, but as many nonconformists refused to have their children baptized in the parish church, some other form of evidence was needed.

Initially for Baptists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians, the Protestant Dissenter's Registry was founded in 1743 at Dr. Williams' Library where for a fee, parents could register the births of their children and in 1818, the Wesleyan Methodist Metropolitan Registry was founded.

### **Finding Clues**

There are several clues you can find that suggest that your ancestor was a nonconformist, such as not finding any baptisms in the parish register after their marriage had taken place there, so search for any records of nonconformist places of worship in the area. Contemporary maps show the locations of these and trade directories list all denominations in the 'Clerical' section. The Victoria County History series of books are also helpful in identifying which nonconformist denominations had a presence in the area, and many individual chapels produced yearbooks, which may list members and subscribers, and provide details of organizations run by the congregation. You'll find these at county record offices or libraries. While records created by nonconformists themselves may be sparse for the early period, you'll find them appearing in material generated by the state and Anglican Church in respect of brushes with civil and canon law.

Recusant rolls are lists of persons who were fined or had their goods seized for refusing to attend services at the parish church and were initially collected by the church wardens. Later rolls are deposited with Exchequer records at TNA. Refusal to pay tithes resulted in an appearance before the magistrates at Quarter Sessions and you can find records at county offices, while records of offences tried at the church courts—such as fornication (because the couple did not have a valid marriage) are at Diocesan record offices. The Quakers and most Protestant nonconformist denominations surrendered their pre-1837 registers to the Registrar General and are now at the TNA; but Jews declined to do so, and only a few Catholic

registers were handed in. There isn't any central location for nonconformist registers, but you can search huge online collections at

[www.bmdregisters.co.uk](http://www.bmdregisters.co.uk) and

[www.thegenealogist.co.uk](http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk).

You'll also find some nonconformist material at [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) and [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk).

Databases such as the National Burial Index. The Alien Arrivals and Entry books can be useful resources for Jewish immigrants. Most denomination has historical or family history societies and their websites provide guidance on locating records and contact details of repositories. (By Doreen Hopwood, *Your Family Tree*—January 2012).

### **Remembering the Hillcrest Mine Disaster**

On June 19, 1914, the worst mining disaster in Canadian history occurred in Hillcrest, Alberta just seven weeks before the outbreak of the First World War. A total of 189 men died, 90 women were widowed that day and nearly 250 children lost their fathers. It was the largest loss of life in a mine disaster in Canadian history.

This year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the disaster, so an important event has been planned. The Hillcrest 100<sup>th</sup> Commemorative and Spirit of the Coal Miner Celebration will take place in Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, from June 18 to June 20, 2014.

Cathy Pisony is the coordinator of special events and marketing at the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre. She said the effects of the Hillcrest Mine Disaster cannot be underestimated.

"One hundred and 12 victims of the disaster are buried in two mass graves and 31 more in familial and fraternal plots in the Hillcrest Cemetery," said Pisony. Everyone in the town of Hillcrest and the communities of the Crowsnest Pass lost someone they knew or cared for on June 19, 1914. The magnitude of the Hillcrest Mine Disaster had a prominent effect on industry standards we take for granted today concerning worker's compensation, occupational health and safety and mining regulations."

According to Pisony, the disaster at Hillcrest was a major factor that prompted the Canadian Government to make massive changes to the Workers' Compensation Act just four years later, in 1918. At the time of disaster, the liability of the company had to be proven in court by the injured person or by the dependent of the injured person in order to receive any compensation whatsoever.

The Crowsnest Pass area had seen tragedy just before this disaster as well. On April 29, 1903, 90 million tons of rock fell from the summit of Turtle Mountain; it covered part of the town of Frank and killed upwards of 90 people. Then in December 1910 a massive explosion ripped through

the Bellevue Mine, taking the lives of 31 men. Just four years after the Bellevue Mine explosion and 11 years later after the Frank Slide, tragedy on a massive scale once again struck the Crowsnest Pass with the Hillcrest Mine disaster, just three kilometers south of Bellevue and less than four kilometers east of Frank.

### **A Historic Event**

"The Hillcrest 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary event will highlight the tragic and amazing story of the 1914 Hillcrest Mine Disaster," said Pisony. "New interpretive exhibits are being developed at the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre as well as the Crowsnest Museum. The Bellevue Underground Mine gives visitors the opportunity to experience an underground mine first-hand and guided tour through the Hillcrest Cemetery and the abandoned Hillcrest Mine site gives visitors a comprehensive view of what it was like for the people of Hillcrest and the surrounding community when the explosion took place in 1914."

Over the last 15 years the Hillcrest Committee has raised approximately \$500,000 to establish an interpretive experience at the Hillcrest cemetery and part of the event will highlight the unveiling of the last stage of this process. Musical entertainment for the event will include the Coal Creek Boys, Maria Dunn, Connie Kaldor, James Keelaghan and Tim Hus. There will be outdoor concerts, dances, barbecues, a parade, family activities, guided hikes, horse drawn tours, ball games and much more.

"Death in an underground coal mine was not an unusual thing at that time and these families lived knowing that every time their loved ones went underground there was a possibility of them not returning," said Pisony. "It is important to remember the sacrifices on which our country was built, the families that were the pioneers of our communities and the history they created. This is why we hold a commemorative event for the Hillcrest Mine Disaster. The miners and their families knew the dangers of working underground and therefore they also knew it was important to enjoy life. Picnics, sports, dances, music and enjoying the great outdoors were all vital aspects of their lives. This is something we also celebrate today and that is why these activities are all a part of the event that will be taking place this June."

For a full schedule of events and information on the Hillcrest Mine Disaster commemoration, please visit [hillcrestmine100](http://hillcrestmine100) or call the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre at 403 562-7388 or e-mail [cathy.pisony@gov.ab.ca](mailto:cathy.pisony@gov.ab.ca).

(By Karen Kornelsen—see the full article <http://www.miningandexploration.ca>).

## **More than 4 Million Devon Parish Records Dating 1538–1915 Now Available at Findmypast.com**

Millions of new Devon baptism, marriage and burial records published online records reveal over 375 years of Devonshire history. The leading UK family history website findmypast.co.uk (<http://findmypast.co.uk>) has published online for the first time parish records in partnership with Devon Heritage Services, as the latest installment of their 100in100 promise to launch 100 record sets in 100 days.

Spanning 1538-1915, the Devon Collection is a rich source comprising over 4 million fully searchable transcripts and scanned color images of the handwritten parish register held by the record offices in Barnstaple and Exeter. With Plymouth and West Devon Record Office's records already available on findmypast, these new additions mean that findmypast's Devon Collection is the best possible place to find Devonshire ancestors.

Devon is one of the largest counties and therefore highly significant for family historians. As Maureen Selley, Chairman of Devon Family History Society [www.devonfhs.org.uk](http://www.devonfhs.org.uk) whose records are also available on findmypast, put it; "We all have Devonshire ancestors, it's just that some of us haven't found them yet." findmypast's existing Devon records are already the most popular parish record set on the website.

The records are also of international significance as many historic Devonians immigrated to Canada, the US and Australia to work in the booming mining, fishing and agricultural industries. Devon's position on the west coast meant that it was often used as a jumping off point for those headed to the United States. The Mayflower, the ship that carried the first pilgrims across the Atlantic, departed from Plymouth and the Devon Collection houses records that predate this famous voyage. These new records will help people from all over the world to trace their ancestral roots back to the county.

The Devon Collection adds to findmypast's already extensive cache of parish records, the largest available online. These records allow family historians to go as far back as the 1500's, and with more parish records still to come as part of the 100in100 promise, family historians can now explore their more distant roots more easily than ever before.

You can view these exciting new records here: <http://100in100.findmypast.co.uk/>

Tim Wormleighton, of Devon Heritage Services said: "We are delighted that, after a lengthy process of preparation involving a lot of hard work by a large team, people will now be able to access high quality images of the majority of Devon's parish

register entries online for the first time ever through findmypast." (Written by Findmypast.com found on Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter—May 2014)

## **Alberta Resources —Some Free Online Records & Databases**

### **Alberta Family History Soc.—Cemetery Index**

Online cemetery listings based on monument and burial information for the region which surrounds Calgary, Alberta.

### **Alberta Genealogical Society**

<http://abgensoc.ca/databases.html>

Indexes to Applications for Alberta Land Patents—1885-1897, Index to Alberta Homestead Records—1870-1930, Index to Alberta Homestead Records—post 1930, Index to Selected Alberta History Books and etc.

### **MyHeritage.com [www.myheritage.com/Obituaries](http://www.myheritage.com/Obituaries)**

Find billions of genealogy records.

### **Births, Deaths, and Marriages in Calgary Newspapers**

Searchable databases which cover the years 1883-1900, 1989, 1992 and 1997. You can search by event and surname.

### **Charles Denney Metis Genealogical Collection**

Denney compiled information on over 1200 families with roots in Red River, predominantly Metis and fur trader information on family members included. Index of surnames is online.

### **Edmonton Municipal Cemeteries Database**

Search this huge database from the City of Edmonton, Canada, to find any of almost 60,000 people interred in Cemeteries.

### **Genealogical Projects Registry: Alberta Births, Marriages and Deaths**

Is a central registry, maintained by the Alberta Family Histories Society, which provides a bibliography of genealogical births, marriages and deaths information.

### **Top Canadian Genealogy Websites**

#### **Library and Archives Canada**

#### **Canadian Genealogy Centre**

[www.collectionscanada.gc.ca](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca)

Search for free in a variety of Canadian genealogy resources, including digitized census, naturalization records, passport and military records.

#### **InGeneas Database <http://www.ingeneas.com/>**

Search Canadian passenger lists and immigration 1748-1903, Canadian Census, Canadian vital statistics, Canadian Land, Canadian records from the mid-1700s to early 1900s in this database of indexed records.

### **That's My Family** [www.voicimafamille.info/](http://www.voicimafamille.info/)

This free search tool makes it possible to search for information on Canadian ancestors across multiple genealogical federal, provincial and territorial archives centers and libraries. Many of the available sources are from pre-Canada, but there are also sources from genealogical societies and records offices in BC and Saskatchewan.

### **Genealogical Research Library**

[www.grlresearch.com/](http://www.grlresearch.com/) This Canadian “databank” includes over 16 million names of individuals who lived in Canada between the years of the territory of Canada. Over 1 million of these Canadian names include an image of the original source document.

### **Canada GenWeb** [www.canadagenweb.org](http://www.canadagenweb.org)

The various province and territory projects under the umbrella of Canada GenWeb offer access to transcribed vital records, land records, and wills.

### **The Olive Tree Genealogy**

[www.olivetreegenealogy.com/](http://www.olivetreegenealogy.com/) Scroll down the page to find links to free transcriptions of Canadian genealogical records, including ships' passenger lists, American Revolution and War of 1812. Transcribed records are also available for the provinces (especially Ontario such as Loyalists, Palatines, Mennonites, Huguenots and Walloons, and the Mohawk Nation).

### **Early Canadian Online** [www.eco.canadiana.ca/](http://www.eco.canadiana.ca/)

More than 2.7 million pages of Canada's printed heritage can be accessed online, covering the first large scale online collection of Canadian Print Heritage.

### **Canadian Virtual Wall Memorial**

[www.veterans.gc.ca/eng](http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng) Search this free registry for information about the graves and memorials of more than 116,000 Canadians who gave their lives for this country. The collection contains pre-1920 Canadian digitized periodicals.

### **Immigrants to Canada**

[www.jubilation.uwaterloo.ca/marj/genealogy/thevoyage.html](http://www.jubilation.uwaterloo.ca/marj/genealogy/thevoyage.html) List of links to emigration and immigration reports on the 19<sup>th</sup> century immigrants to Eastern Canada.

### **Historical Canadian Directories**

[www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/) Offered here are historical Canadian directories for national, provincial and territorial, county, and city directories, primarily from the nineteenth and twentieth century links to digitized images of the directory pages.

### **Canada Online Historical Directories**

<https://sites.google.com/site/onlinedirectory/site/Home/Can/> Check out Canadian online historical directories for all of Canada. Some directories may have to be accessed through ancestry.com.

### **The Death of Microfilm**

Genealogists love microfilm. Visit any genealogy library anywhere, and you will see genealogists in darkened rooms, hunched over microfilm viewers, trying to solve the puzzles of their family trees. However I have taken several pictures of genealogists sitting at rows of microfilm readers. However, I suspect that within ten years those pictures will become collectors' items, recalling an era that exists only as distant memories in the minds of “the old-timers.” You see, microfilm and microfiche are about to disappear. Many of the manufacturers of microfilm and microfiche equipment have already disappeared or else have switched their production lines to other products.

The problem is economics: microfilm is expensive. Those who wish to preserve data find it faster, easier, and cheaper to scan documents on computer scanners and then make the information available as disk images than it is to do the same thing on microfilm.

With the genealogy world, FamilySearch, an arm of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons), has traditionally been the biggest user of microfilm equipment. With this huge investment already made in microfilm, you might expect the LDS Church to continue using microfilm forever. That's not true, according to numerous announcements made in recent years. FamilySearch is already moving away from microfilm, replacing it as fast as possible with digital images, mostly made from the old microfilms.

Within a few years, some of us will be telling newcomers, “I remember the good old days when we had to hand-crank microfilm viewers. There was none of this modern stuff where everything appeared on a computer screen.”

Would you please hand me my slippers and cane? I'm going to go sit in my rocking chair and look at my old (digital) pictures of genealogists sitting at rows of microfilm readers. (Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter—May 29, 2014)

### **Kelowna and District Genealogical Society—Harvest Your Tree Conference**

The KDGS bi-annual genealogy conference will be held in Kelowna, B.C. on September 26-28, 2014. Western Canada's largest conference boasts a full day of seminars with renowned international speakers. See their blog at:

<http://www.harvestyourtree.blogspot.ca/>