YESTERDAY'S FOOTPRINTS
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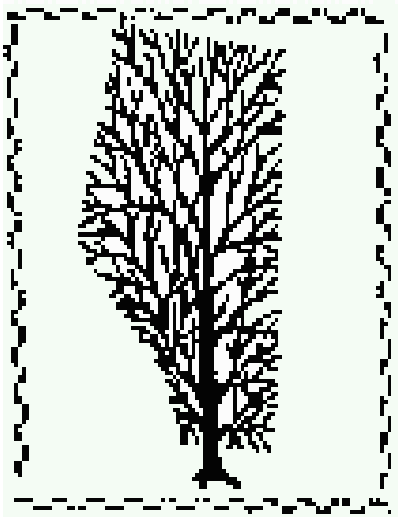

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Committee	2
President's Message	2
Monthly Meetings	2
Lethbridge Family History Center Hours	2
How to Decipher Old Handwriting Online	2-4
The Search for the Elusive Female Ancestor	4-6
Genealogy Moments	6-7
Searching for Scholars: Online School Records	7-8
How To Get a Teen Involved in Genealogy	8-9
20 Canadian Library Databases	9-12
Alberta Genealogy Websites	12

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 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 – 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

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President's Message

Well here I am – President once again as well as working with the same Executive.

It seems as if spring has arrived and we tend to think about lawns, gardens, and flower beds instead of our genealogy efforts. However don't forget that we still need volunteers for the Resource Centre. Volunteers are a valuable part of any group, be it non-profit, commercial or whatever. They are what keep things running smoothly. Please remember to report your volunteer hours every month as they are part of AGS hours and used in grant applications.

Five of our branch members attended the AGS Conference, Discover Your Roots, Share Your Stories and AGM in April up in Edmonton. There were 251 people in attendance and it was a very successful conference. I'm sure we all picked up a few helpful hints to help us all in our genealogy.

That's it for now, have a safe, enjoyable spring and summer. President—Doug Mcleod.

Monthly Meetings

On Thursday, April 16th at 7:00 p.m. we had Yvonne Sugimoto a volunteer with Findagrave.com come and give us a presentation on her experiences. Thursday May 21 at 7:00 p.m. Nestor Martinez will give us a presentation on his experience with DNA Research. For our June monthly meeting Lorraine Cathro is coming to give us a presentation on Roots & Adventures: A Prairie Childhood.

Lethbridge Family History Center Hours

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

How to Decipher Old Handwriting Online

Being able to read old handwriting allows you to consult a multitude of primary sources, which will help you progress your family tree into the earlier periods of history. At first glance old handwriting may look difficult to read and interpret – or even appear illegible to the inexperienced. You may feel apprehensive about even considering learning how to decipher it simply because it looks 'difficult'.

However, even interpreting the handwriting on a British census as late as 1911 or modern letters and documents can be equally challenging, so don't be put off. There are self-help, interactive tutorials available online to help you both develop and test your skills so you can look at the difficult documents with a good deal of confidence.

The study of old handwriting styles needs time, concentration, patience and above all practice. Different styles are known as 'hands' and each hand can present its own challenges. However, sometimes it's easier to read a document written in

the 1600s than one which uses the more recognizable styles. As you undertake your research you will encounter distinct letter formations and in time you'll become familiar with these and so be able to decipher different era documents. Each 'hand' will require individual consideration and sends you 'back to school' to learn a new alphabet.

Help on Hand

In the main, the documents most familiar to family historians such as wills, deeds, parish chest records and even personal letters written in the 16th and 17th centuries will be written in chancery, secretary or italic hands, but of course every scribe will have its individual style. Legal scholars or those who had a grammar school education and who therefore frequently used all these styles when writing would have been the authors of many of these documents.

Irrespective of how experienced you become it's a good idea to follow a set of simple guidelines for transcribing each document:

Knowing the background to the document will help enormously with reading the handwriting, as documents usually contain several standard phrases or formulae.

Read through the document and determine which words you can easily read. Don't worry how much you can read initially.

Number each line for ease of identification before transcribing.

Enlarge the document by using the zoom facility on a PDF or if it's a paper document use a good optical magnifying glass, as enlarged words become a lot easier to read.

Compile an alphabet appropriate to the style—you'll be surprised how many letters are contained in the recognized standard phrases such as "In the name of God Amen" and in simple words such as' and to, 'but & item' – these should be the words you are able to identify without too much difficulty. Check for abbreviations—a challenge in their own right!

Transcribe as written-don't try to alter it to a modern day interpretation. Using the compiled alphabets you will often need to break down a word letter by letter.

Inevitably, as you do this you may not be able to read every word and this is why you need some experience. The more familiar you become with the handwriting and the more practice you have, the more you will be able to transcribe. There are several online tutorials that will help you become increasingly proficient.

Take a Course

It's clear from genealogy blogs and mailing lists that the main thing family historians need help with is making sense of old documents but few are aware they can participate in online courses.

There are some excellent resources online, which will initially help you on the subject of paleography, and don't forget the specialist books or the face-to-face courses run by educational establishments to complement your internet work.

The interactive guide by the National Archives www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/paleography) covers handwriting styles from 1500-1800 and is the one that family historians should start with. The site, which is free to use, includes introductory notes on document interpretation, calendars, regal years, old money and measurements. These explain some of the terminology that may be unfamiliar to you, as well as information on abbreviations, contractions and the various confusing letters associated with each hand. The ten transcription exercises are graded from easy to difficult and for each one there is an introduction, which explains its context of the document. It also comments on its style of handwriting as well as giving essential tips on how to transcribe it. A downloadable PDF version gives examples from the document of each letter in the alphabet of the hand, a line numbered copy of the actual document to aid easy transcription, and of course the transcription solution, all of which you can save to your computer.

The interactive page in which you type your attempt at transcription shows first line of each document already transcribed. This can be really helpful in becoming familiar with the handwriting.

To begin with, choose your document, read the introduction then hit 'transcribing exercise' – and away you go. When its complete be brave enough to hit 'submit' and get it all accessed.

As you work through the ten exercises you encounter different document types and hands.

If, having completed this course and you're keen for more, there are additional exercises for work categorized into the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, which enables you to further your practice, without the guidance, but are of course comes with transcripts. Undertaking the whole course allows you to build up your expertise at your own pace.

There is also an advanced site for those who wish to develop their skills and covers the period before—1500—but don't visit that site until you are competent, there is also some Latin involved).

Although The National Archives paleography course is considered to be the best, it's not the only one available. The BYU Centre for Family History and Genealogy Studies English Script Tutorial (http://script.byu.edu/english/en/welcome.aspx) also explains clearly the background to old handwriting with a couple of sample exercises, then links back to the TNA site.

For a slightly more advanced course the Cambridge University site aims to develop your skills with slightly earlier styles dating between

1500-1700 www.english.com.ac.uk/ceres/ehoc, which allows you again to work on actual examples. You can submit them for assessment in order to obtain a ready reference guide to capital and lower case alphabets, plus abbreviations covering actual examples from the document. It's a good idea to work the 'sample transcriptions' first Click on 'Go to Lesson' undertake the transcription and then click on the hyper-linked number to get the answer.

Once you're feeling confident there are further 50-plus exercises for you to tackle. As you undertake your research you may find you have ancestors from Scotland. Scottish records present a different challenge, not only with types of records but also with terminology – and to some extent the handwriting styles used in many legal documents.

The National Archives of Scotland website (www.scottishhandwriting.com) provides exercises specific to Scottish sources. It handles the exercises, which are again interactive, in a slightly different way by asking for isolated words or short phrases to be transcribed, rather than the whole document.

This approach does of course really test your skills as you need to be able to identify letters and names, and while the documents used are obviously Scottish the skills gained from working these exercises will increase your experience in identifying not only words and letters, but also abbreviations and contractions.

Learning Curves

Every family history researcher occasionally struggles to make sense of an old document. The challenges increase the further back you go because you are looking at unfamiliar handwriting, unusual spellings, scripts and flourishes. You don't have to be an expert to read old documents, but working through some of the online courses will certainly minimize the struggles. (Your Family Tree—July 2012-- pages 63-65.)

The Search for Elusive Female Ancestors

Finding detailed information on our female ancestors is a primary challenge for all of us. Every time we can identify the ladies in our ancestry, we add new surnames to our research project. However, it's not always an easy thing to do. Since most women have traditionally changed their names at marriage, finding their ancestry can be a challenge. Over the centuries, the women haven't left as many documents behind as the men have. This was caused by societal norms that left them in a subservient position relative to their husbands in legal affairs. That's not to say that they were always deferential, or submissive in any way. But the legal systems were such that our female ancestors often don't show up in the records. And if they did, it was usually with their married (not maiden) names.

Thus said, there are numerous records where we can find the ladies, and this article will attempt to identify some of those records. Note that we are principally concerned with three separate, but related, search types, the first being that in which we can locate the maiden name of our married female ancestors. Secondly, it's often a challenge to locate the married names of the women. This comes into play when we're searching our collateral lines. Thirdly, locating biographical information can be a challenge, as being a housewife and mother wasn't documented anywhere near as well as occupational data found on their husbands.

Marriage Applications

American marriage applications have typically included the maiden names of the women who married. However, if this was a second marriage for the lady, her previous married name will usually be given on the document (unless she previously had legally retaken her maiden name). These records are found at the county courthouse, and are often available on microfilm through the Family History Library. We are also seeing more and more of these documents online at state-sponsored sites, Familysearch.org, and etc.

Marriage Registers

Another marriage record type is that found in marriage registers. These registers are typically large books in which the vital data was recorded by hand. Early volumes are nearly always handwritten, while later data was typed onto the forms. I've found that many of the registers included a lot of family information, including the parent's names, even including the maiden name of the mother. At the very least, we can get the bride's maiden name from most registers. When you write to some counties for a marriage certificate, you'll be sent a standard form with data that was abstracted from their marriage registers. These are called Verified Transcripts.

Verified Transcript from a Register of Marriage

As mentioned above, the verified transcript is essentially an abstract of the data found in the Marriage Register. The verified transcript typically contains most of the information found in marriage register, including the maiden name of the bride, and possibly the maiden names of the female parents.

Consent to Marry

If one or both of the parties being married were under the legal age, there may be a consent form from a parent or guardian on file in the courthouse. I had one a while back for Frances E. Jones, who married William R. Irvin in Byron, Ogle County,

Illinois—dated April 11, 1846. This document lists the name of her father, along with his signature. Although I already had a copy of the marriage application, which had been filmed by the Family History Library, I didn't know the consent even existed until alerted to it by an item in October 1986 edition of Ogle County Genealogical Society Newsletter (page 5).

The Family Bible
Family Bibles can be a goldmine of information. They almost always include marriage information including maiden names of the brides and the names of grooms, names that can be used to ascertain married names of women who might initiate collateral lines of interest. Note that it's often with your collateral line cousins that you'll locate the Family Bibles.

The US Federal Census
Although maiden names are not given for married women found in most census records, we can often find those names within the census because parents and siblings are often found within the entries. If someone is listed as a father-in-law, mother-in-law or brother-in-law of the head-of-household, then there is a chance that that person may have the same name as the maiden name of the wife in the family.

State Census Records
Marriages that have taken place within the last year can be found in a number of state census schedules. I have records for some of my relatives found in 1865 and 1875 New York census schedules. Names of the brides are included. If the marriage is the first for the bride, then the maiden name can be found in this record.

Death Certificates
Although notoriously inaccurate, death certificates will often list the mother's maiden name. However, the accuracy is only as good as the data supplied by the informant, who may not know anything—but think they do! The biggest problem is that these are fairly new documents—of 19th and 20th century invention.

Early Town Birth & Death Registers
Many towns, especially in New England and New York, have birth & death registers that may preclude or predate those typically found at the county level. While in Brighton, New York a few years ago, I was able to read and transcribe records on my family dating from May 15, 1889. Included in one of the records was the maiden name of the mother of my cousin, Fred Kratz, deceased. This woman was Anna Maria Damm, the sister of my great-grandmother.

Probate & Will Records
Probate Records often provide the married name of daughters. Wills also record the same kind of useful information. The names of other family members are also found in the records, sometimes as inheritors, executors or as witnesses. Since probates and wills are typically indexed only by the name of the deceased, it's useful to watch for newly-published indexed abstracts and websites that might have indexes to names found only within the records. For example, I had searched for the name of the father of my great-grandmother, Sally Anthony, for many years. Then I ran across an indexed book of probate abstracts for Rensselaer County, New York, in which my Sally Anthony was listed. It gave her deceased father's name as Ebenezer Stephens.

The Cemetery
Check out who may be buried next to, or nearby, your ancestors. You'll often find the parents, grandparents, and extended family, with previously unknown surnames buried in the "family plot." The cemetery is a good place to find maiden names.

Funeral Home Records
Funeral home records can often supply maiden names for the deceased, as well as for the parents of the deceased. Note that like death certificate data, the information found at the funeral home is often subject to the knowledge—or lack thereof—of the informant. And, akin to death certificates, this data is usually of the 20th century although if lucky, you may find data back as early as the 1870s. Some funeral homes in the United States go back much earlier, including the Davis Funeral Home of Nashua, New Hampshire, established by Moses Davis in 1842.I've also heard of others established as early as the 1830s. However, this is extremely uncommon.

Newspaper Records
Obituaries often include the maiden names of the deceased, as well as the married names of daughters. You may also find marriages noted within the gossip columns, wherein you may locate a maiden name for the bridge.

War of 1812 Pension & Bounty Land Files
Found at the National Archives the files include not only information about the veteran's service, but are likely to contain family information, such as children's names and data about the widow's maiden name and marriage. A typical pension file usually contains the soldier's or widow's application file, a statement of service provided by the Pension Bureau and other papers prepared by the Third Auditor's Office. Of the two, the widow's or minor's application is potentially the richest in

genealogical information. This is because the widow had to provide proof of marriage, including the date and place of marriage, including the date and place of marriage, and usually her maiden name.

Civil War Pension Files
As with the war of 1812 Pension files, those of the Civil War also often contain marriage affidavits and proofs that include the widow's maiden name. These records are found in both Union, as well as Confederate Pension files.

Birth Certificates
Typically of late 19th and 20th-century origin civil birth certificates often give the maiden name of the mother. The information is usually quite accurate, as the mother often supplied the data.

Original Family Manuscripts
I have a page from a "family book". It is burned around the edges, so it's easy to see that the page was nearly lost. I found this page in a manuscript file A00-579 at the Buffalo-Erie County, New York, Historical Society in Buffalo. The page was deposited by Judge Robert Cyrus Titus (1839-1918), my 1st cousin—three times removed. It includes my third great-grandfather, Robert Titus, and turned out to be a key document, tying my Titus's into this family. While the document alone didn't supply me with maiden names beyond those of the Titus daughters, put in context with other documents, it completes the family picture.

Early Court Records
Court records may include maiden names, dependent on the case. The Court of General Sessions for Essex County, Massachusetts dated 27 September 1692 included the following entries: Joseph Weed complained of by John Hoyt for fornication with his daughter, Rachel Hoyt. Weed confessed; court fines him 40s and maintenance unless he marries Rachel; Rachel Hoyt for having a child out of wedlock 40s.

Middle Names
A child's middle name may give you a clue as to an ancestor's maiden name. My father's name was Theodore Canfield Meitzler. He was the youngest o 10 children and was born in 1903. His mother's maiden name was Canfield—Nellie Canfield.

US Social Security Application for Account Number—the SS-5
The SS-5 application form will have the maiden name of the mother listed—if the applicant knows his (or her) mother's maiden name. These applications are available from 1937.

Adoption Decrees
In most cases, someone received a copy of the adoption decree. Here you will find the "real" name of the adopted child. My mother was adopted. Her birth certificate says she was born to folks who were actually her Great-Uncle and Aunt. I located the original adoption decree with my Uncle, who cleaned out the house after Great-Aunt Rosa passed away.

Foreign Female Use of Maiden Names
In a number of European countries, including France and Italy, women frequently used their maiden names on legal documents. In some localities, the death records of German and Polish Catholic women recorded only their maiden names. In Scotland, widows reverted to their maiden names. In Wales, Scandinavia and the Netherlands, married women would often retain their maiden names.

Parish Registers
Marriage records found in German parish registers will often give the father's full name, thus listing the maiden name of the young lady. Don't overlook the names of the Godparents, often found in the parish records. These folks were often relatives, and just might have surnames important to your research.

In Conclusion
There are many places to locate both maiden and married names of the women in the family. Exhaust the sources listed here, and then use your own imagination to find your elusive female ancestors. (Leland K. Meitzler founded Heritage Quest in 1985—Family Chronicle—March/April 2011—pages—42-44.)

Genealogy Moments
This section is a place for Branch members to share genealogy experiences that they have had.

Rostecki Family

A number of years ago I went to do some research at the Lethbridge Family History Center. Upon arriving there I immediately was approached by a volunteer asking me to assist a patron who had come in for some help on his Manitoba research. At first I was hesitant because I had so much of my own research to do but thought I could take a few minutes to help this man. So I sat down and asked this patron how I could help him Unbeknownst to me this fellow was researching in Manitoba on one of my offshoot lines of my family. I was so amazed so I gave him the help that he needed and he in turn filled me in on information that I did not have at the time on that part of my family line. We both shared

with each other what we had learned about the family and both benefitted greatly. I never forgot that experience because had I said I am too busy to help that person that day I would have missed that great opportunity to not only help this individual but in turn to receive help myself. I learned later that he was just passing through on vacation and I would have missed that opportunity entirely if I had not taken the time to help him. (By Susan Haga)

Roy Buchanan

Some years ago when I was re-starting my genealogy research once again I had asked another researcher who I knew who had a lot of genealogy experience to assist me in my family history. I showed her what information I already had for my great grandmother (Helen Jane) including a family group sheet where I had recorded her information from a history that she had written. I had approximate birth, marriage and death dates for all of her siblings, except the youngest, Roy and I desperately wanted to find him.

This researcher that was helping me looked at a few New Brunswick censuses, finding every member of this family except for Roy! She then concluded that he did not exist. I protested stating that my father's brother was named after him therefore he had to exist. I was talking to a friend about this so she asked to look at my family group sheet. The first thing she did was to flip over the family group sheet and she noted on the back that I had written that Roy had been a telegraph operator in Bridgewater, Maine. She then looked on the US census for Maine during the time when Roy had worked there and found him! As she continued her search she found Roy's wife and some of his children, all living in Maine. She then decided to check an earlier census in Canada to see if she could locate the family when the children were younger and found Roy on the 1891 Canadian census as a seven year old boy with his siblings living in Kings County, New Brunswick. The family eventually moved back to Canada which is what she had suspected since that is where his wife had died. I knew he had existed all along and now I had proof. (By Sharon Allred)

Searching for Scholars: Online School Records

School Records exist online in many forms, and they offer lots of potential for enriching your family history files. It is possible to find where many ancestors attended school; where the school buildings were and what they looked like; and who taught the children at the schools. Of course, ancestors who made a career of teaching may have left behind many kinds of records for the genealogist. And, information to break genealogical "brick walls" can come from searching various kinds of schools and student records.

You might divide school records into two categories. The first category would be the personal records of a single student or teacher. In the second category would be information about, or pictures of a particular school.

For early schools in the US, there may be little or no documentation available until the antebellum era. Prosperous families in the early colonial and federal eras might have hired tutors for their children. Some children were sent to boarding schools far away from home, sometimes even across the Atlantic in Great Britain. There were some public schools in New England as early as the 1600s, but many generations of students in other regions had to attend private academies or forego school completely.

Each state's public school systems started at various dates and operated under different laws and systems. In general, public schools became better established and catered to more and more children from the 1840s onward. Attendance was not mandatory in all US states until 1918. Many children attended school for only a year or two, and the school years were only terms of a few months. "Graded schools", in which students were divided by age and ability to better concentrate on their individual needs, became more common in the mid- to late 19th century. High schools, providing secondary education to build on the basics of earlier grades, became widespread in early 1900s.

Only a tiny fraction of American students attended colleges and universities before the post World War II years. Well into the 1800s, professionals such as doctors and lawyers often trained with practitioners rather than attending a professional school. Essentially, they were apprentices, although without the sort of organized records one might find for true apprentices.

Student Censuses and Other Online Records

Numerous state archives or libraries have microfilmed old school records. Familysearch.org has placed quite a few of these microfilm reels online. Four sets devoted entirely to schools are "Minnesota, Clay County School Census Records, 1909-1962"; "Mississippi, Enumeration of Educable Children, 1850-1892; 1908-1957"; "South Dakota, School Records, 1884-1938"; and "Texas, Matagorda County, School Census Records, 1923-1946".

At FamilySearch.org, many more school records are contained in larger collections, such as county records. States with at least one county with some online school records include Georgia, Idaho, Montana, North Carolina, Texas, and Washington. In localities with town or city school districts, school records might, of course, have been held at a

municipal rather than a county level. New materials are added constantly at FamilySearch.org, so their collections are worth re-checking every few months. Even if "your" states are not included in the online material yet, these digitized reels can suggest what might be found for the states where your ancestors attended school. Besides the online selections, the catalog at FamilySearch.org includes many more microfilm reels of county and school records that can be borrowed.

School censuses, depending on the county, might be compiled every year. Not every district compiled them, and those that exist may be hard to find. But, imagine an annual census with the names of parents and of children in school, possibly with the ages and birthdates of the children. The home address, or at least its town or township, might be added, giving a way to track family moves in between the decennial censuses. Some school census forms have a space for writing down the occupations not only of the parents, but of the youngsters themselves.

Other reels of school records might include deeds, construction contracts, invoices for building supplies, or documents regarding teachers. Land for many 19th century schools were donated, so it's possible that a relative's name might be found as a land donor. Ancestors who were carpenters or masons might have been employed in building a local school, leaving their names in the records.

Ancestry.com has a few hundred collections of school and college records from the US, Canada, Great Britain, Europe, Australia, and elsewhere. Among their searchable collections are "US, High School Student Lists, 1821-1923"; London, England, School Admissions and Discharges, 1840-1911"; and "US School Yearbooks".

Offbeat Online Sources

The Internet also offers some unexpected angles for researching local schools during past eras. School yearbooks, particularly for colleges, are increasingly available online. The Internet Archive, www.archive.org, is a particularly good place to check for old yearbooks and alumni registers, as well as academy or college catalogs and related volumes. College and university archives at many schools have scanned their yearbooks and placed them online. It's also worth checking to see if a college archive had some online collections of old photos, letters, or other school memorabilia.

Antique shops and dealers on eBay offer many kinds of school memorabilia, including yearbooks, sports souvenirs, student newspapers, and old postcards. Envelopes mailed from 19th century academies and ladies' seminaries were often decorated with elaborate engraved views of their buildings.

Locating Early Schools on Maps

Old topographic, military, or county maps might show the locations of long-gone schoolhouses, academies, and colleges. The Library of Congress' "Geography and Maps" page, at www.loc.gov/topics/maps.php , is a good place to start looking. Their collection "Panoramic Maps 1847-1929", offers a potential way of seeing what //memory.loc.gov/ammem/pmhtml/panhome.html, an ancestor's school building looked like. Panoramic maps were imaginary Victorian or early 20th century birds'-eye that look as if they were sketched from balloons. But, artists made them by making hundreds of quick thumbnail sketches, and combining them on an imaginary map grid seen in perspective from on high. Schools, academies, and colleges are among the prominent landmarks that can be recognized "from the air" in these views. Map legends often name the school buildings, but even if they're not named, you might be able to identify them from other information.

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps (available at some local libraries, state archives, and other places) are useful for finding schools attended by ancestors who lived in towns or cities. Usually the maps name the school, and have an outline of the building's "footprint" and the layout of the grounds. Such maps usually concentrate on the business districts and core residential neighborhoods, but major institutions, such as schools or factories that were located away from the center of town are covered by insert maps.

Historic newspaper collections found at : NewspaperArchive.com, Genealogybank.com, and elsewhere recitations or performances. Other angles to check are annual reports of government school agencies. These might be by state boards of education, but there can also be reports on county or city level school systems as well. Numerous annual reports for many states are at Google Books, www.books.google.com, or the Internet Archive, http://archive.org. A local history section at your library may also be a useful source for such reports that have not been digitized.

State archives may have voluminous school records that, while require some effort to sift in person, may have undiscovered information about schools where some of your ancestors taught or studied. The National Archives has a list of state archives with hotlinks and contact information www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/state-archives.html. (By David A. Norris--Internet Genealogy—Oct/Nov 2013—pages 13-17).

How to Get a Teen Involved In Genealogy

I have two teenage boys and mostly they just tolerate my fanatic genealogy obsession. I started asking them questions about where they thought they came from. They said they weren't sure and

they didn't seem too interested. So then I told them the story of my maternal grandparents and how my grandma thought she was mostly Irish because she had a red-haired grandmother named Catherine Duffy, and my grandfather thought he was mostly German because he and his family all spoke German. They thought so until I did some digging into their history on Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, and Google. My kids were hooked on the challenge of finding out the mystery. I had already solved it, but I wanted to show them what they could find if they looked.

On occasion, my kids asked questions like, "Do we have any famous relatives?" or "Did our relatives fight in the Civil War?" When they do this, I try to encourage their inquisitiveness and make a connection to them. They need to see how they are involved in the process of finding their history. So, I usually open up a genealogy search engine like Ancestry.com or Familysearch.org and let them find out for themselves how they are connected. For example, "This person is related to you because they are your great-grandma's brother: or "Our ancestors fought on the Union side in the Civil War which you are learning about in history."

Then I ask them questions to keep them involved. "Can you tell me what you are learning about the Civil War?" Show them the documents from the War that you have: pictures, census records, and any other relevant information. Talk about what might have happened in that time period and how that may have affected their ancestor. For example, my Civil War ancestor, John McNamee, was killed in battle in 1865. Then, his wife died in 1870 and some of their younger children, between two years old and twelve years old, had to go to an orphanage. My boys and I talked about being a Civil War soldier and what they have learned in school about the Civil War.

My younger son is tech savvy and he suggested we use Google Images to see a battle John McNamee may have fought in. Then we discussed how hard it must have been for the children and what orphanages were like back then. My eldest son, who was fifteen, then asked what it must have been like for John McNamee's son, Patrick, to be out on his own at age fifteen. Our Patrick had lived in Cleveland, Ohio and he worked on the B&O Railroad that was being built at that time. So, he cam e to Chicago to make his fortune. This spurred many questions about what it was like to work on the railroad and what Chicago was like during that time period in history.

Again, we used Google Images to see what Chicago was like during the 1870s and we used Google to look at the history of the B&O Railroad. We looked at census records, maps, and photos. Sometimes a local library online will have a great database to look at. We found images of The Great Chicago Fire from that time frame at www.greatchicagofire.org. This produced a lot of questions like, "Why did it start?"and, "Isn't there a children's song about this?" So we discussed the meteor theory and the O'Leary cow theory and decided that a trip to Chicago to see it for ourselves was in order.

Then, the boys asked about Patrick's wife, Delia Cahill. We checked Ancestry.com to see when she had come from England to Chicago via Boston with her family, who owned Cahill Printing and still do today. It turns out that they came to Chicago before 1879 as we confirmed by a grave certificate. They didn't believe this so we had to look up the printing company as well.

Be patient with them if they don't share your enthusiasm about their origins. They will come around eventually or maybe one of their children will share your passion.

Keep good documentation. I belong to Ancestry.com which stores my documents so I can pass my information along for future generations. But, the more you involve them in the digital side of things, the more they will be curious about it, perhaps not now, but in the future. They may even come up with other search avenues that you might not have thought about, like my boys did when they learned the truth about my grandparents who thought they came from different origins. We did find that the red-haired grandmother's family was from Ireland but, all of the other people on her side were glass blowers from Bavaria. On my grandfather's side, they did have one German grandmother who took care of all the kids and taught them German, but his other family was all from Ireland. Surprise! He was really Irish and she was really German despite what they both had thought. So, I talked to the boys about how we never would have known this had we not searched resources like Ancestry.com, Familysearch.org and Google. You never know what truths you could uncover about your own family origins, and using these search engines help to make it easier to do so. (Kellie Jensen—Internet Genealogy—Aug/Sept 2014-pgs 25-26)

20 Canadian Library Databases!

Public Libraries are wonderful places to do genealogical research. Increasingly, their websites

also offer many resources you can use right from your own home. In this article, I will profile 20 Canadian Public Library websites that provide online genealogical databases or indexes. In alphabetical order they are…

Brantford Public Library (Ontario)
http://brantford.library.on.ca/genealogy/Here you'll find a searchable index to birth, marriage and death notices (as well as a few anniversary, divorce and naturalization notices) appearing in the Brantford Expositor newspaper for the years 1852-1943, 1960-1986 and 1988-2008.

Bruce County Library (Ontario)
www.bruce.canlib.ca (choose "Bruce's History Online—Digital Collection")
This site provides access to a database of historical documents including WWI enlistment cards, photograph albums, newspaper clippings and census indexes. I could not find a descriptive summary for the collection, so it's difficult to know how these resources were selected or what time periods and locations they cover.

Cobourg Public Library (Ontario)
www.cobourg.library.on.ca
The library provides two major electronic resources for genealogists—a newspaper index and an archival database. The Cobourg Newspaper Index includes references to newspaper articles and birth, marriage and death notices from several local newspapers from 1912 to 2009. Search results provide the name of the person, the type of article (e.g., death notice, birth announcement), the name of the newspaper, the date and the page and column. In a few cases, you will get full transcripts of the item. The Archival Database includes scanned copies of deeds, newspaper clippings and other documents that seem to have been donated to the library as part of personal collections.

Edmonton Public Library (Alberta)
www.epl.ca/EPLExtVor.cfm?id=64
An index to obituaries published in the Edmonton Journal from 1959 to 1982 can be found here. Search results provide the name of the deceased and the date the obituary was published.

Essex County Library (Ontario)
www.essexcountylibrary.ca (choose Local History & Genealogy) The Essex County Digital Archives provides an index to birth, marriage and death notices published in local newspapers in 1849, 1850, 1867, 1871, 1892 and 1894 through 2008. Search results provide the subject's name, the name of the publication, date, page numbers and a couple of keywords describing the item.

Halton Public Library (Ontario)
www.halinet.on.ca/localhistory/forms.htm
This URL takes you to "Halinet", an online resource center for Halton County information. Genealogists will especially appreciate the historical and newspaper records. These include:

- Indexes to birth, marriage and death notices from local newspapers (over 30 local newspapers from the 1840s to the present—including papers printed in Acton, Burlington, Georgetown and Oakville.
- Indexes to Halton County censuses (heads of households and strays, 1842 to 1901).
- A surname index to burials in Halton County cemeteries (206 cemeteries are included)
- An index Halton County land records (names taken from the first two volumes of the abstract indexes to deeds for Georgetown up to 1875 and etc.
- An index to Halton County surrogate court files, 1851 to 1907 (name, township, date of probate, volume, page number and instrument number)
- An index to 10,000 names of men who served in the Lorne Scot regiment during WWII.
- Indexes to local business directories for 1851, 1857, 1866, 1869, 1871, 1882, 1896 and 1899—results give name, community, occupation, address and the details of the source information (directory title, page).
- Indexes to local history publications.
- The full text of the Illustrated Historical Atlas of Halton County, 1877.

Innisfil Public Library (Ontario)
www.ibidnet.ca/index.php The "Ibid" database includes a wide range of genealogically relevant resources, including digitized photographs from the Innisfil Historical Society collection, essays on local history and biographical topics (mostly short items from the Women's Institute Tweedsmuir Histories and newspapers), documents (receipts, letters, maps), and birth, marriage and death notices from local newspapers predominantly from the South Simcoe News, Bradford Witness and Innisfil Scope) from 1854 to the present. Search results from the BMD database provide the subject's name, the newspaper title, date, page number, microfilm number and type of notice.

New Westminster Public Library (B.C.)
www.nwheritage.org/heritagesite/genealogy/
This unique database provides scanned images (fully indexed) of the Bowell Funeral Home Records for the period 1932 to 1956 (records for

1911 to 1917, 1921 to 1931 and 1957 to 1960 are in process). These records are a goldmine for genealogists as they provide all the details usually found on a British Columbia death certificate (name, address, sex, nationality, racial origin, occupation, birth date, birth location, years of residence in Canada, in British Columbia and at place of death, names of parents) plus the names, addresses and relationships of close kin, and details about the funeral service and interment.

Niagara Falls Public Library (Ontario)
www.nflibrary.ca/nfplindex/ This site's Historic Niagara Digital Collections include a Newspaper Index, a Local History References Database and an Images Database. The Newspaper Index includes birth, marriage, anniversary and death notices published in the Daily Record, the Evening Review and the Review between 1908 and 1961 (with a few months' gaps), and between 1984 and the present. The Local History References Database is an index to local history publications, journals, clipping files, scrapbooks, audio/visual materials, burials in local cemeteries, census records and church records. Some items are linked to digital images of the original record. The Images Database includes photographs, postcards and digital images of documents.

Oxford County Library (Ontario)
www.ocl.net/genealogy/ The Oxford County Library has a large collection of online genealogy and local history databases. These include indexes or transcripts for the following records:

- Local history publications—indexes provide names and page numbers.
- Birth, marriage and death notices and obituaries published in the Ingersoll Chronicle between 1854 and 1919—most with full text transcripts of the articles.
- Birth, marriage, and death notices and obituaries published in the Ingersoll Tribune between 1897 and 1970—some with full text transcripts of the articles.
- Ingersoll and area burials --results provide the cemetery location, grave location and full transcript of most inscriptions.
- Oxford County Genealogy Records (a miscellaneous collection of published and unpublished parish registers, local history books, marriage bonds, wills and other records covering the period 1793-1858)--entries are fairly basic, but refer the searcher to the original source.
- Oxford County Land Patents, 1798-1852 results provide patentees' names, the location of the property and date of the patent.
- Town of Ingersoll Historical Directory (1894-95)--details include name, address and occupation
- Town of Ingersoll Historical Photo Gallery, including many group pictures, such as of school classes and sports teams from the 1880s to the 1950s--names of all individuals are provided, where known.
- Town of Ingersoll Vital Statistics: Births (1896-1909), Deaths (1896-1934), Marriages (1896-1924)—full details provided.
- Directory of Oxford (1857-58)--full details transcribed, including name, address and occupation.

Pickering Public Library (Ontario)
www.pada.ca/ Pickering and Ajax Digital Archive includes a variety of genealogically valuable resources, including a database of inscriptions on gravestones in local cemeteries (fully transcribed), an index to birth, marriage and death notices published in local newspapers, between 1800 and 2001, digitized newspapers (1985 to 1997), local history books and pamphlets (fully indexed), and an extensive image database.

Prince George Public Library (B.C.)
www.lib.pg.bc.ca/pgnewspapers/The Prince George Public Library provides a collection of fully digitized Prince George Newspapers for the period 1909 to 1971. You can search by keyword to find pages that include your ancestor's names, but be prepared to search the image of the page carefully for the reference, as search terms are not highlighted on the page.

Saskatoon Public Library (Saskatchewan)
www.saskatoonlibrary.ca/ (choose "e-library services" and select "Saskatoon Obituary Index") This index provides a guide to obituaries published in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix from 1946 to the present. Only the date of publication and page number are provided online.

Scugog Memorial Public Library (Ontario)
www.scugolibrary.ca/history.php Here you'll find an index to birth, marriage and death notices published in Port Perry newspapers between 1866 and 1985. Search results give the subject's name, age (for death notices only) and the publication details: type of notice, newspaper title, date, page and column.

St Catherines Public Library (Ontario)
www.stcatherines.library.on.ca/content/bmd
The Local Names Index contains notices for births, marriages, deaths, adoptions, anniversaries,

birthdays and engagements, appearing in the St Catherines Standard between 1900 and August 1928, and from July 2005 to the present. Notices for the period September 1928 to June 2005 are in the process of being indexed.

Toronto Public Library York, (Ontario)
http://historicity.torontopubliclibrary.ca
The Historicity Collection includes a wide variety of resources for genealogists whose ancestors lived in the area now encompassed by the City of Toronto. This includes the former independent cities or townships of North York, East York, York, Scarborough and Etobicoke. Major resources include:

- City directories 1797 to 1881, full text searchable, images online
- Ephemera collection (posters, invitations, pamphlets, tickets, programmes, etc.)
- North York Collection (includes newspaper clippings)
- Indexes to local history publications
- Photo and postcard collection.
- Maps and plans (including fire insurance plans

Vancouver Public Library (British Columbia)
www.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca/bccd/ Fully digitized British Columbia city directories from 1860 to 1901 can be found on this site. The text is not searchable, but as directories list residents alphabetically, it is usually quite simple to find the page you want.

Welland Public Library (Ontario)
www.welland.library.on.ca/digital/geneo1.htm
The Welland Public Library's genealogy index includes names from a variety of local history publications, plus birth, marriage and death notices published in local news papers (the Herald, the Telegraph and the Tribune) from 1874 to 1934, and 1900 to the present. Search results provide the subject's name, the community (where available), the name of the subject's spouse (where available), the name of the publication the date and the page number, and one word description of the item, such as "B" for birth announcement in a newspaper, "settler" for a reference to a pioneer in a local history book or "business" for a mention in a newspaper advertisement. The site also has an index to newspaper headlines from the Welland Tribune, a database of photographs and news clippings relating to the Welland Canal, and a helpful list of local cemeteries.

Whitby Public Library (Ontario)
www.whitbylibrary.on.ca/local-histort/
On this site you'll find detailed online indexes to several local history publications, including voter's lists for the town of Whitby 1886 through 1889 and "Early Days in Whitby", a series of historical columns published in the Oshawa Daily Times in the 1950s. A quick check of these indexes will tell you whether your ancestor is mentioned in any of these publications, and thus save you time in locating relevant information.

Woodstock Public Library (Ontario)
http://woodstock.news.halinet.on.ca/
The Woodstock Newspaper Index includes birth, marriage and death notices from over a dozen local newspapers from 1840 to the present, the vast majority of which come from the Woodstock Sentinel Review (1846 to 2009). (Janice Nickerson--Internet Genealogy--Dec/Jan--2010--pages 33-35.)

Alberta Genealogical Websites

Alberta Genweb Digital Archives
www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ab.archiv/
(Includes biographies, BMDs, newspaper, census, church records, correspondence, deeds, local histories and directories.)

South Peace Regional Archives
www.albertaonrecord.ca/south-peace-regional-archives Records date from 1834-201 with majority of the material dating from 1920-1960.

Genealogy Resources at Calgary Public Library
www.calgarylibrary.ca/library/genealogy.htm
(Collection focuses on Canadian materials with an emphasis on Alberta, Ontario and the Maritimes.)

Alberta CanadianHeadstones.com Alberta
www.canadianheadstones.com/ab
(Browse over 49,000 headstone photo records from across Alberta.)

Prairie Souls.com www.prairiesouls.com
A pictorial view of Prairie Cemeteries--Alberta.

Don's Cemetery Page
www.people.ucalgary.ca/~dsucha/cemetery.html
(Calgary cemeteries, etc.)

Global Genealogy.com
www.globalgenealogy.com/links/Canada-ab.htm
(Includes Yukon News—obituaries of Albertans 1960-2000)

Doukhobour Genealogy Links
www.doukhobor.org/links.html