



AncestryTree

The Nanaimo Family History Society Quarterly Journal
ISSN 1185-166X (Print)/ISSN 1921-7889 (Online)

President's Message

by Dean Ford

I am not sure where to start with everything that has been happening since my last report. I am sure no one in our group thought that we would have to be in self-isolation and be worried about a thing called coronavirus. Most of us are just happy when we don't get the flu or a cold over winter. I hope that everyone has been safe and well over these last few difficult months.

I would like to thank Carolyn Kemp for her continued special *AncestryTree* editions that she has been sending out weekly. I have received numerous emails of thanks to her for the extra work she has done. I know in talking to members that a lot of research and updating of family information has been done during these trying times. My wife and myself are in the same situation, but I still do not think I will get through all the hints on my family tree even if I sat at my computer for ten hours a day. After all, everyone must get outside during the nice weather to work in their yards and I am no exception.

President's Message Continues on page 2

Parents and children. The simplest relationship in the world and yet the most complex. One generation passes to the next a suitcase filled with jumbled jigsaw pieces from countless puzzles collected over time and and says, "See what you can make out of these."

Kate Morton, Contemporary Australian Author
from *The Clockmaker's Daughter*

What's Inside

President's Message	Page 1-2
Genealogy News Briefs	Pages 3-5
John F. Brown in Haiti	Page 6-11
British Child Emigrants	Pages 12-14
Faces of Our Ancestors	Pages 15-16
Illegitimacy in Britain	Page 17
Thomas Orlando Bridgeman	Pages 18-19
Those We Knew	Pages 20-25
Writing Contest	Page 26
Web Links	Page 27
Members' Miscellany	Page 28
Contacts	Page 29

Save the Date!

DATES ARE TENTATIVE

NFHS September Meeting	Sept 21
Nanaimo FHS October Meeting	Oct 19
Nanaimo FHS November Meeting	Nov 16

President's Message Continued from page 1

As you are aware, with everything cancelled or postponed, the executive has had to put a few things onto the back burner. Our ongoing project of placing most of our library collection at the LDS Family History Centre is still ongoing and once things start to reopen, this project will be completed. The Wellington Cemetery project that was discussed at our meeting in February is also on hold and members will be asked if they are interested in completing this project in 2021. And, of course we have had to postpone our one day "Steps to Our Ancestors Workshop." The committee has set March 27, 2021, as the new date and I understand that we will have the same speakers. If you had signed up for the workshop, you should have received an email

with additional information. If you haven't been contacted please [email](#) our society.

Due to the ongoing situation with COVID-19, facilities still being closed, social distancing and the demographics of our group, the executive has made the decision to cancel our June meeting. We feel that most of our members may not feel comfortable getting together just yet. Hopefully we will get back to meetings in September.

The executive would like to wish everyone a safe and happy summer.

Dean



NFHS CO-OP FUND RAISER

Don't forget to use our membership number when you visit a Mid Island CO-OP!

In 2019, members helped to raise \$214.51 for NFHS. Well done!

Did you know . .

Our society has 12 generation blank pedigree charts on sale at each meeting. These charts are ideal for beginners and "seasoned" genealogists who prefer to consult a paper visual rather than a smaller on-screen version.

Here's Sharon Davison displaying her hard work! Talk to Sharon about how the chart helps her research. See Jocelyn Howat to purchase one.



GENEALOGY NEWS IN BRIEF

FROM LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

◆ LAC CAN USE YOUR HELP WITH ITS DIGITIZING PROJECTS

Welcome to Co-Lab!

Imagine transcribing handwritten letters like the one that Louis Riel wrote the day before his death to his wife and children, asking her “to make them pray for me,” or tagging the names of soldiers in photographs from the First World War. You can help to unveil a great part of our history by using Co-Lab. Transcribe, tag, translate and describe digitized records from our collection. The more work we collaborate on using the Co-Lab crowdsourcing tool, the more accessible and usable our digital collection will become for everyone using the Library and Archives Canada(LAC) website. Start by taking our short tutorial to learn how to contribute to the “challenges” that we have put together, or dive right in and learn as you go; you can always refer back to the guidelines for assistance. You can now also contribute to any of LAC’s digitized images when you do research using our new Collection SearchBETA. By registering for a [user account](#), you can keep track of the records to which you have contributed. Contribute as much or as little as you like. Tag it, type it, share it!

To read more about this project, [click here](#). To see a list of the Co-Lab Challenges, click on the *Start Contributing* button. Very few projects have reached 100% completion, so why not jump in to help?

- ◆ New at Library and Archives Canada (LAC) – [Canadian Veterans Death Cards: First World War](#). This collection includes Canadian World War I nurses and veterans, and a few others, but only those whose deaths were reported to Veterans Affairs up to the 1960s. The collection does not include those who died overseas during the war. Before searching, check the help section for more information and for explanations of abbreviations, etc. This collection is part of LAC’s digitized microform, so is not searchable. The cards were originally used as an index and were filmed alphabetically. Details can include next of kin, date and cause of death and place of burial.

PUBLIC APPEAL TO IDENTIFY SCOTTISH IMAGES

The Scottish Development Department is posting thousands of [unidentified images](#) that it hopes the public can identify. The collection contains scenes, buildings and some people. The site is updated regularly with new images, so regular perusal is required.

KENT, ENGLAND ANCESTORS?

[Old Bunyard’s Kent Pride](#) is a “Treasury of Kentish Greatness” in a collection of stories about the many people, places and practices that have made Kent so different.

ONTARIO HOME CHILD DATA BASE

About seventy per cent of British home children were settled in Ontario and the Family History Society of Greater Ontario has established a [data base of photographs and accompanying name index](#). This site ties nicely with member Richard Nash’s article on page 12 of this issue.

GENEALOGY NEWS IN BRIEF continues on page 4

GENEALOGY NEWS IN BRIEF continued from page 3

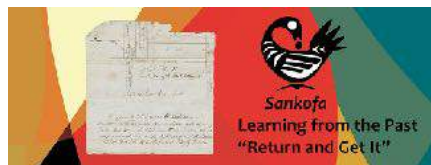
SASKATCHEWAN VITAL RECORDS CAMPAIGN

The Saskatchewan Genealogical Society has begun a letter writing campaign to “prod” the provincial government regarding the high costs of obtaining birth, marriage and death registrations. The society has approached the government before, but to no avail, being told repeatedly that this information is not a priority of the government. You can help by participating in the letter writing campaign — more information and a sample letter can be found on the [society's website](#). Many of you may remember the letter writing campaign organized to reduce costs of Alberta documents. Our voices were heard — the campaign was successful and documents are easily and cheaply obtained from that province. We can only hope that all provinces will follow BC's practice of providing these documents free and quickly from the archives at the Royal BC Museum.

DO YOU HAVE MANITOBA ANCESTRY?



If you're researching Manitoba families, check out the database from the University of Manitoba. in collaboration with the Manitoba Library Consortium, the university has digitized more than 800 [Manitoba local history books](#) to celebrate Manitoba's 150th anniversary. The books are easily searchable and pages can be magnified for easy reading.



NOVA SCOTIA DOCUMENTATION OF AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIANS

Nova Scotia Archives has launched a new site, [Sankofa](#), that emphasizes African Nova Scotia history. Easily searchable, “the collections digitized in their entirety, come together here with the addition of transcripts wherever

available. This allows for increased accessibility, comprehension, and engagement with the African Nova Scotian narrative.”

TRANSCRIBERS OF NOVA SCOTIA DOCUMENTS SOUGHT

[Nova Scotia Archives](#) is seeking volunteers to assist with the transcription of historic documents relating to immigration and settlement of Nova Scotia from the end of the American Revolutionary War (1783) to the final emancipation of Black settlers (1838).

MENNONITE ANCESTORS?

MAID ([Mennonite Archival Image Database](#)) is an online collection of Mennonite family photographs and other archival information including biographies, meeting minutes and even audio and video recordings. Both American and Canadian data can be found.

MONTREAL SCOT ANCESTOR?

A lengthy [bibliography](#) for researching your Scottish ancestors in Montréal and Québec including a few web links has been compiled by Dr. Gillian Leitch.

GENEALOGY NEWS IN BRIEF continues on page 5

GENEALOGY NEWS IN BRIEF continued from page 4



BC ARCHIVES
COLLECTION SEARCH

BC ARCHIVES REFERENCE ROOM COVID 19 CLOSURE UNTIL 2021

In response to the British Columbia Archives announcement last week that its reference room will remain closed until 2021, the Canadian Historical Association (CHA) sent a letter to Premier John Horgan and Jack Lohman, CEO of the Royal BC Museum, urging them to re-consider the decision.

BC Archives said last Tuesday in a brief [news item](#) on its website, "During this time, we are reviewing and modifying our processes to ensure the health and well-being of all who work in and rely upon the archives."

CHA President Penny Bryden, in her [letter](#) to the Premier and the museum CEO, wrote that archival reading rooms, which are used by researchers and students, "offer ample opportunity for physical distancing."

Meanwhile, on the day BC Archives posted its announcement, the Royal BC Museum, which houses the archival centre, issued a [statement](#) to advise it would re-open to visitors on June 19. The Royal BC Museum temporarily shut its doors to the public on March 17, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers who have visited both museums and archival reference rooms will think it odd that a museum with plenty of galleries, exhibits, and work spaces can introduce social distancing and other safety measures to protect staff, volunteers and visitors, but an archival centre is apparently unable (or unwilling) to implement the same procedures for its reference room. Ms. Bryden also raised concerns about the impact a delayed opening of the reference room will have on research related to Indigenous issues. "Such a lengthy closure will also delay treaty negotiations and land title litigation pushing back resolutions by a year or more." She closed the CHA letter with "To limit research into the past can do nothing other than imperil the future."

The Friends of the BC Archives and the British Columbia Historical Federation have joined the Canadian Historical Association to urge the Royal BC Museum and Archives to re-consider its decision to keep the archives reference room closed until 2021. On May 26, the Royal BC Museum and Archives announced it would welcome visitors to its galleries as early as June 19. The BC Archives reference room, however, would remain closed until 2021. The Friends of the BC Archives (FBCA) and the British Columbia Historical Federation (BCHF) want the museum to prioritize the development of a plan that allows users to access the archives in a timely manner. They say the plan should reflect provincial health directives and the archives' status as an essential public service.

Gail Dever [Genealogy a la Carte](#) May 31st and June 5, 2020

NATIONAL ARCHIVES TRANSCRIBERS OF WWI SHIP CREW LOGS NEEDED

National Archives seeks volunteers to help transcribe WWI Royal Navy service records for a free online database. These service records can provide information about individuals and their lives. However, as crew lists for ships and submarines during this period rarely survive, it is difficult for researchers to determine who was on a ship or in a certain battle together with topics such as mortality rates, areas from where men were recruited and the type of tradesmen who enlisted. Volunteers on the project will input information from service records into a database. All you need to be involved is a computer, internet connection and a willingness to learn. No prior historical knowledge or training is necessary. There is also no minimum time commitment for volunteers. Whether you can do a little or a lot, all contributions are welcome. For more information and to register your interest, contact crewlists@nationalarchives.gov.uk

John Frederick (Fitzgerald) Brown and Atrocities in Haiti

By NFHS Member Penny Bent



John Frederick Brown was my grandfather's younger brother. As a child, I was told this great-uncle lived in the United States, was part of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders and had "committed atrocities" in Haiti. The story also said he had joined and deserted the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I understood that he was some sort of family outcast. I have been looking into his past, and some of what I have found is shocking.

John was born in Shoreditch, London, England, January 2, 1888, where his father owned a small wooden box factory. He was the second youngest of many brothers and sisters. He started his education at the Church Street School¹ when he was five and a half, and was still at home and going to school when he was thirteen.² There is a family rumour that he was a "handful," and when he was a teenager he either ran away or was sent to Canada, to where his oldest brother immigrated in 1905.

In the 1911 census John claims that he came to Canada in 1902, when he would have been fourteen. I have found a ship's manifest for 1906 which is possibly him coming to Canada, at eighteen, with a destination of Regina, which is where Mountie headquarters are situated. His name is spelled John Frederick Browne (with an "e") and he says he is twenty-one, but he is such a liar that none of his information is trustworthy. He shows up in British Columbia about aged twenty.

John was a policeman in the remote gold mining town of Gold Bridge, where he rode a horse to his work in the icy winter. That would make him technically a "mounted policeman," and it is an easy step to say that he had been a RCMP and more glamorous to "desert" than quit.

I am quite sure that he is the plain "John Brown" in the 1911 Canada census, a lodger, living in Kamloops, where his brother Leonard and his family live, and working as a brakeman for the railway. (His brother had been a brakeman when he first arrived, before he got a desk job.) John's flair for drama shows when he tells the census worker that he had worked one hundred hours a week for the past fifty-two weeks, and earned \$1,400, far more than anyone else on the page. He also says that he is a Canadian citizen, and immigrated in 1902. I don't believe either statement is true. My guess is that he had only recently been working for the railway, and was on his way to the United States and a new life. That December, 1911, he entered the USA at Sumas, Washington, and his

name was now John Frederick Fitzgerald-Brown. In later official documents, his birthplace will be Sumas. This is his surname, complete with the hyphen, until he is buried.

¹ 1891 census for England

² London, England School Admissions and Discharges 1840-1911

JOHN FREDERICK BROWN continued from PAGE 6

John travelled to California, where on the 7th March, 1912, he enlisted with the US Marine Corps as a Private in Company "B", 2nd Regiment.³ Private Fitzgerald-Brown is posted to Cavite, Philippine Islands, on the southern shores of Manila Bay. (That November, Roosevelt is defeated by Taft in the Presidential elections. This could be where the "Teddy Roosevelt Rough Rider" myth began, as Roosevelt was President when John first joined the Marines.)

By March of 1914, John was a corporal, and was posted to Guam with the 42nd company.⁴ By June 12, 1915, he was posted to Haiti.⁵ He was to spend most of the next fifteen years there, and was part of some of the most outrageous colonialist military behaviour in Marine history. John clearly enjoyed his work in Haiti, because when his time was up in March, 1916, he reenlisted for the first of several times. I can only speculate that he learned how to deal with "locals" from his experiences in the Philippines and Guam. He would not have learned this in England or Kamloops.

The Marines arrangement in Haiti was to separate themselves from the day to day policing of the locals. They were there to keep order for the United States. The Haitians had their own quasi-military national police force, the Gendarmerie, which was badly trained, corrupt, and understaffed. The Marines "assigned" US personnel to the Gendarmes, who then took on positions within that force. Almost immediately upon arriving in Haiti, John was "loaned" to help the local Haitian police force to establish order and control the citizens. A corporal or sergeant in the Marines could quickly become a lieutenant or captain in the Gendarmes, with a

different uniform. This is why John Frederick Fitzgerald-Brown was never a higher rank than first sergeant in the US Marines, but was referred to as "Captain Brown" in a lot of the reports. He was a captain in the Gendarmes.

In her book *Occupied Haiti*, author Emily G. Balch describes how some of the abuses by John and the other marines began:

What happened was in brief that in order to get military roads built cheaply and quickly the military authorities, in 1917, revived the legal but obsolete Haitian practice of forced labour for road-work. At first when the construction was near home there was little or no trouble, but when work came to be at a distance, unwilling workers were impressed, often very unfairly. They were sometimes manacled like slaves, compelled to work for weeks with little or no pay and inadequate food and shot down if they attempted to escape.⁶

It wasn't just road building that was an issue. The American backed president and political party were deeply unpopular, and there were many Haitians who were living in extreme poverty. Any complaints were dealt with harshly. The Gendarmes were very quick to put down unrest by any means available. There was no Rule of Law. John had by now reenlisted for his third three-year stint, and Captain Brown was a very well-known name in Haiti. Stories of what was happening in Haiti had been rumoured in the United States for years, and finally it was so bad that the United States Senate struck a Select Committee to

³ United States of America Marine Corps Muster Rolls for August 1-31, 1912. I will be referring to these Muster Rolls several times. Each week for every company these documents are produced, and cover the month, plus other reenlistment, sick leave and holiday leave promotion and demotion information.

⁴ Muster Rolls Mar 1-31, 1914

⁵ Passport Application of J. F. Fitzgerald-Brown dated Oct. 11 1923.

JOHN FREDERICK BROWN continues on page 8

⁶ Balch, Emily Greene, editor. *Occupied Haiti*. New York, Writers Publishing Company Inc., 1927.

JOHN FREDERICK BROWN continued from page 7

conduct hearings entitled *Inquiry into Occupation and Administration of Haiti and Santo Domingo*.

The hearings were published by the Washington Government Printing Office in 1921 and are available online as a Google Book. There are about eight hundred pages, including many appendices which are the transcripts of individual testimony.

There had been an earlier enquiry in 1920, carried out by the navy to "enquire into the question of the conduct of the personnel of the United States Naval Service in Haiti since the marines were landed in that country on July 28, 1915, with the view to determining whether any unjustifiable homicide has been committed by any such personnel, whether any unjustifiable acts of oppression or violence have been perpetrated against any of the citizens of Haiti and any unjustifiable damage or destruction of their property has occurred". Unfortunately, this was a case of the navy investigating itself. and that year the navy produced all its reports for public examination except this one, which was suppressed. It was apparently too awful.

Page eighty of the Senate Inquiry reads:

The voice of truth and justice cannot be stilled. The Haitian people await with confidence an honest, impartial, and thorough investigation. In Haiti numberless abominable crimes have been committed. To give some idea of their horror we cite only a few cases made public through the press which the naval court did not feel the need to investigate.

There follows a relatively short list, in which the perpetrators are sometimes "a group of marines" or "some marines and gendarmes" but numbers 17, 18 and 19 are specifically our man:

17. Bodily tortures were inflicted by the American captain of gendarmerie, Fitzgerald Brown, upon M. Polydor St. Pierre, clerk of

the St. Marc police court, in the prison of that town. He was arrested on January 3, 1919, on a false charge of theft, and was imprisoned for six months. Brown administered the "water cure" to him and burned his body with a red-hot iron :to say nothing of the beatings and other tortures which he inflicted upon him. St. Pierre vainly begged a hearing from the naval court of inquiry.

18. Executions by night at St Marc during the first months of 1919 in the localities known as "Grosses Roches" and "Gros-Morne" by Capt. Fitzgerald Brown.

19. Hanging of Fabre Yoyo from a mango tree on March 13, 1919, at Pivert on property belonging to the Orius Paultre family of St. Marc; execution on this same property this same day of two young boys of 14 and 15 years, Nicolas Yoyo and Salnave Charlot, by Capt. Fitzgerald Brown.

John went on leave from Haiti for a month, from June 1 to June 30, 1919. Back in Haiti, he reenlisted on September 18, 1920. Since 1918, he had held the rank of sergeant in the US Marines, no matter what his rank was in the gendarmes. He also had the advantage of speaking Creole fluently. In 1923 again on leave he plans to travel back to England. As he has no American citizenship papers, and has been lying about his name and birthplace for all the time he has been in the US, it is awkward when he wants to apply for a passport. He manages to get a passport, and we have a copy of his application. In it he uses his "leave" documents which state he is a Marine on leave as evidence that he is American, and says that he was born in Sumas, Washington, and also that his father was an American, born in Washington State, and is dead. He manages to finagle a US passport without a birth certificate or proof of citizenship. (His British father, John Pennington Brown, is still alive.)

In October, 1923, John sails on the *S.S. President Polk* to England, stating his English address will be "Totcham, 43a Acacia Road". On December 21 he arrives back in the USA from England on the same

JOHN FREDERICK BROWN continues on page 9

JOHN FREDERICK BROWN continued from page 8

ship. On this manifest it says he was born in Sumas, Washington on January 2, 1888 and will live at "Quarters C-26 Marine Barracks Naval Mine Depot, Yorkton, Virginia."⁷

As soon as he returned to New York he applied to become a citizen, at the New York County Supreme Court on December 23, 1923.⁸ He then returns to Haiti, and the situation there is as turbulent as ever.

Five years later, John sails from Port au Prince to New York, and back to England again. This time he is a proper citizen of the USA.

While he is there he marries **Elizabeth Anne Young**, born in 1887.⁹ John and Bessie, as they are known in the family, were married in Hackney November 7, 1928. This is made official in the United States by a special document provided by the American Consulate¹⁰.

The story is that Bessie was John's childhood sweetheart, but he may have met her in 1923. I looked for Bessie in the censuses, and think that she is the daughter of **Charles and Matilda Young**, born in Shoreditch, (the neighbourhood is right), who is a "lady clerk" in 1911.

John is on the *Berengaria* leaving England (and Bessie?) on November 10, 1928, just three days after the wedding. He arrives in New York and continues to Port au Prince.

When Bessie joins him in Port au Prince, she joins the other wives in a closed social setting where their life is completely contained in a round of teas and dinners and there is practically no interaction with Haitians except as servants. She also gets malaria, and is quite sick. In 1929 John is not only 1st Sergeant

Constabulary, Port au Prince, he is also 1st Lieutenant G. and H District Construction Office, Aux Cayes, Haiti.

Family gossip reports that John drank, a lot, and that Bessie was a strait-laced teetotaler. As an interesting side note, on December 18, 1929 John is admitted to hospital in Port au Prince with syphilis. Poor Bessie. She must have been wondering what she signed up for. He was in hospital over Christmas.



⁷ UK and Ireland Incoming Passenger Lists 1878-1960

⁸ New York County Supreme Court, 21 Dec. 1923, Volume 637 Page 144.

⁹ Marriage info.

¹⁰ U.S. Consular Reports of Marriages (1910-1949).

JOHN FREDERICK BROWN continues on page 10

JOHN FREDERICK BROWN continued from page 9

Earlier that December, there was yet another uprising. Bessie wrote to her sister Hilda on New Year's Day, January 1, 1930, describing the previous month:¹¹

I expect that you will have heard from May that all the women and children were ordered to Port au Prince after the trouble of Dec 5 and 6. We were simply hurried off – only given a short time to pack up a few things, so I had to leave the house as it was. Fortunately, I had nearly finished my Christmas correspondence and sent off my presents.....I am recovering from another attack of malaria and it makes my writing very shaky. It was not such a bad attack as the first, but the after weakness is so trying.

The trouble started with a strike and the mob crowded the streets of Au Cayes ...The leaders of the strike had well supplied the men with "taffia", a Haitian alcohol....

Wednesday afternoon martial law was declared and John had to go and post the notice in the town which when the people saw it, evidently infuriated them and they started throwing rocks at the car – John left as quickly as possible...

In this same very long letter she says: *There has been a lot of trouble caused by Berroyer, who is jealous of John, which I can't tell you about now. In fact, Berroyer is the most unpopular man in Aux Cayes, whereas John is the most popular. I am not just saying this because he is my husband, but all the Haitians like him and tell me so, and I am sure that the way they have received me speaks for itself.*

You have to wonder how the Haitians really felt about dear John. They are certainly not going to tell his wife they don't like him. There is no mention in the letter of her husband having been hospitalized during this uprising during which towns were bombed.

On September 18, 1930, John reenlisted yet again, and shortly after that John and Bessie permanently

GENEALOGY SOURCES — LETTERS

In the article below, Penny Bent relates how she acquired the letters to which she referred in her story "John Frederick Brown." Needless to say, Penny found these letters of great help in understanding the life of her great uncle. If you are lucky enough to have family letters, use them in your writing. They reveal much about the character and lives of our ancestors.

**The Amazing Voyage of Letters used in the
John F. Fitzgerald Brown Article
by Penny Bent**

Joellen is my second cousin, and lives retired in Georgia, USA. Her grandmother and my grandfather were siblings of John Frederick Fitzgerald-Brown. Jo found letters which were a valuable source of information for this article. She wrote me February, 2019:

*As we know, John Fitzgerald Brown married Elizabeth (also called Bessie) Young who apparently was his "childhood love", returning to London to wed her. Elizabeth had several siblings, Bob (Harry Richard) who lived in NZ and accompanied Admiral Byrd to Antarctica on 2 of 3 expeditions, and (Winifred) Hilda who was married to John Goodman Barnes and Harold (HCS) older brother and executor for Elizabeth. Hilda and John Goodman had a son also called John Maxwell Young. John Maxwell married late in life a divorcee with 2 children. John loved and treated these children as if they were his own. Through Ancestry I initiated contact with Ian Mc*** whose wife M was the step-daughter of John Barnes. M's mother passed away last year in Devon. While clearing up the house effects in early June this year, M and Ian found letters from Elizabeth to her sister Hilda, letters from John FB to Hilda about his wife's death and a letter from Bessie Bergevin advising them of John's death and a photo of John FB and Elizabeth on their wedding day. The Mc's live near North Vancouver and as John H and I were passing through Vancouver at the end of our Alaska cruise, we met up with the Mc's at their home where they returned the letters to me.*

From Vancouver, the letters went to Calgary and then to the United States, where they were scanned and sent to me. If there is a moral to this story, it is "follow every lead" or get a cousin who will. And a salute to the hoarders who do not throw out anything, especially old letters.

JOHN FREDERICK BROWN continues on page 11

¹¹ Letter from Elizabeth Fitzgerald-Brown to her sister Hilda in possession of Joellen Harche, Atlanta, Georgia.

JOHN FREDERICK BROWN continued from page 10

leave Haiti, where he had been stationed for fifteen years. Bessie has a trip back to England, and John spends the next few years in Portsmouth, Virginia and Quantico, Virginia. Bessie applies for US citizenship in 1935, and in that application states that she arrived permanently in the States from Haiti on December 1st, 1930.¹² Then on January 1, 1936, we find John ensconced as First Sergeant, Company "A" Marine Detachment, at the American Embassy (Peiping), China. He would be part of the Marine Guard that stand at attention guarding American Embassies all over the world. This would have been a wonderful post. The next record is 1938, that of Bessie coming back from China sailing from Chinwangtao on the *Norfolk*. On the ship's passenger list she states that she was born British but lost citizenship when she married John. When she arrives in San Francisco she applies to be a USA citizen, and is issued Immigrant card #581983 on July 11, 1938. The Fitzgerald-Browns brought back a great deal of beautiful Chinese furniture and ornaments.

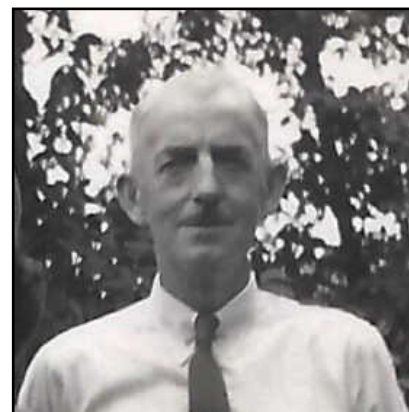
After getting back to the United States, they travelled to England, just as war was being declared. On their return, John took up work at the Marine Barracks, Navy Yard, Washington, DC until his retirement at Rome, Georgia. There he built Stratton Tor, his dream home. He had a surprising amount of money for a man who never rose beyond a sergeant in the marines, but we must remember for all the time he was in Haiti, he was also being paid by the Haitians as a member of the Gendarmes. This double dipping, plus possible bribes, and careful saving, may have been enough to build a substantial nest egg.

In Georgia, in their beautiful home, surrounded by huge trees, filled with Chinese furniture, John and Bessie had only a few years together. Bessie died August 25, 1943, aged fifty-six. She had been married to John for fifteen years. She was buried by John as "Elizabeth Ann Fitzgerald-Brown," **with the hyphen**.

In his retirement, John was the Assistant Commandant for the Marine Corps League Devil Dogs, and worked with the American Legion, leaving a houseful of records to be cleared. John developed cancer of the throat, and was nursed by his sister, another Bessie, (**Elizabeth Bergevin**), who had come to live with him as his housekeeper and who attended his death.

John died July 18, 1951. He left his estate to this sister, but did not want her to sell the house. The Cold War was starting, and he wanted it to be a haven for his and his wife's British relatives if the Russians "started trouble" in Europe.

He was buried by his sister as "John Frederick Fitzgerald Brown". She **left out the hyphen**.



¹² United States of America Petition for Citizenship No 34623 by Elizabeth Ann Fitzgerald-Brown San Francisco California District Court.

Richard Nash was scheduled to speak at our April meeting, which unfortunately we had to cancel. Richard kindly provided a written copy of his talk, which we are pleased to include below.

BRITISH HOME CHILDREN EMIGRANTS

By NFHS Member Richard Nash



The subject of British Home Children shipped to Canada was the topic of my intended talk to members of the Nanaimo Family History Society in British Columbia at our April meeting.

Generally speaking, very few are aware of this important part of Canadian history and I hope the following summary will stimulate members' interest.

Following the Industrial Revolution in the middle of the 19th century, many families moved to the large cities to find work in the factories. Life was hard: monotonous work for long hours and living in conditions which were cramped and unhealthy. Some families decided to seek a better future by emigrating to Canada, Australia or New Zealand. The Minute Book for the Kingston Board of Guardians records the following for Tuesday, 27 May 1873:

Emigration — Jane Newnham applied to the Board for assistance towards the emigration of herself and six children to join her husband at St Thomas Province of Ontario Canada, her husband having sent her part of the passage money. Resolved that the

several poor persons whose names are hereunto written, residing in the Kingston Union, being desirous of emigrating to St Thomas Province of Ontario Canada. The necessary steps be immediately taken to effect the emigration, and that a sum not exceeding fifteen pounds be expended for such persons and be charged upon the Common Fund of this Union. Names of the proposed Emigrants: Jane Newnham 48; Charles 7; Alfred 5; Jessie 3; Mary Ann 8; James 10; Jane 12.

In this instance the whole family emigrated. However, between the late 1860s and the 1930s over 100,000 orphaned, abandoned and pauper children were sent from England to Canada. Life in the towns was hard and families with little income were often obliged to abandon their children to life in the streets or to the workhouses. The situation was deplorable and with no social welfare, these street urchins had to survive in the slums where they had no access to good food, clean drinking water or toilet facilities. Illness and disease killed many. The general public referred to them as "gutter children" who were responsible for the increasing crime and disease in the cities. Some religious groups and a few wealthy philanthropists provided some facilities to house and feed them but there were so many children needing

BRITISH HOME CHILDREN continues on page 13

BRITISH HOME CHILDREN continued from page 12

help. The sheer numbers of pauper children in the streets and workhouses persuaded the government that some of the problem could be resolved by filling the growing need for workers in the colonies. Child emigration was seen as a solution that

could satisfy this need and would also give a child the chance of a better and healthier life. Organizations such as the Southwark Catholic Emigration Society and the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society became involved in arranging groups of children to be sent overseas.

So, in the late 1800s, the first groups of children, ranging in age from six to thirteen years, were put aboard small vessels and headed for Canada. The journey took ten days or more and the insanitary conditions and length of the journey took its toll. Many children died or weren't in very good health on arrival in Canada.

The children were taken to locations where various groups arranged for the boys to be distributed as "indentured farm labourers" and the girls sent to work as "domestic help." At this stage siblings were often separated and many never saw each other again.



Regardless of their ages, farmers agreed to employ many of them as 'cheap labour' and, while some children were well treated, many were put to work for little or no pay and

housed in barns along with the animals. Children were abused and mistreated in every way. I was surprised to learn that quite a number of prominent individuals, including politicians and businessmen spoke of these children as scum that had brought nothing but disease and birth defects to Canada. In 1891 Mr Frederic Nichols, M.P. publisher of the influential *Canadian Manufacturer and Industrial World Magazine* and also a Vice-President of the Press Club wrote that "these waifs and strays are tainted and corrupt with moral slime and filth of the most foul and disgusting character." He went on to state: "Dr. Barnardo is probably doing a good thing for London in decreasing the vicious and criminal classes thereby dumping his human waste and warts upon Canada."

Then in 1894 Dr McDonald M.P. for an Ontario riding and member of the House Committee on Immigration in the Canadian Parliament said "these children should not be allowed to come here at all. It is the same as someone throwing rubbish into your yard."

With these prominent and influential people speaking out against the immigrant children perhaps it is not so surprising that their views and opinions were adopted by many citizens.

Of course, some children were accepted into families and went on to lead healthy and happy lives. Also 10,000 men volunteered for service to fight with Canadian forces in the Great War.

Both Britain and Australia have officially issued apologies to the immigrants who were ill treated. So far, Canada hasn't done the same.

In 2013 some members of Nanaimo Family History Society worked on digitizing Canadian passenger lists including those ships carrying hundreds of British

BRITISH HOME CHILDREN continues on page 14

BRITISH HOME CHILDREN continued from page 13

Home children to these shores. These lists are available to [view on line](#).

There are a number of books written by the children of these migrants which make interesting reading. I have only recently become aware of a website [British Home Children in Canada](#) owned and operated by the BHC Advocacy and Research Association which contains a wealth of information including immigrant ships, BHC books and stories galore. If you would like to look at the site there is one account which I consider of particular interest under the heading Park Lawn Cemetery 2017 where seventy-five unidentified Dr. Barnardo children are buried.

To appreciate the many implications I suggest viewing the documentary films available on the internet. On Yahoo I watched [British Home Children in Canada Born of Good Intentions](#) which is a real eye-opener. Also BHC film 2016 – [Lost and Found](#) is very informative.

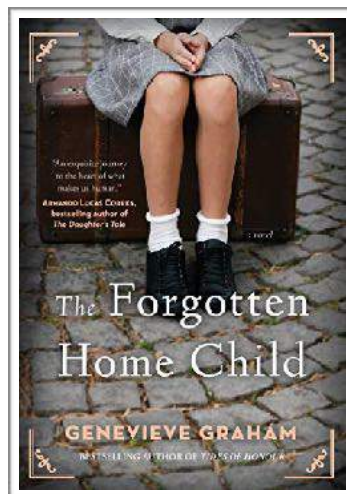
I have to say that my interest in this subject is a personal matter because as a child I was identified as a home child and spent the first nine years of my life in a government run children's home in south London. I didn't suffer abuse like the many children who were shipped to Canada but appreciate the contribution they made to this country.

NEW HOME CHILD NOVEL

A new novel from Halifax author Genevieve Graham, *The Forgotten Home Child* is based on the story of the 130,000 British children shipped to Canada.

"The Home for Unwanted Girls meets Orphan Train in this unforgettable novel about a young girl caught in a scheme to rid England's streets of destitute children, and the lengths she will go to find her way home— based on the true story of the British Home Children."

[A sneak peak at excerpts](#) from the book is available from Amazon.



HELP BUILD OUR MEMBERSHIP! The larger our membership, the more resources we have and the more family connections that can be made. Do you have a friend wondering about his or her ancestry? Why not bring this person to our next meeting or perhaps purchase a membership for your friend to help start someone else's genealogy search?



Faces of Our Ancestors

from NFHS member David Blackburn



Reuben Baker grandfather of Diana Little, David's wife ca 1896



Here is a photo dated 1904 of Mrs. **Agnes Baker (née Polkey)** and her brother **Jack Polkey** taken near Birmingham, England. Agnes was Diana Little's great-grandmother. The car was an eight horsepower, single-cylinder model, make unknown.

FACES OF OUR ANCESTORS continues on page 16

FACES OF OUR ANCESTORS continued from page 15



The photograph to the left was taken in about 1907 near Birmingham, England. The parents were **Jack and Ellen (née Allwood) Hare**. The girl seated at the right in the front row was **Beatrice Clara Hare** the grandmother of Diana Little. Beatrice lived at various times in England, Ceylon and Malta. Diana emigrated with her immediate family to Canada in 1957.



The photo above is of the 40th Wedding Anniversary in 1907 of David Blackbourn's great-grandparents **George and Mary Ann (née Harris) Parker**. They lived then in Footscray, north Kent, England. George was a farm bailiff. David's grandmother- **Emma Louisa Parker** was the oldest daughter and is seated second from right in the front row. She lived all her life in England, but her grandson, David, whom she never knew, came to Canada in 1965. Strangely enough, two of the younger girls (top left) emigrated to Canada in the 1920's. Two of the grandchildren of one of them were born in Prince Rupert, and now live in Parksville and Nanaimo. They and David and other Parker descendants from England have reunions every few years.

Illegitimacy in Britain by NFHS member Ben Wilkinson

Having discovered that my grandfather was born a year before his parents married, and that his father was illegitimate, I became interested in the topic. Why was illegitimacy so important? This exploration is related to British history in particular, but a lot of the conclusions relate to other countries as well.

A person's value, especially when considering matrimony, was related to his or her possessions, and in particular, what inheritance was expected from parents. Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is full of references to the "worth" of various potential mates. What a person 'brought to the marriage' was all important.

Since illegitimate children were not supposed to exist, they had little or no protection in the law, no rights. They rarely stood to inherit anything. In certain circumstances, particularly if their father made special provision in his will, or if they were royal, they did have 'value', and inherited something. William the Conqueror of Normandy was the son of Robert I "the Magnificent", Duke of Normandy Robert and his mistress. Because Robert had no legitimate children, William inherited (with some difficulty) the Dukedom, and was known as "William the Bastard" before he became "William the Conqueror." In Georgian England, royal bastards were given the title "fitz"; so FitzWilliam would mean royal illegitimate son of William, who may not be a reigning monarch, but a close member of the royal family.

Because they had no legal rights, illegitimate children were treated very differently by their fathers. My great grandfather was one of three children of a lawyer and his mistress. The lawyer was married to the daughter of a prominent clergyman, so there was no hope of divorce. His three children were given a good education, the eldest became a lawyer, the second, a daughter, never married, and the third, my great grandfather, became a physician. Many illegitimate children, on the other hand, were completely abandoned by their embarrassed fathers.

Alfred, my great grandfather, took his father's name, started life as an auctioneer and estate agent, then trained as a physician, becoming a ship's doctor. He fell in love, and his girlfriend became pregnant. Despite her becoming pregnant, and her boyfriend having good prospects, her parents still refused to allow them to marry. This puzzled me for some time, until I discovered that Alfred was illegitimate. Eventually, they eloped to Dublin, Ireland, where they were allowed to marry without her parents' consent. Evelyn, their son, was their only child.

There were many euphemisms for illegitimate children, "natural child" was a gentler term than "bastard" and was often used by Jane Austen.

Notes from Penny Bent on Illegitimacy

in 1926, the law changed in England and an illegitimate child could be "postfactum" legitimized by the subsequent marriage of the parents.

If Ben's grandfather (who was born a year before his parents' marriage in Ireland) was born to a minor, and if she was of age, great-grandma could get married, preferably by special license, in England, while her father stormed and mother fainted.

In a will a child who is "natural and lawful" is legitimate. Just "natural" does not always mean illegitimate as it can also mean son-in-law, stepson, adopted son. Ben is right though, Jane Austen used it as out-of-wedlock.

Thomas Orlando Bridgeman (1870 – 1950)

by NFHS member Grant Bridgeman

I am not certain when I first became aware that I had a great uncle named Tom Bridgeman. No doubt it was after his death in 1950 and he must have become a topic of some conversation with my father. My father's portrayal of Tom was less than complimentary and consisted mainly of a few anecdotal stories, none of which served to positively enhance Tom's reputation. The following account of one of these incidents will serve to illustrate the general tone of the stories.

Aside from sparse and none-to-informative conversations with my father, the only source of first hand knowledge about Tom that was available to me was from a cousin, **Mary (née Bridgeman McLaughlin)**, about twenty years older than I. This source also was not tapped until much later when I became interested in my roots.

When I began to research Tom's life, the normal consultation of census documents and church records placed Thomas Orlando Bridgeman in the appropriate spot in the family tree. Unmarried male members of the clan occupy a spot at the end of a branch and that's that. Usually! But broken window panes were apparently not Tom's only transgressions.

One guiding principle that has hopefully etched itself in my brain while researching ancestors is "expect the unexpected." Some time ago I was trying to fill in a few gaps in a parallel line of the Bridgeman family in the Shropshire area. The immediate target of my research was the BMD's of a Thomas Bridgeman born in 1811. Admittedly someone born in 1811 was not likely to be getting married in 1900 but casting a "wide net" I searched for a wedding of a Thomas Bridgeman somewhere between 1837 and 1900. Surprise! Free BMD came up with a GRO wedding record of Thomas Orlando Bridgeman marrying **Jane Elizabeth Green** in the Parish of Cleobury North, Bridgenorth District, Shropshire in the first quarter of 1896. This was not the Thomas I was looking for at the time, but I immediately suspected that I may

have found the wedding of my great uncle who supposedly had never married. Checking in with cousin Mary who was over ninety at the time, she verified that as far as she knew Tom had never had a wife!

But there appears to be zero probability that Tom was not the groom at the wedding in Cleobury.

There was only one marriage of a Thomas Bridgeman that was registered in Shropshire in the late 1800's. It didn't take much digging to determine that this was indeed Tom. In the first place he was the only Thomas Orlando Bridgeman whose birth was registered in the Government Records Office in England from 1837 to 1890, therefore the only one that would likely be getting married. His occupation is given as "Cattle Dealer", which didn't help much, but his father is listed as John Bridgeman, farmer. Both he and his bride are listed as "of full age". Tom was about twenty-six and Jane was twenty-two. Her father was **Richard Green**, farmer, and both he and apparently his wife were present as witnesses. Census documents revealed that Jane was born in Bridgenorth about 1874.

Just who knew what about Tom's marital status remains a mystery. It may be possible that nobody on this side of the Atlantic did. The only exception would likely be my grandfather, Tom's brother. But following that wedding Tom disappeared. No census record of his existence on either side of the Atlantic, including the US, from 1891 to 1926 has been located. This includes the possible use of either the Bridgeman or Glover version of his name.



Thomas Orlando Bridgeman continues on page 19

Thomas Orlando Bridgeman continued from page 18

Recording the (known) chronological steps of Tom's life up to 1926 results in the following:

- 1870, May 1, Thomas was baptized in Berrington, Shropshire, son of John and Emily Anne Bridgeman¹
- 1871, Thomas is recorded in the 1871 Census of Berrington as the one year old son of John and Emily Anne²
- 1881, He is recorded as a ten year old resident at Milton College, Little Claybrook, Leicester when the 1881 census was taken. His older brother, and my Grandfather, John was also a boarder at the same school³
- 1891, Thomas was listed as Thomas O. Glover, stepson of Dr. John Glover and living in the Parish of Loppington, District of Wem, Shropshire.⁴ Tom's father had died when Tom was about three and his mother had remarried to Dr. Glover
- 1895, Tom appears as Thomas O Bridgeman arriving in Liverpool from New York on Jan 26 aboard the Adriatic.⁵ His occupation is recorded as "rancher".
- 1896, Thomas Orlando Bridgeman married Jane Elizabeth Green in the Parish of Cleobury North, Bridgenorth District, Shropshire, first quarter of 1896.⁶
- 1901, No record of either Tom or Jane Elizabeth has been found in the 1901 census to date.
- 1911, Jane is recorded on a census document as living in Cleobury North in the

household of her father, Richard Green. She is listed as Jane Bridgeman and her status is married.⁷

When Tom died in 1950, he was a bartender at a hotel in Saltcoats, Saskatchewan. In 1985 Mary McLaughlin wrote to the Town of Saltcoats to determine if they had any information on Tom. She received the following reply:

Dear Mrs McLaughlin ; Re- T.O.Bridgeman;

I have been handed your letter as sent to the Town Office. Firstly because I used to be Town Clerk and knew many people here, secondly, because I knew your Great Uncle - Tim. He was always known as Tim to us. He worked as a bar tender in the hotel here for many years. Yes, he is buried in the Saltcoats Cemetery. The cemetery book shows he was buried March 22nd, 1950. A stone has been erected on the plot. If you ever come this way you may wish to stop at the cemetery it is right on Highway No. 16.

*Trusting this may be of some assistance,
Stan Spokes.*

Some years later, my sister and her husband, Ella and Doug Younger stopped in Saltcoats to see the grave. Through a chance encounter with a longtime Saltcoats resident who remembered Tom, they were told that he had been greatly loved by all the community. Perhaps an ounce of redemption for a "black sheep"!



¹ FindmyPast, England Births and Baptisms, 1538 to 1975, Berrington, Shropshire. p.71

² 1871 census of Berrington, Shropshire

³ 1881 census, Milton College, Little Claybrook, Leicester, England

⁴ 1891 census, Loppington, Wem, Shropshire

⁵ 1895 Ancestry.com, UK and Ireland, incoming passenger lists, 1878 – 1960.

⁶ FindmyPast, England and Wales Marriages, 1837 to 2005.

⁷ Census of England and Wales, 1911, Cleobury North, Bridgenorth, Shropshire, England

Our Memories of Those We Knew

A great writing idea was suggested by member David Blackburn, an idea that hopefully will become a regular page in future editions of *Ancestry*. We're inviting you to share your memory of the earliest born relative whom you knew personally. What do YOU remember about the oldest person you knew?

Madeleine Louise Sartain — her Sad Life by NFHS Member Ben Wilkinson, Her Great Grandson



Madeleine Louise, who liked her friends to call her "Louie," was called "Nonna" by my mother, and that was what I was told to call her; she lived in a very old house in Tulse Hill, London. The house itself was not that old by London standards, but, since it had never been fitted with electricity (too dangerous, according to Nonna), it had gas lights, which were rarely used, and oil lamps. To me, as a teenager, it was a very old house. It had probably not changed since Victorian times, around the beginning of the 20th century.

My mother took me there by bus. To enter, we had a short walk down the overgrown garden path, which was, fortunately, quite short. The house was always very dark; the curtains were kept drawn to prevent the light from fading the furniture. There were wooden venetian blinds on many of the windows and the corners often hid crocodiles, at least when I was quite

young! It smelled musty and was always intimidating.

Cooking was extraordinarily primitive since there was no electricity. The coal-fired range was not used, and there was no gas stove! So, the cooking was done on a Beatrice Stove. This was an oil lamp, shaped rather like an old-fashioned toaster, with a wick about three and a half inches long. Since it was not pressurized, there was very little heat, and boiling water for tea needed a lot of patience. We never had a meal there.

When I was about thirteen years old, my mother would send me, on my bike, to take a meal to Nonna. This was very much quicker than the bus. This happened on Saturdays, after lunch, our largest meal of the day.

Nonna was bedridden. She had gangrene of her toes.

They smelled bad. She was looked after by an old companion, Miss Crowdy, who had lived with her for about fifty years.



Madeleine Louise Sartain continues on page 21

Madeline Louise Sartain continued from page 20

MEMORIES

When my mother was twelve, she was sent to boarding school in Belgium, and had to spend the holidays with her grandmother, Nonna. When she left school, she lived with Nonna full time, but left as soon as she could afford it. She thought of Nonna as a difficult, rather cross, controlling old woman. Even when she visited with me, she did not like going, but she felt a sense of duty.

Nonna was born in 1861 into a respectable family. As a girl, Nonna was beautiful. She fell in love with a young auctioneer called Alfred. At seventeen, disaster struck — she became pregnant. Even though she was pregnant, her father would not let her marry Alfred, so, after her baby was born, they eloped to Dublin, and married there with Alfred's brother as a witness.

It seemed very odd that, despite her becoming pregnant, her parents would still not allow her to marry Alfred. Recently, after I was unable to find any record of Alfred's birth, nor of his brother and sister, I was sent the answer by a very helpful woman in Australia. Census details recorded that all three siblings were born less than eight years apart in Hackney, London. There was, however, no record of their births. Apparently, the answer is that all three were the illegitimate children of a lawyer, **William Crick**, who lived in Maldon, Essex. This explains why Madeleine was cut off from the family.

Then Alfred went to medical school, and became a doctor working for the P & O line as a ship's doctor. Alfred had plenty of money, but he became very depressed, and there was no real treatment for depression in those days. In 1904, he committed suicide, and Nonna inherited his property. Alfred's brother, Harold, was the executor of his will, and continued to look after Nonna's money.

Then, Nonna's only son, Evelyn, got TB and had to go into a sanatorium. He recovered, but was told that he could no longer train as a lawyer; he had to get an outdoor job. He went to agricultural school to learn to be a farmer. Then Harold suddenly left the country for Buenos Aires, having embezzled a great deal of money, including most of Nonna's money and property. He had lost most of his money, as well.

In 1907, Evelyn married his sweetheart, also named Evelyn, a match that Nonna disapproved of since Evelyn's wife was a chorus girl. Then Evelyn has a relapse of his TB and returned to the sanatorium. When he recovered, he was told that he had to emigrate to a hot climate. He left for Ceylon (now called Sri Lanka) just before baby Thora was born in September, 1910. He landed a job in a tea plantation, and, in December 1911, called his wife and baby to join him.

Nonna, now had no family. Her own family had disowned her, and her only son and his family had gone to live in Ceylon; she was forced to live with her sister-in-law, Edith, in a house in Tulse Hill, the house which I visited to take her some meals. Edith eventually died, and left Nonna the house.

The beautiful Madeleine Louise, born to an affluent family, suffered an extraordinary series of misfortunes through her life, and had little to be cheerful about. I wish that I had known more about her when I knew her, and that I had asked her many questions about her life when I had the chance. I feel sorry for her.



Jessie Reeves (née Kemp)
by NFHS Member Carolyn Kemp, Her Great Niece

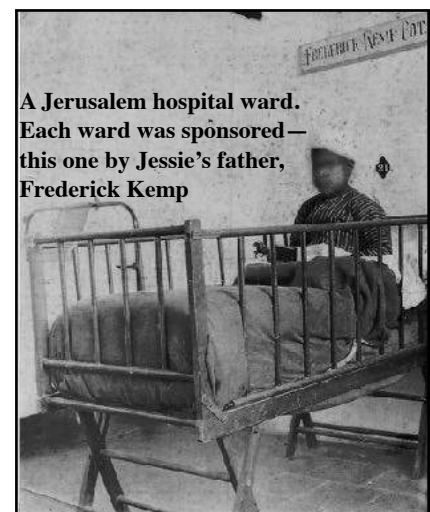
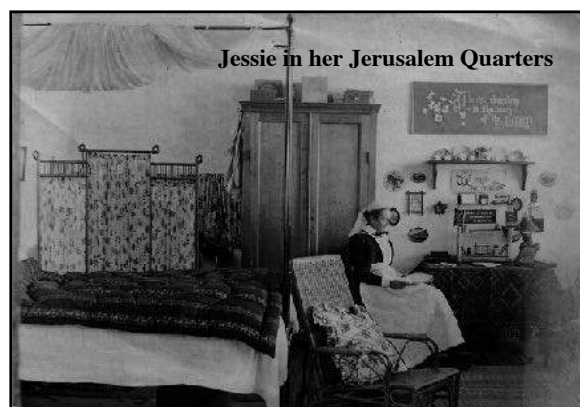
MEMORIES



My paternal great aunt, Jessie **Reeves née Kemp** was the oldest person I knew personally. Jessie was born in 1870 at Whitstable, Kent, where she grew up among seven siblings, one of whom was my grandfather. Jessie had some nursing training and by 1901 she was a missionary nurse at the Hospital of St. John in Jerusalem. At Jerusalem and Jaffa she spent a few years, returning to Whitstable before WWI. (Research continues to confirm this.) I have been unable as yet to trace her during WW I, but it is probable that she was nursing during the war years. She would also have taken care of her mother **Fanny Kemp (née Austin)** until the latter's death in 1929.

Jessie remained unmarried until 1930 when she travelled to Canada and married, at my grandfather's home, her childhood sweetheart **John Fox Reeves** who had immigrated to Canada in 1905 and had recently lost his wife. Following their marriage, they settled at Jack's farm near Mannville, Alberta. Jessie was sixty years old at the time — the harsh conditions of the prairies must have been difficult for her, but she managed well helping with Jack's children and assisting with his evangelical pursuits until his death in 1951. She returned to Whitstable in 1954. Here she was very active in church life and gave many talks at Whitstable and neighbouring towns about her years in Palestine.

I was alive when Jessie came through Winnipeg on her return to England (she remembered I wouldn't crawl preferring to roll to my objectives) but I don't remember meeting her until 1960 when my mother and I visited her at Whitstable. I was fascinated by her stories of the Middle East and she took me to the Whitstable beach from which my oyster dredging ancestors set sail. As a teenager, I kept up a correspondence with Aunt Jessie. I have kept many of those letters and they continue to nourish in me my love of family history. Jessie died in Whitstable, the town she loved, in 1968.



Catherine Adams Laird Muir
by NFHS Member Cate Muir, Her Daughter

MEMORIES

Sadly I never met any of my grandparents as they were gone before I was born and my parents had me late in their lives, but there is someone who has the earliest birthdate and whom I knew really well. The oldest relative whom I knew personally was my Scottish mother, **Catherine Adams Laird Muir**. She was born in Leith, Scotland on May 7th, 1907 to **Catherine and John Laird**. When Mom was two years old, her family immigrated to Canada on the *Ionian* (which I found on the NFHS passenger lists). They lived in Toronto, Ontario where her two siblings, Ann and John were born. Her mother at the age of thirty-two died of tuberculosis in August 1915, and then her father enlisted in WWI in 1916. John Laird died November 9, 1917, leaving Mom and her siblings to be raised in Montréal, by her father's sister and her husband, **Janet and Alec Lowe** along with her four Lowe cousins (whom I met when they visited my hometown). Mom started working as a mother's helper (she was great with babies and children) when a teenager and then she worked as a house maid. When she worked at Budge's, a rich mansion, she met my Scottish father, **David Wilkie Muir**, the newly hired chauffeur-gardener. After asking Mom three times to marry him, she finally said yes. She was thirty-one and Dad thirty when they married June 4, 1938, in Trinity United Church. They had four children David Laird, Hazel Catherine, Jean Elizabeth, Catherine Ruth (me). They had moved to Brampton where I was born, so Dad could work in the Dale Estates, a big greenhouse horticulture business where he grew long-stemmed roses. They bought their first home, a wartime house and an extra lot for Dad's huge vegetable garden. Mom was always busy cooking, cleaning, baking, canning, sewing, taking care of us, and being a wonderful, calm and warm caring mother. She had a great sense of humour and a real love of nature, and liked to stop and watch the sunrise and sunset. She lived to be eighty-eight years old after strokes and cancer, but still lives on in my heart. A better mother I never could have asked for.



Catherine (centre) with siblings John and Ann. Cate's mother said they were told that the dolls and lockets were from their dad while he was away at war. Grandad probably wrote Mrs. Annie Bennett, their next door neighbour on Mutual Street, Toronto, who was taking care of his children (my grandma) died before he went to war) and asked her

to get them for his children and maybe take the photo to send him. I don't know what John was given. I hope this photo would have been a comfort for him. He died November 9, 1917 during the Battle of Passchendaele in Belgium, one day before that battle ended.



PERCY BATES by NFHS Member Susan Bates His Granddaughter

The oldest ancestor I can remember is my grandfather, **Percy Bates** who was born in Manchester, England in 1875, the youngest in a family of eleven. My father, his eldest child, was born in Vancouver in 1913. In that time span — 1875 to 1913 — Grandpa Percy finished school at age twelve, worked for the Inland Revenue Service where he earned a Stamping Certificate, enlisted in the 2nd Manchester Volunteer Regiment, sailed to South Africa to fight in the Boer War, emigrated to the USA through Ellis Island (1905), lived for a time with a brother in Chicago, took the train across the country to live with another brother in Los Angeles, immigrated in 1908 to Canada (because the United States wasn't "English enough"), worked as a street car conductor for BC Electric in Vancouver and courted, then married my grandmother.

Grandpa loved football and identified his hometown as "Manchester City." I always thought Manchester must be a county name as well as a city name to differentiate it this way. I realized once I paid attention to the English league that Grandpa was simply identifying with his favourite team.

Grandpa was a big fan of Gilbert and Sullivan. Whenever he came to stay, he would have a few of their albums tucked into his suitcase. To pass the time while Dad was at work (he rarely talked to my mother or the children), he would play the albums and sing along as if he were in the chorus. Undeterred by his lack of singing ability, he was an enthusiastic member of the Vancouver Light Operatic Society, so he knew all the words.

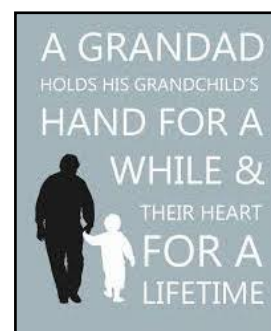
In 1956, Grandpa returned to South Africa as a tourist. He visited Kruger National Park as well as the old battle sites. Never shy, he met lots of people and generally had a wonderful time. On his next visit to us after he returned, we watched jerky, grainy black and white videos of all his adventures. While he was in South Africa, he looked up Malcolm Spiby, who was one of the RAF crew that had rescued my dad from his plane crash in the North Atlantic in 1945.

Grandpa died (maybe peacefully?) at the Pitch and Putt Golf Course in Stanley Park, one of his regular hangouts. He was ninety years old. He smoked until his death, but always used a cigarette holder and insisted he never inhaled. He attributed his longevity to never touching vinegar.



The family photo was taken in the summer of 1944. It shows Susan's grandmother, Kate Peters, Uncle Art (b.1929), father, (b.1913), Aunt Betty (b. 1918), and Percy Bates. The children are Susan's cousins.

MEMORIES



Adele Brown and Sidney Hastings
by NFHS Member Donna MacIver Their Great Granddaughter

The two oldest relatives that I had the privilege of knowing personally were two of my great-grandparents on my father's side. I did not know them well, but since delving into my family history, I have learned a bit about what their lives were like. Interestingly, they were both born in the same year, and each had an unknown parent.

The first was my Grandma Talbot, my paternal grandfather's mother. **Adele Brown** was born 8 June, 1886 in Dresden Ontario to Annie Brown, father unknown. They lived with Annie's parents who farmed land in Chatham Township. By the age of fifteen, Adele was working as a domestic servant. In 1907 Adele married a farmer, **Henry Talbot**, and together they had eight children; their oldest son was my grandfather. By 1921 they lived in Windsor, where Henry was a machinist at the Ford Motor Company. At the age of sixty-one Henry retired from Ford and became a minister. He was a well-known and respected preacher who ministered at churches in Windsor, Dresden, and North Buxton, with Adele fully supporting him in his new career. I remember meeting Grandma Talbot only once when I was about four or five years old. It was wintertime, at a big family gathering. She was very nice as all her great-grandchildren were introduced to her individually, then gathered around her for a photo. There must have been thirty or more of us kids in that picture – how I wish I had a copy of it! Grandma Talbot died in 1971 at the age of eighty-five.

I also knew my grandad, my paternal grandmother's father. **Sidney Hastings** was born 29 July, 1886 in Barbados. He never spoke of his parents, except to say that he ran away from home at age thirteen to get away from an abusive stepfather, working on a freighter bound for England. It was rumoured that he changed his name when he left Barbados. He arrived in Canada in 1902 at the age of sixteen and was working as a chauffeur in Toronto in 1911. By 1921 he was married with four children (his oldest daughter was my grandmother) and working as an electrician. He continued in this career until retirement. I remember meeting him once or twice; he didn't seem particularly warm to me as a small child but was friendly enough. My grandmother told me that he was very strict when she was growing up; she and her siblings were absolutely never allowed to speak at the dinner table! Grandad died in 1982 at the age of 96. Through DNA I have learned Grandad's father's name (it was not Hastings, so the name-change rumour was true!), but his mother remains a mystery.

Both my Grandma Talbot and my Grandad were mixed race, as am I. I have always been immensely proud of my African heritage, and I appreciate this opportunity to honour my ancestors. I hope you will pause a moment and reflect on the difficulties that people of colour continue to endure around the world, my family included

Alexander Shukin
by NFHS Member Cynthia Gabrielson, His Great Grand Daughter

My great grandfather **Alexander Shukin** was born in Russia 1873, and died in New Westminster B.C. in 1960. He lived with my maternal grandparents and we visited regularly. As a young child, I sat and watched him play solitaire. One day to my excitement, he asked if I wanted to learn with his deck of cards. I always enjoyed our time together. We spent many hours playing cards until his stomach cancer was no longer manageable. I witnessed on several occasions the family Doctor Lesk inserting a needle to relieve the pain he was in. A Turkish sword wounded him in the stomach during a war resulting in continuous pain until he was diagnosed with cancer. I was seven when he passed away.

Nanaimo Family History Society Meet My Ancestor Contest 2020



Nanaimo Family History Society members are invited to enter a "Meet My Ancestor" contest. Entries must be submitted by **midnight, December 31, 2020**. Cash prizes of \$100, \$75, and \$50 will be awarded to the authors whose entries, in the opinion of the judging panel, best meet the contest criteria. The prizes will be awarded only if we receive at least four entries. all entries will be published in future editions of *AncesTree*.

A Choice of Topic

This year NFHS has a variety of topics from which to choose. Length of papers should be approximately five hundred to one thousand words (about three to five double spaced pages).

1. Pre 1900 Rogues and Rascals!

Yes, they lurk in most of our families. Write about them and share their stories. What did they do? Why? How did the family react? What happened to these people?

2. Home is Where the Heart Is!

Describe a place (village, car, house, room, tree-house, lake, a rocking chair) that you loved as a child and the family or person you associate with it. How does that person fit into the family tree?

3. The Secret!

Write about a secret that you have discovered in your family tree that no-one in the family knew. You can elaborate on the family's reaction, or tell the story and describe how you came to your discovery.

4. The Explanation!

Describe a situation or tell a short story — then explain the real story. (For example — "my grandpa was always very quiet, didn't talk, and he walked with two canes. We children were afraid of him." Then tell what you found out about his history — it may have been a horrible accident or a war story or polio.

CONTEST CRITERIA

1. The author is a current member of Nanaimo Family History Society on December 31, 2020.
2. The entry has not been previously published.
3. The entry is an interesting, coherent read with a specific focus of genealogical interest.
4. The entry demonstrates the reader's methods of research including any problems encountered and their resolution.
5. The entry includes family tree diagrams **and/or** photograph(s) **and/or** other illustrations **if appropriate**. These visuals are appropriately placed to support the context of the entry.
6. The length of the entry is not more than 1000 words and not fewer than 500 words.
7. The entry includes footnotes and /or sources as necessary.

WEB UPDATES

Ancestry (subscription)

[Finland War Casualties 1939-1945](#)

[United States Hawaii, Birth Certificates and Indexes 1841-1944](#)

[United States Hawaii, Marriage Certificates and Indexes 1841-1944](#)

[United States Oregon State Births 1842-1917](#)

FAMILY SEARCH (free)

[Ireland Poverty Relief Funds, 1810-1887](#)

[Jamaica Church of England Parish Register Transcripts 1664-1880](#)

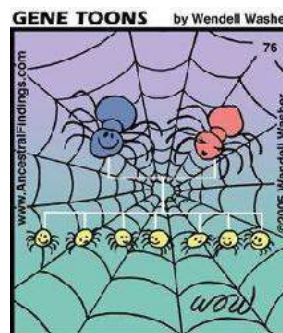
[Norway, Oslo, Census, 1832-1954](#)

[USA Louisiana Parish Death Records and Certificates 1835-1954](#)

[USA Oklahoma Deaths and Burials 1864-1941](#)

[USA Brigham Family History Centre Obituary Collection 1930-2015](#)

[USA Washington County Birth Registers 1873-1965](#)



Genealogy on the web.

FINDMYPAST (subscription)

[United Kingdom British Army Service Records 1760-1939 Coldstream Guards and Scots Guards](#)

[United Kingdom RAF Operations Record Books 1939-1945](#)

[United Kingdom Royal Engineers Journals 1939-1945](#)

MY HERITAGE (subscription)

[Greek Records Collection](#)

MISCELLANEOUS (Free) LINKS

[Search for Scottish Ancestors](#) (an excellent new link of Scottish indexes!)

[Canadian Obituary Links on Line](#)

[Almost 4000 Historical Canadian Newspapers on Ancestor Hunt](#)

[RootsIreland](#)

[Early Alberta Newspapers](#)

[British Columbia Ancestors BC Historical Gazette Online](#)

[Island Newspapers](#) Fully searchable Prince Edward Island Newspapers

[New Brunswick Executive Council Meeting Records 1840-1862.](#) (Many local names.)

[Kingston Ontario Newspapers](#) Many early newspapers including the *Daily British Whig*. Easily searchable.

[Canadian County Digital Project Ontario County Maps and some Individuals](#)

[Top Ten Dutch Genealogy Websites](#)

[Family Tree Magazine's Best Genealogy Websites of 2020](#)

The links above are **new** links recently spotted by your editor. Remember, though, that sites such as *Ancestry* and *Family Search* are continuously adding to older collections. There is no room here to include all the additions, so remember to periodically re-check the sites you've used before — your editor has frequently found additional information about ancestors whom she began researching years ago.

MEMBERS' MISCELLANY

EDITOR'S NOTES

Thank you to all the members who have contributed to this issue. We had many responses to our memories of the earliest born person we knew. I anticipate we'll have even more from members in the fall issue! Your sharing of stories and other content is of great assistance to your editor.

Please continue to submit photos, links and stories — your submissions not only create *AnceTree* but also provide a legacy of stories for your descendants.

If you submit to *AnceTree* and haven't received an acknowledgement from your editor within a day or two, please resend the article.

As always, a special thanks to **Maureen Wootten** and **Jan Nelson** for their editing help!

Carolyn

**Did You Know ...**

Nanaimo Family History Society has a [Facebook Page](#) hosted by member Lorie Heshka. If you would like to join this group, you will need a *Facebook account* first. Google "Facebook Account" and follow instructions to set up account. Once you have an account, you can Search for "Nanaimo Family History Society" inside *Facebook* then click Join. Currently there are fifty-nine members in the group.

**Did You Know ...
From Penny Bent**

During periods of plague, for examples in the 1300s and 1600s, **plague stones** were set out in markets and other places of commerce. They were large stones with a hollowed out area on top which held water, or preferably vinegar. The money being exchanged (and sometimes the goods), was put in the liquid in the stone, and thus decontaminated, before the recipient picked it out! Just like the Skip the Dishes delivery setting the bag down and backing away!

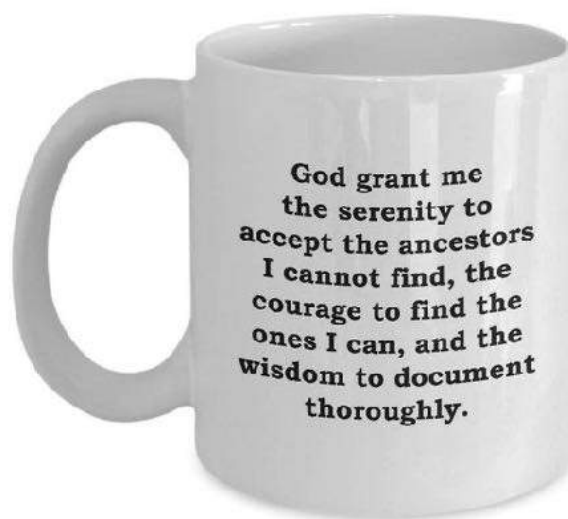
There are several excellent pictures on Google.





Future guest speakers

Our plans for meetings this fall are still tentative due to the health situation. Members will be contacted once dates, topics, and speakers are confirmed. We will also inform members of the evening's format if changes from "normal" such as seating are needed.



Nanaimo Family History Society Executive 2020

President	Dean Ford
Vice President	Sharon Davison
Secretary	Dave Blackburn
Treasurer	Jocelyn Howat
Program Director	Maureen Wootten
Membership Director	Donna MacIver
Director at Large	Bronwyn Frazer
Director at Large	Lorie Heshka
<i>AncesTree</i> Editor	Carolyn Kemp
Webmaster	Dean Ford

Contact Information

Nanaimo Family History Society
PO BOX 1027
Nanaimo BC V9R 5Z2

Email: info@nanaimofamilyhistory.ca

Web Page: www.nanaimofamilyhistory.ca