



AncestryTree

The Nanaimo Family History Society Quarterly Journal
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President's Message By Sharon Davison

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. Our Christmas social was very well-attended. The food was great as usual, as was the camaraderie! It was very encouraging to see so many of our newest members attend the social and participate!

The winner of the quilt raffle was member Barry Kemp and our congratulations go out to him. Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets and especially to Ruth Stewart who made the quilt and donated it to us as a fund-raiser. I would also like to thank those who donated prizes for which \$2.00 tickets could be purchased at the social. A huge



thank you goes to *My Heritage* who generously donated a one-year subscription as well as to Ruth Stewart, Aleda Spring and Mali Bain for their donations. Winner of the *MyHeritage* subscription was Megan Maitland. Congratulations!

Ruth Stewart's quilt won by Barry Kemp is now enjoyed by his mother in Weyburn, Saskatchewan.

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Save the Date!

People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors.
 Edmund Burke, statesman and philosopher.
 (1729-1797)
 from *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

Nanaimo FHS Jan Meeting	Jan 15
Nanaimo FHS Feb Meeting	Feb 19
Nanaimo FHS Mar Meeting	Mar 18

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At our social, Susan Bates gave a short presentation on our new project, mapping the Nanaimo 1921 census. Thanks to Susan for organizing this — details of the project can be found on page 8 of this issue. Susan has also done an excellent job of scheduling the mini Zoom sessions for January to March. See pages 7 and 8 of this issue for a list of the sessions, and thank you to those who have volunteered to host them.

A reminder that library books in our collection stored at Beban Park can be accessed through the winter months when we are not meeting by contacting NFHS by email. Any books stored at the LDS Family History Centre are available during the library's open hours. Please check out the library listings on our website. Finally, don’t forget our general meetings for January, February and March are by Zoom only. Sharon



Did You Know ...Nanaimo Family History Society has a [Facebook Page](#) hosted by NFHS director at large Donna MacIver. If you would like to join this group, you will need a *Facebook account*. To do this, first click "Google Facebook Account" and follow instructions to set up your account. Once you have an account, you can "Search" for "Nanaimo Family History Society" inside *Facebook* then click "Join." Currently, there are about one hundred and forty-four members in the group.



NFHS CO-OP FUND RAISER

Don’t forget to use our membership number at a Mid Island CO-OP! In 2022, members helped to raise \$108.61 for NFHS.

Nanaimo Family Search Centre Winter Hours

Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m, Wednesday 6:30–7:45 p.m.

This year an appointment system is being initiated. An appointment can be made by [email to the Search Centre](#).

GENEALOGY NEWS IN BRIEF

FROM LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

- * The 1931 Canada Census is now available and free on the LAC website. If you register for a free LAC account, you can save the records you find. A searchable index is now available. "This searchable index of the census replaces the temporary database of images that we published in June, so you may need to update your bookmarks and favourites. Using Census Search makes it much easier to locate individuals and offers features such as being able to move from page to page within a subdistrict. LAC is very pleased with the progress we are making on improving access, but this isn't a finish line for us. We will be making updates and correcting data issues as we continue to fulfill our mandate to preserve Canada's documentary heritage and make information—like this census—available to everyone.
- * Library and Archives Canada (LAC) is proud to introduce the 2023-2024 members of its [Youth Advisory Council](#). This year's cohort boasts an impressive 20 members, including three returning members from the previous year. The 2023–2024 cohort is a mix of students and young professionals between the ages of 16 and 25 from across Canada, selected through a rigorous process that aims to create a cohesive unit with a wide variety of backgrounds and equity groups. While not all members have experience in the library and archival fields of study, they all share these essential qualities: creativity, critical thinking, curiosity, enthusiasm, reliability and the ability to work well with others. From November 2023 to May 2024, YAC members will attend monthly virtual meetings with LAC staff to share their perspectives, recommendations

NEW BRUNSWICK SCENIC PHOTOS

The Provincial Archives of New Brunswick has launched an online database of scenic photos by Isaac Erb (1846-1924). The photos are in the public domain, so can be used in your family histories. The photos are available on a new [online search portal](#).

CANADIAN LAND DESCRIPTION CONVERTER

If you are confused by land descriptions of quarter, section, township and range, a handy link that enables researchers to [convert legal land descriptions](#) to latitude and longitude is freely available.



NOVA SCOTIA BIRTHS, DEATHS, MARRIAGES UPDATED

[Nova Scotia Archives](#) has added birth registrations for 1922, death records for 1972 and marriages for 1947.



MARYLAND, USA ANCESTORS?

More than 5 million [records from the state of Maryland](#) are now freely available online from *Reclaim the Records*. Information includes both the name/date indices as well as full vital records certificates from more than a century of Maryland history.

GENEALOGY NEWS IN BRIEF continues on page 4

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ROOTSTECH 2024

Free Early Bird registration for [RootsTech 2024](#), February 29-March 2, 2024 is now open.



SCOTLAND'S CRIMINAL DATABASE

Over [half a million records from thirty-eight Scottish prisons](#) are now indexed and freely searchable at [Scottish Indexes](#). These records are vital to exploring the stories behind our family history as well as overcoming brick walls to our research. Emma Maxwell, genealogist at Scottish Indexes, says "The census is a snapshot in time, but what happened to our ancestors on all the other days? Prison records can be a key to discovering more. For example, we may find a description of our ancestor's tattoos or scars."

Genealogist Graham Maxwell says "The key information given in a prison register to identify the inmate is now very useful for our research projects. While the census may give a place of birthplace of 'Ireland' or 'England' a prison register may give us the specific county or parish. If our ancestor died before 1851, the birthplace and age could be the vital clues we need. Aliases and alternative surnames are given in the prison register. It could be that someone used a name to try to avoid the law but we also see multiple surnames recorded for other people. Married women usually have their maiden and married surnames included. Inmates who were illegitimate may be recorded under their biological father's name as well as their mother's surname."

10TH SEASON OF *FINDING YOUR ROOTS* JANUARY 2024



The names of guests for the tenth season of Lewis Gates's popular PBS show has been announced. The series will begin in January with a variety of guests: Valerie Bertinelli, Danielle Brooks, LeVar Burton, Ciara, Michael Douglas, Lena Dunham, Brendan Fraser, Sammy Hagar, Sunny Hostin, Tracy Morgan, Alanis Morissette, Bob Odenkirk, Ed O'Neil, Anthony Ramos, Illiza Shlesinger, Wes Studi, Dionne

Warwick, Jesse Williams and others.

MyHeritage LAUNCH OF MYHERITAGE RESEARCH WIKI

On December 11th *MyHeritage* announced it is now hosting a new [Wiki, an online encyclopedia for genealogy and DNA](#). The company is excited to announce "the launch of the MyHeritage Wiki: the new, community-led online encyclopedia for genealogy and DNA. The new wiki is hosted on *MyHeritage*, but its scope is very broad and goes far beyond the specifics of the *MyHeritage* service. We invite you to explore the wiki and use it to further your knowledge of genealogy and DNA. But more importantly, we invite you to join us on a meaningful and ambitious journey to transform it into the ultimate online encyclopedia covering every family-history and DNA-related topic under the sun, in dozens of languages. By becoming a contributor, you can help us make it happen!"

MICHIGAN ANCESTORS?

A [free searchable database](#) of Michigan deaths 1921-1950 is now available at *Michiganology*. The site also contains other historical information about Michigan's past.

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GENEALOGY NEWS IN BRIEF continued from page 4



TORONTO CITY DIRECTORIES

If you've had difficulty accessing Toronto directories through the Toronto Public Library's website, the problem has been due to a cybersecurity attack in November. The library has now created a [temporary page](#) that contains a list of Toronto available Toronto online directories.



FINDMYPAST IRISH RC MARRIAGE COLLECTION IMPROVED

In December, *Findmypast* announced that its [Irish Roman Catholic collection](#), still **free to access**, has been improved. "This important collection, which holds more than three million records dating to 1881 and is one of the key resources for family historians with connections to Ireland, offers transcriptions of register images hosted online by the National Library of Ireland."

"A precise description of the improvement process has not been provided by FindMyPast. Instead, the company says that transcripts have been improved and some names previously not transcribed have now been included, which should mean there are now more individuals available to search." [A list of parishes with accessible dates is available.](#)



FINDMYPAST AND ARCHIVES CANADA PARTNERSHIP

The new partnership of *Findmypast* and Archives Canada has begun with two Canadian military collections containing approximately 120,000 records: Military Honours and Awards Index 1812 to 1969, and Courts Martial of the First World War Index. Genealogist Gail Dever notes in her December 4th blog that the Courts Martial records record "members of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces who were accused of military and civilian offences. You'll find some detail of a person's offence in these 11,000 records, plus their name, service number, rank, regiment and unit, and the date of the event. Some of the transcripts also contain further remarks to shed more light on each case. Once you have located a person in the Courts Martials, you'll see the microfilm reel number, and you can then look for the digitized image on [Héritage](#). Both of these record collections are also available and searchable in "Other Resources" in the Military History section on [Library and Archives Canada's website](#).



ENGLISH AND WELSH DEATH CERTIFICATES NOW AVAILABLE

The [UK General Register Office](#) now has English and Welsh death certificates, 1837-1957, online. The cost is £2.50 for access to an online image of the record.



2024 LEGACY FAMILY TREE WEBINARS ANNOUNCED

The new year will feature 168 classes and 112 speakers from 14 countries. It will include two brand new series, Artificial Intelligence for Genealogists and England Counties Research. And for the second straight year, Elizabeth Shown Mills returns for the members-only series, "The Best of Elizabeth Shown Mills: Genealogy Problem Solving. A [complete list of the 2024 webinars](#) with descriptions of the sessions is available.

GENEALOGY NEWS IN BRIEF continues on page 6

GENEALOGY NEWS IN BRIEF continued from page 5

 **MyHeritage** NEW FEATURES FROM MYHERITAGE

MyHeritage announced in December the release of two ground breaking features that mark the next frontier in family history research: AI Record Finder™ and AI Biographer™.

According to MyHeritage, AI Record Finder™ revolutionizes genealogy like ChatGPT revolutionized searching the internet. It is an interactive, intelligent, free-text chat to help the user locate relevant historical records about a person of interest in MyHeritage's database of 20 billion records.

For further details on both new features, check out genealogist [Gail Dever's December 27th blog](#).

**US LIBRARY OF CONGRESS FIRE INSURANCE MAPS**

Fire insurance maps can be useful for genealogists researching a particular location. The US Library of Congress on December 14, 2023 posted a [detailed blog](#) on how to use its map collection, especially its collection of Sanborn Fire Maps.

"The Sanborn map collection consists of a uniform series of large-scale maps, dating from 1867 to 1999, which depict the commercial, industrial, and residential sections of some twelve thousand cities and towns in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The maps were designed to assist fire insurance agents in determining the degree of hazard associated with a particular property and therefore show the size, shape, and construction of dwellings, commercial buildings, and factories as well as fire walls, locations of windows and doors, sprinkler systems, and types of roofs. The maps also indicate widths and names of streets, property boundaries, building use, and house and block numbers. They show the locations of water mains, giving their dimensions, and of fire alarm boxes and hydrants. Sanborn maps are thus an unrivalled source of information for their time about the structure and use of buildings."

**1931 CANADIAN CENSUS NOW AVAILABLE AT FAMILYSEARCH**

Just before Christmas, FamilySearch added the 1931 census. Genealogist Gail Dever writes, " All that you need to search the collection is a free FamilySearch account. Searching this census on FamilySearch seems faster and easier than on Library and Archives Canada website, but that could be my imagination.

The name you're searching is highlighted in yellow on FamilySearch's 1931 Census page, making it quick to find. To help narrow down the results, you can add the name of a spouse, parent or child, which you can also do on Ancestry and MyHeritage, but not on Library and Archives Canada's site. LAC, however, does allow you to include occupation, religion and other details to the search criteria. To help narrow down the results, you can add the name of a spouse, parent or child, which you can also do on Ancestry and MyHeritage, but not on Library and Archives Canada's site. LAC, however, does allow you to include occupation, religion and other details to the search criteria."

A 2015 poll revealed that 67% of respondents stated that knowing their family history has made them feel wiser as a person. 72% said it helped them to be closer to older relatives. 52% said they discovered ancestors about whom they had known nothing.

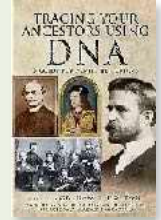
Zoom "Mini-How-To" Sessions, January to March 2024



The sessions are all on Thursday evenings, with presentations beginning at 6:30 and lasting for about an hour. They are open to all members of NFHS, at no charge, but you must register in advance. **The links in blue** below the description of each session will take you to the registration page for that session. Once registered, you will receive a confirmation email containing the link that will give access to the Zoom session on the day of the meeting. You can use the link to join in as early as fifteen minutes ahead. If you have ideas for topics that you'd like to present, or hear someone else present, please contact your executive.

January**Jan 11 - Genealogy Book Club**, Terry Hartley

The book club has been studying *Tracing Your Ancestors Using DNA*, edited by Graham S. Holton. We will continue to focus on this book for 6 more sessions: January – June of 2024. The group shares questions and ideas which arise from reading the book. Everyone interested in the use of DNA for genealogy will enjoy the discussions, regardless of previous experience. The January session will discuss Chapter 4. Note. The print version of the book is only available to order. Try Chapters or Amazon. The ebook is on Kindle and Google. Register once for all 6 sessions, held on the second Thursday of the month.

[Registration](#)

Jan 18 - Did I Marry My Cousin? ...Eww! Ruth Stewart. Ruth proves her relatives are in her husband's family tree through DNA and paper research.

[Registration](#)

Jan 25- Brick Wall Busting, Donna MacIver Do you have a dead-end on your tree that you've been trying to break through? Or are you new to family history research and unsure where to start? Please bring your problems and questions to this session, along with the ideas you've already tried. Donna will facilitate a discussion amongst the participants to brainstorm potential solutions and help you on the road to success! Register once for 3 sessions: January 25, March 28, and May 23.

[Registration](#)February**Feb 1 – My Irish Ancestors' Ever-Changing Religious Affiliations**, Penny Bent

Penny will follow her family's religious "explorations" in Ireland in the late 1800's.

[Registration](#)

Feb 8 - Genealogy Book Club, Terry Hartley. Ongoing. See description and zoom registration link above for January 11.

Feb 15 – Surprising Findings at Newspapers.com, Aleda Spring. Aleda has found this website to be very helpful. She will describe some of her surprising and interesting finds there.

[Registration](#)**Feb 29 – A Midshipman at Crimea**, Tony Green

Tony's story is of his ancestor, Charles William Thomas Cookesley, a witness after the fact of the Charge of the Light Brigade. Originally from Boulogne-sur-mer, this privileged doctor's son started as a midshipman in Crimea but failed on the Australian goldfields.

[Registration](#)

Zoom How To Sessions continue page 8

Zoom How To Sessions continued from page 7**March****Mar 7 – Searching for British Ancestors Beyond the Census**, Carolyn Kemp

Carolyn will provide some examples from her research into less common resources such as apprenticeship papers, poor law records, and others.

Registration**Mar 14 - Genealogy Book Club**, Terry Hartley.

Ongoing. See description and zoom registration link above for January 11.

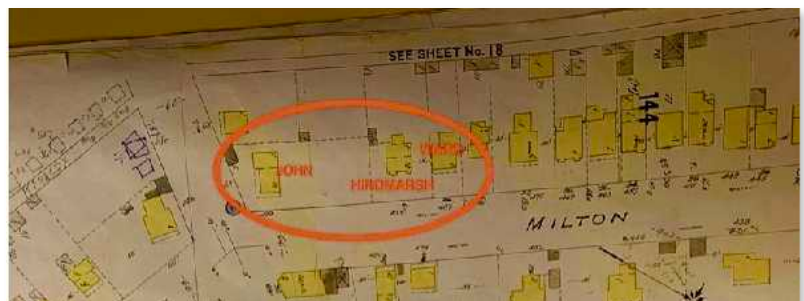
Mar 21 – Finding My Taylors ... Not Where I Expected! Sharon Davison outlines her 20 year search for her Taylor family and the surprising — but not to her father— result. Sharon was the one who was surprised. Her father just said, "I thought that's where they came from!"

Registration**NANAIMO FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY 1921 MAP PROJECT****by Susan Bates**

With funding support from the Nanaimo Historical Society and volunteer help from our members, we are planning to produce a map of the City of Nanaimo as it was in 1921, showing each home labelled with the name of the head of the household. The completed map will reside on our website, with open access. This will be a wonderful research aid for anyone who had ancestors in Nanaimo at the time. Viewers of the map will be able to see at a glance not only where families of interest lived, but also who lived in the neighbourhood around them.

Nanaimo Archives has offered us the use of the Nanaimo city fire Insurance maps, drawn in 1909, revised in 1916. The maps show the boundaries of every property within city limits, and the footprint of every structure on each property. The occupants' names are available from the 1921 census records at Library and Archives Canada. The 1921 tax roll ledger at Nanaimo Archives will also be an excellent source for the work.

When this project was announced at the social on December 11, there was an enthusiastic response from members. Several people stepped forward to offer to help put this together. The volunteer jobs will span a range of skill sets. If you would like to join the team, please [send an email](#) to the society.



Every step you take is supported by a thousand ancestors!



WHY WE BEGAN OUR GENEALOGY JOURNEYS REFLECTIONS OF OUR MEMBERS

Twisting Arms from NFHS Member Rosina T. Schmidt

Remember those ancient internet baby-steps times? When eons ago, you searched for a town, say where your grandfather was born, and you stumbled on other people searching for clues on the same place? Most of them had documents found after their parents died written in an unknown language. The scans sent indicated that they were in one of the languages in which I was fluent, so of course I did the translation. More translations SOS's arrived, and after a while I felt like my arms were twisted and I ended up full time being a translating Good Samaritan. There were also questions relating to those documents, like why did grandfather claim to be of German descent when he was born in Hungary and had Hungarian citizenship? Or in my case, why did my Croatian grandpa speak only German?



It was time to unravel this mystery and at the same time help others discover the answers to their questions. I developed a website, naming it after my grandfather's place of birth, and lo and behold in no time there developed a whole community of family researchers spread around the globe. Together we collected any personal recollections of still living relatives, which I posted on the website, the photos, the maps of the area, etc. That community is still very vibrant to my delight, but alas, it took all my free time. So much for letting someone twist your arms!

from NFHS Member Donna MacIver



Why did I begin exploring my family's history? It all started with my mother. She was raised to be proud of her Scottish ancestry, and she instilled that pride in her children. I knew that my mother's four grandparents all died before she was born, but I didn't realize she didn't even know all their names! My only goal was to find those names for her.

When she was growing up, my mom heard many stories about her maternal grandfather, Grandfather Glen, but not of her other three grandparents. I had no experience in genealogical research, so I just started googling. Every new discovery was so exciting for both of us. I was eventually able to give her the names of all four grandparents, but I didn't stop there! Twenty-five years later I am still researching whenever I get the chance. And that Scottish heritage runs very deep – two of her grandparents were born in Scotland and one was born in Manitoba of Scottish parents:

- James McKenzie - born 1883 La Riviere Manitoba, died 1919 Vancouver
- Maggie (Matheson) McKenzie - born 1885 Rothesay Scotland, died 1942 Vancouver
- John Erskine Glen - born 1873 Paisley Scotland, died 1938 Vancouver
- Julia Blanche (Sykes) Glen - born 1883 Oxford England, died 1937 Vancouver

AMERICAN DIVORCE STORIES: THE GOOD, THE BAD, ...
by NFHS Member Susan Bates

In the Summer 2023 edition of our journal, Helen Webster gave an account of her great grandmother Maggie's divorce in North Dakota and subsequent second marriage in Ontario. Maggie's American divorce had rid her of an adulterous and abusive husband, enabling her to marry again to someone much more suitable. A good story!



Alberta Cameron 1922

My husband's grandmother's story was similar to begin with. **Alberta Cameron** left Vancouver with her two children in November, 1922 to take up residence in Seattle. A year later, she applied to the King County Court for a divorce from her husband **Robert Cameron**. The divorce was finalized on July 24, 1924. Alberta remarried in Tacoma a few weeks later. She, her new husband, and her children (there were three by then) returned to British Columbia. Divorce was somewhat scandalous in those years, so the first marriage was never spoken of again. Only her eldest child had any memory of Robert Cameron, and she was sworn to secrecy. The secret was safe for thirty-three years.

On March 25, 1957, the *Vancouver Sun* printed a short article entitled "1924 Divorce Made Valid." It described how Alberta Cameron, from a small Vancouver Island town, had recently obtained a legal divorce from her first husband Robert Cameron in a Vancouver court, enabling her to legally marry her second husband. Her divorce in a Seattle court in 1924 was not considered valid in BC, so neither was her marriage to the second husband. So much for secrets!

The outcome of this American divorce story was very different from Maggie's. I was curious to find what I could about divorce laws in British Columbia and Washington State. I wanted to know why a Canadian woman felt it necessary to cross the border to obtain a divorce. I wanted to know why Alberta's divorce was not considered valid in BC.

Divorce in Canada was a provincial matter until the Canadian Divorce Act was written in 1968. Before 1968, BC and most of the other provinces did not have any divorce law at all. The governing legislation was by reference to English law, the *Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act, 1857*. The act was very restrictive about why a wife might sue for divorce. The only allowable reason was adultery coupled with complicating factors such as rape, bigamy, incest, sodomy, bestiality, cruelty, or desertion. Given that evidence with witnesses could be required to be presented in court to substantiate the claim, it seems obvious that not many women would choose to proceed this way. (It was possible to obtain a legal separation for lesser reasons, but a separation did not permit remarrying.)

As early as 1887, Washington State law, on the other hand, included eleven "Causes for Absolute Divorce". Alberta's claim was based on lack of financial support for the family. Her story was accepted as truth when Robert did not respond to the official request to attend the court hearing. This was not a "quickie" divorce. A one-year residency was required before applying for the divorce, plus six weeks to allow for contacting the husband and giving him a chance to respond, and then a six-month period of non-contact after an interim decree of divorce.

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AMERICAN DIVORCE STORIES continues from page 10

Once the divorce had been final for three weeks, the partners were free to remarry. If you had the means, living across the border for a year and a half must have seemed like a small price to pay.

Why Was the Divorce Not Valid in BC?

A seemingly innocuous definition of *domicile* in the English *Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act* states that the *domicile of a wife* is deemed to be that of her husband. Because Robert Cameron continued to live in Vancouver, Alberta couldn't establish residency in Seattle according to the definition. Here's an excerpt from an article by T.C. Hartley of the University of Western Ontario in the *Buffalo Law Review*, 1967 titled "The Recognition of American Marriages and Divorces in Canada". It describes a hypothetical divorce with circumstances very like Alberta's, and Maggie's, too, for that matter: "W is a married woman whose husband is domiciled in Ontario. After being deserted by her husband she settles in California with the intention of remaining there permanently. On these facts W would probably be held by the California courts to have established a domicile in California, but in the eyes of a Canadian court her domicile will remain in Ontario and any divorce granted in California will not be recognized."

This logic would apply to every Canadian woman who left her husband behind while she sought an American divorce. But many women obtained divorces in the US without running into this problem. How did Alberta get caught in this web thirty-three years after her divorce and remarriage?

I can only speculate, but here is what I found when I searched for the record of Alberta's 1957 Divorce in BC. From the *Index for Divorces (1935 – 1977)*, on consecutive lines:

Name of Bridegroom	Name of Bride	Place of Divorce	Date
Cameron Robert	Cameron Alberta	Vancouver	22-03-57
Cameron Robert	Crockett Doris	Vancouver	22-03-57

It seemed too coincidental that a *different* Robert Cameron would have a divorce on the same day as *our* Robert Cameron. I retrieved the records for both these divorces. *Our* Robert Cameron was indeed the respondent on Doris Crockett's divorce petition. Doris is granted an annulment of her 1951 marriage to Robert "by reason of the fact that the said Robert Cameron ... was lawfully married to Alberta Cameron" at the time of their marriage. Alberta's divorce is then granted "by reason of adultery,, obviously coupled with bigamy to meet the requirement of the English law, although bigamy is not stated on the petition. I'm guessing that when Doris Cameron filed for a divorce from Robert, her lawyer discovered the earlier marriage of Robert and Alberta and brought it to the court's attention in order to obtain a simple annulment for his client.

Acknowledgment

My husband's cousin Jon spent countless hours researching the Cameron family in the Vancouver Public Library. He found records of Alberta's marriages in Manitoba in 1914 and Tacoma in 1924. He found the newspaper article in the 1957 *Vancouver Sun*, the Index for Divorces in BC, the record of Alberta's 1957 divorce, and the photo of Robert Cameron. Robert's image is cropped from a team photo on the sports page of the Sun: he was a member of the Shamrock F. C. Mainland Summer League Champions 1918. It is the only photo we have of him.

AMERICAN DIVORCE STORIES continues page 12

AMERICAN DIVORCE STORIES continued from page 11

Jon died in November 2017, a few months after the cousins had their DNA tested and finally knew for certain which of Alberta's husbands was their biological grandfather.

Sources

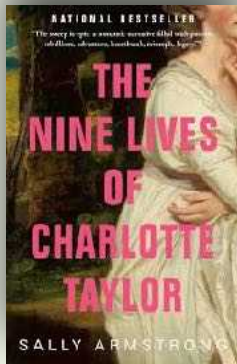
- *Vancouver Sun* article found on microfilm in the Vancouver Public Library
- Record of the Seattle Divorce of Alberta and Robert Cameron found by research staff at Puget Sound Regional Archives. Divorce was dealt with in county court. Each county is responsible for its own divorce records. Very few are online.
- Details of the WA State divorce process derived from contents of the 16-page record of Alberta's divorce, from her initial application in November 1923 to the final decree in July 1924
- State of divorce law in BC in 1924 found online at the Royal BC Museum & BC Archives in the BC Archives Research Guide - Divorce Records
- Details of cause for divorce in BC taken from Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act found online www.bc.laws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/hstats/hstats/1687054102
- Index of Divorces in BC 1935-1977 found on microfilm in the Vancouver Public Library
- Records for the Vancouver divorces of Alberta and Robert Cameron, and of Doris and Robert Cameron found on microfilm in the BC Archives at the Royal BC Museum in Victoria
- Grounds for Divorce in WA State found online 2023/09/23. Article "Divorce in Washington", by Ralph R. Knapp, in *The Washington Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (April 1914), pp 121-128, published by the University of Washington



Robert Cameron, 1918

BOOK REVIEW

***The Nine Lives of Charlotte Taylor* by Sally Armstrong
a review by NFHS Member Penny Bent**



Sally Armstrong is a journalist who reported from dangerous war zones, earning the Amnesty International Media Award four times, written many books, worked for *MacLeans* and *Chatelaine*, accepted awards, delivered the Massey Lectures, has been a member of the International Women's Commission at the UN, and has ten honorary doctorates. And she is a stunning researcher.

Her book about her great great great grandmother, **Charlotte Taylor**, is a brilliant example of genealogy which has been augmented by extensive research and a vivid imagination to create this fictionalized story which is a national best seller. When you read about this intrepid, courageous pioneer, it is easy to think Sally inherited Charlotte's genes.

The real Charlotte Taylor was born into the upperclass home of General Taylor in Sussex, England, in 1755, and ran away with her parents' black butler. They made it to the West Indies where he died, and she was a pregnant, penniless white in a black world and just twenty years old. She makes it to Nova Scotia, lives and learns from the Mi'kmaq, homesteads, and has ten children with three husbands. In a story that moves quickly, the author tells a lot about pioneering New Brunswick, women's place and women's work, and how the amazing Charlotte survived. This an excellent read, and a master class in writing genealogical fiction.

Searching for Agricultural labourers — Using Manorial Records

by NFHS Member Carolyn Kemp



If UK census records record your ancestors as farmers or agricultural labourers, don't despair. There are valuable resources to aid your research. One source lies in records of the manor estates on which your ancestors may have lived. Don't be fooled into thinking that your ancestor couldn't possibly be a manor resident — actually most people living in a rural area of the UK leased property from the local lord of the manor. The most common leases were freehold or copyhold properties..

Currently, I am still accessing information from manorial records, a process that was a learning journey for me. Below I have traced the steps I have taken:

STEP ONE: Research YOUR ANCESTOR'S VILLAGE(S)

Acquaint yourself with early Victorian village life. There are many online sources detailing this period of time, but I found the source I kept returning to was Helen Osborn's *Our Village Ancestors A genealogist's Guide to understanding the English Rural Past*. The book is easy to read, and provides the reader with an appreciation of our rural ancestors' lives. Begin internet searches for the village (s) where your ancestors lived. Browse the net for local history books about your ancestors' homes. (I use [AbeBooks](#) as my go to online book shop. Periodically this site offers free postage to Canada ... Bonus!).

STEP TWO: DETERMINE THE MANOR ON WHICH YOUR ANCESTOR LIVED.

Once you've explored the local history of your ancestors, you should have an idea of the name of the manor (s) in which your ag labourer resided. Be aware that many manors will have the same name, so be certain to check the location of the manors — I was searching for Milton Manor and there were many listed with that name.

STEP THREE: DETERMINE WHAT DOCUMENTS ABOUT THE MANOR ARE AVAILABLE.

Fortunately, the *National Archives* has a searchable "[Manorial Documents Register](#)" that is the official index to English and Welsh manorial records. As well as a brief description of available documents, the register provides the locations of the documents. The search page is easily accessed:

Search

Search by manor Search for manorial documents

Search by Manor

Search by historic county, standard manor name, alternative manor name, parish (English counties only), or a combination of these

Manor name

Parish name

Historic county

MANOR RECORDS continues page 14

MANOR RECORDS continued from page 13

STEP FOUR: LOCATE SITE OF DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR MANOR. In the sample below, I've chosen the manor in which I'm interested. There were ten in total from which to choose. The links with the dates will lead to to the repository:

MILTON MANOR
 Date: 1500 - 1719
 10 collection(s) held by 1 archive(s)
 Place: Castor; Northamptonshire; East Midlands; England

1608-1608: chief rens, with other manors	Northamptonshire Archives Service	F(M)/Charter/2613/1	NRA 5870 Wentworth
1644-1644: rent roll, with Marholm	Northamptonshire Archives Service	F(M) misc papers 808	NRA 5870 Wentworth
1646-1647: rental, with other manors (2 vols)	Northamptonshire Archives Service	F(M) misc vol 220,221	NRA 5870 Wentworth
1646-1646: rental, with other manors	Northamptonshire Archives Service	F(M)/Charter/2613/2	NRA 5870 Wentworth
1647-1647: rental, with other manors (annotated)	Northamptonshire Archives Service	F(M)/Charter/2614/4	NRA 5870 Wentworth
1719-1719: rental, with other manors	Northamptonshire Archives	F(M)/Charter/2613/6	NRA 5870 Wentworth

↑
repository

STEP FIVE CONTACT REPOSITORY SITE TO ORDER DOCUMENT(S)

The links on the Manorial Documents page will take you to the repository you need. Securing the documents will vary for each repository. In your initial contact, inquire about the cost involved and how you can pay to receive the documents in Canada. Most repositories will accept Visa. I have had no problem using my Visa card for orders.



“The Gleaner” Daniel Ridgway Knight

You can also request research if you have a specific question. A general question like “research all you have on Thomas Carter in Ailsworth” won’t fly. I requested information on Thomas Carter in Milton manor records from 1814 to 1829. The researcher I hired provided excellent details for me. Usually researchers are hired by the hour. Fees will vary among the repositories. These repositories also have other documents such as apprenticeships, legal documents and other genealogy sources.

ANCESTRY (subscription)

Canada Prince Edward Island Baptisms, Marriages, Burials
 Canada, Manitoba Birth Index 1870-1917
 Czech Republic Births and Baptisms 1857-1921
 Czech Republic Select Marriages 1654-1889
 UK East Sussex Wills and Probate
 UK West Sussex Wills and Probate

**FAMILY SEARCH (FREE, (just register)**

Canada Births and Baptisms 1661-1959
 Canada Military Honours and Awards Index (1812-1969)
 Canada Courts Martial WW1 index
 Austria Roman Catholic Church Records, 1565-2007
 Czech Republic Censuses and Inhabitant Registers 1800-1990
 UK Funeral Notices 1914-2023
 Germany Deaths and Burials 1582-1958

FINDMYPAST (subscription)

Germans to America 1850-1897
 Ireland Diocese of Dublin Wills and Grants, 1270-1858
 UK Greater Manchester Electoral Registers 1820-1940
 Yorkshire Monumental Inscriptions

MYHERITAGE (subscription)

Germany, North Rhine-Westphalia-Münster, Detmold, Arnsberg Marriages 1874-1899

ROOTS IRELAND FREE (Just Register)

Antrim and Down Baptisms and Marriages

MISCELLANEOUS (Free) LINKS

Researching Scandinavian Ancestors Part 1: Introduction to Patronymics
 Researching Scandinavian Ancestors Part 2: Locality Research and Repositories
 Researching Scandinavian Ancestors Part 3: Research Planning and Initial Research
 Accessing Ancestry's Free Collections
 Add Consistency to Your Source Citations (great hints on organizing your citations)
 Newly Added Records and Databases Offer Some Treasures for Russian Genealogy
 DNA Doesn't Lie, but it Sometimes Speaks in Riddles
 How to Preserve Your Genealogy Research
 6 "Secret" Google Search Links for Genealogy That Will Help you Find Your Ancestors
 10 Ways to Find Notarial Records in the Netherlands
 Free Italian Military Records for WWI and WWII
 Website Searches for Historical German Place Names
 3 Keys to Discovering your Hungarian Jewish Ancestors
 Red River Ancestry Website and Métis Scrip
 10 Most Important Record Groups for Dutch Research
 Finding Ship Passenger Lists
 4 Keys to Italian Genealogy
 10 Websites for the History of Ordinary People
 How to Preserve Holiday Heirlooms

Most of 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.

**NANAIMO FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY FUTURE
SPEAKERS**

Hybrid meetings will be held live at Beban Park



Monday, January 15, 2024

JAMIE BROWN



TIPS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF ANCESTRY AND FINDMY PAST

Take some time to reacquaint yourself with two of the most popular family history databases—Ancestry Library Edition and FindMy Past. You'll learn what's new, what has changed and get tips and tricks to make the most of your family history research experience.



Monday, February 19, 2024 AGM and Election of Executive

AHA! MOMENTS



Monday, March 18, 2024

CLAIRE SMITH-BURNS POINTS TO THE PAST:

AN UNDERUSED RESOURCE EXCLUSIVE TO BRITISH COLUMBIANS



Claire is happy to come back to Nanaimo to speak to our friendly group on March 18. She has family ties to Nanaimo from the past going back to her great-great-Grandfather, Charles Wentworth Wallace (Wentworth & Wallace Streets were named after him)..



Monday, April 15, 2024

MARIANNE RASMUS

A RUSSIAN REVELATION:

A FAMILY SHAPED BY SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL EVENTS



We have all hit our fair share of brick walls while doing family history research, but how about an 'Iron Curtain'? When Marianne Rasmus began exploring her family history, little was known about her maternal grandmother's ancestry. Her grandmother had died before Marianne knew to ask her about her childhood, her emigration from Communist Russia in 1926, or how she adjusted to life in Canada. Starting with a handful of names, Marianne will reveal the process and sources used to discover a deep maternal heritage about which she knew little, and the circumstances which made it challenging to learn. She will share how historical events in both Canada and Europe affected her grandmother in a life-altering fashion, and how perseverance and a little DNA shed light on long-unanswered questions.

Do you have ideas for future guest speakers? If you have a name or a topic in mind, please let a member of our executive know!

MEMBERS' MISCELLANEA

From NFHS member Dave Blackburn

Dave notes that the UK press is shocked at a decision by the Ministry of Justice's plans to destroy millions of wills. Hoping to save £450,000, the plan is to digitize wills from 150 years ago saving only those of "famous" people. The rest will be destroyed.

Jane Roberts in her [December 16 2023 blog "PastToPresentGenealogy"](#) discusses this "madness" as most genealogists would see it. Check out her blog for further details:

- * "As a clarification point, the documents subject to destruction are not the registered copies of wills obtained from the Probate Search Service website. The original will may differ from these registered copies, importantly containing the original signatures of testator and witnesses. These, as family historians know, can provide an important comparator in identifying/proving signatures of the individuals in other records. Currently you are able to request – and should legally be supplied – the original will. It is these originals which are earmarked for destruction."
- * "family historians are well aware of issues around digitization. How many digitized documents have been incorrectly scanned, for example sections chopped off, failure to scan both sides, even missing out pages, or skipping complete sections. And on the subject of this in relation to wills, I've had the wrong soldier's will supplied because of a scanning issue. The reply I eventually got from HMCTS when, after months of emails and fobbing off, they finally acknowledged the problem, was... we are looking at rescanning the affected soldier's wills and will correct yours in due time...From this reply, it appears mine was not a one-of issue. It seems multiple wills were affected by scanning problems. I did eventually get the correct will. But if the original document had been destroyed this would have been impossible."
- * "linked to this, there is the long-term viability of digital documents and new technology. Their preservation and longevity is a whole new can of worms. Remember floppy disks? Betamax and VHS? Anyone bought a new laptop of late, with a CD DVD drive? Will USB ports and sticks be consistent? What about deterioration of digital documents? Digital preservation is not one-off and cost-free. And what about cyber attack? The British Library is still suffering major technology outages weeks after they fell victim to one, and anticipate disruption to some services will last for several months to come."

NFHS MEMBER ANNOUNCES NEW BOOK

Helen Webster has published the third volume in her Lucy trilogy *Reckoning* completes the story of Lucy, who realizes that the only way she can move past the terrorizing events of her traumatic youth is to triumph over her deepest fears. "In *Reckoning*, Lucy's life has changed. She knows it's time to conquer her fear of the self-described Prophet, Josiah, whose psychological abuse and cult-like religion destroyed her hometown and resulted in her brother's death."

MEMBERS' MISCELLANEA continues page 18

MEMBERS' MISCELLANEA continued from page 17

Simple Google Search Results in "Aha Moment"
From NFHS member Jan Nelson (née Webber)

While Googling various combinations of the name and spelling of Jan's ancestor, **William Woolington Webber**, Jan discovered the article below. Some interesting details about her family were found in the online October 2017 edition, page 3 of the *Merriott Messenger*. **William W. Webber** was the brother to Jan's 3rd great grandfather **John Webber** (surgeon).

A lesson for all of us — don't neglect simple Google searches and try combinations of names and places as search criteria. Also, don't forget to put quotation marks around word combinations of more than one word.

For example:



Searching for clues re the Merriott Cider Flagon

Following the photo posted in last month's *Merriott Messenger* of the cider jar with the inscription: **W.W.Webber Wine and Spirit Merchants, Merriott, Crewkerne**, I have been contacted by several readers with information and done further research myself.

The Webbers owned the nursery before selling it to John Scott in 1848. The **Merriott Families Genealogy** website is an excellent resource and there I found a reference from the 1851 census to **William W Webber** age 30, a Nurseryman and Brewer employing 16 hands.

He had a wife Dorcas Ann age 25, a daughter Rose age 1 and a second daughter Dorcas Ann age 1 month. They lived at Town's End Merriott.



The 1861 census, kindly forwarded by a reader, has **William W Webber**, a Wine Merchant, living at Chard Road, Merriott with his wife, 6 children, a governess and 2 servants. He was obviously doing well.

I would think that is the same address, although why that part of the village should be called Chard Road I am not sure.

The 1887 Ordnance Survey map has a

beer house situated at Townsend. In the 1891 census William was a retired Wine Merchant.

Interestingly the 1889 edition of Kelly's Directory has a **William Woolmington Webber** living in Sheepmarket Street (now Market Street presumably) Crewkerne. He was a graduate of Edinburgh University with LRCP after his name and was a Medical Officer and Public Vaccinator for Crewkerne. He was also possibly William the wine merchant's son.

I need to do more research to establish the exact train of events. Perhaps a visit to Somerset Heritage centre in Taunton is called for. Watch this space!

Marion Biggs

Genealogists do not gather facts,
 but breathe life into all who
 have gone before.



The Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia announced that its virtual conference, [Explore Your Ancestral Ocean Playground](#), will be held May 4 and 5, 2024. The lineup of topics is bound to interest many family historians whose relatives lived in Nova Scotia. **Registration will open January 1.** As for who the speakers are and what the registration fee will be, further details are expected to be made available later this year. The topics will include:

- * Moving from novice to intermediate Nova Scotia genealogist
- * Exploring the Acadian mtDNA Project
- * Early Scottish settlers in Atlantic Canada
- * Irish and Channel Islanders to Nova Scotia via Newfoundland
- * Presentations by archivists from each of the primary religious archives in the region: Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, and United Churches
- * Nova Scotia Loyalist research
- * Presentation from Nova Scotia Archives staff
- * Nova Scotia Crown lands
- * Nova Scotia poorhouses and poor records
- * Distorted descent: White claims to Indigenous identity
- * Using DNA to trace family from California to Nova Scotia



Start the New Year off by exploring your Family History with our free monthly Family History Forums hosted by the Okanagan Regional Library and the Kelowna & District Genealogical Society!

Tuesday, January 23rd, 6:30-8:00pm, via Zoom (log on from 6:15pm) Registration Required (see details below)

Topic: *Finding Family at the BC Archives*, with Trevor Dyck of the BC Archives, Victoria

Description: This talk will examine the different ways you can conduct genealogical research at the BC Archives, and the diverse types of records we hold that can help you with your research. Some interesting types include institutional records, coroner's reports, and vital statistics.

About the Speaker: Trevor Dyck is an archivist at the BC Archives in Victoria. He is originally from Winnipeg and moved to Victoria in September. At the BC Archives, Trevor works on community engagement, outreach, programs, and assists with Indigenous records. His interests include archival decolonization, community, and the reconciliation framework. Trevor is looking forward to providing insight into the genealogical holdings at BC Archives, and how the Archives can assist you with this research.

Family History Forums are a partnership presentation series of the **Kelowna & District Genealogical Society** and the **Okanagan Regional Library**. The topics vary but are typically at the beginner's level in Family History research. All are welcome to these **FREE** Zoom presentations, but pre-registration is required through the [ORL's Events Calendar](#), scroll down to the fourth Tuesday of the month (no FHF in Dec, July or August), 6:30pm and find, "Online Family History Forum." Click on the event in the Calendar and follow the instructions. Be sure to enter your email address correctly and watch for the email from the ORL to confirm your registration and the Zoom link. A reminder with the FHF handout will be sent to you shortly before the Forum.



FROM NANAIMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(note — this is not our Nanaimo Family History Society)

LOOKING LOCAL

from Susan Garcia

Nanaimo Historical Society (NHS) promotes the **area** history of Nanaimo, including its cultures and peoples. Were your ancestors coal miners? Gold miners? Indigenous? Chinese? Japanese? Welsh? Did any work on BC ferries or freighters? If so, please feel welcome to explore all these topics in "Stories & Articles" on our [website](#) where recorded presentations about these histories may be viewed. There is also an NHS Facebook page.

The Nanaimo Historical Society (NHS) appreciates sharing several events in 2023 with the Nanaimo Family History Society, including the December 14, 2023 Zoom session with Glamorgan Family History Society, Wales and speaker Dr. Gethin Matthews, of Swansea, Wales.

Future events:

- * The annual **Show and Share January 11, 2024**, a popular circle where members share items of historical interest.
- * **February 8, 2024** when the renowned speaker **Robert Janning** presents *The History That We Share*, the title of his recent history book about the Snuneymuxw Nation, the Methodist Church in Nanaimo and the Coqualeetza Home and School in Chilliwack, BC.

Finally, this year the NHS approved 2023 and 2024 Leynard Legacy Grants for historical initiatives by groups and individuals from Nanaimo, Wellington, Lantzville and Parksville. Everyone with ideas the promote the history of Nanaimo and area can apply on [our website](#).

Visit our website's "[News and Events](#)" for more information!

EDITOR'S NOTES

A special thank you to all members who contributed to this issue. Also, a **very special thank** you to the **eight members who entered our writing contest**. Your stories are a great legacy for your families. The number of entries is a record, and **All entries** will appear in future issues this year. Thank you for supporting *AnceTree* in 2023 — your continued support keeps *AnceTree* thriving!

Please consider writing about your ancestry research ... **keep your editor smiling!**

As always, a special thanks to **Maureen Wootten, Jan Nelson, and Wilma Kennedy**, for their proof reading prowess!

Carolyn



RING OUT WILD BELLS

Ring out, wild
bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty night:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more:
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful
rhymes
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant and the free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land . . .

Tennyson wrote these words in 1850, but given our world today, they seem to fit 2023 rather well. Musical versions of Tennyson's poem can be enjoyed online.

Nanaimo Family History Society

Executive 2023

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| President | Sharon Davison |
| Vice President | Dean Ford |
| Secretary | Bronwyn Frazer |
| Treasurer | Aleda Spring |
| Program Director | Maureen Wootten |
| Membership Director | Aleda Spring |
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