

# Ancestry

**The Nanaimo Family History Society Quarterly Journal**  
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*President's Message*

*By Ruth Stewart*

To begin, I wish to send a huge thank you to our outgoing president Sharon Davison. Sharon was the first person to greet me and make me welcome when I joined Nanaimo Family History Society (NFHS) over a decade ago. Sharon has worked tirelessly for our society for almost three decades, with the majority of those years serving on our executive. Although Sharon is stepping back from executive duties, she has offered to act as librarian for our book collections housed at Beban Park and the LDS FamilySearch Centre. Sharon is a class act to follow. We look forward to seeing her smiling face on Zoom and at our in person meetings.

Second, join me in welcoming Gail Moore who becomes our new Membership Director and Privacy Officer. See more about Gail on page 21.



**President's Message Continues Page 2**

If you look deeply into the palm of your hand, you will see your parents and all the generations of your ancestors. All of them are alive in this moment. Each is present in your body. You are a continuation of each of these people.

**Thich Nhat Hanh**  
**Vietnamese Buddhist Monk (1926-2022)**

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*Save the Date!*

<b>Nanaimo FHS Apr Meeting</b>	<b>Apr 15</b>
<b>Nanaimo FHS May Meeting</b>	<b>May 13</b>
<b>Nanaimo FHS Jun Meeting</b>	<b>Jun 17</b>

In respect of the society's finances, one of our newest members, Faye McKinnon, volunteered to review the society's accounting records for the year ended December 31, 2023. In part Faye wrote, "In response to a request by the Board to have the 2023 financial records "audited", I volunteered to do an in-house review of the records kept by Treasurer Aleda Spring. As a retired accountant and auditor, I found the records to be well kept with a very good level of transaction documentation and you should feel very confident with her work and attention to detail."

A big thank you to Faye and Aleda. Faye's full report is on page 12 of this issue.

Currently we are seeking two members to join our executive and fill two roles. First is the editor for our quarterly journal *AncesTree*. The individual, (or individuals acting as co-editors) we are looking for ideally has experience in desktop publishing and has strong English skills. Some ability to resize and edit photographs would also be helpful. Carolyn Kemp, who currently edits the journal, has generously offered her mentorship to the new editor. As an executive member, the editor would join the executive at our monthly meetings.

Second is our Communications Director. The major activity for this position is sending out details of our monthly meetings as advertising. Currently there are seven media outlets and five Facebook sites we use. All of the information required in our advertising is provided by our program director, Maureen Wootten. I have been handling advertising for most of the past two years. It takes about four hours each month.

In our recent amendments to the society's bylaws a few ancillary activities were brought under the umbrella of communications. One is monitoring our email account and forwarding any mail received to the appropriate

recipient(s). Most days there are no emails. A second activity is webmaster. This involves adding content to the website and liaising with an outside contractor on an as needed basis.

Our secretary, Bronwyn Fraser is currently looking after our email account, our vice president, Dean Ford is acting as webmaster and I continue to send out the advertising.

Before I forget, just a little bit about me. I was born in Regina just over seventy years ago, spending most of my life in Saskatchewan and Alberta (Go Riders! Go Flames!). My husband David and I along with two cats have lived in the Nanaimo area for eleven years.

In my former life I worked as a forensic accountant. My love of digging for the facts melded perfectly with my interest in searching for ancestors. For the most part my research is within Canada, having deep familial roots here. My other passions are quilting, masters Olympic weightlifting and CrossFit. In 2019, Sharon Davison asked me to help on a committee. That was when I found my "place" in our society. It gave me a real connection to other members. If you're like me, I found it difficult to strike up a meaningful conversation let alone find friendships during our monthly meetings. That was true back before Covid when all of our meetings were in person and is even more so now that half of our meetings are via Zoom. Once I volunteered, I made friends within NFHS and as an added bonus my research benefitted from the insights and experiences of the members I met.

Would you like to sit in on one of our executive meetings to see how we work? We currently meet the first Monday of every month for a couple of hours. (In April due to Easter, we will meet on the 8<sup>th</sup>.) Questions? [email your executive!](#)

*Ruth*



Sadly, we mark the passing of long time member **Linda Malpass**. Linda was very active in our society, serving as secretary for a number of years, assisting at the Nanaimo Family Search Centre, and warmly greeting new members at our meetings. Linda was passionate about genealogy, helping to reunite a number of families. Our condolences to her family.

## GENEALOGY NEWS IN BRIEF

## FROM LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

- \* Archives Canada is still addressing the backlog of file requests. "In addition to the 14,387 ATI backlogged requests, 1,961 privacy requests were also outstanding as of August 31, 2021. As of November 30, 2023, of those 16,348 ATIP backlogged requests, 9,381 requests have been processed, with 1,276,551 pages released, amounting to 57% of those backlogged requests now completed."

"With regards to its current overall backlog of overdue requests, as of November 30, 2023, LAC had 10,554 overdue requests remaining in its queue and remains on track to meet the overall 40% elimination target for this fiscal year."

"Major investments in equipment and human resources have more than doubled the capacity of our digitization team in a year, meaning it is now able to digitize close to 215,000 pages of records each month. The review of our workflows and policies also positively impacted the processing of the 13,000 new annual requests received since we began implementing our action plan. While continuing to significantly reduce the backlog, the ATIP Team is now able to respond to 73% of new requests within legislated timeframes. As the backlog of requests continues to decrease, employees will be reassigned to inbound processing and proactive approaches to better meet the demand."

- \* With book censorship on the rise in Canada, LAC has published a statement of its role in regard to censorship of its acquisitions — **an interesting and important read for our members:**

**Freedom to Read from****Mary-Francis Turk, Legal Deposit Supervisor, Private Archives and Published Heritage Branch LAC**

"At Library and Archives Canada (LAC), we never judge a book by its cover (or its content, for that matter)! We want to make sure that readers and researchers have access to all Canadian publications. LAC's [mandate](#), as outlined in the Preamble to the Library and Archives of Canada Act, puts emphasis on preserving the documentary heritage of Canada while making it available to the public.

Libraries across Canada have a responsibility to create policies that protect the freedom to read and intellectual freedom. As a national library, LAC has created a permanent collection by acquiring published books, rare and early editions of books and related print material of all kinds."

"Through its [legal deposit program](#), LAC acts as a quiet champion against censorship. Every Canadian publication has its place in the national collection. The program has been crucial in aiding LAC's ongoing efforts to build an inclusive, expansive and accessible national collection.

LAC works closely with publishers to build its collection through the legal deposit program, which is responsible for collecting "materials created in Canada and intended for sale or public distribution." In doing this, we are able to make material available and preserve it for future generations."

**Freedom to Read continues page 4**

Freedom to Read continued from page 3

### LAC Materials Accepted Through Legal Deposit

Canadian publishers and producers submit materials such as

- Books (monographs)
- Serials (such as magazines, journals, newsletters)
- Physical music and video recordings
- Audiobooks
- Sheet music
- Maps

“Making Canadian publications available to the public and ensuring they are available for future generations is imperative to ongoing intellectual freedom in Canada. This is exactly what we strive to do here in LAC’s legal deposit team. Although it can sometimes feel like censorship is something from the [past](#), there are many examples of more recent instances of [challenged publications](#). This includes several publications that can be found in LAC’s collection:

- In 2018, David Alexander Robertson’s book *Betty: The Helen Betty Osborne Story* was “not recommended” for use in Alberta classrooms.
- In 2016, Robin Stevenson’s book *Pride: Celebrating Diversity and Community* met resistance during Stevenson’s school visits in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec.
- In 2011, Timothy Findley’s book *The Wars* was used by an Ontario school board in Grade 12 English classes and was subsequently challenged by parents. The school board ultimately decided to keep the book as part of the secondary curriculum.”

“As we reflect on the freedom to read and the right to intellectual freedom, the task of acquiring and making Canadian publications available to readers across the country seems more important than ever. Canada’s Book and Periodical Council’s [Challenged Works List](#) reminds us that publications have historically been and continue to be challenged and censored in Canada. [Freedom to Read Week](#) further reminds Canadians **access to publications should not be taken for granted.**”

### NOVA SCOTIA ANCESTORS?

Antigonish Heritage Museum has launched a [free newspaper database](#) containing issues of *The Casket* which was founded in 1852.

### PEEL’S PRAIRIE PROVINCES MOVED TO NEW SITE

The University of Alberta is moving its *Peel’s Prairie Provinces* data base to *Internet Archive* and its historical collection. Genealogist Gail Dever in her January 21<sup>st</sup> blog stated that the move will allow new accessibility features and high resolution downloads. The U of A site will be moved over the next months, but currently [both the original site and the Internet Archive](#) can be accessed.

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### AGING FAMILY GENEALOGISTS AND LONG-LOST RELATIVES STUDY

Simon Fraser University is conducting a study to learn more about Canadians 55+ “who have searched for, and located, a previously unknown immediate or closely related genetic relative.”

“A rising number of adults are searching for previously unknown genetic relatives using DNA testing/databases, online historical public records, and family stories. On a personal level, my motivation for this study originated with my own fascination to identify my maternal grandfather, who was previously unknown to my mother. After years of research and DNA test searches, I was able to solve my family mystery and it was a happy ending. I was also able to reunite my mother with some long-lost relatives prior to her passing. Since then, I have learned that many other people have had similar experiences and many interesting stories to share. Thus, as a sociology/gerontology professor, I believe that the study insights will be very helpful to others, such as hobby/leisure groups or anyone wanting to learn more about this topic.”

### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

- Are you an older aged Canadian (aged 55+)?
- Have you searched for, and located a previously unknown immediate or closely related genetic relative (*i.e.*, parent, child, sibling, grandparent) using DNA testing and databases within the past 5 years?
- Have you had a least one meaningful contact (*e.g.*, face-to-face visit or phone call) with that long lost immediate genetic relative? Or, if the person is deceased or you have been unable to make contact, have you had contact with another relative who knew the individual and is also genetically related to both of you?
- If this is the case, you can be part of this study. If you are interested in participating, we would love to hear about your experiences and would greatly appreciate your participation in this study. All you need to do is to [fill out a web-based survey](#), which will take less than half an hour of your time.

### KAMLOOPS ARCHIVES TO REOPEN

With the absence of a resident archivist, the Kamloops Museum and Archives was shut down in September. However, a new archivist from Montréal has been hired and the facility should reopen in April, 2024.



### COMPARISON/CONTRAST OF COMMERCIAL GENEALOGY SITES

FamilyHistory Daily has compiled a [comprehensive look at the major commercial genealogy sites](#). This is a good read if you're beginning your genealogy research or if you're considering subscribing to one or more of Ancestry, FindmyPast or MyHeritage.

### CANADIAN IMMIGRANTS 1929-1960

Ancestry has online Order-in-Council Records that list immigrants approved in Orders in Council. The records list last and given names of the immigrant, residence, immigration year, employment date and citizenship. Genealogist Linda Yip details [how to navigate Order-in-Council records](#) in her March 10, 2024 blog. Excellent examples are provided..

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### **FINDMYPAST ADDS HOME CHILDREN COLLECTION**

Findmypast has added a first global collection to enable tracing [British Home Children sent to Canada](#), Australia, and New Zealand. Genealogist Gail Dever states: "The collection, launched at Rootstech, will be a growing repository with records added on an ongoing basis. It currently includes workhouse records, Juvenile Inspection Reports, Home Children Board of Guardian Records and emigration reports, while future updates are likely to see historical newspapers, migration records, workhouse and institutional records, periodicals and military records added." More than 130,000 children, now known as British Home Children, were sent across the Commonwealth, in particular to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Only 12 percent of these children were "true orphans." Many came from charitable homes, workhouses, or destitute and struggling families. They were usually fostered into families when they reached their destinations to be used as unpaid domestic or farming labour.

### **MYHERITAGE INTRODUCES "OLD NEWS" WEBSITE**

MyHeritage has announced the release of OldNews a website for historical newspapers. MyHeritage states "that [OldNews.com](#) is an innovative website for historical newspapers, by MyHeritage. OldNews.com enables genealogists, researchers, and history enthusiasts to search, save, and share articles about people and events throughout history. At launch, OldNews.com includes a huge repository of hundreds of millions of historical newspaper pages from around the world, with millions more added monthly. The website features easy navigation and consists of a diverse range of high-quality publications, from major international newspapers to small-town journals and gazettes."

"At launch, more than doubles the amount of historical newspaper content that was previously available on *MyHeritage*. The website includes all the historical newspapers from *MyHeritage*, plus new, unique content.

### **FAMILYSEARCH ANNOUNCES NEW FULL TEXT SEARCH**

At Rootstech *FamilySearch* unveiled an experimental feature designed to search unindexed collections using AI. If you're registered at FamilySearch you can try out the feature. [Rick Wilson's blog at My Family Pattern](#) provides a detailed look at the feature. He states, "This enhancement harnesses artificial intelligence (AI) and optical character recognition (OCI) to quickly search several valuable record collections. It has the potential to not only drastically cut search time, but it may also help break through brick walls." In his detailed blog, Wilson explains the feature with many examples. Well worth a look!

### **VICTORIAN POVERTY**

If you're researching a relative residing in Victorian London, and your relative lived in the poverty stricken areas of London at this time, we have a story for you. A researcher of the Chiddick family has posted the remarkable story of **Adelaide Springett** a child born and raised in Dickensian circumstances. [The story](#) is quite long, but well documented — an excellent read!



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### DROUIN INSTITUTE IMPORTANT UPDATE

The Drouin Institute has recently updated its French Canadian PRDH (Research Programme (in Historical Demography) database to access all French Canadians from the beginnings of the colony through to 1861 (previously 1851). This is a database of all Roman Catholic baptisms, marriages and burials recorded in Québec. Some Protestant records are also included. Although a subscription site, [some free access is available](#), and you have until March 31, 2023 to complete the [online questionnaire](#) if you want to take part in the consultation.”

### LAC ANNOUNCES NEW WWI DATABASE

Library and Archives Canada has launched a new database for WWI personnel records. The March 7, 2024 [LAC blog](#) states that “launched in November 2023, this new database was developed as part of ongoing work to bring all of LAC’s stand alone databases into one federated search tool, [Collection Search](#). This work is necessary because the older web application that hosts the stand alone CEF database is no longer sustainable to maintain. To keep these records accessible for years to come, these files were successfully migrated into Collection Search and a new database tool was created to streamline access to the Personnel Records of the First World War. This database tool offers all the same search features as the original application while also offering new ways to search, filter and extract records and data for research.

### ONTARIO MARRIAGE RECORDS

Marriage registrations for 1940 from the archives of Ontario have been added to [Ancestry Family Search](#) [Ontario marriage registrations](#) are still limited to 1869-1927.

### FULL TEXT SEARCH AT FAMILYSEARCH ANNOUNCED

At this year’s RootsTech, *FamilySearch* launched a new full text search that uses artificial intelligence (AI) to help researchers find historical records. [Kimberly Powell’s Learn Genealogy blog](#) of February 29, 2024, presents “12 Strategies for Using Family Search Full-Text Search.” You can access the new tool at [FamilySearch Labs](#).



### 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.

Genealogy is like doing a jigsaw puzzle without the box top.

### Zoom "Mini-How-To" Sessions April to June 2024

The logo consists of the words "VIRTUAL" and "WORKSHOPS" stacked vertically in white, uppercase letters on a green square background.

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](#).

#### APRIL

##### **Apr 4**

##### **Computer Talk for Technophobes, Susan Bates**

Computer technology has evolved hugely over the last several years. It's pretty much impossible to keep pace with the changes and make full use of our computers. In this session participants will become familiar with all the features of Zoom: screen sharing, the chat box, background changes, etc. If time allows, Susan will also explain how to capture a screen shot on your computer, tablet or smart phone. If there is sufficient interest, similar sessions will be held in the fall, with the focus on common computer tools that are likely to be useful to family history researchers.

[Registration](#)

##### **Apr 11 - Genealogy Book Club, Terry Hartley**

The book club is studying *Tracing Your Ancestors Using DNA*, edited by Graham Holton. The group will share 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 April session will discuss Chapter 8. Register once for all 3 Spring sessions (only necessary if you haven't attended before). Note. The print version of the book is available only to order. Try Chapters or Amazon. The ebook is on Kindle and Google.

[Registration](#)

##### **Apr 18 – ... Finding my Taylors Not Where I Expected! Sharon Davison,**

Sharon 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](#)

##### **April 25 - Ups and Downs, Joys and Sadness, of Years of Family Research, Maureen Wootten.**

Maureen will describe some of the highlights of her many years of research, including getting in touch with an Irish relative of her Young family and attending a Bonnet family reunion in the state of Washington. Participants are invited to bring experiences of their own to share during this session.

[Registration](#)

#### MAY

##### **May 2 - My Elusive 3<sup>rd</sup> Great-grand Uncle. Gail Moore**

Gail spent years researching the family of her 3<sup>rd</sup> great-granduncle Baker Spinks, (1772-1842) from Feltwell, Norfolk, England and his wife, Elizabeth Simmons, 1779-1876. She obtained many church records of baptismal and marriage certificates, but DNA results make her wonder if her research was all in vain!

[Registration](#)

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#### May 9 - Genealogy Book Club, Terry Hartley

The book club is studying *Tracing Your Ancestors Using DNA*, edited by Graham Holton. The group will share 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 May session will discuss Chapter 9. Register once for all 3 Spring sessions (only necessary if you haven't attended before). Note. The print version of the book is available only to order. Try Chapters or Amazon. The ebook is on Kindle and Google.

[Registration](#)

#### May 16 - DNA for Beginners, Susan Bates

The biggest benefit of getting your DNA tested is the opportunity to find matches with previously unknown relatives who can lead you to further discoveries in the search for your ancestors. However, interpreting the information provided with a match can be tricky and ambiguous. What exactly is a "second cousin, once removed"? What relationship might you share with a match of 150 cM? Some basic concepts will be explained to help you stay on the right track(s) as you make the most of your DNA test results.

[Registration](#)

**May 23- 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](#)

**May 30- To Be Announced**

## JUNE

#### June 6 - A Research Trip to England, Susan Bates

In June of 2023, Susan spent a week in the tiny Lancashire village of Newburgh, in the neighbourhood where her Peters ancestors lived until they sailed for Philadelphia in 1818. She'll describe the highlights of her research finds in Manchester Central Library, the Lancashire Archives and a small village library. The beauty of the countryside was an unexpected bonus!

[Registration](#)

#### June 13 - Genealogy Book Club, Terry Hartley

The book club is studying *Tracing Your Ancestors Using DNA*, edited by Graham Holton. The group will share 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 June session will discuss Chapters 9 and 10. Register once for all book club sessions (only necessary if you haven't attended before). Note. The print version of the book is only available to order. Try Chapters or Amazon. The ebook is on Kindle and Google.

[Registration](#)

**Unfortunately, there is no life guard in the gene pool.**

## Beginner's Question: Why Study Genealogy?

by NFHS Member Gregory Skala

Though I have been a member of the Nanaimo Family History Society for half a dozen years, my involvement thus far has been rather peripheral to attempting personal genealogical research. I must admit that my main motivation for joining the group was to share time with my wife at events she favoured — something akin to how she has gone along with me to sporting events that were more of interest to me than herself, at least at first.

Much of what I've seen and heard through NFHS meetings has been about the *hows* of doing genealogical research, and that has been interesting in its own right, of course. Recently, I decided to give more thought to the *whys*. For a person like myself, who has so far simply thought about and treasured memories of family members that I actually knew in the flesh, why might I become motivated to delve farther back into the past and learn about generations of ancestors I've never met?

I thought of eight potential answers to my own question: Why study genealogy? Certainly, other people must have thought along similar lines, as I confirmed for myself by browsing books, websites, and videos after I'd come up with my own list, and I will include below some references to others' ways of putting these matters, too.

1. I've studied world history through numerous courses and books for over seventy years. Why shouldn't the history of my forbears turn out to be just as fascinating and full of important life lessons for me as general history has proven to be? For example, I found the history of coal mining in my home area of Nanaimo, British Columbia, to be extremely interesting, and my father, Ladislav Skala, was born in the village of Příkosice, near **Plzeň**, Kingdom of Bohemia, in 1901, close to a coal-mining area of that country, which is now part of Czechia.<sup>1</sup> While neither my father, nor his father, ever spoke to me about coal mining, I might well find out information about that industry if I traced the ancestral line back, which would surely enhance my general knowledge of history.
2. Genealogical research can provide important medical knowledge. I know that some of my personal physical traits obviously correlate with the genetic profiles of my ancestors. A case in point would be my male pattern baldness. Given the ability of modern science to analyze genes, any clues to biological facts recorded about my ancestors could be invaluable for someone, if not myself. As I read in an on-line posting dated June 11, 2020, "In some cases, there's an opportunity to collect family medical information, either from living relatives or by uncovering health information from records about ancestors. This information can be helpful in identifying potential risk factors for surviving family members."<sup>2</sup> Genealogical research might be able to help.



**Kingdom of Bohemia  
public domain map**



**Ladislav Skala, ca. 1910  
Photo Possessed by N.  
Hobin, Mountain View  
California**

**Beginner's Question continues page 11**

<sup>1</sup> Parish register of Mirošov No. 28, book of baptisms, 1895–1901, Leaf: 46 [research by [www.pathfinders.cz](http://www.pathfinders.cz).]

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.czepigalaw.com/blog/6-surprising-benefits-of-researching-your-family-history/>.

**Beginner's Question continued from page 10**

3. Genealogical research might be able to help people overcome narrow-minded attitudes. I say this because, since the early 2000s, scientific findings have increasingly been reported that show what a mixture of genes we each carry from diverse populations far and near, and even genetic signatures correlated with the earliest humans. That there is more human-species commonality than there is divergence is indicated by pronouncements like this one: "'There's only one human race' says cardiologist Anne L. Taylor of the University of Minnesota"<sup>3</sup>
4. Studying genealogy might enhance my enjoyment of other current hobbies. I remember how appealingly one of the first speakers I heard at a NFHS general meeting tied his own numismatic hobby into his genealogical investigations, and he allowed members of the audience to make a close examination of the old coins which well illustrated the stories he had shared.<sup>4</sup>
5. Since we are social beings, gaining a window into the traditions and culture of my forbears and their times would probably give me a richer life, better-informed about the timeless concerns of all humans.
6. Becoming more able to visualize past circumstances and personal stories might make me a better creative writer. So far, I have mostly tried my hand at writing poetry, philosophy, and fiction; but listening to enthusiastic members of NFHS suggests to me that learning more about past ancestors might help me do better with those genres and also help me branch out into nonfiction.
7. Besides genealogical research possibly discovering information that others among my relatives might be grateful to learn, it has occurred to me more and more that even non-relatives might be helped along their own genealogical quests by information I might find. While surfing the Internet recently, I came upon a website with content that poignantly bought to my attention how one person's genealogical research might be of incalculable help to another person's. This site<sup>5</sup> offered resources for people whose ancestors arrived in North America, or were born there, as enslaved persons. I do not think that my own ancestors had been slave owners; but my point here is that I really don't yet know much about them at all, except the ones whose lifespans overlapped with my own. If I do get busy and research my family's history, some collateral information might well come to light that I could share with someone else who would care deeply about knowing it. This is the kind of sharing that happens in societies like NFHS.
8. Lastly, watching and listening to my wife and other members of NFHS persuades me that doing genealogy must be a lot of fun.

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Ben Harder in *Science News* magazine (April 16, 2005)

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Ben Wilkinson, in an address given at the Nanaimo Family History Society general meeting, November 20, 2018, in Nanaimo, British Columbia.

<sup>5</sup> State Library of North Carolina: <https://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/genealogy-and-family-history/family-records/records-enslaved-people>.



## NANAIMO FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY 1921 MAP PROJECT

We have an exciting mapping project in the works for this year. Using the 1921 census, the names of heads of households will be recorded by city lot using copies of Nanaimo maps that are contemporary to that time. Our education director, Susan Bates, secured a grant on behalf of NFHS in the amount of \$10,000 from the Nanaimo Historical Society. The grant will fund costs associated with the project and the ongoing website data storage requirements. Already, volunteers have digitized Nanaimo fire insurance maps as well as the 1921 tax rolls. Work continues with the preparatory steps necessary before volunteers begin transcribing the census data. The volunteer response has been great and the initial steps are under way. If you want to be part of this experience, [contact your executive](#).



### REVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTING RECORDS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2023

In response to a request by the NFHS to “audit” the 2023 financial records, I volunteered to do an in-house review of the records kept by treasurer Aleda Spring. As a retired accountant and auditor, I found the records to be well kept with a very good level of transaction documentation. You should feel very confident with her work and attention to detail.

Bank accounts and membership records were reconciled to the financial balances, these being the two major financial accounts of the society.

I spent some time reviewing the December 31, 2023 financial statements and made a few recommendations which were agreeable to Aleda. These included:

- different reports to provide the board. While the reports shared with me did accurately summarize the financial position for the year, I suggest printing a Balance Sheet instead of a Net Worth report and an Income Statement instead of an Itemized Categories report.
- a suggestion to include an overlooked bank account which is comprised solely of the Credit Union membership shares (\$5) and
- discussion about whether the society owned any assets (for example, the library) that should be added to the financial records.

As you can see, these are not critical elements but I do mention them here as a point for discussion.

I did not review the Charities Return but we did discuss the society’s charitable activities around tax receipting and tax reporting and found that Aleda felt comfortable with both areas.

Although this was not a formal review in any sense, I did want to document my observations for you to let you know that I found the bookkeeping and year end financial figures to be accurate and complete. Aleda is extremely diligent with keeping the records of the society and you should have every confidence in her skills.

Respectfully,

Faye McKinnon, NFHS Member

## IF I COULD MEET AN ANCESTOR — FINDING BILLIE

by NFHS Member Stephanie Williams



Aunt Stella is the aunt I've been searching for all my life. Her birth was recorded simply by my grandfather **Edward Mason** in his farming journal: "July 21, 1893 "Estella born at 2 p.m. I went to Mrs. Stuart's, and she came back." Thus began Stella Mason's young life.

Estella's parents had both emigrated to southern Manitoba, Edward Mason in 1882 to be with his brothers, and **Margaret Stuart** in 1885 with her entire family. They met while both were working for a neighbouring farmer called MacEwan. According to the story it was love at first sight when Edward saw Margaret riding her horse across the prairie with her rosy cheeks and wavy hair streaming out behind her, and he thought "That's the girl for me." So, when Mrs. MacEwan found them in the kitchen holding hands she said, "Is it bless you my children?" And so they were married.

Stella was the second child in a family of three, Mabel born in 1891 and then Laurie (my father) was born in 1895. So, the three children grew up in their log cabin on the prairie together being cared for by very loving parents.



**Laurie, Stella and Mabel  
as children**

Each of the children went by a nickname when they were little. Stella was Billie. As the years went by the name Billie stayed with her. Mabel became Mabs and Laurie was just Laurie but, in all letters, and in all pictures, it was generally "Billie" whenever Stella was mentioned.

Their parents worked hard at making a success of their pre-emption, but it was a hard life. Edward's diary is a long list of choring, breaking, hoeing, fixing and hauling. They had horses, pigs and a large garden. It was good to have relatives near — Margaret's family and Edward's brother were on neighbouring farms.

Unfortunately, Edward and Margaret slowly fell into debt to the grocer and could see no way out other than to move. Margaret longed for the milder climate like England and France where she had been raised. So, in 1899, they sold the farm, took their team and wagon, and headed west.

Stella spent her seventh birthday in Regina and was given a coin with Queen Victoria on it in honour of the queen's birthday in 1900. While in Regina, they spent the winter in a cabin of upright logs. The cold was so intense that the logs cracked like rifle shots scaring the whole family – this only intensified their desire to keep moving west.

Edward sold his wagon, horses and equipment and bought tickets on the Canadian Pacific Railway completing their trip west. They lived in Fort Langley for a while, but then moved on to New Westminster. They had finally moved to the milder climate for which Margaret had wished.



**Margaret, Edward, Laurie,  
Aunt Vivien, front Mabel and  
Stella.**

**Finding Billie continues page 14**

**Finding Billie continued from page13**

Edward found a job working in a mill on the Fraser River and the family eventually established themselves in New Westminster staying in that home for the next fifteen years. They lived near schools and settled into the neighbourhood making friends with other children. They had a big garden in their back lot. Everyone in the family loved animals, especially Billie. The Mason's always had a dog and some cats.

The children frequently wrote letters to their grandmother and aunt in England. Each letter they received was treasured as was any present. Their ties with England were strong.

The family had a camera and took pictures of their activities and always labelled them — the date, the people and who took the picture. "They dreamed-up scenarios to film. They had their own darkroom. Billie was a very clever photographer and caught family and animals in endearing poses. So many of the pictures were noted "photo Billie."

Stella and Laurie were planning to buy a horse and worked hard to save enough money, but their plans were dashed when in 1910 their cousins came for a visit. This should have been a happy time but one of the boys was playing with matches and the house almost burned completely down. The money that Stella and Laurie had accumulated went up in the flames. Fortunately, their father's company was very generous, donating enough lumber for them to rebuild on the same site.

The years from 1910 to 1915 must have been very adventurous for these young people. Living near the Fraser River invited a huge amount of adventure. When the river froze over, they skated with friends. Also, Laurie and his friend had a small boat and with Mabel and Stella they motored up to Pitt Lake for a camping trip. They fished, shot ducks and practiced their marksmanship. The girls were skilled at many things like their brother was.

In 1915 the Mason's started planning a retirement scheme. They looked for a piece of property that would be a way to do small farming. They found a place at Boat Cove on Lasqueti Island. This was during WWI and suddenly their dad's employment was very needed at the mill. A raise in pay prompted the parents not to go to Lasqueti but lingered on in New Westminster. It seems that Billie (Stella) was not very interested in going there either. Indeed, the only record of her going to Lasqueti Island was a visit in 1917 when she and Mabel rode their horses around the trails and roads visiting neighbours.

1917 was an important year in their family. Laurie joined the army and went to France. Mabel, married and with a child, was living on Lasqueti. Stella stayed on in New Westminster.



**The Mason home in New Westminster**



**Laurie, Mabel and Billie, Pitt Lake**

**Finding Billie continues page 15**

**Finding Billie continued from page14**

Here's where Stella's life becomes a matter of questions. She was twenty-four years old and had many friends. Some of the pictures of her with her friends indicate that she was "modern" in wearing pants and riding astride on a horse. She could shoot a gun. She was of the age to have a boyfriend, perhaps in the army? There is a picture of soldiers marching in the streets of New Westminster. Was one of them special? Did one of them not come back?

The clues get thinner. Billie liked to assume other names. She is mentioned anecdotally when Laurie came home from war in 1919. She is mentioned in letters to her father when he is still working at the mill and the family is on Lasqueti. Was there a family fight? What was she like personally? Laurie said they had lots of fun and were close as siblings. I was always asking my dad and looking for clues.



**Stella, second from left.**

The family story goes thus. In 1922 Stella went to work as a secretary in San Francisco and correspondence was exchanged for about six months. Then the letters stopped coming. The family contacted her friends and the police but no results. Frantically, they hired a private investigator, but also there were no results. It was a sad time for the family, and people were reluctant to ask questions.

There was a locked box in the Mason home belonging to Stella but the family was hesitant to break it open. One time though, Laurie, in frustration, took a hammer and broke it open. There were some letters and names of friends, they were too late as many of her friends had moved.

My cousin Pegge and I would sit together and puzzle over the family mysteries. What had happened to Stella? Was there any chance of finding out if she married and had children. Did she die young? I tried many things from a genealogical perspective: advertising in magazines, looking for marriage and death records. I tried DNA but have heard nothing.

Then there is another clue. One time Pegge told me the story of what happened at our grandmother's funeral in 1942. Pegge was sitting beside her mom, and she turned around and saw a lady dressed in black with a black veil sitting at the back. Pegge asked her mom who she was, and she was told quite severely "You can't find someone who doesn't want to be found." She would say no more.

I would like to meet my Aunt Stella (Billie), sit down and have a gentle conversation with her and tell her of my love for her.

### Nanaimo Family Search Centre 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](#). Most of our NFHS collection available for borrowing is at this location. The library is located at 2424 Glen Eagle Crescent.



## *Faces of Our Ancestors*

from NFHS members Stephanie Williams and Susan Bates



To the left is a picture of Stephanie's father **Laurie Mason** holding the family dogs Dick and Dandy. Laurie was born in 1895 and at the time of this photo he was about sixteen years old. The family lived in New Westminster from 1900 until 1917 when they moved to Lasqueti. This was one of my grandmother's favourite pictures as I have a copy of it with crochet or tatting around the edge. I wasn't born until Laurie was fifty years old, so I never got to see his wonderful brown hair.

From NFHS member Susan Bates

To the right is Susan's paternal grandfather, Percy Bates with his mates during the Boer War (1899-1902). Percy, lower left, was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Manchester Volunteers Regiment from February 1900 to May 1901 during the Boer War. Grandpa Percy recorded the names: clockwise from upper left **George Vincy**, **Bob Mosley**, **Bob Inglis**, Percy Bates, with **Bill Roberts** in the centre. From his diary, he was in the Germiston, South Africa area in December and January of 1901.



**We take photographs as a return ticket to a moment otherwise gone.**



The quick tips on this page and the next page come with kind permission from the blog of Kenneth R. Marks, [The Ancestor Hunt](#). On your hunt through newspaper sites, Marks offers some excellent tips.

### The Best Way to Find Hidden Ancestor Newspaper Articles

- **What?** - Deliberately misspell your search criteria
- **Why?** - OCR works by analyzing the shape of the letters, is not perfect, and 100 year old newsprint is full of errors
- **How?** - Change the letters in your search criteria
- **Result?** - Find hidden articles - up to 20% more pertinent hits

#### Letter Pairs Often Confused

rn and m (ar n and em)	v and y
h and b	Capital R and B
Capital D and O	d and cl
Capital D and G	e and o
i, l, 1, /, !, and l	Capital H and B
0 and O	h and k
c and e	h and n
r and n	Capital S and 8
[, ] and I (el)	Capital S and 5
nl and m (en el and em)	Capital Z and 2 or 7
n and ri (en and ar eye)	Capital G and 6
Capital B and 8	Capital K and  <
t and +	Capital C and G
Capital E and F	Capital O and Q
Capital K and X	Capital Z and 2
Capital V and Y	Capital I and T
Capital D and O or 0	g and q
m and n	5 and 8 or 3

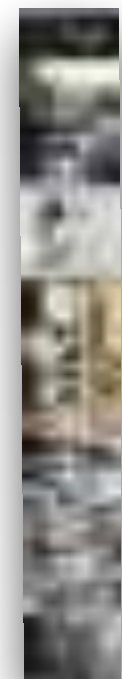
**Deliberately misspell** your search criteria and you will find hidden articles and get up to 20% more pertinent hits.

### Abbreviations to Use to Find 50% More Ancestor Newspaper Articles

- **What?** - Use an abbreviation instead of a full word
- **Why?** - Typesetters used abbreviations to save space
- **How?** - Enter the abbreviation in your search criteria
- **Result?** - Find hidden articles - Usually 50% more pertinent hits

Eliz for Elizabeth	Capt for Captain
Wm for William	Pl for Place
Sgt for Sergeant	Co for Company
Ave for Avenue	Pres for President
Corp for Corporation	Ln for Lane
Jno for John	Col for Colonel
St for Street	Chas for Charles
NYC for New York City	Benj for Benjamin
Jos for Joseph	Cpl for Corporal
Jas for James	Geo for George
Margt for Margaret	Robt for Robert
Saml for Samuel	Thos for Thomas
Inc for Incorporated	Genl for General
Deb for Deborah	Danl for Daniel
Hy for Henry	Pvt for Private
CPO for Chief Petty Officer	Ens for Ensign
My for Mary	Theo for Theodore
Agt for Agent	Prop for Proprietor
Ag for Agnes	Alex for Alexander
Chr for Christian	Dy for Dorothy

**Include these abbreviations in your search criteria and you will find hidden articles and get as much as 50% more pertinent hits.**



#### Did You Know ...

Nanaimo Family History Society has a [Facebook Page](#) hosted by NFHS member 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 one hundred and sixty-one members in the group.

**NANAIMO FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY FUTURE SPEAKERS**

**Hybrid meetings will be held live at Beban Park and on Zoom**



**MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2024**

**MARIANNE RASMUS**

**A RUSSIAN REVELATION: 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.



**MONDAY, MAY 13, 2024**

**DAVE OBEE**

**AN EVEN FRESHER LOOK AT OLD NEWSPAPERS**



Dave advises it has been five years since he gave a talk in Nanaimo on newspaper research. The talk is quite different today.



**MONDAY, JUNE 17, 2024**

**TERRY HARTLEY**

**MENNONITES, MÉTIS, AND A SPRIG OF NOBILITY**



Terry will share the highlights of a genealogy journey she began in the 1970s. She will recount her experiences during the “old days” of family history research, identify major challenges in studying Mennonite, Metis, and Royal ancestry, and reveal some surprising discoveries she made along the way. Tips and techniques applicable to other researchers will be interspersed throughout the presentation.

**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!**

**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 Church Books, 1516-1994](#)  
[Czech Republic Censuses and Inhabitant Registers 1800-1990](#)  
[Germany, North Rhine-Westphalia, Wuppertal Civil Registration 1810-1930](#)

**FINDMYPAST (subscription)**

Ireland Diocese of Dublin Wills and Grants, 1270-1858  
[Ireland Belfast & Ulster Directories 1831-1900](#)  
[Ireland 1766 Religious Census](#)

**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  
 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  
[5 Historical Women's Magazine Databases](#)  
[Italian Genealogy 21 Genealogy Tools](#)  
[Best Genealogy Sites for Different Research Scenarios](#)  
[Researching a German Colonial Immigrant Ancestor](#)  
[Bringing Hidden Clues To Light Through Creating a Timeline](#)  
[How to Find where Your Dutch Ancestors were Buried](#)  
[DNA Painter: What It Is and What Are its Key Features](#)  
[Finding Women Ancestors in Your Genealogy Research](#)  
[Geography for Genealogists: English Ancestors](#)  
[Free Websites to UK Essential Genealogical Records](#)

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.



## MEMBERS' MISCELLANEA

### **AncesTree Connection**

Our journal continues to make connections with researchers beyond our society. Recently a request was made for a copy of our summer 2017 *AncesTree*. A reader from the UK interested in the **Bowring** family about which NFHS member Doug Toms had written. Doug has contacted this person, so hopefully an exchange of family. research will ensue.



### **What's in a Name?**

Most of us have probably found odd names in our research, but the oddest your editor has so far found is that of a distant ancestor of mine whose will is dated 1726 — **Leftalone Bryant**. Initially, I believed the name was some sort of nickname; however, this is the name on his will and as a witness to another family will earlier in 1709. Leftalone was also in 1696 an overseer of the Poor in Godstone, Surrey, and registered to vote on poll lists in 1705.



### **Recommended Resource**

Susan Garcia notes that If anyone is researching Methodist Church ministers, their families and their work in BC, from 1859-1890, she recommends a book by Robert Janning, *The History That We Share*. It is available at Vancouver Island Regional Library. Most Methodist ministers in the book were born in England or Ontario.



### **Meet Our New Membership Director, Gail Moore**

Gail has been a member since 2009. She's enjoyed every year spent with our society and being in touch with like minded people who have a passion for family research. Gail says that she never stops learning from our group. Gail's research involves England and Germany on her maternal side while on her paternal side she is looking in Scotland, Ireland, USA and Canada.

Gail has been working for years on family photo albums for her parents, grandparents and as far back as she can go at this time. Gail is always searching for more photos or documents from DNA connected family members who may have a treasure trove of photos they no longer need or want. So far this has been difficult, but Gail knows her work will pay off one day! Gail enjoys reading, walking and travel. Thank you Gail for joining our executive.



### FROM NANAIMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

#### LOOKING LOCAL from Susan Garcia

Susan Garcia is a current member of both the Nanaimo Family History Society (NFHS) and the Nanaimo History Society (NHS). The latter society is not generally genealogy related, but is concerned with the cultural, physical and building history of Nanaimo and area. Susan retired as president of NHS in March of 2024.

#### Future events:

- Nanaimo Museum [Japanese History Exhibit](#) starting March 14, 2024.
- History of Westwood Lake by Tony Orchard will be posted on [our website](#) March 21, 2024
- From Dock to Dock: the art and adventures of Doug Harrison, April 1, 2024 at Bowen Park Complex.

### EDITOR'S NOTES

A special thank you to the eight members who entered our writing contest this year: Susan Bates, Eva Clegg, Susan Garcia, Tony Green, Rosina Schmidt, Beth Skala, Greg Skala, and Stephanie Williams.. As well as creating some written legacies for your families, you've helped your editor with filling *AncesTree's* "waiting to be published shelves." With this issue, **three of the entries have appeared in *AncesTree* and the remaining five will appear later this year.**

If you missed our announcement at the February AGM, this year's winners were first, Susan Bates, second, Stephanie Williams and third, Beth Skala.

Thank you to all members who continue to write — your writing efforts are a great legacy for your families and your continued support keeps *AncesTree* thriving!

As always, a special thank you to your editor's proofing team: Maureen Wootten, Jan Nelson, and Wilma Kennedy.

**Did you know that a will is a dead give away??**



**Nova Scotia Genealogy Virtual Conference 2024**  
 Explore Your Ancestral Ocean Playground  
 NSGVC Conference 2024 via Zoom  
**MAY 4-5, 2024**



**Qualicum Beach Family History Society Speakers**

**April 17, 2024 "Family History (Genealogy) at BC Archives" - presented by Trevor Dyck** The BC Archives holds many records that can help you learn your family's story. We have records and publications from court registries, government agencies, as well as private individuals, families and institutions that may contain information about your family members or the communities where they lived. To help you with your genealogical research, we've created guides to help direct you to resources available at the BC Archives as well as at other institutions.

**May 15, 2024.**

**"Trusting Your Sources: How Do You Know You've Found the Right Record?" - presented by Marie Palmer** You've worked hard to collect records for your ancestors, but how do you know you have the right records for the right people? This talk gives tips on how to find and evaluate records and ensure your research is top-notch. Using the Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS) as our guide, we'll discuss a compelling case study that seemed watertight... until it wasn't.

[Details and Registration](#)

Foundation for Eastern European Family History Studies

**Eastern European Genealogy Conference**  
**August 6 – 9, 2024**  
 At the Plaza Hotel and adjacent FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City, Utah

- Nationally & Internationally Recognized Speakers and Specialists
- Opportunities for Individual Expert Consultations
- Time to research at the FamilySearch Library

**Classes on:**  
 Russian Empire/USSR, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Poland, Jewish Research, Germans from Russia, Germany, Baltic States, DNA Research...and more

**Hands-on Pre-Conference Workshops on August 5 on:**  
 Finding Your Village of Origin, Cyrillic Script, All You Need to Know about My Heritage, Interpreting German Script, Emigration/Immigration...and more!

**Other Events:**  
 Complimentary Welcome Reception/Orientation  
 Optional Last Night Banquet with Plenary Presentation

To register and find more detail: [feefhs.org](http://feefhs.org)

**Nanaimo Family History Society Executive 2024**

President	Ruth Stewart
Vice President	Dean Ford
Secretary	Bronwyn Frazer
Treasurer	Aleda Spring
Program	Maureen Wootten
Membership & Privacy	Gail Moore
Education	Susan Bates
Communication	Vacant

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