



# Ancestree

The Nanaimo Family History Society Newsletter

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Visit with your fellow members in person!

Come to our Brown bag Social

June 16, 6:00pm at Beban Park

Pack your own supper or snack



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## *Co-op Reminder*

NFHS earns from its Mid-Island Co-op membership 1148592. In 2024 we received \$40.46. So use the number when you fill your BBQ tank or buy that chocolate bar!

## *Contact Information*

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## President's Report 2025 (Spring/Summer)

Welcome to our brand new AncesTree!

Tony Green, our new editor has been working hard to bring you his inaugural publication of AncesTree. Tony introduces his own energy and insight to the newsletter.

Along with Tony I'm delighted to introduce Eva Clegg and Brian Hutchison to our executive board. Eva is our Membership Director and Privacy Officer while Brian is our Communications Director.

Along with the rest of our board members: Dean Ford, Vice President; Bronwyn Frazer, Secretary; Aleda Spring, Treasurer; Maureen Wootten, Program; and Susan Bates, Education, this talented executive will pilot our society through the upcoming year.

We have just two more meetings before our summer break: May 12 (a week earlier than normal due to the statutory holiday) will be by zoom only and our last meeting on June 16 will be hybrid.

We are planning to host a brown bag social on June 16 at Beban Park. Everyone is encouraged to arrive early (doors will open at 6:00 pm that evening) and pack along their supper or a snack to enjoy while visiting with fellow members, browsing through our library or exchanging stories of genealogy successes. This is an excellent time to bring a guest and show them what our society is all about. Stay tuned for more information.

Our 1921 Mapping Project is nearing completion. Susan Bates and Bronwyn Frazer have done superb work to prove some of the more difficult names from the census and prepare for the final phases. There will be opportunities to join the team that brings this valuable project to a close. An email will go out in the near future with details.

The question that comes to my mind is, "What will we do next?" Our Constitution states that in addition to furthering the study of genealogy, the purpose of our society is: "To collect and preserve materials relevant to genealogical research with special emphasis on local sources."

Once we are finished the 1921 Mapping Project what is the next preservation project we should pursue? Let us know.

As I am writing this report we are experiencing some rainy weather. My husband bemoans these days because he is unable to pursue his passion of golf. I see the rain as giving me one more day to get into my genealogy. Soon enough I will be gardening in the great outdoors, but today let me sort through another census, birth record or county history. Happy genealogy hunting!

**Ruth Stewart, President**

## A New Editor

Dear Nanaimo Family History member, please join me in thanking Carolyn Kemp for her outstanding work producing "Ancestry". The newsletter began about 1989, Jacquie Jessup was editor for some years until 2011 when Carolyn Kemp took over. With her retirement, I have taken the challenge to continue her amazing work to produce a communication of value to our members. It's a big challenge and I don't have the vast wealth of genealogical knowledge of your previous editor, so I will need lots of help from our members. And I cannot guarantee all the content. Thanks go to Maureen, Joe, Yvonne, Ruth and Eva for proofreading this issue.

**Call for Articles.** We welcome submissions you think may be of interest to members. Especially family story articles about biographical research into a family or family member to show "research in action" - a family story or how I broke through a brick wall. Please make sure the content is copyright free.

*Tony Green*

### Our new Executive for 2025-2026

A full slate of positions was elected at the AGM in February

President	Ruth Stewart
Vice President	Dean Ford
Secretary	Bronwyn Frazer
Treasurer	Aleda Spring
Program Director	Maureen Wootten
Membership & Privacy Director	Eva Clegg
Newsletter Editor	Tony Green
Communications Director	Brian Hutchison
Education Director	Susan Bates

## Our recent Monthly Meetings

### January 20 - Member talk about a lucky find

Tony Green of Nanaimo, BC, a NFHS member spoke on "Letters from the Crimean War".

Tony discovered letters in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich England written by his great, great grandfather Charles William Thomas Cookesley. When just 15 he was a witness, after the fact, to the Charge of the Light Brigade. From Boulogne-sur-mer on the French seaside, this privileged doctor's son starred as a midshipman in the Crimean War but failed on the Australian goldfields. The talk emphasized how a lucky find can transform your research if you follow a clear plan and be open to surprises.

### February 10 - BCGS Memberships

After the Annual General Meeting and Executive Elections, we had a very useful presentation from the British Columbia Genealogical Society (BCGS) Affiliate Concierge Cathy Smart and Web Editor Sheila Albrecht. We are one of 17 affiliates currently. They explained the benefits of Affiliate Society membership. [www.bcg.ca](http://www.bcg.ca)

1. Receive a copy of the quarterly British Columbia Genealogist eJournal.
2. Receive a copy of the monthly eNewsletters.
3. Receive the weekly eGenBlasts.
4. Affiliates are 'advertised' on the BCGS Website, to encourage researchers to make contact with these groups.
5. Members of Affiliate societies:
  - a) Can submit articles to either the Newsletter or Journal;
  - b) Are welcome to attend any Coffee Chats via Zoom;
  - c) Are welcome to attend the monthly BCGS General Meetings via Zoom;
  - d) Have access to and can research in the BCGS library for free.

### March 17 - Hudson's Bay Company

Linda Yip of Saskatoon, Sask. presented "Tracing the Voyage of the 'Princess Royal' to B.C. as it deals with Nanaimo & the Princess Royal's arrival in 1854" It also included information about the Hudson's Bay Company in Western Canada. Linda writes:

"This talk was inspired by my blog post, 'Western Canadian migration before the CPR. Tracing the voyage of the Princess Royal, London to Fort Victoria (1858-59), 19 May 2024'. As is known

to family historians today, passenger lists for the west coast held at Library and Archives Canada begin in 1905, a frustrating forty years behind the east coast. What's less well understood is that some early settler movements may be traced by using the rare and beautiful maps held at the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg, MB, and by investigating ship's logs and ship's histories. In addition, genealogical resources that disappeared when RootsWeb went offline may be recovered using the WayBack Machine. In this talk, I will explore the voyage of the barque Princess Royal, as she sailed from Southampton, England to Fort Victoria, Colony of Victoria, in 1858-59." (reproduced by kind permission of Linda Yip, Accredited Genealogist® professional)

### **April 14 - Stories of planned research leading to lucky finds**

Claire Smith-Burns of Kelowna, BC presented "The Lucky Dip: Serendipity & Genealogy".

Claire Smith-Burns shared three case histories of spectacular genealogical discoveries made quite by accident. However, she emphasized such "lucky" finds happen more often to observant family historians who are following a solid research plan and examining every clue! Claire gave us a lesson on good research habits and following clues.

### **Our recent mini-zooms**

Mini-zooms included single talks such as "My Oyster Dredging Family" by Carolyn Kemp and "A Research Trip to England" by Susan Bates, as well as two series on DNA and geographically focussed research.

Terry Hartley is continuing her Genealogy Book Club, studying "Research Like a Pro with DNA" by Diana Elder, Nicole Dyer, and Robin Wirthlin. The discussion each month tackles another chapter to grow member's understanding of this intricate yet exciting major research tool of DNA.

The "Researching in" Series hosted by Susan Bates and Bronwyn Fraser gives members hands-on experience in a different geographic focus each month. For Ireland we learnt how to use Griffiths Valuation (1847-1864) and related Valuation Office books (1830-1865), massive records that fills in gaps where others are not preserved. For Ontario we learnt about 19th century Township maps with named property holders that are free online at a little known website. For Nova Scotia, members shared their area expertise to solve a member's family brick wall.

## Members contribute to LDS Seminar



Seminar poster

Several members participated in this seminar on April 26. Members crewed a table to highlight our Society and presented displays about the 1931 Canadian Census released in the past year and our current Mapping Project. Four of our members gave excellent talks with these subjects:

### **Danube Swabians' Lost Children** by Rosina Schmidt

The "Danube Swabians" is the name of the youngest Germanic tribe. The 1938 census lists the tribe as 5 million living in 6 different former Austro-Hungarian areas. In communist Yugoslavia they were persecuted and at least 45,000 children were abducted by Tito's communists.

### **Using the Library and Archives Canada website for Family History research** by Bud Pennington

This presentation covered the main areas of the LAC website that will be of interest for the family history researcher and Bud has kindly written an article for this issue.

### **Message from our Ancestors – Using DNA to unlock Family Stories** by Terry Hartley

Curious about DNA testing for genealogy? This beginner-friendly session explored how different types of DNA — autosomal, Y-DNA, and mitochondrial DNA — can help confirm family connections, add new branches to your tree, and break through brick walls. Throughout the session, real case studies illustrated how the presenter used DNA to uncover family stories. Ethical considerations and privacy concerns were also discussed.

### **My Grandmother Lied, and So Did Yours!** by Bronwyn Frazer

You need to use the Genealogical Proof Standard – Let's face it, memories grow sketchy, family members embellish family stories to make things better, others alter facts for the same reason, and stories through the generations have the "broken telephone" effect. The hunt to

determine which family story is fact and which is fiction (or a bit of this and a bit of that) is what makes genealogy so addictive. So how do we figure it all out? It doesn't help that genealogy sites are rife with misinformation. This talk introduced the Genealogical Proof Standard. The subject is so relevant, Bronwyn has written an article for this newsletter.

## Coming Events

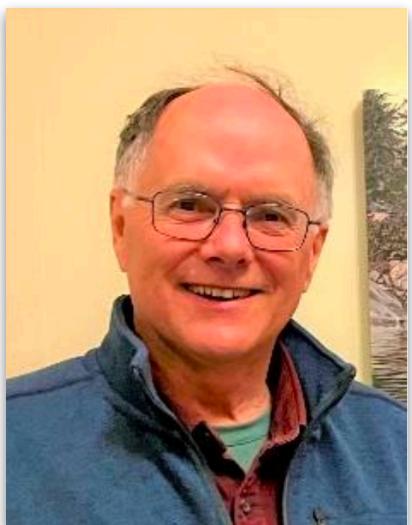
### Monthly Meeting, Monday, May 12, 2025 – Zoom only.



Marianne Rasmus of Ottawa, Ontario will present "Ella's Story: Expanding that empty branch on the family tree."

It is the story of Marianne's husband's Scottish War-Bride grandmother who had been adopted and how they used DNA to determine her parentage.

### Monday, June 16, 2025 – Hybrid. Mid-year Social plus talk!



Before the talk, we will have a brown bag social starting at 6:00 pm. Arrive early and pack along supper or a snack to enjoy while visiting with fellow members.

At 7:00 pm Gordon L. McBean of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Gordon will present "They Came Through Ontario". He will be reporting on various research methods and tools he has used to obtain favourable results. During the search, methods evolved from microfilm and paper to online and digital, so a broad bag of techniques were used. This will be a hybrid presentation - available both in person and online.

### Mini-Zooms till the summer break include:

May 8 - Genealogy Book Club. , Terry Hartley We're studying "Research Like a Pro with DNA" by Diana Elder, Nicole Dyer, and Robin Wirthlin. The discussion at the May session will be on Chapter 11. [Registration](#)

May 22 - Computer Talk for Technophobes, hosted by Susan Bates. This will be an open Q&A session. Bring any question you might have about computer usage, and/or bring any tips you might have about features that have helped your own work. Registration link: [Registration](#)

June 5 - Researching in Ireland and Scotland: the Ulster Scots, hosted by Susan Bates and Bronwyn Frazer. The group will work on Tony Green's research challenges with his Ulster Scot ancestors. [Registration](#)

June 12 - Genealogy Book Club, Terry Hartley. We're studying "Research Like a Pro with DNA" by Diana Elder, Nicole Dyer, and Robin Wirthlin. The discussion at the June session will be on Chapter 12. [Registration](#)

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.

### **Monthly Coffee Socials**

The popular Coffee Socials continue on Thursday, May 29, 10am at Smitty's. You will receive an email to RSVP for numbers.

**Talks and mini-zooms will recommence after the summer break in September**

### **Question Corner**

Each issue we will pose a question. *If you have any questions you would like answered, send them along to [infoNFHS@gmail.com](mailto:infoNFHS@gmail.com)*

The question this issue is:

#### **What is a honey party?**

This is from a Toronto Star social notice (page 36, Thursday May 5th 1955)

*"Mr and Mrs Douglas Hall-Wood and Mr and Mrs Myron G Doyno are entertaining at a honey party this evening at the former's home on Douglas Ave."*

Please send your answers to [infoNFHS@gmail.com](mailto:infoNFHS@gmail.com) and we'll present them next issue.

## 1921 Mapping Project progressing smoothly!

This exciting and challenging project will give a snapshot in time:

### Residents of Nanaimo on June 1, 1921

The map project team of up to 15 volunteers is working on labelling every residence within the City of Nanaimo with the name of the family occupying it when the census was taken on June 1, 1921. Every building in the City is outlined on one of 24 maps that were hand-drawn in 1909 for the purpose of assessing fire risks and determining insurance premiums. The maps are both attractive and informative. Drawn to scale, they trace the footprint of each structure at its exact location on the property. They use symbols and colours to describe relevant features such as building height and construction material. (From 1885 to 1975, similar maps were drawn for nearly every town in Canada and the US with a population over 1000 - more than 10,000 communities.)

Team members have transcribed, from the 1921 census, the occupant's name and address for about 1600 residences. Wherever possible, they have verified the census entries with other sources such as the tax roll, the city directory or vital statistics. These few lines do not give enough credit to the many hours of laborious work on the many steps needed to achieve this database. The test map below (not proofread) shows fire insurance map 12, with about one third of the residences labelled with the names of the occupiers as transcribed from census Enumeration Subdistrict 31.

The colour yellow on the map indicates a wood construction. Pink indicates brick. The numbers inside the dwellings indicate the number of storeys. Other numbers give distances, house addresses, official survey lot numbers, etc.

Looking forward, the team will validate the last census records, assign map locations for residents, produce a complete set of Nanaimo maps and create an exciting website for users.

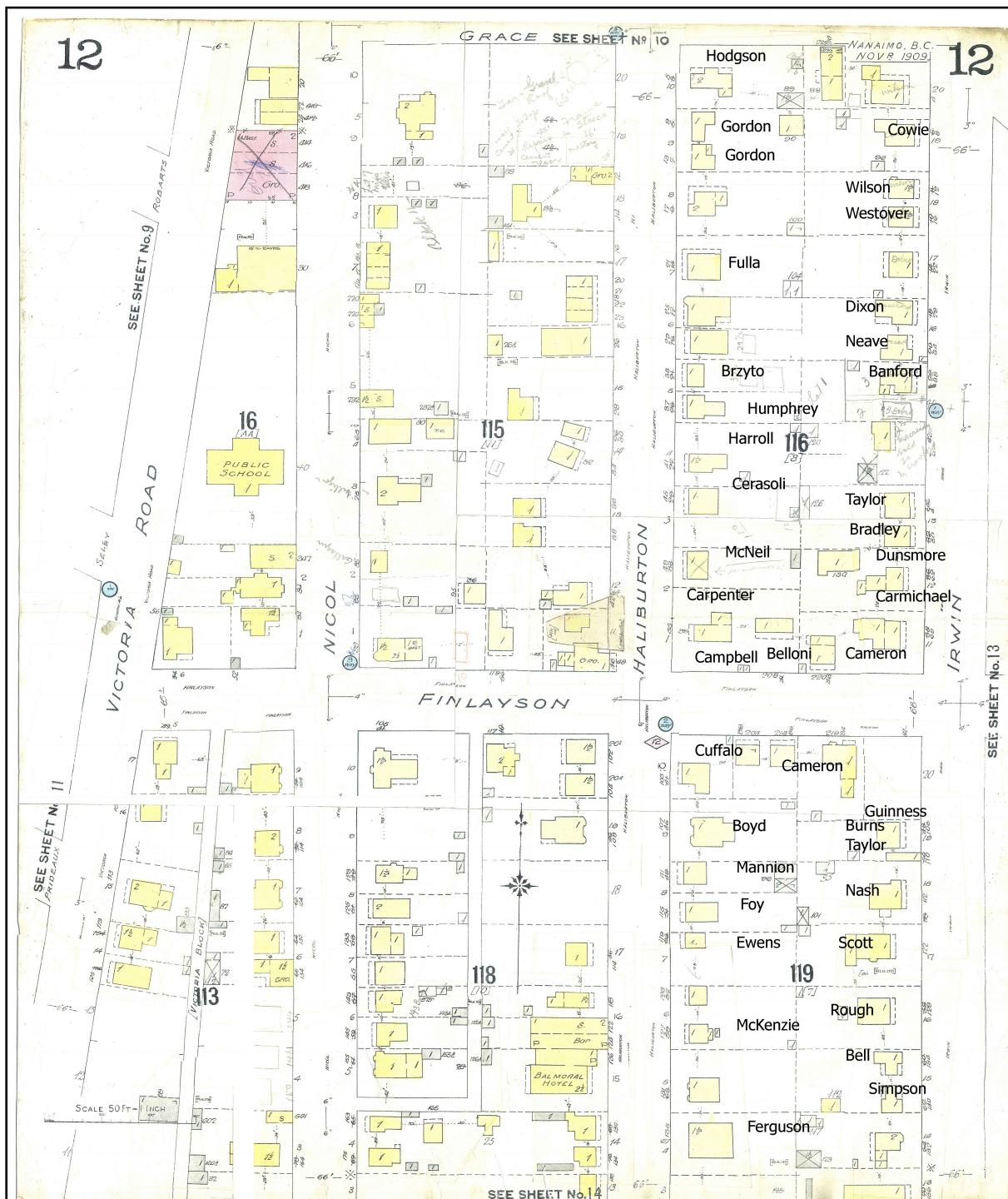
### A puzzle for Ancestry readers

The family at 33 Haliburton named here as BRZYTO, was transcribed by Library and Archives Canada as BRYSTO. Searches in multiple other sources did not find any other occurrence of either surname, nor of other similar names. The head of house was Antonia, born in Italy in 1873, immigrated in 1890. You can check the original census image using a search for BRYSTO. (You will see that Antonia is likely a mis-transcription of Antonio.)

Do you recognize this name, or know of any similar-sounding name that might have been recorded this way? Send any ideas to [infoNFHS@gmail.com](mailto:infoNFHS@gmail.com)

If you enjoy puzzles like this, join the map project team!

Susan Bates, Education Director and Map Project Manager



In progress - Nanaimo fire insurance map 12 with 1921 census resident's names labelled.

## President's Choice

This is a new Ancestry feature. Each Issue I will be reviewing a genealogy related topic and writing a brief review. Today we are looking at:

### **The Leeds Method of Organizing your DNA Matches**

I recently saw Dana Leeds explain her method of organizing DNA matches. After testing my DNA I, like many others, struggled to make sense of the hundreds or thousands of matches. Where do they fit into my tree? Why don't they all have a family tree attached to their name?

Dana's method focuses on DNA not trees.

To organize your matches into four groups that represent the people related to your four grandparents, the Leeds method suggests that you:

List your DNA matches with whom you share between 90 - 400 centiMorgans or cM. By using this group you should avoid including matches who are related to two of your grandparents (such as a first cousin). By choosing between 90 and 400 cM's you should only have second or third cousins in your list.

Assign a colour to the match with the highest cM.

Using your DNA testing site find that person's matches and assign the same colour. (Only use the matches from your list, don't introduce new matches.)

Assign a new colour to the next match with the highest cM count that does not have a colour.

Assign the same colour to all of their matches.

Repeat until each person on your list has at least one colour.

Then sort the names according to colour. Each colour group is a cluster. From there you need to do traditional research to determine how the people are related to each other and to you.

Sometimes you will not have four distinct clusters, due to lack of testers or endogamy.

For a clear and concise visual explanation to the Leeds Method and more check out Dana Leeds' YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/@danaleeds](https://www.youtube.com/@danaleeds) or go to her website: [www.danaleeds.com](http://www.danaleeds.com)

Until next time, **Ruth**

The editor followed Ruth's instructions and made his first ever Leeds table from his 16 DNA matches that lay in the range from 90-400cM. From family history research the first three categories were known but those in blue from the mother's mother open a new line of research and people to contact.

My DNA matches	centimorgans	Father's mother	Mother's father	Father's father	Mother's mother
JK	283				
AM	223				
DM	201				
PS	192				
VT	152				
MP	144				
EK	131				
JY	127				
ML	120				
WM	120				
RB	116				
KM	111				
HV	107				
KA	102				
JN	100				
CG	97				

## Getting Started - What is GPS?

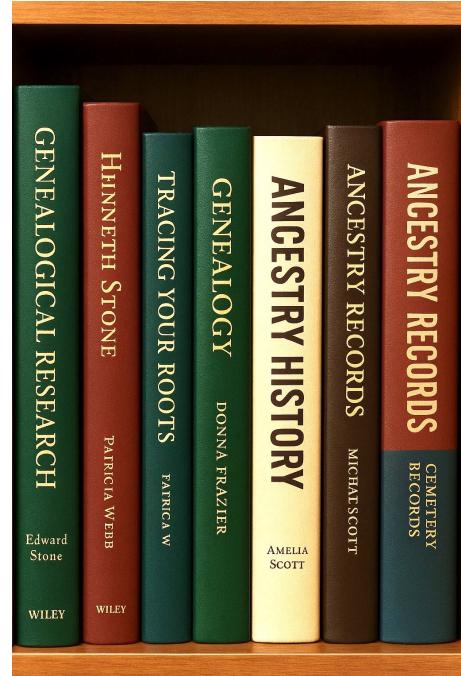
### An introduction to GPS - part 1.

Your editor recently decided to research his Irish ancestors more completely. In Australia he had many family papers, photos, letters, cemeteries visits, BMD records, even reunions to solidify the work. To tackle their Irish roots, he went to Ancestry and My Heritage and found literally dozens of records forming a complete family tree. He realized the multiple trees were copied from one another with virtually no source records. Did someone know Henry S. was born in 1740 and all the following family from personal information? If so who are they and where is that recorded? That's when I remembered Bronwyn's insistence on the GPS method. She has kindly agreed to explain its importance and give us lessons:

We all know that all trees are not created equal. As information increases on-line so does the amount of misinformation – I shudder to think what full blown AI will bring us! Just yesterday I saw another tree published on a genealogy site with the wrong date for my grandfather Albert Moss's birth.

I know exactly how they got it wrong – they relied on two key pieces of information normally considered authoritative and correct – his birth registration and his death certificate stating he was born March 11th 1905. But the thing is, that date is wrong, and if the researcher had only looked a bit further, they would have found his baptismal record and his headstone recording his birth as March 4th 1905, – enough to suggest that further investigation was required to understand the anomaly and determine which date (if either) was true. A more thorough investigation would have uncovered the March 4th date in the Moss family bible and an oft told story by Albert himself about his “two birthdays” and the reason for it.

If they had, they would have discovered that when reporting the birth to the registrar, his mother adjusted his birth date by 7 days in order to comply with the 42 day time frame within which to report a birth before incurring a financial penalty and a stern talking to. This false date was then reproduced on other civil/legal documents when legal proof of birth was required – so the wrong date is found in several places. The March 4th date Albert claimed was his true birthdate is written by his mother's hand in the family bible, in his baptism record, in the documents his wife provided the cemetery for his interment and to be memorialized on his headstone.



So with this in mind I thought it might be a timely reminder of the Genealogical Proof Standard (the GPS), the 5 step research and analysis process for establishing genealogical “proof” as set out by the Board for Certification of Genealogists:

- 1) Thorough (reasonably exhaustive) searches in sources that might help answer a research question.
- 2) Informative (complete and accurate) citations to the sources of every information item (or lack thereof) that answers genealogical question.
- 3) Correlation (analysis and comparison) of relevant sources and information to assess usefulness as evidence of research question.
- 4) Resolution of any conflicts in evidence.
- 5) A written statement, list, or narrative supporting answer to research question. The form is dependent upon the subject and complexity of the question and evidence found.

Anyone who would like to learn more about these steps can do so in a number of ways. There are many on-line forums and blogs, but particularly helpful are the following publications:

*Genealogy Standards*, Second Edition, by the Board for Certification of Genealogists

*Mastering Genealogical Proof*, by Dr Thomas W Jones

*Professional Genealogy : A Manual for Researchers, Writers, Editors, Lecturers and Librarians*, by Elizabeth Shown Mills, et al.

I will also explore each of these steps in upcoming editions of AncestryTree.

**Bronwyn Frazer, PLCGS**

## What happened at Roots Tech?

Roots Tech is a massive annual convention held annually by Family Search in Salt Lake City and online. <https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/library>

In 2025, some of our members attended Roots Tech, part of 15,000 total on site and millions online. This largest global event for family history and genealogy, explored the latest innovations and trends in family research. The conference featured workshops, keynotes, and new tools aimed at making genealogy more accessible and exciting for users around the world. Webinars and other content from the event are available all year, but with 1500 talks and 1374 speakers, you will need to filter and focus unless you want your garden to wither from neglect!



Here are some highlights:

### 1. Keynote Speakers

This year's keynotes included emphasized the emotional and cultural significance of understanding one's heritage.

Tara Davis-Woodhall and Hunter Woodhall, Olympic athletes, who shared how family history has influenced their careers and personal lives.

Ndaba Mandela, the grandson of Nelson Mandela, talked about the role of ancestry in shaping one's identity, highlighting the power of family connections.

Dana Tanamachi, an artist, delivered a moving keynote on the importance of preserving family stories through creative expression.

### 2. New Features and Tools in Genealogy Research

- Ancestry's DNA Clustering and Networks: Ancestry introduced their exciting new feature "Matches by Cluster." This tool helps users identify DNA matches linked by common ancestors, represented visually through cluster charts. It allows filtering by maternal or paternal lines, and adjusting centimorgan (cM) ranges, offering more in-depth insights into genetic connections. Additionally, Ancestry's new "Ancestry Networks" feature enables users to create networks for

collaborative family tree research. The competitor MyHeritage has introduced Autoclusters working along the same lines. These tools and options are getting increasingly complicated so a bit of investigation is needed to find the best for your needs.

- FamilySearch's AI-Driven Search and Indexing: FamilySearch revealed major advancements in its artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities. AI is now being used to improve the readability of old handwritten records, allowing users to find information in previously inaccessible documents.
- This is part of FamilySearch's broader efforts to enhance searchability and speed up record indexing.
- Release of the "Together" App by FamilySearch

FamilySearch launched its "Together" app, a mobile and web application designed to help families connect, share, and record memories in a private, ad-free environment. The app offers prompts to assist users in documenting life stories and facilitates the creation of family groups for sharing photos, stories, and memories. "Together" is available for both Android and iOS devices.

- On the subject of AI, Mark Thompson emphasized the need to be very clear with your prompts to the Chatbot. Tell the Chatbot how to act. Tell it your knowledge level, your goal, and exactly what you want it to do. Tell it how you would like the results to be organized and finally find ways to verify the results! Mark suggested how to assess whether AI would be a good application for a research problem based upon how much of the subject is online and whether it is a language based question. Among other tasks he believes AI excels for using DNA and cM scores to sort out relationships and matches, and for quickly finding resources for researching a place, the way FamilySearch wiki does. Another application he highlighted was reading old handwriting.

RootsTech 2025 emphasized the continued merging of technology and family history. With new tools like AI-enhanced searches, DNA clustering, and mobile apps for preserving memories, the event promised a brighter, more interconnected future for genealogical research. These innovations will make it easier for users to explore their family histories, connect with distant relatives, and preserve important stories for future generations. Even though their convention is over, you can continue to make use of the Roots Tech information and more is added all year at Family Search!

## Genealogy News & Updates

**FamilySearch's** Full-Text Search is expanding dramatically. This new version of character recognition (OCR) software, can convert an image of text into a machine-readable text format giving you the ability to search the full text of these records before they are even indexed. Thus hand written documents of importance such as land records, wills and probates can be searched better than ever before. In the previous AncestryTree Carolyn Kemp noted that full-text search was very worthwhile and successful though at an early stage. Starting only at RootsTech 2024 it now boasts 3489 collections with 957 million records! Researchers are raving about the unexpected and very welcome results they are finding every day.

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/full-text>

If you have not tried it follow these steps on the FamilySearch website:

While signed in on FamilySearch, go to FamilySearch Labs.

On the Expand your search with Full Text card, click Try It.

A video available on the page (also provided above) helps you learn to use this experience.

Hopefully the program will be improved with better source citations and a way of seeing what records you have already viewed.

**Books**, just like newspapers are old-fashioned print forms not to be overlooked in your research.

The Genealogist recently announced the release of a major new collection of fully searchable historical books. This diverse collection encompasses nearly 200,000 names from rare publications, providing family historians and genealogical researchers with an invaluable resource to delve beyond basic records. With these new volumes, users can uncover not just names and dates, but the rich social and occupational context that brings ancestors' stories to life. [www.Genealogist.com](http://www.Genealogist.com)

### 1939 Register

A reminder the 1939 Register of the UK is expanded each year when records become 100 years old, in addition to others which are opened where death has been proved. In 2024 alone, 290,000 new records were opened.

As the 1931 census for England and Wales was destroyed by fire during the Second World War and no census was taken in 1941, the Register provides the most complete survey of the population of England and Wales between 1921 and 1951, making it an invaluable resource for family, social and local historians. The Register is available to search and view on [Findmypast.co.uk](http://Findmypast.co.uk) (charges apply) and [Ancestry.co.uk](http://Ancestry.co.uk) (charges apply).

## Updates to Canadian Genealogical Sites

### Library and Archives Canada (LAC):

Collection Search Improvements: LAC upgraded its Collection Search application, introducing a more intuitive interface and enhanced advanced search options. The new search engine, powered by ElasticSearch, offers improved search capabilities.

Public Research Lists: LAC launched a feature allowing users to create and share curated research lists. This initiative facilitates collaborative exploration of Canadian heritage and provides insights into lesser-known records.

### Genealogy Quebec:

New Search Engine and Expanded Database: Genealogy Quebec unveiled a new search engine, providing access to over 65 million genealogical records. This update includes millions of previously unpublished documents, enhancing research opportunities for users tracing French-Canadian ancestry. [genealogiequebec.com https://www.genealogiequebec.com/en/](https://www.genealogiequebec.com/en/)

Expansion: The PRDH-IGD database was extended to cover records from 1849 to 1861, adding approximately 740,000 baptism, marriage, and burial records. This expansion enriches the depth of genealogical data available for researchers focusing on Quebec's demographic history.

### Ontario Genealogical Society (OGS):

OGS is presenting a monthly webinar series in 2025, held on the first Thursday of each month. These live, members-only sessions cover topics such as research methods, preservation techniques, and specific records for genealogical research.

GEDCOM Website Launch: In collaboration with [CanadianHeadstones.com](https://www.canadianheadstones.com), OGS relaunched [CHFamilyTrees.com](https://www.chfamilytrees.com) as [OntarioFamilyHistory.org](https://www.ontariofamilyhistory.org). This platform hosts over 830,000 individuals and 315,000 families, providing a valuable resource for those researching Ontario ancestry.

## Focus on LAC - Using the Library and Archives Canada website for Family History research

by Bud Pennington

There is a lot of information for those researching their family history at the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) website. Once you select your language, many searches can be done from the main page <https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng>. Clicking on "Advance search" and the down arrow beside "Collection" will show you which collections are included in this search. The results may be filtered in order to zoom in on what you want.

If you are looking for a book for your research, entering the title and then clicking on the title will give the details of the book. Near the bottom of the listing is a box titled "Other Availability and Holdings". Clicking on this will give you all the locations of this book, centred on Ottawa; changing the location to Nanaimo will give you nearby locations.

The Genealogy and Family History Page <https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/research-help/genealogy-family-history/pages/genealogy-family-history.aspx> lists most of the topics of interest to the genealogist. Read the different sections to see which might be of interest to you. Several sections have pointers to digitized microfilms which have not been indexed and are not available elsewhere.

The Military History Page <https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/research-help/military-heritage/pages/military-heritage.aspx> has sections up to the Second World War. Records for the War of 1812, the South African War (1899-1902), the First World War and the War Dead of the Second World War are available. For persons who survived the Second World War and those who served later the records may be requested through the Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) process.

How to make an ATIP request <https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/services/public/access-information-privacy/pages/make-atip-request.aspx> This section lists how to make an ATIP request. You may do it online, using one of the PDF forms listed there or an informal request. If the person has been dead for less than 20 years, the request will be made under the Privacy Act. You will have to provide proof of your identity and proof of death. If the person has been dead for 20 or more years, then the request will be made under the Access to Information Act. Proof of death and a \$5 application fee is required. Proof of death can be an obit, death certificate, photo of a gravestone, etc. The ATIP process may be used for other government records as well.

Did you know that some older copies of Ancestry (2007-2019) are available online at the archives? Searching using Nanaimo Family History Society will bring them and all the other publications that the Society has published.

## Lucky find - A Midshipman's letters by Tony Green

While AI is a stupendous new tool that is revolutionizing genealogy, older research methods should not be forgotten. Even today much is not on the internet as what is loaded first are data of wider interest and potentially more lucrative.

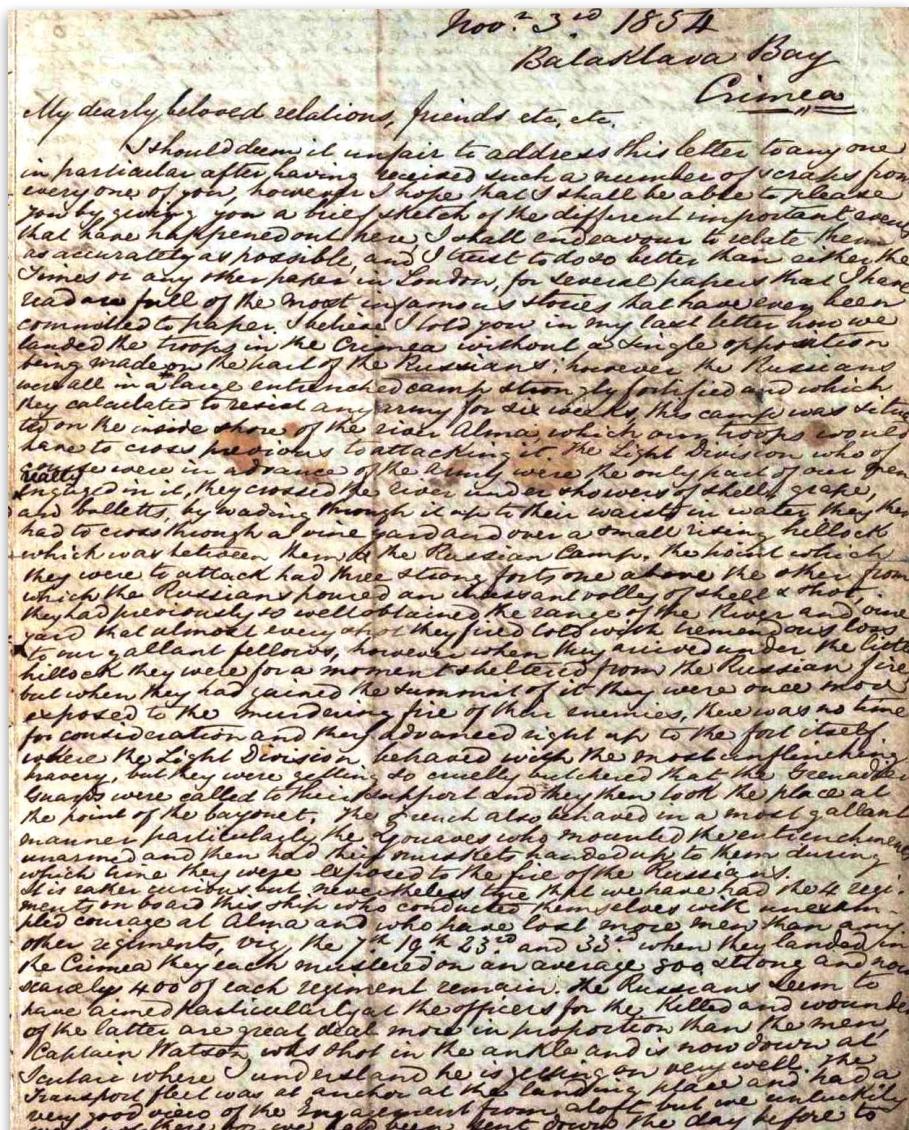
In her April talk to our Society, Claire Smith-Burns showed examples of the "lucky dip". Hunting for ancestors with a wide beam can surprise us with specially valuable discoveries.

In his January talk to the Society, Tony showed how finding letters languishing in the basement of the Greenwich Maritime Museum brought an ancestor's story to life. This summary of the story shows a few examples of the many traditional ways of researching that helped put flesh on the bones of Charles Cookesley.

Family lore is not always reliable!! e.g. Charles' first daughter, my GG grandmother whom I knew, told us

that her dad met the infamous bushranger Ned Kelly, served as a Gold Commissioner, fought at the Eureka Stockade, was related to the Irish poet Thomas Moore and had a main street in Melbourne named after him. Alas all disproved.

The story begins: Who would have guessed the son of an erudite English doctor practising in France would die penniless and in pain in a squalid town in Australia aged only 46?



Baptism and christening records

Boulogne-sur-Mer book

Punch Magazine



Books - Life of Thackeray,  
The Letters of Charles Dickens

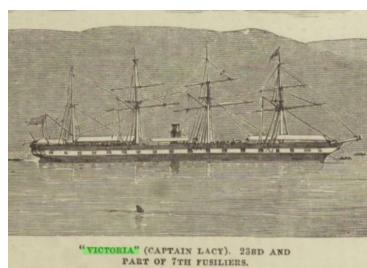
British Naval Records

Fiske Family Tree Book

Court Record of robbery with  
John Moore as witness

Merchant seaman licence

Lucky find! 17000 words in  
letters at Greenwich National  
Maritime Museum



Illustrated London News picture  
of fleet at Varna

Charles William Thomas Cookesley showed such promise, became confident and privileged but his life ended sadly. Born in 1838 into a comfortable well-educated family, he grew up not in London, nor some English County town but across the Channel in the seaside resort of Boulogne-sur-mer. Punch Magazine wrote "the English inhabitants are composed of those living on their means, those living in spite of them and a sprinkling of outlaws".

Dr John Cookesley, Charles' father, studied medicine at the Sorbonne and counted Dickens and Thackeray as friends. Grandfather William ran the pay office for the entire British navy. His mother Susannah Fiske traced her upper crust family back to the Norman Conquest. Many of his extended family also lived in this fashionable town, such as uncle Richard. Thus Charles gained an excellent education in English and French though his letters home reveal a very entitled youngster. Life was not all sweet as when he was seven he lost his mother and younger sister to cholera.

By age 16 his first big opportunity came when Britain entered the Crimean War and Charles shipped off as a midshipman on the troop steamer SS Victoria. Reaching Constantinople his eyes widened at the sight of its magnificent palaces, mosques, harems, veraglios, lightly veiled women and exotic customs. Back on board he felt tired and fell asleep on watch duty. The captain returned late to find him asleep and next morning, according to one of the letters "sent for the Master at Arms and had me put in irons on top of the deck house, where all the ship's Company could see me. I should like to know", he asked his father, "if Captain Lay is justified in putting an officer in irons for such a trivial offence, I am not the only one that he has caught in the same manner before and therefore why should I be punished ... as a felon".

Arriving at Varna on the Black Sea, Charles met a family friend. "He very kindly asked me to go and dine with him that afternoon at 5 o'clock and sent a boat for me, but I was forced to send back a note in the refusal for my wardrobe was in such a dilapidated state that I would have cut a very conspicuous figure at the dinner table". Soon after Charles wrote to his dad "I have bought two or three articles of clothing out of the money you so kindly sent me" but, he continued "The things I most require are, flannel drawers, flannel shirts, thick trousers, sea boots, thick socks, thick gloves, blue beige shirt, pair of dark coloured blankets, overall trousers."

His ship finally moored at Balaklava just days after the Charge of the Light Brigade and another relative came to visit him. Taking up Charles' account "Then before he left the ship he asked me to come and see him up at the camp and if I named the day he would send me down a horse and a servant so that on Sunday I found myself on horseback riding up to the camp [where] he holds a very high and responsible situation. I had a fine view of Lord Raglan's house as he is attached to Headquarters he lives in a tent close by his Lordship's house. In the



Gallery in Ancestry from Trees

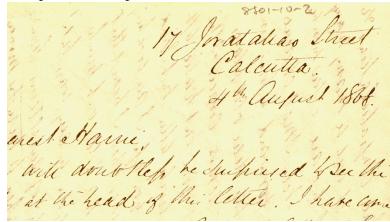
Connections in Ancestry to Trees

Family lore

British Library etc

Various newspapers & book

Another lucky find - letters at the Royal Army Museum



Vic Government gazette

In person trips to Northumbria and Smythesdale

Ship passenger lists Victoria

Victoria BMD records

Government gazettes & newspapers

Newspaper articles in Trove

**NEVADA MINING COMPANY, Break o' Day.**  
—A Meeting of the Promoters of the above company will be held at the Camp Hotel, Ballarat, on Friday, the 21st April, at 6 o'clock p.m.  
C. W. COOKESLEY.

City Directory for Collingwood

Find a Grave

afternoon he took me out on horseback with him to see the lines, we went all round the English and French lines and had a beautiful view of Sebastopol and the two Russian armies in our rear. We returned home after a long ride in which I received what might have been a very bad fall for I fell off my horse when I was at full gallop but luckily I did not hurt myself at all. I ate a very good dinner and discussed a glass of good sherry as I brought up myself as a present to him, viz. a dozen of porter, 4 bottles of sherry and two of brandy which he was very pleased of as his stock was just finished. I slept very comfortably in his tent all night ..."

After the war ended we would have expected Charles to enter military service by buying a commission. His father was apoplectic when instead he announced he was going to Australia to seek his fortune on the newly discovered Victorian Goldfields. His father threatened to disown him. His younger brother John Francis was sent to Addiscombe Cadet school of the British East India Company in London and joined the Royal Artillery. At age 30 he died during the Lushai campaign on the Indian frontier.

Meanwhile Charles arrived in Melbourne after a long sea voyage half way around the world, bought a Miner's Licence and headed for the diggings. The old gold mining town of Smythesdale came into existence following the discovery of gold at Woady Yallock Creek in 1853. A rush to the area ensued and by 1859 there were 20,000 people on the Smythes Creek Goldfields. Numerous settlements were established on the fields, many of which no longer exist.

Several letters sent by ship stayed unclaimed at the Melbourne Post Office. Charles threw himself into the action, buying shares in a variety of mining ventures near Rokewood and Smythesdale. He also found time to find a wife, Jane Smith, a coal miner's daughter. She had emigrated from Northumbria with her mother and sister without her father. Charles and Jane set up a very humble home in the bush and had 11 children. Jane worked as a midwife in the district. Though Charles had seemingly abandoned his family, he named his children after his father, all his siblings, himself, and Jane's father.

Notices of Charles' business meetings usually had them set in local public houses. At first work was steady and he bought shares in a number of ventures without any great success. He invested large sums into mining shares - £ 336, £ 216, £ 400, £ 180 at a time and was manager of the Royal Oak Gold Mining Company before he turned 30. As the years wore on things got worse and finally in 1882 they moved to the big city, Melbourne, and Charles declared insolvency. The official notice stated "Having being unrenumeratively employed in mining persuits for many years, sickness in family and pressure of creditors. Liabilities £ 152 12s; assets 10s; deficiency £ 152 2s." Charles became a clerk in an insurance office but died three years later after five months of agony with an abscess on his right lung, aged only 46. His eleventh child arrived months later! While his life ended miserably, Charles' legacy is his many descendants living in Australia.