

Genealogy There Lives Our History

We have all seen and been entertained by television shows such as “Ancestors in the Attic” or “Who Do You Think You Are”. You may be surprised to know that there is a very active “genealogy club” in Medicine Hat. The Medicine Hat Genealogy Society, (MHGS) has a 37 year history in the city, with members who have 20 to 30 year continuous memberships.

The MHGS offers a great resource to those who would like to research their family history. The club promotes, does research and has a large volume of resource materials available in their library, for the local citizens to help find their very own Ancestors in the Attic. Our member's ethnic origins consist of, Germans from Russia, English, Scottish, Norwegian, Swedish, Greek, French, Ukrainian, etc. We meet every 1st Wednesday of the month, except for July and August. Our meetings comprise of a business section, a sharing of research, road blocks, success stories, and a program promoting genealogy and ideas for research. Throughout the year we have various speakers give presentations on different topics relating to genealogy.

At our May meeting, guest speaker, Mr Don Schmidt gave an interesting presentation on Cemetery research. Don is a volunteer contributor to the website, “Find A Grave.” Don has visited, taken pictures of headstones, researched, and cataloged over 50,000 grave sites, and has them uploaded to the “Find A Grave” website at www.findagrave.com

As genealogists we are always tracking and looking for lost cousins, hoping to find connections to past ancestors, and how those families evolved.

Two of our members can trace their family roots back to passengers on the famous Mayflower Ship which landed at Plymouth Mass. in 1620.

Now, did I mention success stories!!

Well, sometimes you discover “living treasures” when you connect with relatives you never knew existed. Sometimes you find them in the most unlikely places, such as the following story discovered in our genealogy club.

One of our members and myself, realized that we both were researching the same name respective to our family trees. This compared research showed that we share a 7th great grandfather, thus making us first cousins 7 times removed. The family name we share is Hickok.

The Hickok family had its origins in Stratford-Upon-Avon in England. In this quaint rolling country side of central England, the Hickok name became connected to William Shakespeare's birth place.

The discovery of a lease agreement between Lewis Hickok and William Shakespeare, gave Lewis Hickok legal right to rent both Shakespeare's House and Farm for an indefinite period of time. This agreement allowed Lewis to turn the Shakespeare house into a Pub called "The Maiden Head". This enabled Lewis to grow barley on the farm, make beer from it, and then sell it at the Pub.

Recently the will of Lewis Hickok was discovered in England. This will gave an exact description of William Shakespeare's home and furnishings. The will detailed down to the exact number of chairs, beds, linens, even accounting and describing the utensils and cookware. This allowed the Administrators of the Shakespeare House to furnish the house exactly the way it was in the early 1600s.

Fame followed the Hickok family to North America. William Hickok, our 8th gr. Grandfather and cousin to Lewis, emigrated to Farmington, Connecticut in 1635. With the birth of his two sons Samuel and Joseph, the Hickok name would become well known over many generations. The Hickoks played a significant role in the establishment of America becoming a nation, through their contribution in both the American Revolution and the Civil War.

The Hickok family also includes the name of James Butler Hickok famously known as Wild Bill Hickok. He was a US Deputy Marshall, Town Sheriff, and Union soldier. In our relationship to Wild Bill, we are 2nd cousins 4 times removed.

I have found a real treasure, an Ancestor in my Attic, come and join us at MHGS, if you but look you might find your Ancestor as well.

Contributed by
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