

Celebrating International Day of Older Persons

Today October 01, 2016 we celebrate the International Day of Older Persons as proclaimed by the United Nations. It is to celebrate the values and knowledge that Senior Citizens contribute to society and the challenges they face. Charles Lefebvre of the Medicine Hat News on Wed. Sept. 28, 2016 wrote an excellent editorial titled, quote, "Respect your elders and appreciate what they can teach you" unquote.

Genealogically speaking, today's seniors are the reservoir of familial and historical information, they are the connection to the past and the present. You are fortunate indeed when researching your genealogy to have an elder person in your family. The wisdom of a great grandparent, great aunt or uncle can be very valuable when searching for clues to connect to another generation of your family tree.

A treasure trove of ancestral stories and events that happened within your family, can be had just by listening to your elders. Make time to visit with them, to hear what they have to say, it could be your only chance to record, and share these family stories in your genealogy.

Be patient when interviewing, reminisce about the past, bring up family events or stories, ask about their favorite pets, etc. From our experience, the best way to interview, is for them to be comfortable and at ease, one thought leads to another, and the wonderful stories of the past can be amazing. My 100 yr. old Aunt Ruby, was a charm to visit and reminisce with. So many family stories came out of our visits. One day she told us, that as a young wife farming with her husband, she would walk down a long hill with her dog "Laddie" to the pasture below to bring up the cows for milking. One day she wasn't feeling well, but started out to get the cows, she stopped, looked at Laddie and said, "Laddie go get the cows". To her surprise, he turned ran down the hill and brought up the milk cows. She paused, then quietly said, "how did Laddie know to only bring the cows that I milked?" She said, "after that, I always sent Laddie to get the cows".

One of my regrets is not talking or listening to my grandmother Carrie who was born in 1876. Her father was a Civil War Soldier, with 39 battles to his credit

during the 3 ½ years he served in the Union army. The stories and events she would have been able to tell would have been invaluable to our family history.

Fortunately our family has inherited some old family photographs that tell a story in their own way. Photographs are a key resource, full of important clues about your family. I have attached a picture, and will describe how to date it.

Its size 6 ½ x4 ¼ inches, determines that it is a Cabinet Card Print.

The card is thicker which enables bevelling and gilding of the edges.

The color is cream with Photographer's advertisement and address across the bottom. Imprint on back of photograph has elaborate advertisement and address for the photographer. The head and shoulders vignette was common composition. These clues give us the date of 1895 to 1900. As mentioned in last month's column, sometimes the handwritten information plus the clues above can help in your research.

Stories and photographs of your ancestors are a wonderful gift to pass on to your children and future generations. Do not miss out on a great opportunity to share your elders' knowledge.

Your comments, suggestions and questions are always welcome.

I can be contacted at timetraveller2011@gmail.com