

SAAMIS SEEKER

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Table of Contents

Ocupashun – Cencus Taker.....	Page 1
A Word from Our President	Page 2
Queries Korner	Page 3&4
Websites of Interest	Page 4
What's New in the Library	Page 5
POW's Scrapbook / WWI Postcard.....	Page 6
In Memory of George Fontaine.....	Page 7&8
SGGEE Convention 2011	Page 9
1852 New Year's Resolutions	Page 10
The British Library & Google	Page 11
Inexpensive, Yet Priceless	Page 12
Out & About / Eleanor Clyne.....	Page 13
British Home Children	Page 14

Purpose:

- To inform members of the affairs of Alberta Genealogical Society (AGS) and the Medicine Hat and District Branch.
- To print material to further members' research
- To publish local resources and research materials.

The Medicine Hat & District Genealogical Society, a branch of the Alberta Genealogical Society, publishes the Saamis Seeker 3 times a year February, June, and November.

Final authority regarding acceptance of material rests with the editor. Neither the editor nor the Branch accepts any responsibility for the opinions or errors on the part of the contributors.

Address correspondence and submissions to: Medicine Hat & District Branch AGS, P.O. Box 971 Medicine Hat, AB T1A 7G8
Submissions accepted up to the 15th of January, May, & October.

Submissions may also be sent by

Email to: mhgs@telus.net

OCUPAYSHUN-CENCUS TAKER (Submitted by Helene Paquin)

I am a cencus taker for the city of Bufflow. Our city has groan very fast in resent years & now in 1865, it has become a hard & time consuming job to count all the peephill. There are not many that con do this werk, as it is nessessarie to have an ejucashun, wich a lot of pursons still do not have. Anuther atribeart needed for this job is god spelling, for meny of the pephill to be counted can hardle speak inglish, let alon spel there names.

A Word from Our President

By Clark Lang

The summer is a good time to do genealogy research. Finding new facts about your family is always interesting. My visit to two old aunts revealed the history of an old great uncle. He was not a nice person. My search for more family history continues.

I recently visited the farm I was raised at and found the old farm house built about 1913 had been taken down by the present owners and replaced with a large modern home. The farmhouse was home to three generations of Langs. This farm is now the beginning of the history of another family.

The Medicine Hat Society has been active over the summer and into the fall. We sponsored an information booth at the Canada Day festivities on July 1, and a booth at the Heritage Day festivities on August 6. There was a lot of interest by the public at these booths, and as a result we have had many more inquiries regarding our genealogy society and two new members. Thanks to Melvin Bender and the volunteers who helped at the booths.

Our membership has increased to 52 with one life member. Our volunteer hours to date are 1491. There were four queries this summer and all were completed. Our cemetery committee, headed by Margery Ensminger, has had a lot of success working with one of the counties in our area. We now have an accurate list of cemeteries, names, and pictures of all of the head stones. It will take some time to properly organize the information and have it ready for use.

We are working on this year's list of meeting programs including speakers, demos and sharing sessions. The September program was a visit from AGS President Liam Hobbs. October's program was a presentation by our members who visited the LDS Family History Library in Salt Lake City. November's program will be by Earl Morris about "Box Cars" on our railroads, and the families who lived in them during the early days. The December program will be our Christmas Party. Our two special interest groups, Computer Assistance and Germans from Russia, have restarted and hope to have many members attending the Wednesday sessions.

Our library is increasing its size with the addition of many donated books from an old member. We were given an overhead projector this summer, and an old microfilm reader from our local library.

We look forward to another good year.

*****AN INTERESTING FACT:**

When French geographer Gerhard Mercator published a book of maps in the 16th century, the cover featured a picture of Atlas, from Greek mythology, holding the world on his back. After that, similar books containing maps were referred to as an Atlas.



Did you know...? If you are searching for an ancestor for whose ship record seems to be missing for a certain port, be aware that passenger lists could go on with the ship until the end of the voyage. In this case, the ancestor's name may appear in the ship's records for the last port instead of where you know he landed...

Queries Korner

(Kathy Gleisner, Eileen Stahl, Clarence Janke, & Leanne Balfour)

Firstly, we need to report that our Queries Committee Coordinator Clarence Janke handed in his resignation as of June 1, 2011. Clarence, our most sincere thanks go out to you for years of dedication to this position. We know you've always tackled the queries promptly, and to the best of your ability, and learning from your research methods has been both inspiring and enjoyable! We know you were also very much appreciated by the searchers who were in need of your assistance.

Consequently, in June, we welcomed Kathy Gleisner into the position of Queries Coordinator. Kathy has been a member of our society for a number of years. Many of you may know Kathy as our current treasurer, and she is also responsible for organizing our casino events. She is very much looking forward to this new position, and, I am sure, will tackle incoming queries with gusto and exuberance!

QUERY: **Murray Johnston** from **Calgary, AB** was searching for the **Thomas A. Currie** family in **Medicine Hat**. **RESPONSE:** Kathy located obituaries for **Thomas**, his wife **Margaret**, and son **Robert**, and also **Crawford** obits for a daughter and son-in-law, and a birth announcement for Robert. Funeral home records were retrieved for most of the family, as well as Henderson Directory entries from 1914 and on. Kathy also sent on a cemetery plot map for Hillside Cemetery, and photos of the plots, although there were no headstones.

QUERY: **Maurice Dieu** from **Arizona** wrote: "I am looking for genealogy information regarding my family member that lived in this area of Canada." **RESPONSE:** Kathy asked Phyllis from Lethbridge for some help on the Dieu family research, as the family came from the **Lethbridge** area, and not Medicine Hat. Phyllis is going to contact Mr. Dieu because she already had done research on this family for another lady last year. So she will give him what she has, and connect him with the other lady. Also, Kathy has ordered the marriage record from the BC Archives for **Jean Louis Lemoigne** and **Bertha Justine Dieu**, which is also relevant to Maurice's search.

QUERY: **Liam Hobbes** from **Edmonton, AB** was searching for information about **John James Ilott**. **RESPONSE:** Kathy acquired for Liam a Hillside Cemetery plot map marked with the location of the Ilott's grave, and a photo of the headstone. Also located an obituary from the Medicine Hat News, and a death record from B.C. Archives (as Ilott died in B.C., and was shipped back to Medicine Hat for burial).

QUERY: **Mildred Fox** and **Alice Garlock** from **Brooks, AB**, were searching out ancestors **James Murphy & Josephine van Valkenberg**. They submitted the names of this man & wife, and their 11 children - some with really distinctive names. **RESPONSE:** Since Mildred & Alice are family members, I (Leanne) tried to help them in their quest. I found the Murphys in Alberta in the Canadian census records for 1916, 1911, 1906, and US census records for 1900, 1890, 1880, and the wife's family even farther back in New York. The names matched, etc., and the land location in two of the census records in Alberta matched Murphy's listing for the homestead record. I also appreciate the Edmonton branch for finding an obit for Mrs. Murphy in an early newspaper. For this research, they thanked me, but have written off the found documentation as incorrect, even though these census records show the kids, in the same birth order that she listed them to me, etc. Their reasoning is based on a memory that this aunt had of being at a funeral in the early 1930s, when she was a young girl. She remembers the funeral taking place in a different county from the land descriptions, and so I guess she figures that he must have lived where the funeral took place.

The following three queries were worked on and summed up by Clarence Janke; although retired from the coordinator's position, is still proving to be a valuable member of our team:

QUERY: **Mandy Wilson-Gerry** of **Cutbank, Montana** was trying to find information and a birth record for her grandfather, **Andrew Wilson**, who was apparently born around **Barons, AB**, but became orphaned at an early age and knew little about his family. Mandy is also looking for info as well as a burial site for her great-grandfather, **John Wilson**, who may have died in **Utah** having been in a TB sanitorium.

RESPONSE: As this query was centered between Barons and Coutts, I questioned her why not try the Lethbridge Branch – she said she had, but did not get satisfaction as no one seemed interested. There was never much information revealed, so appears nothing will come of research for this query. *(It may be that lack of found information could have been misinterpreted as lack of interest. – lb)*

QUERY: Gayle Kosh of Vancouver, BC was looking to find an obit and burial place for a family member, **Matilda Phillips** who had been living in **Medicine Hat** and as she had been told, had passed away in the 'Hat in 2005. **RESPONSE:** Could first find no record of this death, have now found that her husband was buried in **Cabri, SK**, and they had farmed and lived near **Abbey**. Have now also found from the Abbey History Book that she had been living with her son, **Wayne**, in **Killiher, SK** (NE of Regina) in about 1999. She was 94 at that time, and could be buried there or at Cabri. That needed further research. After considerable enquiries at Cabri, we found at the town office that Matilda died in 2002 and was indeed buried beside her husband, Ernest. My former partner in research, Eileen, had been called in and was by now working with me on this query. Had tried to find cemetery records at Killiher with no luck, also tried the Cabri Herald for an obit, with no luck. On Eileen's earlier suggestion, I tried to telephone a Phillips family member living near Swift Current. This lady had no info, but put me in touch with a cousin of hers who indeed knew it all, had dug the hole at Cabri for the cremation urn, and obtained an obit on Matilda from his mother. So all ended well, resulting in a very satisfied customer.

QUERY: Mary Edwards of Minnesota inquired about her husband's uncle, **Chester H. Edwards**, (1890-1930). He had supposedly been a train robber - at least that's what he had told her husband about 75 years ago. He was also supposedly shot by a sheriff - not for robbing trains, but instead, for singing church songs in a saloon on Sunday. They had been trying to verify or falsify any part of this story, and so far had not had success - which may mean he was a successful train robber, or totally clean. However, he also claimed to have been married. There was a document which had the name of his wife, named Colette or Edith, who was supposed to be living in **Medicine Hat** about 1918 or so. The rest of Chester's family lived in **Kincorth, SK**, so Chester's wife would probably be one of the few Edwards in Medicine Hat. **RESPONSE:** Kincorth is just west of the road to Maple Creek, SK - there is a small sign to the road leading to the (no longer) town of Kincorth nailed to a telephone pole. As it happens, Chester is buried in the small cemetery at Kincorth, SK. Eileen did find an entry in 1917 in the Medicine Hat News BMD Book for the marriage of Chester Edwards to **Edith Bowman**. In the 1923 Hendersons Directory, Edith Bowman was shown to be back living with her family on Allowance Ave. Mary was interested in us searching further into Chester's alleged escapades, however Eileen and I decided between us that we should not get involved in what could be criminal investigations. We informed Mary of that decision, and she accepted it.

Websites of Interest

To read the last **16 years of "Ancestry Magazine" issues for FREE** (Ancestry Magazine was arguably one of the best genealogy magazines produced, but is no longer in print.) <http://books.google.com/books/serial/FTgEAAAAMBAJ?view=1&lr=&sa=N&start=0>

Or, if you are satisfied with just one issue at a time, go to Google Books and search "Ancestry Magazine", and the search results will be a list of single issues offering full view. (Suggested by Leanne Balfour)

Germans From Russia records:

- Images for St. Petersburg Consistory records can be accessed at: <http://bit.ly/igCKUH>
- Help page to decipher St. Petersburg Consistory records: Link can be found at <http://bit.ly/erMRjL>.
- This site provides resources for deciphering German handwriting: <http://bit.ly/f4SKtO>
- A topic page for Germans from Russia research: <http://bit.ly/i0vsHg> (Suggested by Melvin Bender)

Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness: <http://www.raogk.org> You need to click on the "Guidelines for Making a Request" link, and then on that page click on the "Let's go find a volunteer" link. It will bring you to the page where you can find volunteers who may be able to help you in specific geographical areas you are researching. (Suggested by Shannon Cairns)

'What's New In The Library'

Submitted by Faye Knoblick

Information taken from newsletters that are received in the library:

'The Power of the Blog' – check out the following websites:

British GENES (genealogy news and events for all of Britain)

www.britishgenes.blogspot.com

Scottish Emigration Blog (notes on a wandering people and their homeland)

www.scottishemigration.blogspot.com

('Toronto Tree', OGS Toronto Branch, Sept/Oct 2011 issue)

'Old Sandy Hill Cemeteries' in Ottawa, now known as MacDonald Park – these cemeteries were opened about 1845 and closed to burials Dec. 31, 1872. There are eight pages of surnames, given names and additional information.

('The Ottawa Genealogist', OGS Ottawa Branch, July/Sept 2011 issue)

'Town of Woodstock Directory 1852' – three pages of names and their occupations.

('The Tracer', OGS Oxford County Branch, May 2011 issue)

New books that have been added to the library shelves:

- **'Yesterday – A Pictorial History of Agriculture in Alberta'** by Alberta Women's Institutes
- **'Back Roads of Southern Alberta'** by Joan Donaldson-Yarmey
- **'Gone Without A Trace – German Russian Women in Exile'** by Nelly Das
- **'Final Appeal – Anatomy of A Frame'** by Colin Thatcher
- **'Amish Life'** by John A. Hostetler
- **'The Forgotten People'** by Michael Holzach
- **'Bessarabia – German Colonists on the Black Sea'** by Ute Schmidt
- **'I Am Hutterite'** by Mary-Ann Kirkby
- **'Hutterite Life'** by John A. Hostetler
- **'Beyond Our Prairie Trails'** (Vol. 1 & 2) by Carstairs AB History Book Committee
- **'Ghost Towns and Drowned Towns of West Kootenay'** by Elsie G. Turnbull



The War Graves Photographic Project

Have you checked The War Graves Photographic Project www.twgpp.org for photos of your military ancestor's grave markers? TWGPP now covers all nationalities and military conflicts, and enables people from all over the world to obtain a photo of war grave markers when it is impossible for them to visit a distant location. If you find your ancestor's name in the database, you can order a photograph in exchange for a nominal donation to the project.

POW's Scrapbook Salvaged from Red Deer Dump

By Leanne Balfour

A WWII scrapbook caused a big stir in the media recently. This scrapbook, belonging to Robert Henry Hill, was discovered in the Red Deer dump in March of this year. Cade Graville, of Sylvan Lake, Alberta, found the scrapbook - along with Hill's paybook and a row of medals - and turned the treasures over to The Military Museums in Calgary.

Within this scrapbook, Robert Henry Hill, about 28 at the time, had chronicled his involvement in The Battle of Dieppe and his 33 months spent as a prisoner of war. His documentation included journal entries, poetry, photos, drawings, dog tags, prison money, and other items.

Most of these scrapbooks were lost or destroyed at the end of the war when the prisoners were released, but Hill's scrapbook made the journey back home. Hill's scrapbook was one that was originally sent over by the War Prisons Aid of the YMCA.

The Military Museums hopes to make contact with Hill's family, in case the scrapbook was thrown out accidentally. Ideally, they are hoping to arrange to keep it on display, and have thus far transcribed the scrapbook's entries.

(For more information, check the online articles from The Calgary Sun, June 3, 2011 edition, and The Calgary Herald, June 4, 2011 edition.)

A WWI Postcard Delivered 94 Years Late?

By Leanne Balfour

A short time ago, there was an article printed in the Daily Mail (UK newspaper online) noting that a postcard written from the trenches in WWI had finally been delivered – 94 years after it was sent! A soldier named Alfred Arthur had penned a postcard in 1916 to his sister, Nell, writing: **'Dear Nell, Just a postcard to let you know I have not forgotten you. On the other side you will see our orders for next week. I will need your pity. Drop me a line, your brother Alfred.'** (The front of the card pictures a new recruit overwhelmed by the orders of the day.) Unfortunately, Alfred was mortally wounded in battle and died four days following in 1918. His sister Nell died in 1964, possibly having never seen this card.

The postcard is marked 1916 and again September 2010 when it was stamped 'repair duty'. It arrived at the home of Lauren Bleach and Jill Liversidge in Lakenham, Norwich in November 2010, with a note which apologized that it had been damaged and for the delay in delivering it. The original stamp and postmarks (from 1916 and 2010) have been confirmed as genuine. The Royal Mail denies that the postcard could have been in their possession for so many years, saying that they regularly clean out their sorting offices.

Recipients Lauren and Jill have since tracked down Arthur's great-nephew and great-niece, Brian Buxton and Angela Vinch of Norfolk, and have passed the card on to them. To see the postcard and read the full story on this reunion, go to www.dailymail.co.uk and search "the last post 94 years late".

(I think it is fair to say that regardless of how the postcard came to surface 94 years later, a piece of family history has finally made its way home. Wouldn't any genealogist be thrilled to be reunited with a piece of their ancestor's past? – lb)

In Memory of Our Uncle George Fontaine

By Alex & Florence Fontaine

George Fontaine was born September 4, 1918 at Dollard, Saskatchewan. His parents were Israel & Delia Fontaine from Claydon, Saskatchewan. His family consisted of five brothers and four sisters; he was seventh in the family.

George went to school at Dollard, Foothills, & Antelope Valley School District near Claydon, Saskatchewan, where his family farmed. He completed grade eight.

At an early age, he started working north of Claydon and various places in Alberta. His hobbies were training horses, playing most games, and reading fiction and adventure books.

George enlisted in the army on March 25, 1942. He was sent to Camrose, Alberta, for his basic training course. By the end of the year, he'd been attached to the Sherbrooke Fusiliers. He boarded the Queen Elizabeth on October 27, 1942 at Halifax, and arrived in Gourock, Scotland, on November 5, 1942. From here, he took advanced training in England for two years to be a tank driver/mechanic.



The plan of the Sherbrooke Fusiliers on D-Day was to land on the White Sector of Nan beach and go inland as far as the airfield at Carpiquet, about 10 km from the beach. Early afternoon of the next day they had taken Buron and Authie, but the unexpected counter attacks of the Twelfth SS Panzer Division drove them back from Buron and Authie. The Sherbrooke Fusiliers suffered twenty-six casualties and lost 25 to 30 tanks on the 7th of June, 1944. One of those men, a tank driver/mechanic, was Trooper George Fontaine.

George Fontaine was taken prisoner near Authie on June 7, 1944. The exact circumstances of his murder are not known. The murder took place during one of two incidents. During one incident, six prisoners were taken into the kitchen of Mme. Godet and shot execution-style in the back of the head. In the other, the officer of the SS detachment opened fire on a column of prisoners encountered between Authie and Cussy, killing nine prisoners.

Trooper George Fontaine was first buried in a mass grave at Authie. He now lies buried at Beny-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery northwest of Caen, France.

The Fontaine family knew that George was killed in action the day after D-Day. This was all they knew about George's death. We searched for Uncle George's army records, and found his enlistment forms. Through our searches, we came across Doug Chisholm. This is where we found out that Uncle George was killed as a prisoner of war.



(Photo taken By Doug Chisholm)



The Saskatchewan Geo-Memorial Project has 3700 geographic features named in honour of the men and women from Saskatchewan who died in World War II. Doug Chisholm took photos of each geographic site, to commemorating these service men & women. Fontaine Island is located on the northwest shore of Reindeer Lake, Saskatchewan, 220 air miles northeast of La Ronge, Saskatchewan. Fontaine Island is four miles long.

For more information, contact Doug Chisholm at woodland.photos@sasktel.net

Books by Doug Chisholm:
Their Names Live On
Age Shall Not Weary Them

The Society for German Genealogy in Eastern Europe

SGGEE 2011 Convention - August 12 - 14, 2011 - Winnipeg, MB

By Marlene Smith

SGGEE is a society for people of German origin interested in the genealogy, culture and history of their ancestors who migrated through Poland, The Austro-Hungarian Empire, Volhynia and surrounding area.

This past August I had the opportunity to once again attend the annual SGGEE conference in Winnipeg held at the Victoria Inn. An extensive library and research area was provided for the members including wireless internet and access to thousands of names extracted from records with photocopies of same, along with gazetteers and maps to locate the village of an ancestor.

The topics and speakers included:

- **Genealogy 101** by Thelma Findlay.
- **Conducting Family Interviews** by Kathleen Kufeidt.
- **Ancestors in Volhynia and Poland from 1700 to 1900: How They Got There and How They Lived** by Bill Remus.
- **Translating 19th Century Polish Parish Records** by Jerry Frank.
- **Introduction to the Use of EWZ Records** by Edie Adam.
- **Translating 19th Century Russian Cyrillic Records** by Sigrid Pohl Perry.
- **Letters in the Attic: Voices From War Torn Europe** by Ron Neuman.
- **Tsar Nicholas and Six Degrees of Separation** by Felix Kuehn.
- **How to Use DNA in Your Genealogical Research** by Bill Remus.
- **The Cloth Making Industry in Lodz, Poland and Region: Its Impact on the Germans and How They Contribute** by Jerry Frank.
- **A Child's View of Collectivization from the book The Kulak's Daughter** by Gabriele Gladstone.

Each one of the speakers was well informed, knowledgeable about their particular topic, often humorous, and gave very interesting presentations. I attended all the sessions, and one provided an unexpected answer to the research I am presently working on. Through the SGGEE members only family tree database, I found a connection to my mother's family in Manitoba which we knew very little about. On my arrival in Winnipeg I contacted a first cousin of my mother and found that she had an old family Bible belonging to our Great Grandfather named Jakob Sido. In the Bible was a record stating that he married Margareta Schmidt in Lubline, Russland. I knew from the 1940 National Canada Registration that my Grandfather Philip Sido was born in Poland. So now how did this all fit together? In her session, Sigrid Pohl Perry spoke about translating 19th Century Russian Cyrillic records, the current project of the SGGEE to index the birth, death, and marriage records for Trinity Lutheran Church in Lublin, Poland. In her talk, she mentioned that this area in southeast Poland was under Russian control in the late 19th Century. Hence the reason for the records being in Russian Cyrillic not Polish script. I had the opportunity to speak with Sigrid and asked if by chance the place I was looking for could actually be Lublin, Poland. We checked the index for the church record on the SGGEE site and there was the marriage record for Jakob and Margaret Sido along with the birth record for their son Philip, my grandfather. Through the SGGEE site, I will now order a copy of the actual records simply by making a donation to the church in Poland, and they in turn will email the record to me. Suggested donations are 10€ for each record requested via Visa, PayPal or bank draft. The information for this indexing project is available to anyone on the SGGEE website search page. The indexing project for Trinity Lutheran Church in Lublin is by no means complete, as there are thousands of records in this collection, making it an ongoing project by the SGGEE.

As a new member of the SGGEE, I attended the 2008 conference in Kelowna, BC. Here I was introduced to the Galician Village books where I found my paternal ancestors back to the 1700's. If you are researching in the areas covered by the SGGEE, I would encourage membership in this Society. Certainly in my research it has provided me with information that is not available on any of the common genealogy websites.

I have donated the SGGEE quarterly Journal to our Library along with the Galizien German Descendants publications for perusal by the general members and visitors.

1852 'New Years' Resolutions That Solve Genealogical Mysteries

(Submitted by Faye Knoblick, taken from the 'News & Views' newsletter, Leeds & Grenville Branch, OGS, Jan/Feb 2011 issue).

It is New Year's Eve 1852 and Henry Hydenwell sits at his desk by candlelight. He dips his quill pen in ink and begins to write his New Year's resolutions.

1. No man is truly well-educated unless he learns to spell his name at least three different ways within the same document. I resolve to give the appearance of being extremely well educated in the coming year.
2. I resolve to see to it that all my children will have the same names that my ancestors have used for six generations in a row.
3. My age is no one's business but my own. I hereby resolve to never list the same age or birth year twice on any document.
4. I resolve to have each of my children baptized in a different church – either in different faiths or in a different parish. Every third child will not be baptized at all or will be baptized by an itinerant minister who keeps no records.
5. I resolve to move to a new town, new county or new state at least once every ten years – just before those pesky enumerators come around asking silly questions.
6. I will make every attempt to reside in counties and towns where no vital records are maintained or where the courthouse burns down every few years.
7. I resolve to join an obscure religious cult that does not believe in record keeping or in participating in military service.
8. When the tax collector comes to my door, I'll loan him my pen, which has been dipped in rapidly fading blue ink.
9. I resolve that if my beloved wife Mary should die, I will marry another Mary.
10. I resolve not to make a will. Who needs to spend money on a lawyer?

The British Library and Google to Make 250,000 Books Available to All

[Snippets from a British Library press release dated 20/06/2011 –

<http://pressandpolicy.bl.uk>]

(Submitted by Leanne Balfour)

“The British Library and Google today announced a partnership to digitize 250,000 out-of-copyright books from the Library’s collections. Opening up access to one of the greatest collections of books in the world, this demonstrates the Library’s commitment, as stated in its 2020 Vision, to increase access to anyone who wants to do research.

”Selected by the British Library and digitized by Google, both organizations will work in partnership over the coming years to deliver this content free through Google Books (<http://books.google.co.uk>) and the British Library’s website (www.bl.uk). Google will cover all digitization costs.

“This project will digitize a huge range of printed books, pamphlets and periodicals dated 1700 to 1870, the period that saw the French and Industrial Revolutions, The Battle of Trafalgar and the Crimean War, the invention of rail travel and of the telegraph, the beginning of UK income tax, and the end of slavery. It will include material in a variety of major European languages, and will focus on books that are not yet freely available in digital form online.

“Once digitized, these unique items will be available for full text search, download and reading through Google Books, as well as being searchable through the Library’s website and stored in perpetuity within the Library’s digital archive.

“Researchers, students and other users of the Library will be able to view historical items from anywhere in the world as well as copy, share and manipulate text for non-commercial purposes.

“This partnership demonstrates the Library’s further commitment to working with the private sector to digitize parts of its collections. Recently, the Library announced a partnership with Brightsolid to digitize up to 40 million pages of its newspaper collections and previously the Library partnered with Microsoft to digitize 65,000 19th century books, some of which are now available as an App on Apple’s iPad.”

Border Crossing Records – Report of Rejections?

By Leanne Balfour

In searching for a James Murphy border crossing record on the Ancestry website, an entry for a J. Murphy came up. Upon viewing the images, it was revealed that it was actually a “Report of Rejections” for the month of September, 1909. Apparently, there were 62 people rejected at the port of Sault Ste. Marie during that particular month. Most rejections on this report were due to “insufficient cash”, but upon scanning down to J. Murphy (albeit not the James Murphy we were looking for), his occupation reads “drunk” and under country of birth, citizenship, etc., it reads “incapable of giving further particulars - from USA”. So it seems, in certain instances, it was not necessarily a “come one, come all” sort of attitude in regards to admissions to Canada...

Inexpensive, Yet Priceless

By Leanne Balfour

Back in April of 2011 when I attended the AGS conference in Edmonton, one of the speakers told of the wonderful family treasures that may be found on internet auction sites. She mentioned that everyone should search these sites for your surnames of interest, or even set up alerts so the website will contact you if an item attached to your surnames comes up for auction. She went on to mention a couple such examples that had surfaced in her own searches. This has proven to be most valuable in my own searches.

So in the couple weeks following the conference, I decided to try this for myself. Initially, my surname searches were coming up with no results... until I tried "Troastle". Then all of a sudden, I had a hit. A batch of thirteen letters (all but one written in the 1880's) was up for auction, all written to a Cevilla C. Troastle. A couple buyers were already in a bidding war with each other. By looking at their past purchases, I was able to tell that they would likely be interested in only the stamps on the envelopes, or any mention of the Civil War. Right at the end of the auction, I placed one last bid and ended up winning. A bit of anxiety ensued. In my mind, I thought that spending \$39 on thirteen old letters was surely a waste of money.

A couple weeks passed, and my letters arrived in the mail. They tell of the trials of life during the 1880's, and more specifically, really let me see the personalities of some of the family members in that era. Here in front of me was all this information that the census, and other documentation that genealogists depend on, would never be able to reveal. Aside from numerous detailed accounts of deaths & illnesses in the family and community, there are things mentioned such as:

- From Cevilla's brother William Troastle – 29 June 1883: *"...you folks must have no chairs that your strangers sit on the floor when they come to see you. If that is the way, we will not come to see you...Pennsylvanians is higher toned then all that, than to set on the floor. When we go away we look for to get cushened chairs and rockers under yet at that..."* and *"I had been working...in the hay field and I felt so sick that I had to quit...Father went for the doctor – he came and said it was the dysentery..."*
- Again, from brother William Troastle – 27 Nov 1883: *"Will Munturf...on Saturday was a going to go hunting, went to the house for the gun...as he was taking it down it caught a clothe line and went off in his knee and he suffers a great deal..."*
- From Aseneth D. Fink – 11 Mar 1884: *"Huldah my sister received a letter from you last week stating that you were getting two dollars a week in Illinois..."*
- From Cevilla's father, Isaac B. Troastle, in describing his trip out to Kansas – 14 June 1876: *"...such wheat fields I never seen...there are no fences around them, there are hedges...I seen one range of wheat about 4 miles long..."* and *"Oh you dear children strive to live such shining lights...thereby glory for your Heavenly Father so that you can meet your sisters that have gone before you."*
- From Cousin Jennie Trostel - 28 Feb 1881: *"...he told me that Aunt Betsey is dead. I did not ask him when she died. Her sufferings are now over and she has gone where she long wished to be."*
- From Jennie E. Eby - 22 Mar 1882: *"You say you are nothing but a plain girl at least in dress. And are not smart enough for RC - well what more am I than you – I dress plain also. And am only a very ordinary girl when you make the best of me so you are equally as good as I..."*
- From Mary C.D. - 01 July 1884 (about the location of the Battle of Gettysburg): *"...did not get to see the battle of Gettysburg as father didn't much approve of it. Josh Wingert & wife was to see it and she got stiff & turned black. Mattie Gitt said she very nearly fainted the air is so oppressive up there they say...it was so hot Sunday and yesterday the mercury stood 110..."*

Every single letter had at least a few bits to glean, and most were absolutely packed with references to relationships, and family situations. The letters were not worth much money, but are worth a great deal in getting a feel for people in my family tree... a very worthwhile purchase, after all...

Out and About

Salt Lake City Family History Library – September 18 – 23, 2011

By Leanne Balfour

This year, three Medicine Hat branch members (Faye Knoblick, Kathy Gleisner, and Leanne Balfour) spent a wonderful week in September in Salt Lake City with members from AGS Edmonton. Twenty-eight of us in total made the journey down – some had gone several times before, but this was our first visit. The Library is something that cannot be adequately explained – you truly have to experience it for yourself. The library is a five story building with separate floors for British Isles research, a floor of family history books, a floor of US/Canadian books, a story for US/Canadian microfilm, and a story for International research. About 2.4 million rolls of microfilm, over 400,000 books, and close to 500 computers are at the patrons' disposal, free of charge. The Family History Library workers were very helpful, and I think we all tapped into people who could translate documents in other languages. We came away with fantastic research and got to know the Edmonton branch members a bit better (plus we met other people from all walks of life, from all over the world, and yet we were all there for the same purpose. It was very common for other people at the research tables or in the elevators to discuss any luck, or lack of luck...) Each evening, most of us attended a "Brag & Moan" session where we were able to share our great finds, or receive suggestions to help knock down our brick walls. Some of us did a bit of sightseeing, but most of our time was spent many in the library with our nose in a book, photocopying, or cranking reels on the microfilm machines. (The Library was open from 8am-5pm on Monday, 8am-9pm Tuesday to Saturday, and closed Sunday.) Our accommodations were excellent, the food was delicious and affordable, the weather was perfect, and the grounds were unbelievably beautiful. We all suggest making the journey – you will not be disappointed...

(Ellie Clyne was a member of MHGS who, before her passing, gifted our branch with numerous genealogical resources & research materials. Her obituary follows, as published in The Chronicle Journal newspaper on Tuesday, May 17, 2011.)



Eleanor Clyne - Eleanor Reta (Miller) Clyne passed away at the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital on Monday, May 9, 2011, at the age of 73 years, beloved wife of the late Donald J. Clyne. She leaves to cherish her memory her sisters, Eileen (Jim) Prettie of Medicine Hat and Audrey Lake of Toronto, Ontario; two brothers-in-law, Ken Clyne of Nipigon, Ontario and Harold Clyne of Harriston, Ontario as well as several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents Ruby and Wesley Miller; her husband Donald John Clyne; one brother, Carson Miller; two brothers-in-law, Gordon Lake, Kenneth Clyne and Harold Clyne; her sister-in-law, Lois Clyne, her nephew, David Clyne and her precious little Shitzu, "Sugar". Eleanor was born at Mount Forest, Ontario on December 21, 1937, the daughter of Ruby and Wesley Miller. She started her career with Bell Canada in Toronto; later transferring to a Thunder Bay division. In 1993, she retired from Ontario Hydro after 35 years of service working at Cameron Falls and Thunder Bay, Ontario. Following her retirement, she moved to Medicine Hat where she resided until her passing. Her main interests were genealogy and watching curling. As per Eleanor's request, cremation has taken place and no service will be held. If friends so desire, donations may be made to the Hospice Palliative Care Society, #640 Professional Building, 640 3rd Street SE, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 0H5 or to the charity of one's choice. To e-mail an expression of sympathy, please direct it to: pattfh@telusplanet.net subject heading: Eleanor Clyne, or you may visit: www.gonebutnotforgotten.ca and leave a message of condolence. Arrangements are by the PATTISON FUNERAL HOME AND CREMATORIUM 540 South Railway St. SE, Medicine Hat T1A 2V6.

British Home Children

Submitted by Faye Knoblick

**Is there anyone in our group researching their ancestor from
Dr. Barnardo's Homes?**

**If so, please contact me, as I know a lady in Medicine Hat
whose father was a BHC, and she is most anxious to meet others
with the same circumstances for some discussion.**

**She has obtained information about her father
from the Barnardo Family Group and is willing to share information.**

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