**A Redneck Love Poem**

*(Author Unknown)*  
*(Submitted by Eleanor Kreiser)*

Susie Lee done fell in love,  
She planned to marry Joe.  
She was so happy 'bout it all,  
She told Pappy so.

Pappy told her, “Susie gal,  
You’ll have to find another.  
I’d just as soon yo’ Ma don’t know,  
But Joe is yo’ half brother.”

So Susie put aside her Joe,  
And planned to marry Will.  
But after telling Pappy this,  
He said, “There’s trouble still.

You can’t marry Will, my Gal,  
And please don’t tell yo’ Mother,  
But Will and Joe, and several mo’,  
I know is yo’ half brother.”

But Mama knew and said, “My child,  
Just do what makes you happy.  
Marry Will or marry Joe,  
You ain’t no kin to Pappy.”
A Word from Our President - January 2012
By Clark Lang

Medicine Hat Genealogy Society 2011 has enjoyed a good year. Our memberships increased by 2 to 52 (with 61 actual members overall) and we have new members signing up as this report is being written. Many of these members have volunteered a total of 2187 hours of their time to build and maintain our Society. We get 20 to 30 members per meeting and enjoy good discussions. We gave out service awards from 10 years to 25 years for 2010.

We have had many queries of information from USA, Canada, England, Norway and New Zealand. Most queries were successful in gaining information for the ones inquiring. We are happy to announce our finances are not in the deficit. We raise funds from casinos, 50-50 draws, queries, Medicine Hat Co-op and donations. Our Special Interest Groups of Computer training and Germans from Russia are assisting many of our members. Our Library/meeting room was moved to a new room in the same building and it gives our librarians a chance to reorganize our collection of books and other publications. The library collection is increasing because of books being purchased and from members and other interested parties. A new overhead projector and a used microfilm/fiche reader were added to our inventory. Medicine Hat Library purchased a new microfilm/fiche reader and our members donated $500.00 to it and our Society matched the donation. We thank all those who donated.

The casino in January was on a very wintry day but we were able to fulfill our commitment. This is our principal fundraiser and will continue every two years.

Our Saamis Seeker has been a great success due to the new committee. We are always in need of new stories and family histories. The Saamis Seeker is shared with many other Genealogy Societies across Canada.

We have two groups recording old and new obituaries. One person is recording all of the obituaries from Medicine Hat News and other volunteers are recording names and dates from Medicine Hat News archives at the Medicine Hat library. These collections are a slow process. We have a committee recording cemetery information including pictures from all of the counties surrounding us. This too will take some time before publication.

Four members attended the annual AGS conference in Edmonton and thoroughly enjoyed it. Three of our members went to Salt Lake City to do research and were amazed at the volumes of books and digital resources available to them. They gave our membership an enthusiastic review of their trip. One of our meetings was held at the LDS Church in Medicine Hat and we were given a tour and explanation of their genealogy library.

We had information booths at Canada Day July 1 and Heritage Day Aug 6 and thanks to our volunteers we gained a new member. There have been videoconference seminars at Medicine Hat Library, which we organize. This coming year will see a seminar on “How to repair your Books”.

Our programs after the meetings have consisted of a visit from Liam Hobbs of AGS, DVD’s on the lumber industry in Fossmill Ontario, a presentation of the life and times of a family living in a railway car (converted to a house) in Medicine Hat, genealogy program displays and explanations and information sharing evenings.

Overall, I am pleased to be a member of the Medicine Hat Genealogy Society and look forward to another good and fruitful year.

SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 13-14, 2012
“Find YOUR Tree in the Forest”
AGS/AFHS JOINT CONFERENCE – Hosts: Red Deer Branch of AGS
To Be Held at Holiday Inn – 67th Street Red Deer
For information, go to http://rdgensoc.ab.ca/conference.html
** Register prior to March 15th at a reduced rate. **
From the Editor’s Desk... It has, once again, been enjoyable to see the variety of submissions come in from our membership, and I think we have produced another informative and interesting issue. I believe that no less than 13 MHGS members wrote and sent in material for this issue! A BIG thank you to all who have heard my call and contributed.

Please note the new column “MHGS Member Spotlight”. In this issue, Joe Heaton and Brian Konrad have graciously written about their lives and genealogy interests. We are so pleased to get to know both of you better!

Also in this issue are several articles on assorted topics: we have a Cairns brothers military story, multiple website listings and descriptions, an in-depth investigation of the Black Death, a couple locally relevant submissions, and a plea in poem form about writing down what you know.

Our “Queries Korner” column is absent this issue, as there was nothing to report. However, it has come to our attention that one of the entries in our last issue’s query report offended members of our sister branch in Lethbridge. Their current queries researchers apparently never worked with the client in question. Furthermore, any query assistance we have received from Lethbridge has always been completed in an extremely thorough and prompt manner.

***I would like to remind our membership that The Saamis Seeker will be happy to receive articles of interest and stories from ALL of our members, whether local or not, and whether they can attend all meetings or not. Variety is what will keep this newsletter interesting.***

"To the living we owe respect, but to the dead we owe only the truth." — Voltaire

(Submitted by Eileen Stahl)

“What’s New In The Library’

By Faye Knoblick

Several donated books have found their way onto our library shelves:

**Between the Red And the Rockies** by Grant MacEwan

*Beyond Our Prairie Trails, Vol 1 & 2, Carstairs, AB* (area history book)

*Lanark Legacy, 19th Century Glimpses of An Ontario County* by Howard M. Brown

*Men In Scarlet* by the Historical Society of Alberta

*The Relentless Wind, The Way It Happened* by Ewald Radke

*Tales From the Queen Charlotte Islands, Bk 2* by Senior Citizens of the Queen Charlotte Islands

Articles of interest to peruse from the many journals/newsletters that are received:

**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

*Quesnel ‘Cariboo Notes’* V28 #3 - Top 10 Most Popular Online Genealogy Magazines

How To Contact Us – two pages of surnames are listed plus contact info

**ALBERTA**

*AFHS Calgary ‘Chinook’* V32 #2 - Patterns of Immigration & Ethnic Settlement in Canada (re: The Dutch, Polish, Scandinavians & Italians)

*Lethbridge ‘Yesterday’s Footprints’* V28 #3 - Patronymic Paranoia (how the old Welsh system of family names developed)

Military Websites – info re: 15 available websites to search
REGINA ‘Now & Then’ V29 #3 - Teacher Ancestors in Saskatchewan Cemeteries Recorded by Regina Branch

MANITOBA

Winnipeg ‘Generations’ V36 #3 - In Search of John W. Ross 1885-1920 (from Scotland to Canada)
‘Generations’ V36 #4 - Discovering Voters’ Lists – the Municipality of Lorne 1962

ONTARIO

Brant ‘BRANTches’ V31 #3 - Niagara District Map of Upper Canada
‘BRANTches’ V31 #4 - The War of 1812-1814: The Nelles Family
Durham ‘Kindred Spirits’ VXXX #3 - A Splinter of Wood: Story of Charlotte Watson (1835) & Robert Carter (1827)
Kent ‘Roots, Branches & Twigs’ V34 #3 - Surname Index of Merlin Cemetery
Lambton ‘Lambton Lifeline’ V28 #3 - SFOHG: French Societe of Ontario
London/Middlesex ‘London Leaf’ V38 #4 - War of 1812 Losses Claims in the London District 1866 Militia Roll for Westminster Township
Ottawa ‘The Ottawa Genealogist’ V44 #4 - Launch of ‘Census of Canada 1871’
John Simpson Edwards 1805-1868 (from Scotland to Ontario)
Perth ‘Perth County Profiles’ V29 #4 - Finding and Using Wills
Toronto ‘Families’ V50 #4 - The War of 1812: Were My Ancestors Involved?
Finding Family in the Upper Canada Militia, Documents From the War of 1812
Waterloo ‘Our Waterloo Kin’ V11 #4 - 100 Years of Progress in Waterloo County re Surnames: Abra/Berg/Cassel/Dammeier/Gibbons/Heipel/Holwell/Huehn/Hurst/Koch/
Mattusch/Otto/Reist/Robertson/Schummer/Shantz
Reading the Documents: Ins and Outs of Paleography
York ‘York Region Ancestors’ V17 #4 - The Udell Family of Markham, Pickering & Uxbridge

NORTH DAKOTA, USA

Bismarck-Mandan ‘The Dakota Homestead’ V40 #2 - Pioneer Histories Re:
Draper/Kidd/Miller/Travesty/Wade
Morton County Naturalization Records Index (see also V40 #4 for more records)

EUROPE

Baltic Duchy of Pomerania ‘The Pomeranian People’ V34 #4 - Naturalization Records
Family Surnames – eight pages of names are listed

In Memoriam – Ronald “Ron” Becker (1919 – 2012)
By Melvin Bender

Ron, a Branch member from 1996-2008, was still doing family research prior to his passing and had traced his roots back to the 1700s. At the meetings he attended, he often talked about his family history and an anticipated book, which was completed. According to his Branch profile, he was born in a district called Beresina at McNutt, Saskatchewan, the oldest in a family of ten. In 1945, he married Freda Westman of Icelandic descent. His grandparents, Franz Becker and Susanna Schmidt, immigrated to Canada in 1892 from Koenigsau, Galicia. Through the years, Ron lived and held various jobs in Yorkton, Swift Current, Maple Creek, Leader, and Medicine Hat. He travelled extensively and spent winters in Arizona. Heartfelt sympathy to his family.
This issue, we are pleased to get to know a couple of our members a little bit better – Thank you to Joe Heaton and Brian Conrad for writing about their lives and sharing their genealogical interests.

Brian Konrad

Since my earliest memories, family history has been an important part of my life. Perhaps that’s because it was something my mother was always talking about, and something her father had started to record. I still have his notes as he tried to set down the people who came before him. Trouble is, much of it was written after he had a stroke and had to learn how to write with his left hand. Handwritten notes from my mother also conflict with her father’s notes and dates, and it’s always been my goal to get it right.

Suddenly, I’m 56 and all that time I thought I had has whittled away. So here I am, joining the Genealogical Society.

I’m fortunate in one way. I had a great aunt who sat down in 1950 and typed out several pages of the things she remembered about her early days, and things she remembered about her family. I know a little bit about the courtship of great-great grandparents on a ship from Scotland in 1821; I know that when this party of settlers reached Ottawa in September of that year they had to follow blaze marks on trees to find their property in the bush. They also had to make sure they had a home built and land cleared in order to keep the land. Reading about their hardships makes our life today seem rather trivial.

I am also fortunate in that my father’s cousin started to record the Konrad family history back in 1972. Like me, he recalled hearing stories from elderly relatives, but he did something about it. He started writing things down and in 1978 he produced a family history filled with several hundred loose leaf pages that filled a large binder. He kept it up – even travelling to Bessarabia and Germany to get information. He continues to do work for Germans from Russia in the US, making several trips to Bismarck, North Dakota each year. He lives in Iowa. So perhaps I caught the family history gene from him too.

In the little bit of work I have managed to start, it was my goal to find the maiden name of my maternal great grandmother. I spent quite a bit of time looking on the internet – and finally found the answer. It felt great! Then I happened to look at a baby book my mother had started and noticed for the first time a name in brackets behind her grandmother’s name. It was Hazel. The answer had been there all along, just didn’t know where to look! Even more maddening – my mother’s middle name was..... Hazel. Duh! Never made the connection.

I recently learned that I’m to be a grandfather for the first time, as my oldest daughter and her husband are expecting a child in August. I hope to be able to tell my grandchildren who came before them; how they lived, their struggles and successes, and hope that will help to preserve their memories for future generations.

The names I will be starting to research are FREDERICK AND AMELIA DAVEY. They were my mother’s maternal grandparents. I know they were born in the mid 1850’s near BRISTOL, ENGLAND.
I have found the records of their immigration into Canada and know they had lived in PARIS, ONTARIO. But there are loose ends. I don`t know why they decided to move to FLEMING, SASKATCHEWAN sometime before 1890, I don`t know why my great grandfather died at such a young age within 10 years of moving out west. I want to know where their house was (I have lots of pictures of it – as recently as 1975). I also want to try to figure out why obituaries say they had only one daughter (my grandmother) and yet I have pictures of them with two daughters, and funeral cards indicating childhood death and burial in Paris.

It`s a mystery – and as a person who has spent his life as a journalist – it`s a mystery I intend to solve.

But then – that`s another story in the history of my family.

**Robert (Joe) Heaton**

Although Joe was born in Vancouver, he grew up in Calgary. Robert is his first name, but his mother always preferred his middle name, Joe. He started using Robert when introducing himself in “genealogical circles” to avoid confusion and also to honor his grandfather.

After 35 years as a paramedic providing care to and transportation of the sick and injured in and around Medicine Hat, he retired in 2010. He has been married to his best friend, Cheryl for over 38 years. He has two grown children that both live in Medicine Hat and they have given him five grandchildren. These are the “light of his life” and he loves spending time with them! In fact, they are a big genealogical motivation as he wishes to leave his work so that his grandchildren will know their roots. When not doing genealogy, he spends a lot of his time running and has completed several marathons. In 2010, Cheryl and Joe purchased a condo in Phoenix and spend quite a bit of time there in the winter.

His father had always told him stories of his grandfather (Joe’s Great Grandfather) who came from Bolton, Lancashire to Canada in 1900, and that he had many brothers and sisters, but none of them had married. He says that he always figured that his father was telling “tall tales” and it wasn’t true. In 2005, when he did a search on Ancestry.com, he found the family in the 1901 England census. Sure enough, with the exception of one sister who died as a toddler in a farming accident at age two, they were all there! Walter Heaton, who immigrated to Canada in 1900, had started a family, but all four of his brothers, Robert, Roland, James, Roger and his two sisters, Anne and Ada never married.

Joe has been a member of the Medicine Hat Genealogical Society since 2007 and these are the surnames he is researching:

**HEATON** – Bolton Lancashire > Winnipeg (1900-1901) > Vancouver (1904-1911)

**ADAMS** – Hertfordshire> Lethbridge, AB (1911-1915) > Vancouver (1915)

**SMITH** – Pigeon, Michigan > Delburne, AB (1905)

**BLAIR** – Kansas> Delburne, AB (1899)
The Cairns Brothers in WWI
By Shannon Cairns

A number of years ago I had the opportunity to travel with my husband to Ottawa while he attended a conference. As my dad was in the Royal Canadian Air Force when I was younger I was drawn to visiting the War Museum. While touring the Museum, I found a list of Victoria Cross recipients. You can imagine my surprise when one of those listed was Hugh Cairns, which just happened to be the name of my husband’s great-uncle.

Could this be our Hugh Cairns that is listed on the Medicine Hat cenotaph, and why did the family not know he was a Victoria Cross recipient? Well, to make a long story short the Hugh Cairns that received the Victoria Cross was not a relative but another brave soul from Saskatoon who valiantly fought and died in the latter days of the First World War defending his comrades. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Cairns_(VC))

In the First World War, just shy of 620,000 people enlisted with the Canadian Expeditionary Forces (CEF), and close to ten percent of those paid the ultimate sacrifice. Very few families were untouched and our Cairns family was no exception. My husband’s grandfather and three of his brothers enlisted in the CEF. Two of the brothers, William Hilton and Hugh Wilson, were posted to France during the Battle of the Somme.

The Battle of the Somme, fought in the summer and fall of 1916, was an offensive by the British and French troops against the Germans who were occupying large parts of France at the time. The Canadian Expeditionary Forces were under the command of the British, and therefore took part in this battle.

(rt: Hugh Wilson Cairns and William Hilton Cairns)

Much has been written regarding what life was like for the forces during the war, with trench warfare being the predominant form of fighting. The Battle of the Somme was fought using trench warfare. This battle was one of the bloodiest military operations ever, with close to one million casualties. As a result of four and a half months of fighting and an enormous loss of life, the British and French were only able to penetrate about six miles into the Germans occupied land. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Somme)

William Hilton Cairns was 29 years of age when he enlisted in Winnipeg in March 1915. He had tried his hand at homesteading near Hilda, Alberta prior to this, but ended up abandoning his homestead when he was unable to satisfy the residency requirement for living on his property. He arrived in France on March 9th 1916, and was killed in action on September 28th 1916. He was buried in the Adanac Military Cemetery along with 511 other Canadians and 3185 total Commonwealth casualties.

William’s younger brother, Hugh Wilson, also enlisted in Winnipeg in February 1916. He arrived in France on August 27th and was wounded on October 12th just two weeks after the death of his brother. He was taken to the Etaples Military Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries two days later. He is buried in the Etaples Cemetery alongside 10,770 other Commonwealth casualties.
When there were casualties, the families were often first told by a friend or an officer serving with them, who wrote a personal letter advising them of their family member's death. We can only imagine the anguish that they must have felt to receive such a letter informing them that William had been killed in action. Their hearts must have sunk further when they received another letter less than three weeks later informing them that Hugh, too, had died defending life and liberty.

Although it was a small consolation for the family, the Government sent each family a note of gratitude from the King and a scroll commemorating his service to his country.

![Note of Gratitude](image1)

![Scroll of Pte. Hugh Wilson Cairns](image2)

With the principle of equality, all Commonwealth casualties were treated exactly the same. No soldiers were repatriated to their country of origin and the gravestones commemorate the fallen were uniform regardless of rank, social status, etc. The government did send back to the next of kin certain personal effects of the soldier. Amongst the effects our family received were a button from one of their jackets, as well as a hat badge. Also forwarded to the family were their medals and a memorial plaque.

![Button and Hat Badge](image3)

These mementoes have remained in the family since that sad time 95 years ago as a reminder of the sacrifice that these members of our family made to ensure that we would be able to live free. Every November 11th as a family we pause to remember our family members and all the others who served our country.
HISTORY WORTH TELLING

Written by Leanne Balfour

Your own Unique Family Tree
Includes so much we’d love to see!
Whether Average or Amazing Folk you find,
Don’t leave any of their stories behind!

Lots of kids in the family, or maybe a few…
Did they sail across the ocean blue?
Did they run a business? Did they own a farm?
Did they go to war to keep loved ones from harm?

Maybe they worked at the factory, the mill, or the mine –
Or as servants, or shopkeepers, putting in time.
Did some flee the homeland, others decided to stay,
And that separated the family to this present day?

Black sheep ancestors in our heritage past,
Swindlers and outlaws, long gone - but their stories outlast.
Did another child die, while his parents wept,
Despite the bedside vigil that they kept?

Did they forge across a brand-new land
To claim a place where their home would stand?
Did wagon trains and railways move them around,
Finally putting down roots in some far away town?

Hardships aplenty – famine, sickness, and drought,
Did they spend time in the poorhouse, and not make it out?
Were orphans and widows left to fend all alone,
Leaving groups of iron crosses and markers of stone?

Their settlements, once bustling, have faded and gone,
A thriving lifestyle - no more - but their memories live on.
Extraordinary lives, whether glamorous or not,
They went through many things which we wouldn’t want.

But know this: We WILL be a part of history, too.
To honor our ancestors, this is what we must do.
Now is the time… please put pencil to paper…
Your ancestors deserve to be remembered forever.
Ship Named After Hat Hero - First World War Vet Honored in Halifax
(Reprinted with permission of writer Amanda Stephenson of The Medicine Hat News)
(Photo courtesy of Fisheries and Oceans Canada)
(Submitted by Doreen Schank)

Fisheries and Oceans Minister Keith Ashfield (far left) and Minister of National Defence Peter MacKay, along with Lynn Tebay (left), Peggy Carlson (right), and Jim Irving (far right) examine the stern section of the CCGS Private Robertson V.C., first of the Canadian Coast Guard’s new ‘Hero’ class ships currently under construction at Irving Shipbuilding in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Mrs. Tebay and Mrs. Carlson are grandnieces of Private James Peter Robertson V.C. for whom the ship is named.

It was nearly a century ago that Pte. James “Pete” Robertson was killed in the bloody First World War battle of Passchendaele, but the Medicine Hat man’s legacy was alive and well Wednesday in Halifax, Nova Scotia. At a special ceremony held at the Halifax Shipyards, a brand-new Canadian Coast Guard ship named the CCGS Private Robertson V.C. was unveiled. The ship is the first of nine new Coast Guard vessels, each of which is named after a fallen Canadian hero. The ceremony was attended by Minister of National Defence Peter MacKay and Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Keith Ashfield. Also in attendance were Medicine Hat residents Lynne Tebay and her son Laurie Seitz, who are descended from Pte. Robertson. “It’s just phenomenal,” Seitz said in a telephone interview with the News from Halifax. “I’ve never been to Halifax - I don’t know anything about boats, being from Alberta. And yet, now, this boat — the first in a series — has been named after my great-uncle. We’re really proud, and I’m just so glad I could be here and see it all.” Seitz and his mother were at the ceremony because of a Medicine Hat News story that ran in October. The story stated that the Canadian Coast Guard wanted a family member of Pte. Robertson’s to be on hand at the event, but had so far been unable to track down any living relatives. Tebay saw the story, contacted the Coast Guard, and she and her son were offered a free flight to Halifax to take part in the event. Tebay’s grandmother was Pte. Robertson’s sister, Elizabeth, so Tebay naturally heard this story many times while growing up. During battle, Pte. Robertson stormed a German machine gun nest and then sacrificed his own life while trying to drag a comrade to safety. His bravery earned him the British Commonwealth’s highest military honour, the Victoria Cross. However, as familiar as the story may be, Tebay said it all truly hit home for her as she stood there at the Halifax Shipyards. “I don’t think I really realized the magnitude — not only of what Pete did, but also all these other service-people the ships have been named after,” Tebay said. “I think it’s given me a new appreciation of Remembrance Day.” Seitz agreed. “It was really nice to see all the interest in the history of my Great-Uncle Pete and carry on the tradition of Remembrance Day,” Seitz said. “I really hope it makes all Canadians think a little more of the true meaning of it. It’s not just another holiday; it’s not just a day off.” Pte. James “Pete” Robertson was 34 at the time of his death. He was one of nine Canadians who received the Victoria Cross because of their actions at Passchendaele, and is buried at Tyne Cot Cemetery in Belgium near the battle site. In Medicine Hat, a park, a street, and the local Legion branch (Robertson Memorial Branch No. 17) all carry his name.
de Woley, Woley, Wolley, Woolly or Woolley?
Submitted by Grace Roth

This was the evolution of the Woolley name. It is an English name that can be traced back to Rafe de Woley, whose son, William, is on record in 1309.

The year 2012 is the 200th Anniversary of the war of 1812 between the United States of America and Canada. The Woolley family were residents in Southern Ontario (Upper Canada) and were directly affected by the war.

Since this is a genealogical newsletter, I will take the liberty to follow the movement of the Woolleys from England to the United States and then to Canada.

“This is a family who lived through the turmoil of 15th century dynastic wars in England and became substantial gentry during the long reign of Elizabeth I of England. The Woolleys participated in the Protestant Reformation in England and had one son, a Rector of a local parish church by 1616. The family later adopted the radical Quaker beliefs.” The rector was the Rev. Edward Woolley who fathered five children. The mother of the children died in 1627, and the father died in 1629.

The fifth child, Emanuel, was born in 1625. It is thought that he was raised by friends of his parents, and subsequently emigrated to New England with them. Both the Woolleys and Emanuel's adoptive family were probably Quaker in England and were Quaker in New England. Emanuel Woolley and his wife Elizabeth had nine children. Their third son, John, was born in 1659 in New Jersey, and married Mary Potter about 1683. It was their descendants who moved to Canada. John's son, Benjamin, was born in 1692; his son, Daniel in 1717; and Joseph in 1759. Joseph's son, John T. Joseph, and his brother James emigrated to Upper Canada about 1795. Joseph Louis Woolley was born in 1816. Alexander Woolley was born in 1849 and moved with his family to the Northwest Territories (Medicine Hat, Alberta) in 1903.

“The reason for the emigration of Joseph and James is not known, but two reasons can be suggested. First, the family was still prominent in the Society of Friends, which largely remained neutral and pacifist during the Revolutionary War. Neutrality was not popular in American society during and after the Revolution, and the uncommitted were frequently abused by the committed on both sides. ...Secondly, it may simply have been the availability of very cheap land for settlement in Upper Canada which attracted the two families. New Jersey and the other eastern States had filled up rapidly, and western colonial expansion was still constrained, so that the supply of cheap land for settlement had almost dried up in the U.S. Both factors may have played a part in the desire to emigrate. We know that Joseph, his wife Catherine Vonk and their three sons moved to Canada from New Jersey with horses, cattle, chickens, and farm implements. The manner and route has not been confirmed, but it is likely that a long march with wagons and oxen to Niagara, then moving down Lake Erie by boat to Long Point on the northern shore.”

Joseph Woolley and his family settled first near Big Creek in Walsingham Township, in what is now Norfolk County, Ontario. The earliest documentary reference to the family is found in the record: Proceedings of the Court of Special Sessions in Charlottesville on 9 April 1800, which states: “The petition of Joseph Woolley of
Walsingham praying(sic) to have his statue labour on the highways lessened was read in court and his labour of the publick(sic) roads stated by the Court at two days for the ensuing year.” Joseph bought some land in the Charlotteville Township in 1804 but he sold the improved land in 1810, and bought cheaper land in Woodhouse Township.

**Talbot Settlement in Elgin County, Ontario**

When Joseph Woolley and his sons accepted the grants of land in Malahide Township they were joining the settlements of Colonel Thomas Talbot, and became participants in drama played out in the early settlement of Elgin County.

The first settlers were placed in 1809/10, so the Woolleys were very early Talbot settlers in Malahide Township. There was a great deal of movement through the Talbot settlement because of Talbot's autocratic manner and his demands on the settlers. The Woolleys were unusual in taking out patents on the land they had cleared. Talbot abused the Scottish and Irish settlers, and as a result, the two townships they were in were the most restive during the abortive Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837.

“The war of 1812 affected the family. Both Peter and Joseph Jnr. served in the Regiment of the Norfolk Militia, Peter as a Sergeant. Joseph Snr's property in Walsingham was sacked by American troops under General McArthur in 1814. The troops were seeking a grist mill to burn as they followed Big Creek up from Long Point. When they did not find the mill they wrecked the Woolley property, returned to Long Point, boarded their ships and left. It is thought they were seeking the Backus Mill, located on a smaller stream north of Port Rowan and the raid was probably retaliation for similar damage on the American side. The Woolley War Damage Claim was valued at 44 pounds sterling, a considerable amount at the time. Joseph was long dead (1830) when the family solicitor settled for 10 pounds, 16 shilling and eight pence in 1835.”

There are Woolley descendants throughout the United States and all of Canada. However, if you were to look into the Medicine Hat phone book you would only see one Woolley listed for Medicine Hat and one for Manyberries.

Alexander Woolley came west in 1903 with a family of seven children. Some of the family moved back to Ontario and one to New York State in the USA. However two sons stayed out west and were real homesteaders. Unfortunately, most of the Woolley descendants were females, of which I am one.

(Most of the research was done by the late Francis J. Brearton and his wife Joyce Woolley Brearton; quotes from same.)

Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

**Library Donation**

On Wednesday January 18th, 2012, Clark Lang, President of the Medicine Hat & District Branch AGS, presented Sheila Drummond of the Medicine Hat Public Library with the Society’s donation of $500.00 to match the $500.00 in personal donations from MHGS members to the Public Library for their fund-raiser to purchase of a new microfilm, microfiche scanner/reader.
While at the Family History Center in Salt Lake City doing research, I came across a book written in Norwegian that included a detailed section about my Sillerud family farm. I photocopied the pages and set up a time to meet with a Norwegian translator. I was very lucky, as this particular woman not only knew the Norwegian language, but had actually grown up in Norway. She gladly took the pages, and she began to read.

Very soon after she started, she explained that the people who lived on the farm had all died during the Svartedauen, or “Black Death” (‘Svarte’=black, ‘dauen’=death) in 1349. Up until 1616, the farm still remained vacant, and was labelled as “desolate farm”. According to this book, my family ties to this land began in 1617, when Anne and Erik arrived and started building the farm up again. Incredible details about each subsequent generation were listed, but I needed to know more about this Black Death – after all, this property, once left lifeless, is where one branch of my family tree has existed for almost four centuries afterward… Once again, genealogy was urging me to learn about events in world history!

My translator explained that the first arrival of the Black Death, or bubonic plague, in Norway started with a ship that had come into harbour, its cargo heavily swarmed with rats and the rats’ fleas that would transmit the plague. In Norway, the Black Death was characterized as an old hag. Word spread that this horrible illness was coming, and the people hoped that the “old hag” would come with a rake, in which case, a few lives would be spared. They also knew that she could instead arrive with a broom, sweeping the area clean, leaving not a single survivor (as in the land that became the Sillerud farm).

Black Death not only overtook Norway, but the rest of the European continent as well. Black Death was responsible for the loss of an estimated 30-60% of Europe’s population in the 14th century, with some countries losing as little as 20%, and others, as much as 80%. It may, then, be reasonable to presume that if you have European ancestry, you have ancestors who battled the plague.

One account given states: “In men and women alike it first betrayed itself by the emergence of certain tumors in the groin or armpits, some of which grew as large as a common apple, others as an egg… soon began to propagate and spread itself in all directions indifferently; after which the form of the malady began to change, black spots… making their appearance in many cases on the arm or the thigh or elsewhere, now few and large, now minute and numerous…” —Giovanni Boccaccio, Italian writer who lived through the plague in Italy in 1348. These symptoms were followed by an acute fever and vomiting of blood. The time lapse between first infection and death was between two to seven days.

Another account: “How many valiant men, how many fair ladies, breakfast with their kinfolk and the same night supped with their ancestors in the next world! The condition of the people was pitiable to behold. They sickened by the thousands daily, and died unattended and without help. Many died in the open street, others dying in their

houses, made it known by the stench of their rotting bodies. Consecrated churchyards did not suffice for the burial of the vast multitude of bodies, which were heaped by the hundreds in vast trenches, like goods in a ship’s hold and covered with a little earth.”
—Giovanni Boccaccio

There has been much discussion and varied opinions about the root cause of the Black Death outbreaks in Europe, but science has recently proven that the Yersinia pestis bacterium was definitely the cause. A plague pit in East Smithfield, England, was excavated. This was a site that was prepared in 1348 specifically to receive the bodies of plague victims. Bacterial DNA and proteins were extracted from skeletons in this mass grave, and were proven to be almost identical to those of today’s Y. pestis bacteria, responsible for the modern-day plague.

Today’s version is no less fierce, but with much improved living conditions, and the help of modern antibiotics, it does not appear to have the strength it once did. Current mortality rates are listed at between 45-70% for bubonic plague (and 90-95% for the pneunonic variation - affecting the lungs, and close to 100% for the septicemic variation, affecting the blood). There have been small outbreaks and occurrences of bubonic plague as recently as 1995, but so far there has only been one known case that has been immune to antibiotics.

Other considerations would be an overall weakness of populations hundreds of years ago due to multiple illnesses occurring simultaneously, lack of nutrition, and unsanitary surroundings.

Very recent scientific discoveries show that some of our own European ancestors may have carried a genetic mutation called Delta 32, which may have protected them from contracting the plague. Human remains from graves in Scandinavia -- bodies 3,000 and 4,000 years old -- were shown to possess delta 32 through DNA typing. Carriers of this mutation likely survived the Plague to produce future generations that would repopulate Europe and immigrate to North America…

So this leaves me wondering… Did Anne and Erik’s predecessors in the 1340’s possess the lucky delta 32 mutation? Or were their ancestors some the few who contracted the plague, and survived it? Or did they just somehow manage to avoid infection? Unfortunately, given the time period, I think this is one secret that genealogical searches will not be able to solve for me, but now I know more about what my ancestors may have dealt with…

The Plague Doctor — From the 14th century on, plague doctors were hired by communities, and paid handsomely, to exclusively examine plague victims. They were responsible for recording the wills of those affected, advising victims of appropriate conduct leading up to death, recording deaths, and for the autopsies afterward. Eventually they donned ‘protective’ outfits. Their costumes varied; the one in this photo consisted of a heavy fabric overcoat, a wide-brimmed leather hat, a mask with glass eyes, and beak (to be stuffed with flowers and herbs). The beak’s stuffing was thought to reduce the likelihood of contracting the plague, since it helped to lessen the “bad air” of the ill and dead. A wooden cane was used to examine his victims without having to touch them, and keep at bay desperate victims or their families. Treatments that were generally used to treat the victims were bloodletting and putting frogs on the buboes (tumors). Perhaps the most famous plague doctor known was Nostradamus. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plague_doctor)

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3 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Death
5 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Death
6 http://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets/previous_seasons/case_plague/clues.html
I have recently just started my genealogy journey and hobby; however my first love and hobby has been photography. This past November I chaired and organized a photography exhibition at Medalta via the Medicine Hat Photography Club. The show was titled the Ghosts of Historic Medicine Hat and was our club’s 5th annual exhibition at Medalta. What you will find below is the image I took as well as my bio for the show which incorporates “My Family Tree”. This picture and bio is a tribute to my parents as the picture’s history is about my father’s ancestors, but also reflects my mother’s love of genealogy as I received most of the information below from her. I hope you enjoy the combination of my first hobby, photography, and my new hobby, genealogy.

**Artist’s Information**
I am continually inspired by the members of the MHPC in the distinctive way everyone sees and interprets the world through their lenses. I attribute the beginning of my creative inspiration to growing up on a farm with the big picture window located in my parent’s kitchen. The window provided an amazing westward view of spectacular sunsets and terrifying thunderstorms. Medicine Hat was visible to the north with some more gorgeous prairie horizon to the south. I like photography because it allows me to escape into those special “frozen moments” of our lives passing by. I have always enjoyed photography but more seriously since I was 18; a decade ago. That seriousness went up another notch when I joined the Medicine Hat Photography Club in August 2008, over 3 years ago.

**My Family Tree-About my Picture**
When talking about one’s genealogy one often describes their family tree and their ancestors. However in my case there is living proof of my own family tree in Medicine Hat from five generations ago. At 114 A 3rd Street NE three stately black walnut trees (juglans nigra) tower over 3rd Street NE. In January of 1913 my Great-Great-Grandfather, Earl Bassett, immigrated to Medicine Hat from Wallace, Idaho. He was a retired CPR worker at the time when he planted these trees and also a very talented gardener with a yard filled with flowers, shrubs, trees, and a superb vegetable garden amidst a cottage–style house. Originally black walnut trees were not native to Medicine Hat; however there are many more descendants of these trees throughout Medicine Hat as the seeds of these three trees were given out as seedlings to Kindergarten children of Medicine Hat and residents at the annual Parks Arbour Day Open Houses. As a result, these trees are recognized and protected as Heritage Trees of Alberta.

This “branch” of my family tree can be traced back 13 generations to the “Fortune” colonization ship that landed in Plymouth, Massachusetts on November 9th, 1621; 390 years ago this month. The “Fortune” was the 2nd colonization ship that traveled to North America, the first being the Mayflower, which arrived just after the “First Thanksgiving”. My ancestor, William Basset, originally was to be on the Mayflower, but for unclear reasons waited another year and sailed over on the “Fortune”. He was from Bethnal Green, Middlesex, England.
Check out the following websites:

**US Social Security Death Index**  [www.genealogy.about.com/od/free_genealogy/a/ssdi.htm](http://www.genealogy.about.com/od/free_genealogy/a/ssdi.htm)

One of the largest and easiest to access databases utilized for genealogical research in the U.S., the SSDI contains over 64 million records of U.S. citizens who have died since 1962. From the SSDI you can find the following information: date of birth, date of death, state where the Social Security number was issued, the individual's residence at time of death and the location where the death benefit was mailed (next of kin).

**Castle Garden Online**  [www.genealogy.about.com/od/ports/p/castle_garden.htm](http://www.genealogy.about.com/od/ports/p/castle_garden.htm)

The free CastleGarden.org database, provided online by the New York Battery Conservancy, allows you to search by name and time period for immigrants who arrived in Castle Garden between 1830 and 1890.

**Immigrant Ship Transcribers Guild**  [www.immigrantships.net/](http://www.immigrantships.net/)

This group of dedicated volunteers has transcribed more than 5,000 ship passenger lists to date, citing over ½ million passenger arrivals – all available online for free genealogy research. Make sure to leave time for a visit to [www.immigrantships.net/newcompass/pcindex.html](http://www.immigrantships.net/newcompass/pcindex.html), a guide to further immigration research with links to other passenger lists on the Internet, information about specific ships and resources for ports of entry and departure around the world.

**Le Dictionnaire Tanguay**  [http://bibnum2.banq.qc.ca/bna/dicoGenealogie/](http://bibnum2.banq.qc.ca/bna/dicoGenealogie/)

One of the major published sources for early French-Canadian genealogy, the Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles Canadiennes is a seven-volume work of the genealogies of early French-Canadian families published by Rev. Cyprian Tanguay in the late 1800s. Its material begins about 1608 and extends to material at and shortly after the Exile (1760+/-).

**My Cinnamon Toast**  [www.mycinnamontoast.com](http://www.mycinnamontoast.com)

Serving as a gateway to free genealogy databases and surname sites on the Internet, My Cinnamon Toast specializes in one thing – surname search. Surnames from listed sites are stored in a special field, so that when you search for a surname, you are ONLY searching surnames, not first names, regions, occupations or anything else. For example, when you search for CRISP, you actually get sites about the surname CRISP, not Web sites talking about “apple crisp” or “crisp toast.” Surname searches can also be narrowed down by region, religion and record type – especially useful when you have a very common surname.

**Scottish Documents**  [www.scottishdocuments.com](http://www.scottishdocuments.com)

Enjoy free access to a fully searchable index of over 520,000 Scottish wills and testaments dating from 1500 to 1901. Full-color, actual-size digital images of the original documents are available for immediate online purchase from this not-for-profit site operated by the Scottish Archive Network.

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**ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION MEMBERS:** According to the January 2012 edition of Legion Magazine, members of the Royal Canadian Legion are able to purchase a subscription to Ancestry.ca (world deluxe edition) at a one-time discount of 50% off. But upon checking with Ancestry, it only applies if you’ve never had a paid subscription with them before. See [http://www.legionmagazine.com/en/index.php/2012/01/1812-overture/](http://www.legionmagazine.com/en/index.php/2012/01/1812-overture/) for details...
Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness (RAOGK)
By Faye Knoblick

The following article was taken from the Quesnel, B.C. newsletter ‘Cariboo Notes’ (Winter 2011 issue), posted by Dick Eastman.

“It is with great sadness that I report that Bridgett Schneider, best known as the primary person behind RAOGK, passed away on November 12, 2011 at the age of 64 years.

The last message received from Bridgett on October 18th read:

‘RAOGK has been around with our volunteers helping other genealogists get copies of documents required to prove your lineage. Pictures of your ancestors’ tombstones were also high on the lists of requests. I hope everyone got as much service as we were able to give. Our heart is saddened that we will be offline for quite awhile. Between computer problems and the health of myself very questionable…RAOGK, after 11 years, will cease to exist for awhile.’

Bridgett and her husband Doc began RAOGK in 1999 in their Nebraska home. What they began with a handful of volunteer researchers grew to over 4,000 people around the world.

Bridgett’s husband has assured the RAOGK volunteers that the site will be back online in the future. For now, some people are helping individuals through the RAOGK Facebook page at: http://www.facebook.com/groups/33868082803/.

By Leanne Balfour

If you have ancestors in the USA, www.genealogybank.com may have huge amounts of information just waiting for you to discover. On this website, where, as of September, they claim to offer over one billion genealogical records, you will find:

Historical Newspapers – date from 1690 – 2007 (yes, I said 1690!) with over 5800 titles.
Historical Books – date from 1801 – 1900 – family genealogies, local histories, biographies, funeral sermons, etc.
Historical Documents – date from 1789 – 1994 – military records, including Revolutionary & Civil War records, orphan petitions, widow’s pension records, land grants, etc.
Newspaper Obituaries – from 1977 – current
Social Security Death Index – from 1937 – current

As little as a surname is enough to conduct a search, or get more detailed, and add a first name, time frame, and single out one or more states to focus on. At a trial rate of $9.95 for 30 days, it is worth exploring. If you like it, you may sign on at a cost of $69.95 per year ($5.83 per month), and sometimes they have been known to have subscription specials. (As with any website, read all subscription details carefully…)

In my searches on this website, I have found information on births, deaths, and marriages, of course; but I have also found articles regarding murders, poisonings, thievery, tragic accidents, slave ownership, estate notices, and more… Can you imagine what this website could tell you about your family members?
**THE ELECTRONIC AGE**  
By Leanne Balfour

More genealogical information & methods are becoming available every day. Here are a few items that may be of interest:

**BLOGS:**

AGS President Liam Hobbes writes two blogs:

- **Rock of Ages: Grave Concerns** - [http://leprechaunrabbit.wordpress.com](http://leprechaunrabbit.wordpress.com) – spotlighting graves; and
- **Your Roots Are Showing** - [http://yourrootsareshowingdearie.wordpress.com](http://yourrootsareshowingdearie.wordpress.com) - genealogy ideas for involving younger people and possibly turning the hobby into a family effort.

Dick Eastman, who will be holding sessions at the upcoming 2013 Conference in Red Deer “Find YOUR Tree in the Forest”, writes [Eastman’s Online Genealogy Newsletter](http://blog.egon.com). Mr. Eastman has been involved in genealogy for 30 years, and the computer industry for over 40 years. His current newsletter is read by over 60,000 genealogists worldwide.

**SOCIAL MEDIA:**

For those of you who dabble on Facebook:

- Some **new Ontario pages** were just started up for the following areas: Kenora, Rainy River, Thunder Bay, Algoma, Sudbury, Manitoulin District, Nipissing, Cochrane, Temiskaming, Parry Sound, Renfrew County, Muskoka District, and Simcoe. On these pages, people put information about who they are researching in that area, and some offer help with lookups, etc.

- Also of interest may be the **Family History Hound** from Edmonton – genealogical resource alerts and invites for opinions on various genealogical questions.

- **Ancestorville Genealogy** – with over 21,300 people following this page, it is dedicated to discussion of genealogy, genealogical artifacts, history, antiques, and old photos. *(Personally, I just found an antique photo of someone in my family tree on this page. It had been posted by a living relative who was previously unknown to me. -lb)*

***STAY TUNED*** - This spring, genealogists will be treated to some great programming on TV. Tune in for:

**Finding Your Roots (with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.)**  
Sundays starting March 25, 2012 (time not yet listed) on PBS.

And

**Who Do You Think You Are?**  
Fridays starting February 3, 2012 (8-9 pm ET) on NBC.

**The Generations Project** – Unlike a few other genealogy programs, The Generations Project focuses on ordinary people, not celebrities, investigating their ancestry. Their experiences often lead to answers for questions about their own lives. So far, there are 33 episodes available to view online (at a length of about 25 minutes each). Go to [www.byutv.org/shows](http://www.byutv.org/shows), click on “The Generations Project”, and choose episodes to watch… just click to play.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday November 9, 2011

RECORDS OF SACRIFICE

MEDICINE HAT, AB — The Esplanade Arts and Heritage Centre Museum and Archives, working with local military genealogist Chris Enslen, and with the support of local defense supplier Meggitt Training Systems (Canada) Inc., have arranged for all of the records of all the men who enlisted in Medicine Hat for service during World War I to be digitally copied.

More than 1,300 men signed up in Medicine Hat for service during World War I. They put their lives on hold; left their dreams, families and jobs in order to serve their country. All of them made sacrifices; too many did not return.

In what is believed to be the largest undertaking of its kind in the country, the records of their service are being brought home to Medicine Hat with the First World War Enlistment Records Project. Due to the large number of files the project is expected to take over one year to complete and is scheduled to be finished in 2013, just a year short of the centennial of when the first of the volunteers signed up.

The project is being supported by the local defense supplier Meggitt Training Systems (Canada) Inc. Their assistance will allow present and future generations of Medicine Hat students to examine the records of their predecessors who volunteered to preserve freedom and democracy. Genealogists and the public will also be able to conveniently access materials at the Esplanade Archives Reading Room which have previously only been available in Ottawa.

The Esplanade Museum and Archives will also benefit substantially. “We are currently planning a major new exhibit to commemorate the centennial of the First World War and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Second World War,” said Museum Curator Robert Bruce Shepard. “Having these records will help us immensely with our research.”

For further information, interviews or visuals, please contact:

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Rhubarb has been used by man medicinally for over 5000 years, but for the last 200+ years has been used for culinary purposes in many cultures and nations, and so has undoubtedly had a place at many of our ancestor’s tables and in their recipes. Read on…

“Ben Franklin is credited for bringing rhubarb seeds to the North American east coast in 1772, yet the red stalks did not catch on until the early 1800s, when it became a popular ingredient for pie. ...In the late 1800's, rhubarb was brought to Alaska by the Russians and used as an effective counter-agent for scurvy. By the mid-1900s, its popularity was firmly entrenched in the New England states where it was used as pastry and pie fillings and also to make homemade wine.” (www.homecooking.about.com)

“It was always more popular in Britain and the U.S. than elsewhere, but rhubarb also achieved noteworthy popularity in Australia and New Zealand. Culinary uses also spread to northern Europe. At its most popular commercial, quantities of rhubarb were grown outdoors as well as in greenhouses and dark cellars. Culinary use dropped dramatically during WWII as a direct result of the deprivations of war, most notably the rationing of sugar. ...Since WWII rhubarb production has rebounded but to only a fraction of pre-war levels.” (www.highaltituderhubarb.com)

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About the Saamis Seeker: 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. Submissions accepted up to the 15th of January, May, & October to editor’s email address: balfour5@shaw.ca.

Purpose of the Saamis Seeker:
- 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.

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