

CHINOOK ARCH

October 2020 Volume 2 Issue 8



ALBERTA FAMILY
HISTORIES SOCIETY

1980-2020

Society Meetings

Our Next Society Meeting: Monday, October 5

LOCATION: Via Zoom

TIME: 7 to 9 pm

Topic: Sneak Peek at our Upgraded Website

Join us via Zoom as Marion, Michele and Jim demonstrate all the exciting new features of our improved website which is launching soon!

Upcoming Meetings

Virtually using Zoom until further notice. Contact the SIG leaders to receive an invitation link to the meeting.

DATE	GROUP	TIME	TOPIC
Sat., Oct. 17	English/Welsh SIG	10 am to noon	What and where are you re-searching?
Sun., Oct. 18	DNA SIG	1:30 to 3:30 pm	
Sat., Oct. 24	Celtic SIG	10 am to noon	Maps on National Library of Scotland
Sun., Oct. 25	Legacy Users SIG	1:30 to 3:30 pm	Media
Mon., Oct. 26	Ontario SIG	10 am to noon	Land Records
Sat., Nov. 7	Family Tree Maker SIG	10 am to noon	

Next Society Meeting

Monday, November 9

Topic: Canadiana Online

Speaker: Dave Obee

Member Benefits:

- Society events and activities
- Our member-exclusive email news bulletin *The Windsock* & newsletter *Chinook Arch*
- Full access to our Society's resources and library with lending privileges
- Opportunities to participate in our Special Interest Groups
- Gain new friends with similar research interests and have fun!

<http://afhs.ab.ca/membership>

President's Message

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The society had a successful Annual General Meeting at our gathering on September 14 at The Village. We had 43 members attend, enough to make a quorum and hold a proper election for positions of director. Our previous AGM was held back in April of 2019. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, our regular AGM, that was to be held in April 2020, had to be postponed until this September. The Board of Directors agreed to stay on until this election could be held.

During the year, Michele Buhler stepped down as Treasurer. Bev Archer moved from Secretary to take on the Treasurer role, and Jasmin Naglis was appointed as our Secretary. Gordon Lane withdrew as Director mid-year, and both Warren Peterson and Don Duncan decided not to put their names forward for another term. Richard Young and Zolton Walford were elected at the AGM along with several returning Directors.

Our current slate of directors is:

President	Jim Benedict
Vice President	vacant
Secretary	Jasmin Naglis
Treasurer	Bev Archer
Director	Iris Morgan (Director - Finance)
Director	Marion Peterson (Director - Communications)
Director	Linda Murray (Director - Library & Research)
Director	Peter McKenzie (Director - Membership Relations)
Director	Zolton Walford (Director - Education)
Director	Richard Young (Director - Facilities)

I sincerely thank all of our Directors and volunteers for their past and/or current volunteering of their time and skills with our Society. Without such dedication, this Society could not continue.

WEBSITE UPDATE

Our Society website is nearly ready for a major upgrade release. Join us at the AFHS monthly meeting this Monday evening, via Zoom, and get a sneak peek at the new layout and content. Marion Peterson will escort us through the renovations that you can enjoy yourself in a week or two.

Special thanks to several key people, namely Michele Buhler, Heather Grant, Linda Murray and especially Marion Peterson, for their hard work to ensure that the site is modern and full of features.

Ancestor Anecdotes

Finding My Grandfather In Nova Scotia

Leslie Dennis

I did not know my maternal grandfather George MacMillan, as he died in 1925 at the age of 39, and I was not born until three decades later. I had only one picture of him, which my mother gave me. Starting my search on Ancestry, I found basic names and dates for George, his parents Daniel and Margaret, and his siblings. I found a digital copy of the book "*A History of the County of Pictou, Nova Scotia*" by Rev. George Patterson, which covers the early history of the area where he grew up. George's ancestors appear to have arrived in 1806, according to *A Dictionary of Scottish Emigrants to Canada before Confederation* by Donald Whyte. I then decided to take a genealogical research trip to fill in the gaps.

My first visit was to the Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia's (GANS) office and library in Halifax. They recommended that I check the *Property Online* database on the Government of Nova Scotia website, which contains digital land records, as well as wills, deed transfers and property valuations.

<https://novascotia.ca/sns/access/land/property-online.asp>

GANS had an excellent price to access the database, only \$5 for a half day of research. Unfortunately, I ran out of time to explore all that I could, but I found deeds from the 1830s, with George's grandfather Duncan as the purchaser of land in Scotch Hill, which is where the original family farm was. It was Duncan's father John (George's great-grandfather) that moved the family from Scotland to Scotch Hill, so it may be that Duncan was only expanding an existing farm started by his father. In 1851, another document showed that Duncan sold land for the Scotch Hill Cemetery, and in 1868 he sold another 50 acres to a neighbour.

The next day I visited the Nova Scotia Archives in Halifax. Although vital statistics could be looked up online from Calgary, it was much easier with a little assistance from the staff there. I was able to look up my grandfather's actual birthdate (the one

from Ancestry was wrong), wedding certificate, and death certificate. What did they tell me? George was born in Pictou, Nova Scotia, in 1887. He married my grandmother in Sydney, Nova Scotia, in 1916. (As an aside – I wondered where my Aunt's name Ilma came from – it was so unusual. One of the witnesses at the wedding was named Ilma so she was likely a good friend that my aunt was named after.) And George's death certificate indicated that his cause of death was "apoplexy" (which is an old-fashioned term for a stroke).

<https://www.novascotiagenealogy.com>

I then headed off to Pictou. A friend who had moved there drove me around for the day, and I learned how important local resources are for family history research. We visited my grandfather's family land in Scotch Hill and Haliburton Cemetery, where my grandparents George and Sarah are buried. We then visited the Scotch Hill Cemetery which Grandpa's family had donated the land to create. There I saw a tombstone with the name "Wiswell" on it and realized that must be where George's middle name came from – perhaps that person was a family friend. In Pictou, we also visited the house where George grew up. We stopped by the Hector Heritage Quay which was well worth the visit. A replica of the first ship to transport Scottish Highlanders to Nova Scotia, *The Hector*, helped me understand the experience of immigrating to the area, and truly feel how cramped the ship would have been with 180 passengers on board.

In the afternoon, we visited the McCulloch House Museum – a treasure trove that my friend recommended. Apparently a local resident had left \$800,000 in his will to set up the museum and archives – what family history societies dream of!

<http://www.mccullochcentre.ca>

By far the most useful items there were the microfilms of historical newspapers for the area – the *Pictou Advocate* and the *Eastern Chronicle*. I found out from an old newspaper obituary that George's father Daniel had been a local businessman in Pictou, but

Ancestor Anecdotes

met his death in 1928, at age 79, by trying to carry a small table in his upper hall and falling over a railing. Daniel and his wife Margaret had just celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary, and I found their wedding announcement in the local newspaper from 1877. They had raised seven children – Clifford, John, William Charles, Almira (where my mother's middle name comes from), Grandpa George, William Brown and Elizabeth.

I also found George's obituary. It said that George had learned the drug trade in Pictou before he moved to Sydney in 1913. There, he worked for various pharmacies and as a chemist for Dominion Iron and Steel. In 1921 George started his own drug store on Victoria Road. Surprisingly, George's obituary said that he died of influenza, but my mother had mentioned pneumonia, and his death certificate said stroke. A doctor friend told me that back in the day, doctors would often be called in after a death. If they did not know what the cause was, apoplexy (or a stroke) was often put down as a guess. Sadly, George left behind his wife Sarah and four children under the age of ten – Ilma, Ray, Connie (my mother) and Shirley. Sara took over the drugstore to make ends meet, and while her oldest two children stayed with her, the two youngest, Connie and Shirley, went to live with relatives.

The next day I visited the Pictou County Roots Society in New Glasgow. There I found obituaries for George's mother Margaret and his brother William Brown. Margaret outlived two of her children, William Brown and George, and lived to the grand old age of 95. Her daughter Almira died six months after Margaret, in 1948. I also found the obituary of George's brother Duncan, who had run the family farm after Daniel died in 1928, and a map of the MacMillan farm in Scotch Hill.

<https://www.pictoucountyroots.ca>

My final visit was to Sydney, Cape Breton, where my grandfather moved as an adult. While in Sydney I found the house that George and Sarah lived in on Rockdale Avenue. I also drove by the location of the MacMillan Drug Store – but sadly, it is a travel

agency now. The Tourist Bureau had recommended that I visit the Beaton Institute at the University of Cape Breton, which I did. I did not find a great deal of new information there but did find a historical picture of my grandfather's store, which made the visit worthwhile.

<https://beatoninstitute.com>

The Cape Breton Genealogy and Historical Association Office was closed, but I was able to connect with them online. I was also able to ask questions and make contacts on their Facebook page and the website of the Cape Breton Genealogy Research page.

<https://www.cbgen.org>

I had already tested my DNA on Ancestry, so after my return I uploaded my tree and my DNA to various other genealogy sites to try to find some living relatives. Using Thrulines on Ancestry, I was thrilled to be able to find the granddaughter of George's brother John Duncan and the grandson of his sister Almira. And through FamilySearch, I was able to message brother Clifford's granddaughter and obtain wonderful old family pictures. And, like so many other genealogists, my search will continue!



George Wiswell MacMillan

Special Interest Groups

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs) are the ideal place to share your family history. The small-group setting allows for the exchange of information and suggestions on further avenues to pursue.

All SIGs are being held using Zoom for now and the groups do not meet during July and August. Check our website calendar for up-to-date information or email the SIG leader.

CELTIC SIG (Irish/Scots)

Meets every month on the fourth Saturday 10 am - Noon
celticsig@afhs.ab.ca

DIGITAL GENEALOGY SIG

Meets every month on the second Saturday 10 am - Noon
*currently seeking a new leader

DNA SIG

Meets every month on the third Sunday 1:30 - 3:30 pm.
dnasig@afhs.ab.ca

ENGLISH/WELSH SIG

Meets every month on the third Saturday 10 am - Noon
englishwelshsig@afhs.ab.ca

FAMILY TREE MAKER SIG

Meets every month on the first Saturday 10 am - Noon
ftmsig@afhs.ab.ca

LEGACY SIG

Meets alternate months on the last Sunday 1:30 - 3 pm
legacysig@afhs.ab.ca

ONTARIO SIG

Meets alternate months on the fourth Monday 10 am - Noon
ontariosig@afhs.ab.ca

FAMILY HISTORY FEDERATION (FHF)

Ann Williams

The AFHS is a member of the Family History Federation, a British-based organization with over 160 member societies including thirteen societies in Australia, New Zealand & Tasmania, one society in the United States and two societies in Canada. Their role includes lobbying for access to British records (at a reasonable cost), stepping in to preserve records threatened with destruction and promoting membership in local family history societies at the family history shows they present in Britain.

Those with British ancestors might find it interesting to check the Federation's website from time to time. At the time of writing, the website's home page has a link to a podcast on the "1939 Register" and under the "News and Events" tab there is information on upcoming virtual meetings hosted by Family History Societies (although you have to be a member of individual societies to take part). The "News and Views" tab tells of a price reduction in obtaining copies of post-1857 English & Welsh Wills.

<https://www.familyhistoryfederation.com>

As a member, the AFHS has its own page on the FHF website which we can tailor as we like. Our page is a work-in-progress but is intended to generate enquiries (and fees) for our Research Assistants and generally introduce the family history world to Alberta.

The FHF is hosting the **Virtual Really Useful Family History Show** on November 14, 2020.

One of the virtual talks that may be of interest to those of us in Canada will be given by Sue Gibbons. *Tracing Immigrant Ancestors up to World War II* covers reasons our ancestors emigrated from Britain, legislation surrounding their emigration and British records generated in the process.

The virtual talks will be available for 48 hours following the Show. Early Bird pricing (£5 or \$8-9 Canadian) is in effect until the end of October. Go to the website and click on the speaker's name to see their bio and topic or check out the Family History Federation Facebook page.

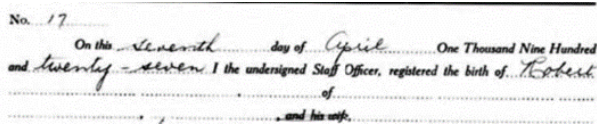
<https://www.fhf-reallyuseful.com>

DNA Discoveries

DNA Solves A Family Mystery

Katie Crossman

My maternal grandfather was always told his father was dead, and that his parents had the same common surname. As an adult, my grandfather Robert ordered his birth certificate and learned that his mother had never been married and that he'd been born in a home for unwed mothers (confirmed by the anonymized birth records I found from the Salvation Army). She had been very sick after his birth and when she got out of the hospital a year later, his father had married someone else.

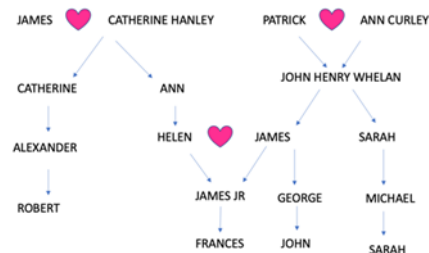


My grandfather tested with 23andme around 2011 and I uploaded his results into GEDmatch, ftDNA, and MyHeritage. When he passed away in 2014, I was no closer to any answers. The matches were too distant. Then my mother did a test at Ancestry where the best match (73cM) was a woman (Frances) born in 1960 in London, England with an unknown father. Frances also had a close match (463cM) with a guy (John), someone that didn't share DNA with my family. I went about building their trees and looking at shared matches, which were all pretty distant (<45cM). I was able to identify a shared surname: Curley. On Frances' and my mother's side I was able to identify another distant surname: Hanley. I took notes, mapped what I could with DNA Painter, and built spreadsheets. My uncle took a yDNA test, but matches were too distant.

Frances and John got a new shared match (Sarah) on MyHeritage (214 and 155 cM respectively). Her family was, like John, from Dundee, Scotland. She had a great-grandfather with the surname Whelan - John's father's middle name! I then found the Curley surname and identified his unknown grandfather with the help of elec-

toral records showing him at the same address as John's grandmother on his father's birth record. Then I was able to figure out how Frances and John connected - her father was his half-uncle, James. He lived a 5 minute drive from where she was born. James was also married and a career criminal who was out of jail for only 6 months (between a manslaughter charge and big jewelry heist that made international news!) when she was conceived.

I built James' tree and found the Hanley surname. I then followed all the descendants and eventually found the one in the right place at the right time. His name was Alexander and his only brother was Frederick. These were the names of my father's siblings my great-grandmother told me when I innocently asked for family history when I was around 11 years old. (Never throw away school project family trees!) He married someone else during my great-grandmother's pregnancy and had 3 children, one of whom is still living. He is my grandfather's half-brother and I see a resemblance. He's in his 80s and I'd like to reach out, but it's a sensitive topic, so for now I'm waiting. ThruLines confirmed 2 distant matches on other branches in his tree and What Are the Odds (DNA Painter) agrees with my hypothesis, so I'm confident.



It feels pretty good to put it all together after 10 years. If you want to read more details about this story and how I figured it out - check out my blog:

<https://katierocketlauncher.wordpress.com/2020/09/08/dna-and-family-secrets-revealed>

Upcoming Events

Family History Coaching Program
AFHS Volunteers & CPL Staff
Cancelled until further notice

AFHS Writing Workshops on Zoom
Michele Buhler

Design & Layout Workshop
October 6, 2020

Bookmaking Workshops
October 20 & 27

<https://afhs.ab.ca/stories/workshop>

Soldier, Settler, Sinner: The Remarkable Journey of Charles MacDonald
British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa

October 10, 2020

<https://bifhsgo.ca/eventListings.php?nm=127#er538>

Scottish Indexes Conference VI
Scottish Indexes

October 10, 2020

<https://www.scottishindexes.com>

Take Your Family History in a Different Direction Virtual Workshop
Genealogy with a Canadian Twist

October 17, 2020

<https://www.looking4ancestors.com/p/conference.html>

Researching Your Family Tree
FutureLearn - University of Strathclyde

October 19 - November 30, 2020

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/genealogy>

Family History Workshop
St. Catharine's Museum & Welland Canals Centre

October 24 & November 7, 2020

<https://www.stcatharines.ca/en/experiencein/MuseumEvents.asp>

2 day virtual workshop

Researching Your Canadian Ancestors in the First World War
Ontario Genealogical Society

November 5, 2020

<https://ogs.on.ca/zoom-meetings/webinar-2020-november>

Fall Virtual Seminar
Campbell River Genealogical Association

November 7 & 14, 2020

<https://www.crgenealogysociety.ca/fall-virtual-seminar>

VGA Annual Virtual Conference
Virtual Genealogical Association

November 13 - 15, 2020

<https://virtualgenealogy.org/annual-conference/>

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer
Opportunities



Finance and Budget Committee Volunteers: Are you good with detail, organization or like to think big picture? Are you familiar with using Excel? We are seeking a few more people to help guide AFHS through the upcoming challenges, find creative ways to keep our society in good financial shape and be another set of eyes when looking over spreadsheets. This is a committee position which does not require a long-term commitment but is a great way to contribute. AFHS is a volunteer run organization, so your support is needed. Contact Iris at finance@afhs.ca

Website Helpers: Our website is almost ready for launch, and we are looking for some helping hands! Marion is seeking volunteers to:

- Index past issues of our journals so that we can add a search feature
- Assist with a news blog, posting news in the genealogy world which would be of interest to members
- Help with a project to post journals from other societies in a members-only part of the website (as part of an exchange journal program)

For more information, contact Marion communications@afhs.ab.ca

Mentors: Would you be willing to help new members who request one-on-one assistance? Contact Heather membership@afhs.ab.ca

Nominations & Volunteer Recruitment: If you would be interested in helping recruit volunteers and find candidates for Board vacancies, please send a message to Peter memberrelations@afhs.ab.ca

Library Hours & Opportunities to Connect

Library Open Hours

Thursdays, 10 am to 2 pm

Saturdays, noon to 4 pm

Library users and staff must wear a mask and also maintain social distancing.



ALBERTA FAMILY
HISTORIES SOCIETY

Get in Touch with us!

Email: info@afhs.ab.ca

Website: www.afhs.ab.ca

Phone: 403-214-1447

Facebook: Alberta Family Histories Society

Instagram:
[abfamilyhistoriessociety](https://www.instagram.com/abfamilyhistoriessociety)



AFHS Library & Office location:

712 - 16 Avenue NW Calgary

Chinook Arch

Watch for our newsletter distributed by email monthly, on the Saturday before AFHS meetings, from September to June. Paper copies are available at meetings and at the AFHS Library.

We are looking for short articles and copyright-free pictures. Favourite relatives, fond family memories, great research tips and tricks, new genealogy technology you love or any related topics are accepted.

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