

# CHINOOK ARCH

June 2022 Volume 4 Issue 6



ALBERTA FAMILY  
HISTORIES SOCIETY

## Society Meetings

### Our Next Society Meeting: Monday, June 13, 2022

**LOCATION:** Glennfield Picnic Shelter, Fish Creek Park (weather permitting)

**TIME:** 7 to 9 pm

**TOPIC:** Member Appreciation Night

If you are in Calgary and area, join us for a short meeting, a fun activity and time to visit while you enjoy refreshments.

### Upcoming Meetings

All held virtually using Zoom until further notice. Contact [communications@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:communications@afhs.ab.ca) to receive an invitation.

DATE	GROUP	TIME	TOPIC
Sat., June 11	Digital Genealogy SIG/ Family Genes Group	10 am to noon	Demo of Tropy, a digital organization tool; information on Family Genes
No meeting	English/Welsh SIG	10 am to noon	
No meeting	Legacy SIG	1:30 to 3:30 pm	
No meeting	Celtic SIG	10 am to noon	
No meeting	Board Meeting	7 to 9 pm	
Mon., June 27	Ontario SIG	1:30 to 3:30 pm	A surprising find

SIGs do not meet over the summer months but will be back in the fall!

### Next Society Meetings

**Monday, September 12, 2022**

**Topic: Less Used Websites**

**Speaker:** Panel of speakers

Location: TBA, 7 pm

**Monday, October 17, 2022**

**Topic: Canadian Halloween Traditions**

**Speaker:** Kelly Southworth

Location: Zoom meeting, 7 pm

### AFHS 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!

[www.afhs.ab.ca/membership](http://www.afhs.ab.ca/membership)

## President's Message

### From Jim Benedict (President 2021-22):

It has been three years now, and my time as President has been a rewarding, if not humbling, experience. The Society has struggled to stay healthy during a two-year stretch of this COVID pandemic, but we have kept our numbers, our finances and our meetings intact. This is thanks to all who helped: the directors, the coordinators, our volunteers and our loyal members. I thank all of you. I extend to the incoming Board a hearty "Welcome aboard and fair winds in your sails." (PS: I just returned from sailing on the West Coast after the AGM meeting.)

### From Marion Peterson (Incoming President):

As I begin my term as President, I find myself remembering previous Presidents I have known. I have big shoes to fill! For many years I said I would not take on this leadership role, but our Society can only exist if people like you and me step out of their comfort zone to take a turn.

First, a huge thanks to Richard Young who was our Director of Facilities. He tackled several challenges, including the insurance renewal "nightmare" last summer. AFHS appreciated all that he did to keep our building maintained (the snow removal, cleaning, frequent building checks and so on).

Thanks also to Iris Morgan, our former Director of Finance. She steered us through all the paperwork, organized finance files, helped write the finance policy and kept us on the right financial track.

Gratitude is also extended to John Smiley who took on the Membership Director role, including looking after the membership database and renewals. His insights regarding rental space were invaluable.

Welcome back to Michele Buhler, Wendy Robertson, Zolton Walford, Linda Murray and Jim Benedict. Their continued participation allows for continuity and is greatly appreciated.

Welcome to the new Directors – Patricia Hodge, Tara Shymanski and Anne Lennox. I look forward to your new perspectives and fresh ideas. The VP position is vacant, so if you would like to be part of this team, please contact me at [president@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:president@afhs.ab.ca)

### Your AFHS Board of Directors for 2022-23

<b>President</b>	Marion Peterson
<b>Vice President</b>	Vacant
<b>Secretary</b>	Michele Buhler
<b>Treasurer</b>	Wendy Robertson
<b>Director (Education)</b>	Tara Shymanski
<b>Director (Facilities)</b>	Zolton Walford
<b>Director (Finance)</b>	Patricia Hodge
<b>Director (Library/Research)</b>	Linda Murray
<b>Director (Member Relations)</b>	Anne Lennox
<b>Director (Website/Digital Presence)</b>	Jim Benedict

## Ancestor Anecdotes

### Clear Board Across Canada

Greg Cave

Many Canadian genealogists have family that worked on one of the major railways that stretched across Canada. My family's railway experiences began in Montreal when my great-grandparents immigrated from Scotland in 1850. My great-grandfather, John Thompson Rollo, was a cabinet maker in Dundee, Scotland, and his carpentry skills were needed in Montreal during the construction of the Victoria Bridge across the St Lawrence River. The bridge was built by the Grand Trunk Railway, and my great-grandfather stayed with the railway and became a machinist.

Many of his sons and grandsons worked for the railway as machinists, boilermakers, station agents, clerks, brakemen, railway engineers and superintendents. My grandmother, his daughter, was a stenographer in the Grand Trunk Bonaventure Station in Montreal. Several of my cousins and I worked on the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) after high school and during university as brakemen. We were truly a railroad family!

The prime motive for the construction of the CPR transcontinental line in the early 1880s was to bring British Columbia into Confederation and prevent western Canada from being assimilated by the United States. At the time CPR rails reached as far as Port Moody but Canada's population centers were in eastern Canada, Winnipeg and Victoria. Virtually no revenue could be derived from the prairie sector between Winnipeg and Vancouver. The CPR recognized that until western Canada was settled, commerce with the Far East was essential to its success and it acquired steamship services to complement its railway business. Within a few weeks of the arrival of the first transcontinental train from Montreal to Port Moody in 1886, the windjammer sailing ship *W. B. Flint* arrived from Japan with more

than one million pounds of tea and other merchandise onboard. This cargo was directly transferred from ship to train for destinations in eastern Canada, the United States and Europe. It was followed a month later by the arrival from Japan of another CPR chartered ship, the *S.S. Abyssinia*, with a cargo of tea, silk and mail that was bound for London. Transatlantic commerce using the CPR as a link had begun.

To facilitate the transfer of the very valuable and time sensitive cargo of silk, special high speed trains were established and were known as the silk trains. Much has been written about the silk trains. From the late 1880s to the mid 1930s, special trains took bales of raw and manufactured silk from the Vancouver docks to silk mills and markets in New York, New Jersey and elsewhere.

The romance and fascination with these trains came from the fact that a trainload of silk was worth many millions of dollars and that these trains raced across the nation at high speed, in relative secrecy, under armed guard with priority over all other traffic. The transportation of silk began immediately after the completion of the CPR. The cargo bales contained live silk worms and mulberry or oak leaves which were consumed by the worms for about two weeks, after which they started spinning silk cocoons. These cocoons were quite fragile and deteriorated quickly. The raw silk was highly susceptible to heat, moisture, fumes and punctures so the carriers minimized their risk by quickly expediting the shipments.



From: [www.freesvg.org](http://www.freesvg.org)

## Ancestor Anecdotes

My grandfather John Charles Case, known as J.C., and his son, also John Charles Case but known as Charlie, were part of the multitude of CPR employees involved in ensuring that the silk train shipments made it safely to their destination.

J.C. was a foreman who was responsible for the crews preparing the replacement steam locomotives used for the silk trains. These were usually the most modern locomotives of the day.

Charlie was a trainman who was occasionally assigned to the silk trains, but more often served as an observer. He was required to wait in the “hole” (a passing track siding) with his train and inspect the silk trains as they raced by on their hair-raising journeys to eastern Canada and the silk mills in the U.S.

As a youngster growing up in a railroad family at the CPR divisional point in Moose Jaw, I had the good fortune of hearing many romantic tales and lore of the railways, particularly during the steam era.

One of my favourite topics was hearing about the thrill and excitement of the silk train specials or “Yokohama Flyers” of the late 19th and early 20th century. One of the stories my Uncle Charlie told was about a winter night on the prairies and his encounter with a silk train.

### Charlie’s Story

“Our train orders were to take the hole at Parkbeg, take water and await Extra 2541, a silk special. I was on the tail end of Number 8, the premier eastbound transcontinental. We were running several hours late due to snow slides west of Calgary.

Only 35 miles from home, on the run from Medicine Hat, we were being scooped [overtaken] by a Silker. Once we were safely in the siding, I went outside at the tail end of

the train and awaited the Special. In the distance I could hear it whistle for a crossing and moments later I could see the faint yellow glow of its headlight. I took my position across the track to inspect the train and when I turned around it was almost on me. It whistled for the west crossing at Parkbeg and then the engine raced past in a cloud of snow, steam, smoke and cinders, followed by a number of Tuscan express boxes and a 60-foot coach.

I gave the tail end a highball with my lantern and saw the shadow of the tail-end brakeman, and the vestibule door of the coach close. The red marker lamps narrowed as it sped away. The whole occurrence took less than four minutes.”



Uncle Charles “Charlie” Cave (centre)  
and his train crew



# Making Connections

An In-Person Genealogy Conference  
Presented by Alberta Family Histories Society  
October 1, 2022 | Calgary Alberta



### WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND

The AFHS is holding an in-person genealogy conference in Calgary on October 1, 2022. Now that there are so many online webinars, some people may wonder why you would want to attend a genealogy conference?

Tara Shymanski, AFHS Events Coordinator, shares a few of the many benefits of attending an in-person event:

- learn from awesome speakers
- discover new resources
- be inspired and energized to research
- discover new genealogy friends, and maybe even meet a distant cousin
- share experiences with fellow researchers
- make connections

Tara has attended many genealogy conferences over the years, both as a participant and a lecturer. She says, "There is a buzz in the air when you attend an in-person conference that you just don't get with online classes. It is a phenomenal experience to sit around a table and discuss your ancestors with people who understand your excitement."

### WHO WILL I SEE?

This year we have Dave Obee, Jill Browne and Kim Zjalic speaking on diverse topics that include DNA and genealogy, using geography for research, planning a family history trip and preserving a photo legacy. There is so much to learn from these speakers.

### HOW DO I SIGN UP?

Dust off your social skills and prepare to join us at Family Roots – Making Connections. To register, go to the AFHS website, Events, Family History Conference or click on the link below:

<https://afhs.ab.ca/event/family-roots-2022-making-connections-conference>

## Research Round Up

### Calgary's Chinese Cemetery

Roy Aggarwal

The Calgary Chinese Cemetery is Calgary's smallest cemetery at only 3.5 acres but has over 1,200 burials. When the Chinese community originally petitioned the City of Calgary for land to bury Chinese Calgarians in 1906, burials were only meant to be temporary. The Chinese custom was for families to arrange for the bones of their family member to be returned to China for a final burial. So, from 1908 when the City of Calgary granted the use of the land until 1938, when the City took over cemetery operations, that is what happened. In 1950, the community again petitioned the City to change the cemetery to a permanent burial site as Chinese Canadians now wanted their remains to stay in Canada. When they agreed to make the Chinese Cemetery a permanent care site, the City redid the landscaping. It now features a beautiful pagoda, a large concrete and granite historical Chinese memorial, an oven for family members to use to make offerings and options for in-ground or cremation burial.

The cemetery includes many of Calgary's early Chinese pioneers. This includes Kam Chong Wong, who was buried on July 3, 1957. The 76-year old was a restaurant owner for more than 30 years and a leader in the economic, social and cultural life of the community. His funeral procession included over 70 cars and two bands, was led by five police motorcycles, and stretched over ten city blocks on its way to the Chinese Cemetery. The tribute was a rare mixture of Chinese tradition and Christian belief. An estimated 2,000 Chinese community members attended the funeral.

Another Calgary pioneer buried there is Louie Hong, a widower who left his three children behind in China with relatives to come work as a cook on the CPR in 1909. He left the CPR to work for millionaire Pat Burns as a cook on his ranch until 1913. Then Louie opened a store and restaurant in Cluny, Alberta. It was a small place with just a grain elevator and a few residents, but he took a chance like so many entrepreneurial Albertans. Louie also started a laundry, which he hired people to run, and he eventually built a general store in 1916. The store did well and was expanded a number of times. In 1926, he remarried and had nine more children. Louie Hong was known as a generous, reliable and community-minded man with many friends and a great sense of humour.

The Calgary Heritage Authority has deemed the cemetery to be a historically significant cultural landscape that played an important part in the settlement and establishment of Calgary as a city.

You can find out more about the cemetery and the history of Chinese Albertans here:

[www.calgary.ca/csps/parks/cemeteries/chinese-cemetery.html](http://www.calgary.ca/csps/parks/cemeteries/chinese-cemetery.html)

<https://albertaancestors.ca/cemeteries/chinese-cemetery>

[https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/eppp-archive/100/200/301/ic/can\\_digital\\_collections/pasttopresent/opportunity/chinese\\_settlers.html](https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/eppp-archive/100/200/301/ic/can_digital_collections/pasttopresent/opportunity/chinese_settlers.html)

[www.culturalcentre.ca](http://www.culturalcentre.ca)



## Upcoming Events

### CALGARY PUBLIC LIBRARY

#### **Family Treasures - Family Stories Storyteller in Residence Program**

**Calgary Public Library**

June 15, 2022 5:30 - 7:30 pm

<https://calgarylibrary.ca/events-and-programs/programs/2022-storyteller-in-residence-family-treasures-family-stories>

#### **Scottish Indexes Conference XVI**

Virtual conference

**Scottish Indexes**

September 3, 2022

[www.scottishindexes.com](http://www.scottishindexes.com)

### CONFERENCES/WEBINARS

#### **A 19th Century Ontario Enigma - A Case Study with Janice Nickerson**

Virtual webinar

**Legacy Family Tree Webinars**

June 17, 2022 12:00 pm

<http://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/a-19th-century-ontario-enigma-a-case-study>

#### **BIFHSGO 2022 Virtual Conference**

Virtual conference

**British Isles Family History Society of  
Greater Ottawa**

September 28 - October 2, 2022

[www.bifhsgo.ca/2022-BIFHSGO-Conference](http://www.bifhsgo.ca/2022-BIFHSGO-Conference)

#### **Family Roots 2022 Making Connections Conference Alberta Family Histories Society**

October 1, 2022

<https://afhs.ab.ca/event/family-roots-2022-making-connections-conference>

#### **Virtual Conference 2022 - The Past, the Present, and the Future**

Virtual conference

**Ontario Genealogical Society**

June 24 - 25, 2022

<https://conference2022.ogs.on.ca>

#### **Celtic Connections Virtual Conference**

Virtual conference

**The Irish Ancestral Research Association**

July 9 - September 30, 2022

[www.celtic-connections.org/index.html](http://www.celtic-connections.org/index.html)

\*\*All times given are in Mountain Time

#### MORE ONLINE EVENT LISTINGS:

Conference Keeper:

[www.conferencekeeper.org/virtual](http://www.conferencekeeper.org/virtual)

Family Search:

[www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Family\\_History\\_Library\\_Classes\\_and\\_Webinars](http://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Family_History_Library_Classes_and_Webinars)

GENEVA (UK events):

<http://geneva.weald.org.uk/doku.php>

## Volunteer Opportunities

Do you have some time to spare? Alberta Family Histories Society is entirely run by volunteers, and we have tasks both big and small. Here are some of our current opportunities:

Spring has arrived, and our projects team is once again planning field trips to document the cemeteries in Calgary and area. If you would like to help take photos or assist with the indexing, please contact Wendy [projects@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:projects@afhs.ab.ca)

Our webmaster, Jim Benedict, is looking for volunteers to help with the indexing of the birth, marriage and death notices from the *Calgary Herald*. We need **someone to coordinate this project** as well as those willing to do the indexing. If you live in Calgary, this could be done in your own home using the Calgary Public Library's *Calgary Herald* digital archive. If you can help, please contact Jim [webmaster@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:webmaster@afhs.ab.ca)

Do you know how to edit videos or are you interested in learning? We would like another volunteer to assist with the videos that are uploaded to our Meeting Archive on the website. For more information, contact Marion [communications@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:communications@afhs.ab.ca)

Do you have experience with grant-writing? We could use your help! Please contact Patricia, our Director of Finance at [finance@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:finance@afhs.ab.ca)

One of our members is seeking a volunteer to help her create a book out of her family information that she has on Ancestry. If you are able to help her with this project, contact Marion [communications@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:communications@afhs.ab.ca)

We are looking for volunteers that will help distribute posters in early September advertising our upcoming conference, Making Connections. If you can help with this, contact Marion [communications@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:communications@afhs.ab.ca)

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## Library Hours & Opportunities to Connect

### Library Open Hours

#### June Hours

Thursday, 10 am - 2 pm  
Saturday, Noon - 4 pm

#### Summer Hours

Thursday, 10 am - 2 pm  
Saturday, 10 am - 2 pm



### Get in touch with us!

**Email:** [info@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:info@afhs.ab.ca)

**Website:** [www.afhs.ab.ca](http://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.

**Editor:** Amber Godfrey

**Email:** [chinookarch@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:chinookarch@afhs.ab.ca)