

Chinook Arch

March 2023
Volume 5 Issue 3



ALBERTA FAMILY
HISTORIES SOCIETY
Supporting worldwide family history research

NEXT SOCIETY MEETING

Monday, March 13, 2023

Topic: Restoring Great-Grandma's Homestead
Speaker: Wendy Robertson
Location: Zoom
Time: 7 - 9 pm Register [here](#)

FUTURE MEETINGS

Monday, March 20, 2023

Topic: Chit Chat Room
Moderator: Jim Benedict
Location: Zoom
Time: 7 - 8:30 pm

Monday, April 13, 2023 - Society Meeting

Topic: The Other 50% - The Women in Your Tree
Speaker: Diane Duncan
Location: Zoom
Time: 7 - 8:30 pm Register [here](#)

Monday, April 17, 2023

Topic: Chit Chat Room
Moderator: Jim Benedict
Location: Zoom
Time: 7 - 8:30 pm

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NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Watch for our newsletter, *Chinook Arch*, distributed monthly by email from September to June.

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

Marion Peterson

Social media can have its downsides, but, in my opinion, if you aren't harnessing the power of Facebook for genealogy, you are missing out.

Last month, I mentioned that my husband and I are planning a trip to Enniscorthy, Ireland, to visit where my Rath family lived before emigrating to Canada about 1841. I joined the local Enniscorthy History and Photos Facebook page. At first I just lurked, getting a feel for this picturesque small town. Then I created a post saying that we were going to visit and wondering if anyone had any knowledge of the Rath family history. I mentioned I was particularly interested in a townland to the east of Enniscorthy called Oulartwick Beg where I've identified a family whose naming pattern for generations included men named James Rath.

I had rapid replies, including one from a man named Gerald who said he knew of 3 Rath brothers who lived near that townland. Would I like him to ask around? Of course, I replied. An amazing string of correspondence has followed, including photos of a possible farm and a potential visit with another living Rath (who probably isn't a close cousin but has an interest in Rath family history). Without his assistance, our trip would have only included a brief taxi ride along roads that didn't go past the farms that are being identified. Now we are wishing we had allowed more days in this area!

Did you know that Alberta Family Histories Society has two Facebook profiles? One is a public page which is set up with a business profile. Our Facebook admins can make posts, but the public cannot. It is possible for anyone to share them and to make comments. Recently Roy Aggarwal has been doing posts about the history of various cemeteries on our Alberta Ancestors site. These have provided great public exposure for our organization. This public page is great for getting the word out to the general public about our events.

The public AFHS Facebook page does not allow our members to make posts or to interact, so last year we added a completely private members-only group. It is invisible to the outside world, and members must request an invitation link from an admin. Once in this group, you can share interesting posts that you have found, ask and answer questions, make comments and interact with our members. Or you can just lurk if that is what you want to do! If you are a member of AFHS and want to join, just send a message to communications@afhs.ab.ca

Alberta Family Histories Society Members Group



Do you have an interesting story about how Facebook helped you do family history? We'd love to hear it! Share it as a "brag" at a meeting, write it up for an Ancestor Anecdote in an upcoming Chinook Arch, or do a post in the Members-Only Facebook Group. I look forward to hearing your stories.

Genealogical Serendipity

Ron Gilmore

In our family, I am the traditional source of genealogical effort. That means that I work away on my family, but I also spend significant effort on my wife Wendy's family. I always thought she was descended from German ancestors, and she is, but we recently discovered that there are also some Irish ancestors on her side. What led to this discovery was her mother one day launching into singing an Irish ditty that we had never heard before, and then following this up with chatting away with an Irish accent! This intrigued me since my paternal ancestors originated in Ireland and I have done some significant research there. So, I launched a new research project to unearth my wife's Irish family.

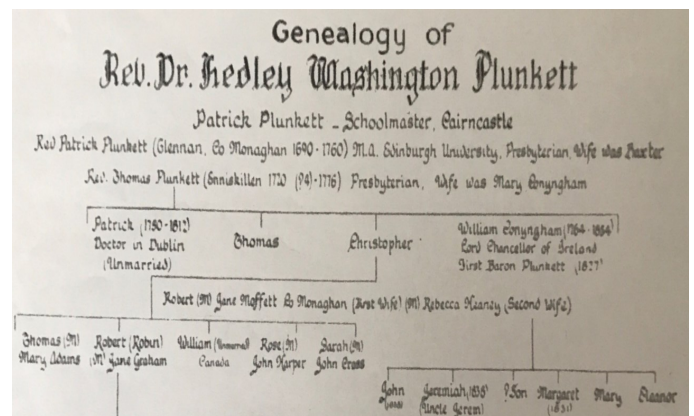
My project began with a visit to a cemetery in Marmora, Hastings County, Ontario, where we found the single tombstone of Wendy's great-great-grandfather, John Alexander Plunkett. From his marriage records, we learned that John had been married twice. His death record showed that he had died rather young, only 40 years old, from malaria. Wait, malaria in Canada? We do have lots of mosquitoes, but it still seemed strange. His parents were Robert Plunkett and Rebecca Henry, from County Fermanagh, Ireland.

At this stage, we were stuck. I began looking for similar families on Ancestry and Family Search and finally Family Search provided me with some clues. Pursuing these, I found an anomaly. A potential ancestor of Robert Plunkett had a wife named Mary Conyngham, but another clue led me to believe her mother was also named Mary Conyngham. Possible but not likely.

I contacted both contributors of these family trees to see if they could provide source records to validate the names. The first chap I contacted replied to me the next day and he was unable to help. However, a week later, the second author responded and said, "My only source is a handwritten family tree diagram that hangs in my mother-in-law's kitchen."

Karen Libra, bless her soul, promptly sent me an image of the diagram. Wow! There was the entire family of Robert Plunkett and Rebecca Heaney/Henry, including Wendy's great-great-grandfather John. The diagram, laid out neatly with beautiful handwriting, also had Robert's first wife and their five children. Intriguingly, several of the children of John's half-brother Robert were listed with the notation (Canada) under their names and another half-brother, William, also had the same note.

The tree went back another three generations, to a Patrick Plunkett, schoolmaster, of Cairncastle. Patrick's grandson, William Conyngham Plunkett, is listed as "Lord Chancellor of Ireland" and "First Baron Plunkett, 1827." William's mother is the elusive Mary Conyngham, who married Rev. Thomas Plunkett of Inniskillen. I have no idea what a Lord Chancellor does for a living but it sure looks impressive. Now Wendy wants to know if her ancestors lived in a castle!



This small investigation has yielded a host of Wendy's folks who also emigrated to Canada. In addition, we were able to move backwards in time. Now, we are working our way through this list of immigrants to learn where they landed and what communities they settled in. We had seen some of them in nearby cemeteries but were missing a connection. Thank you so much Karen! Genealogical serendipity, and some creative thinking, have given us many more clues to follow up on.

Special Interest Groups

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

SIGs are now being held in multiple formats: in-person, Zoom only or a hybrid version (in-person & Zoom). Check the calendar on our website for up-to-date information or email the SIG leader.

SIGs are an AFHS member benefit. If you would like to attend a SIG meeting to try one out before joining, ask for an invitation from:

communications@afhs.ab.ca

CELTIC SIG (Irish/Scots)

Meets on the 4th Saturday
10 am – Noon
celticsig@afhs.ab.ca

DIGITAL GENEALOGY SIG

Meets on the 2nd Saturday
10 am – Noon
familygenes@afhs.ab.ca

ENGLISH/WELSH SIG

Meets on the 3rd Saturday
10 am – Noon
englishwelshsig@afhs.ab.ca

FAMILY TREE MAKER SIG

Meets on the 1st Saturday
10 am – Noon
ftmsig@afhs.ab.ca

LEGACY SIG

Meets on the 4th Sunday
1:30 – 3:30 pm
legacysig@afhs.ab.ca

ONTARIO SIG

Meets on the 4th Monday
1:30 – 3:30 pm
ontariosig@afhs.ab.ca

DNA SIG

Meets on the 2nd Sunday
12:30 – 2:30 pm
dnasig@afhs.ab.ca

The SIG groups do not meet during the summer (July and August)

The AFHS Library is located at **712 - 16 Avenue NW, Calgary** and in-person SIG group meetings are held there.

The Library has over twelve thousand print items and many are available to be borrow for a one-month loan. Electronic resources include computers, a multi-function printer, scanners (flatbed and overhead) and a microfiche reader. Journals from around the world are available to view in-library in either print or digital formats. As a FamilySearch Affiliate Library, visitors can view additional FamilySearch digital records at the AFHS library that they can't see at home.

MONTHLY SCHEDULE

DATE	GROUP	TIME/FORMAT	TOPIC
11 Mar 2023 Saturday	Digital Genealogy SIG/ Family Genes Group	10 am to noon <i>Hybrid</i>	BMD indexing, photo books using Power-Point and new features for Family Genes
12 Mar 2023 Sunday	DNA SIG	12:30 to 2:30 pm <i>Zoom only</i>	Review of DNA sessions from RootsTech
18 Mar 2023 Saturday	English/Welsh SIG	10 am to noon <i>Zoom only</i>	Welsh records
25 Mar 2023 Saturday	Celtic SIG	10 am to noon <i>Hybrid</i>	Research Resources for Counties in Ireland and Scotland
26 Mar 2023 Sunday	Legacy SIG	1:30 to 3:30 pm <i>Zoom only</i>	Legacy software help and tips
27 Mar 2023 Monday	Ontario SIG	1:30 to 3:30 pm <i>Hybrid</i>	The Family Bible: do you own one or have you found a relative with one?
1 Apr 2023 Saturday	Family Tree Maker SIG	10 am to noon <i>Zoom only</i>	Sharing what you learned at RootsTech

Using Artificial Intelligence Engine ChatGPT for Genealogical Research

ChatGPT

This article was written by artificial intelligence engine ChatGPT and is offered without human editing. John Smiley will be providing a short demonstration of how to use ChatGPT for genealogical research at the March 13 meeting.

ChatGPT can be a valuable tool for individual researchers looking to augment their genealogical research. While the technology was initially developed for natural language processing tasks such as chatbots and language translation, it can also be used to provide background information about historical events, people, and places.

One way researchers can use ChatGPT is to get a better understanding of the historical context of their research. By asking ChatGPT questions about a specific time and place, researchers can get detailed information about the social, economic, and political factors that shaped the lives of their ancestors. For example, researchers could ask ChatGPT about life in a particular town during a certain time period, and get information about the local economy, notable events, and important figures from that time.

ChatGPT can also be used to uncover interesting details and anecdotes about historical figures. By asking ChatGPT questions about specific people, researchers can learn about their lives, accomplishments, and personal relationships. For example, researchers could ask ChatGPT about a specific ancestor and get information about their occupation, family life, and noteworthy achievements.

Another way researchers can use ChatGPT is to get information about specific cultural practices and traditions. By asking ChatGPT questions about traditional customs, researchers can learn about the cultural heritage of their ancestors and gain a better understanding of their family history. For example, researchers could ask ChatGPT about traditional wedding customs in a particular region and get information about the significance of different rituals and ceremonies.

Overall, ChatGPT can be a valuable tool for individual researchers looking to add some color to their genealogical research. By providing background information about historical events, people, and places, ChatGPT can help researchers better understand the lives of their ancestors and the context in which they lived. Additionally, ChatGPT can help researchers uncover interesting details and anecdotes about historical figures and cultural practices, adding depth and richness to their family histories.

From the ChatGPT website:

Introducing ChatGPT

We've trained a model called ChatGPT which interacts in a conversational way. The dialogue format makes it possible for ChatGPT to answer followup questions, admit its mistakes, challenge incorrect premises, and reject inappropriate requests.

<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt>



Data Mining for Ancestors

Jim Benedict

The AFHS website has a new feature for you to explore. “Routes to Roots” is a collection of several diverse AFHS databases that are now available on a single search page. The collection spans cemeteries, family trees, newspaper notices and World War I military lists. To access the search page, visit the AFHS website and, on the menu bar at the top of the page, click on Research and then on Routes to Roots.



Routes to Roots

– Data Mining for Ancestors –

This website has a wealth of information on the peoples of southern Alberta: burial records, family trees, newspaper notices and more. Use the search feature to follow new routes to uncover the ancestral roots in your family studies.

How does it work? Start by noting the stack of sections outlined in green, each containing useful information and results. Clicking on the red arrows in the sections expands them so you can see additional information. Explore these sections for explanations and useful tips. Then use the Search box to look for information. You can start with just a surname, or you can add a given name, a death year, or some other combination of search terms. The more information you enter in the search box, the more exact the results that will be returned. However, you might end up excluding some useful results, so try entering either more or less specific terms to see if it improves your query.

The **Cemeteries** results come from our Alberta Ancestors website. If you have results in this section, you can narrow down the list further by using the alphabet filter line at the top. Any letter that is light grey is not available. Click on a blue letter to further filter the results in the left column or click on All to turn the filter off. If the display is not long enough, you can scroll down to change the count of displayed lines. And you can sort the list up or down on any column just by clicking on the column heading. If you have a result, you can then click on the small gravestone icon in the Plot column to be taken to that person’s burial information on the Alberta Ancestors website.

The **Family Trees** section extracts person records from the Family Genes website, which contains studies done by some of our fellow AFHS members. Click on the Profile links in the right column to be taken to that individual’s genealogy profile page.

The **Newspaper Notices** sections are for birth, marriage and death notices (and coming soon other announcements too) that have been transcribed from Calgary newspapers. We plan to expand this to Southern Alberta in the future. The results will tell you the newspaper name, publication date and the page number, so that you can look it up through other online sources, like Newspapers.com or Calgary Public Library.

The **Military** sections contain research done some years ago on World War I soldiers who enlisted in southern Alberta and were either killed during the war or returned home afterwards. It includes general information on the battalions that were created in southern Alberta and a glossary of common military terms.

None of this would be possible without the many contributors who collected and made this information available. Thanks to Roy Aggarwal for his work on the website development and coding, Wendy Schultz and her team of cemetery trekkers, Mabel Kiessling and her helpers on queries, and the BMD indexers for helping to unearth those newspaper notices.

There is still some behind-the-scenes work going on to make all the information accessible so please let the webmaster (webmaster@afhs.ab.ca) know if you find any errors or problems when using the website.

CALGARY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Family History Coaching

In-person at Central Library

Calgary Public Library

March 25, 2023 1:00 – 3:00 pm

<https://calgarylibrary.ca/events-and-programs/programs/family-history-coaching>

CONFERENCES/WEBINARS

*all times listed are in MST

Germans from Russia: Tools, Tips, and Tricks

Virtual conference

Genealogical Forum of Oregon

March 11 – 19, 2023 11:30 am

<https://gfo.org/learn/open-house-2023.html>

Family Tree Maker: Introduction to Update 24.1

Virtual webinar

Heritage Seekers Genealogy Club

March 13, 2023 5:30 pm

<https://heritageseekersar.com/subscribe>

Casualty Identification Program: Identifying Remains of Canadian Service Members

Virtual webinar

Campbell River Genealogy Society

March 18, 2023 10:00 am

www.crgenealogysociety.ca

Genealogy 101 – 2-Part Workshop

Alberta Family Histories Society

March 19, 2023 1:00 – 2:30 pm Hybrid

April 2, 2023 1:00 – 2:30 pm Zoom

<https://afhs.ab.ca/event/genealogy-101-2-part-workshop>

Gene-O-Rama 2023 Annual Seminar

Virtual conference

Ottawa Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society

March 25, 2023 6:30 am – 2:45 pm

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

“DNA Matches” & “DNA (Genetic Genealogy) Tools” with Mags Gauden

Virtual webinar

Qualicum Beach Family History Society

March 25, 2023 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

www.qbfhs.ca/category/speakers

3-2-1 Data Backup is Great, But First You Need to Find All of Your Data by Andy Klein

Virtual webinar

Legacy Webinars

March 29, 2023 Noon – 1:00 pm

<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/3-2-1-data-backup-is-great-but-first-you-need-to-find-all-of-you-data/#>

RootsTech 2023

Virtual webinars

FamilySearch

Available until 2024

www.familysearch.org/rootstech

Alberta Family Histories Society Information

Alberta Family History Society is a registered non-profit organization that welcomes anyone interested in genealogy and family history! For over 40 years, we've helped people grow their family trees and discover the stories of their roots. We have substantial resources about Calgary and southern Alberta but can help you research your roots worldwide. Our website is <https://afhs.ab.ca>.

We learn from each other in a variety of settings – Society meetings, Special Interest Group meetings, workshops and biannual conferences. For up-to-date meeting information, see our website calendar at <https://afhs.ab.ca/calendar>.

Visit one of our best resources - our library! Our collection is broad with an emphasis on materials pertaining to Alberta and Canada. We are a FamilySearch Affiliate Library. Our volunteers look forward to showing you what we have to offer for your genealogy research. You can view a catalogue of our holdings at <https://afhs.ab.ca/library>.

Documenting local historical records is part of our mission. Alberta Ancestors is a special project to showcase cemetery records at <https://albertaancestors.ca>. With more than 70 cemeteries and over 130,000 photographs, it is a priceless resource.

Members have a wealth of opportunities to share strategies, struggles, successes and stories with others who appreciate the challenges of this hobby. One option is for members to share family tree projects and to post stories online as part of our Family Genes website at <https://www.familygenes.ca>.

We welcome visitors, so please drop in at a meeting and introduce yourself. Come see how our services and programs can fit your needs. We hope you will join us either in-person or virtually! To receive a guest Zoom invitation to one of our Society meetings, contact Marion at communications@afhs.ab.ca.

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AFHS LIBRARY & OFFICE

ADDRESS:

712 - 16 Avenue NW

Library Open Hours

January to June 2023

Thursday, 10 am - 2 pm

Saturday, Noon - 4 pm

**Check the website calendar for time changes or closures.*



ALBERTA FAMILY
HISTORIES SOCIETY

CONTACT US

Email: info@afhs.ab.ca

Website: www.afhs.ab.ca

Phone: 403-214-1447

Facebook: Alberta Family Histories Society

Instagram: abfamilyhistoriessociety



Land Acknowledgement

In the spirit of reconciliation, we would like to acknowledge that the land on which we gather and where we work to preserve the records and family history of those who came before us are on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot (Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani), the Tsúut'ínà, the Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3) and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.