

Chinook Arch

November 2025
Volume 7 Issue 9



ALBERTA FAMILY
HISTORIES SOCIETY
Supporting worldwide family history research

NEXT SOCIETY MEETING

Monday, November 10, 2025

Topic: Stories of Those Who Served
Speaker: AFHS members
Location: In-person and Zoom (register on our website calendar)
Time: 7 – 9 pm

FUTURE MEETINGS

Monday, November 17, 2025

Topic: Chit Chat Session
Hosts: Linda Murray and Kelly Southworth
Location: Zoom (register on website calendar)
Time: 7 – 8:30 pm
Topic: Family Heirlooms

Monday, December 8, 2025

Topic: Christmas Catalogues: What Do You Want for Christmas?
Speaker: Christine Hayes
Location: In-person and Zoom (register on our website calendar)
Time: 7 – 9 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 with copyright-free pictures. Favourite relatives, fond family memories, research tips and tricks, new genealogy technology you love, book reviews or any related topics are accepted.

Editor: Amber Godfrey

Email: chinookarch@afhs.ab.ca

President's Message

Gordon Lane

As a third generation military veteran, I feel a deep sense of connection to the generations of service in my family. I was in the Royal Air Force, my father served in the Royal Navy during World War II, and my grandfather served in the British Army during World War I. The upcoming AFHS Society Meeting holds special significance for me, as some of our members will present stories of their family's history of military service. It's a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices made and the legacy carried forward by so many families. Join us in person or attend by Zoom on **Monday, November 10, 2025** at 7 pm at the AFHS Resource Centre.

An opportunity to help shape the future of the Alberta Family History Society is coming up on **Sunday, November 23, 2025** at **2:30 pm**. We will be having an in-person strategic planning session at the AFHS Resource Centre. This meeting is a valuable opportunity to contribute your insights and ideas on how our Society should move into the future. We will be planning our priorities for the coming year and need your ideas and feedback. So mark the date and time on your calendar and make plans to attend!

As we prepare for the 2026 fiscal year, the volunteers on our leadership team are reminded that we need your proposed budgets to help us allocate our resources efficiently and effectively. In mid-November, our finance team will send historical data to our leaders to assist with the planning. Please prepare your budget proposals based on anticipated needs, strategic goals and any planned initiatives for the upcoming year. Make sure you include justifications for any significant increases or new line items, and send them to our Finance Director, Anna Babaeva, by **November 25, 2025**.

Volunteer Opportunities

Our major fundraiser for the year, a 2-day Casino Event, is happening on **March 2 & 3, 2026** and our Casino Manager still needs several volunteers for a variety of positions. If you are available to help out or have any questions about volunteering for this event, please email Jane at casino@afhs.ab.ca

AFHS is still looking for a volunteer or volunteers to help with the upkeep on the website. If you have WordPress or coding experience and would be interested in joining the team, please email webmaster@afhs.ab.ca

At the **May 2026 AFHS Annual General Meeting** we will need to elect a new President, as I will not be putting my name up for re-election. The role is not difficult and we have a wonderful Board of Directors that help with all the tasks involved in running the Society. If you are thinking about putting your name forward and have any questions, please email me at president@afhs.ab.ca



Lest We Forget



The Family History Moment

Ron Gilmore

The house was filled with laughter, chatting, hugs, smiles and the wonderful aroma of Melanie's roasted turkey. Our three kids and their partners all arrived with additional food items. Wendy's sister Lynne and her son brought some still-hot marshmallow topped yams and diced turnip. Kimmy's homemade buns joined a feast of boiled beets, Wendy's "enhanced potatoes" (she adds loads of butter, sour cream, and bacon bits), roast turkey, turkey dressing, gravy, coleslaw, stewed corn with cheese and bacon, and tomato aspic. For dessert, there was apple crisp (made with our own apples), pumpkin pie (including a gluten-free one especially for me) and lemon meringue pie with ice cream and whipped cream.

Kim and Chad's three big dogs roamed amongst the gatherers, greeting each person and eventually settling down on the floor, with big Bentley completely stretched out under the festively decorated dinner table. As part of our custom, Tom shared grace before we launched into the amazing meal amidst the ongoing chattering and laughter.

For my part of our tradition at these family gatherings, I introduced a Family History Moment with an old photograph of three elderly ladies, all clad in long, dark dresses. These were the Moncrief sisters: Mary, Eliza and Sarah. The three sisters were the daughters of William Moncrief and Mary Armstrong who had emigrated from Ireland with their family just prior to the Great Famine to an area north of Peterborough, Ontario. Mary and Eliza were born in Ireland, while Sarah was born in Otonabee, Ontario.

The girls had married into local farming families. Sarah, the lady on the right, is Wendy's great-great-grandmother. She married a William Nelson, and together they raised nine children. As always, there is a need to research Sarah and her siblings further. We learned that evening, from Wendy's sister, that there was a Moncrief Dairy in Peterborough. A possible family connection? Yet another family history clue to pursue.

Folks each searched the old photo for family resemblances and tried to decide if Mary is holding a gun or perhaps a walking stick? They keenly inspected the "rifle" and the background. Questions abounded about how they survived in the rudimentary settlements of rural Ontario of the time. We wondered about their social lives and their many challenges. The photo was a reminder that for many of the people in the room, smiling Sarah was their blood ancestor.

So now, we begin planning for our Christmas family gathering. And I wonder what family history artifact I should bring out to share. Many, many choices here. Great fun lies ahead once more!

Perhaps you can start a Family History Moment at your own gatherings. It doesn't have to be a photo, it could be an artifact like Grandpa's old spyglass, Grandma's china pancake dish or a green glass deviled egg dish belonging to Aunt Nelle! If you have young children, maybe choose an old toy of their parents or grandparents to talk about. All great ways to engage younger family members in their family history.



War Brides from Ashtead, England

Ann Williams

On September 3, 1939, Britain declared war on Germany, and Canada did the same seven days later. Canadian troops began crossing the Atlantic in small convoys of troopships in December. The Royal Canadian Corps of Signals (RCCS) was a unit of the Canadian Army that maintained vital communications using radio, telephone and messengers.

The British army lost its equipment in the evacuation from Dunkirk in June of 1940 and, to help fill the gap, Canadian troops moved into southern England to defend against the expected enemy invasion. The 1st Canadian Corps of Signals arrived in Ashtead, Surrey, England, on July 21, 1940. Some of the men camped, while others stayed with local families or in empty homes. Their meals were prepared by army cooks.

Apart from the officers, most of the Canadians were young and missed home. Some of them were in Ashtead for almost four years and many a friendship with a local girl turned to love. But before marrying, a Canadian soldier needed permission from his commanding officer, his prospective bride had to supply references and be interviewed, and both parties had to have blood tests (a pre-wedding requirement in Canada at the time). It would then be the turn of mothers (some of whom had married men in WW1 uniforms) to watch as their daughters married men in WW2 uniforms.

Couples set up home either with the bride's parents or in rented accommodation where they could enjoy a degree of normal life. Canadian soldiers could apply for "sleeping out privileges," which, if granted, meant that the men could spend the night with their families but had to be back at their billets for breakfast.

While they lived in Ashtead, the soldiers attended courses, went on training exercises, and kept fit with early morning exercise and sports. They dug trenches to shelter in during the 341 air raids that were recorded between August 13, 1940 and July 28, 1941 in the Unit's War Diaries. In 1941, while off duty, 26 of the unit helped bring in the hay crop on an Ashtead farm.

The following three lads and their lovely Ashtead ladies had connections to Alberta, either before or after the war. The last couple are even buried in Calgary at the Queens Park Cemetery.

George Henry Adlam and Patricia "Bernie" Kelly



Married at St. Giles Church, Ashtead, in 1943, they were both just 22 years old. Bernie worked as a General Post Office telegraphist. While on their Scottish honeymoon, George was recalled to take part in the invasion of Sicily.

In the final months of the war, Bernie sailed to Canada, her ship zig-zagging across the Atlantic to avoid German U-boats. On landing, she travelled to Calgary where she stayed with her mother-in-law. George returned to Canada in mid-1945. He and Bernie lived in Ontario while George studied veterinary medicine at the University of Guelph. After graduating in 1949, the couple returned to Calgary.

George gained experience by working in the Calgary Small Animal Hospital and, by 1951, was a Veterinary Inspector for the Canadian Department of Agriculture. The following year they took possession of a house on an acre of land, built by the government for returning soldiers, in the then scattered community of Bowness, near Calgary.

The *Calgary Herald* newspaper reported a story on August 31, 1946 titled "Calgarian Eases Dog's Suffering." While he was on his way home from work, George found a stray Scottish terrier that had had a run-in with a porcupine. He offered to adopt it if a previous owner was not found. George's father, a well-known music teacher in the Calgary area who died in 1940, had come from Scotland so the young vet may have had a special soft spot for the Scottish breed.

George and Bernie later emigrated to New Zealand where George became the chief of Animal Health for the New Zealand Department of Agriculture.

Robert Forshner and Daisy “Mickey” Smith



Just 19, Mickey married Bob, who was 26, in 1944. She was working in a munitions factory during the war. Mickey sailed for Canada in 1945, travelling on to Mildred, Saskatchewan, to stay with Bob's farming family. Bob joined her in 1945.

In 1951, Bob and his brother Mort homesteaded in Sunset House, Alberta, on 320 acres of land each. They took their own prefabricated houses with them. For the first few years they all spent the winters in Slave Lake, where Bob and Mort took jobs. The income financed the summer months when they cleared the wilderness so they could grow crops and vegetable gardens. They dug their own wells, while wood burning stoves provided heat. They used coal-oil, and later gas, for lighting. Going into town for supplies would be a two- or three-day trip. Their children took correspondence courses until 1955 when they could finally get to a school. Good roads and electricity didn't come to Sunset House until 1961. But it was a close-knit community with neighbours always ready to help or to throw a party.

James Marling and Joyce Clowser

James (25) and Joyce (20) were married at St. Giles Church in 1943. Joyce was a munitions worker during the war. Jim left Ashtead before D-Day and took part in the liberation of Holland.

The parents of James Marling put an announcement in the Saturday, October 9, 1943, *Montreal Star* when they found out their son had married.

Overseas Marriage

Sergeant James Ross Marling, of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals, Overseas, was married to Miss Joyce Clowser recently in St. Giles Church, Ashtead, Surrey.

The bridegroom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. James Ross Marling, of Montreal. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. Clowser of Ashtead, Surrey.

For her marriage the bride wore white satin with veil and carried a bouquet of roses. She had one attendant, her sister, Miss Muriel Clowser. Merritt Murray, of Montreal, R.C.C. of S. was best man. The couple went to Torquay for their honeymoon.

Joyce left Southampton for Canada in 1945, and the couple made their home in Montreal where Jim worked for Northern Telecom.

After retirement, they spent about ten years in England (near Littlehampton, Sussex) before returning to Canada. They moved to Calgary around 1988, and Jim died there in 2002, aged 84. Joyce passed away in 2015, and they are both buried in Queens Park Cemetery in Calgary. You can find a picture of their gravestone on the AFHS Alberta Ancestors website.

<https://albertaancestors.ca>

In Flanders' Fields

by John McCrae

In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place, and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing fly,
Scarce heard amidst the guns below.
We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe,
To you from falling hands we throw
The Torch – be yours to hold it high;
If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep though poppies grow
In Flanders' fields.



Special Interest Groups

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs) are a major benefit of being an AFHS member. The small-group setting is the ideal place to expand your knowledge and share your own family history challenges. SIGs provide the opportunity to ask questions, obtain help from more experienced researchers and get to know other AFHS members.

If you are an AFHS member and would like to be added to a SIG distribution list or if you would like to attend a SIG meeting as a guest before joining AFHS, please contact communications@afhs.ab.ca

SIGs are now being held in three formats: in-person only, Zoom only or a hybrid version of both. Check the calendar on our website for up-to-date information or email the SIG leader. The SIGs do not meet during July and August.

SIG GROUP	NEXT MEETING	TIME	CONTACT
BASICS	Saturday, November 29	10 am – Noon	basics@afhs.ab.ca
CELTIC (Irish/Scots)	Saturday, November 22	10 am – Noon	celticsig@afhs.ab.ca
DIGITAL GENEALOGY	Saturday, November 8	10 am – Noon	familygenes@afhs.ab.ca
DNA	Sunday, November 9	12:30 – 2:30 pm	dnasig@afhs.ab.ca
ENGLISH/WELSH	Saturday, November 15	10 am – Noon	englishwelshsig@afhs.ab.ca
FAMILY TREE MAKER	Saturday, December 6	10 am – Noon	ftmsig@afhs.ab.ca
LEGACY	Tuesday, November 25	7:00 – 9:00 pm	legacysig@afhs.ab.ca
ONTARIO	Monday, November 24	1:30 – 3:30 pm	ontariosig@afhs.ab.ca
WRITING	Friday, November 14	9:30 – 11:30 am	writing@afhs.ab.ca

The AFHS Resource Centre is located at **Suite 251S, 8500 Macleod Trail SE** and all in-person SIG meetings are held there. Members are encouraged to stay after meetings, when possible, to browse the collection!

Our collection has over twelve thousand print items, and many are available to be borrowed 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 either print or digital formats. As a **FamilySearch Affiliate Library**, visitors can now view additional FamilySearch digital records at the AFHS Resource Centre that they can't see at home. We also have a subscription to the Canadian newspapers on Newspaper Archive.

SIG NEWS

Our members can watch recorded sessions of past Society and SIG meetings and view handouts at the AFHS website. You must be **signed in to the website** to access them. Go to Resources, then click on Meeting Videos & Handouts.

- Tara Shymanski's presentation on using FamilySearch to find Ontario land records from the October meeting of the Ontario SIG has been uploaded to the Resources section.
- At the English/Welsh SIG in November, Iris Morgan is doing a presentation on English clay and Steve Henley shares more on his research into English photography.
- The November meeting of the Celtic SIG will have the second part of a presentation on Selkirk Records.
- Nancy Leveque is doing a presentation on Wesleyan Methodist Baptism Records at the November meeting of the Ontario SIG.

Chit Chat Session Highlights

Family Recipes

Attendees of the AFHS Chit Chat Session



At the most recent AFHS Chit Chat Session, which is an informal online meeting of AFHS members and guests to chat about genealogy-related topics, they discussed Family Recipes.

Linda Murray and Kelly Southworth host the group once a month, and it is normally held on the third Monday of each month from September to May. The next one will be on November 17, and the topic is family heirlooms. To receive your invitation, just email Linda at library@afhs.ab.ca

Dawn Lavigne

Two cherished Christmas baking traditions in my family have always been Alfajores and Nanaimo bars. My maternal grandmother, who sadly passed away just weeks before I was born, used to make them with my mother. As I grew up, I continued the tradition by baking them with her and continue to this day with my own daughter.

The Nanaimo bars likely traced back to my maternal grandfather's side of the family. His Scottish ancestors immigrated to Canada and settled in the Nanaimo area, where the Nanaimo bars originated. They became a popular Canadian treat in the early 1950s.

At 21, I traveled to Argentina for the first time—my grandmother's homeland. As I walked the streets of Buenos Aires, I was struck by the sight of Alfajores displayed in nearly every bakery and cafe window. In that moment, I realized these cookies connected me to my grandmother's heritage and my family history.

Marlene Knott

We love sweets in our family, and when a friend gave me a recipe for Lemon Loaf, it became a favourite of my husband and two sons. My younger son enjoys baking for his family in England, and one of their favourites is the Lemon Loaf. My grandson loves baking like his father, and on his reading week break from the University of Toronto, he made the loaf at his friend's house, the same day as our Chit Chat!

My eldest granddaughter is living in eastern Ecuador, near the Amazon, and she asked for some cake and loaf recipes for her husband and two daughters. At first, the chocolate cake was the favourite, but once she tried the lemon loaf, it is the one most requested. She also makes it to sell at a small market they have near their village.

Linda Holdaway

I first started cooking when I was in grade 3. Over the years, I have collected a number of cookbooks. I have my Mom's original Five Roses Flour cookbook plus my mother-in-law's cookbook with her recipes written out by hand. One cookbook shares recipes from various members of a specific family line. Some of them just automatically fall open to the best recipe in that particular book!

The process of cooking contributes to fond family memories. I enjoy making meals with our granddaughters. This year, the 13-year-old made the crock pot stuffing and the 9-year-old enjoyed the potatoes from Grandma's garden on Thanksgiving.

Kelly Southworth

For Kelly, the savoury dish Pease Pudding is still regularly made in her family. The name was changed to Pease Porridge when Mother Goose was published in USA, and you may remember the rhyme *Pease Porridge Hot!* Originally a pottage, essentially soup, vegetable or meat depending on what was available, thickened with grain or pulses, it was cooked on an open fire in a large cooking pot. It is a traditional British dish, common since the Middle Ages.

It went out of fashion in most of England in the 18th century, but remained popular in the North East, where Kelly's Mum hailed from. Still famous there, it's known as "Geordie Humus." Kelly's family still serves it every Easter. She can trace a continuous line of women in her family who have made Pease Pudding, back to the 1850s!

Neighbours...Forever!

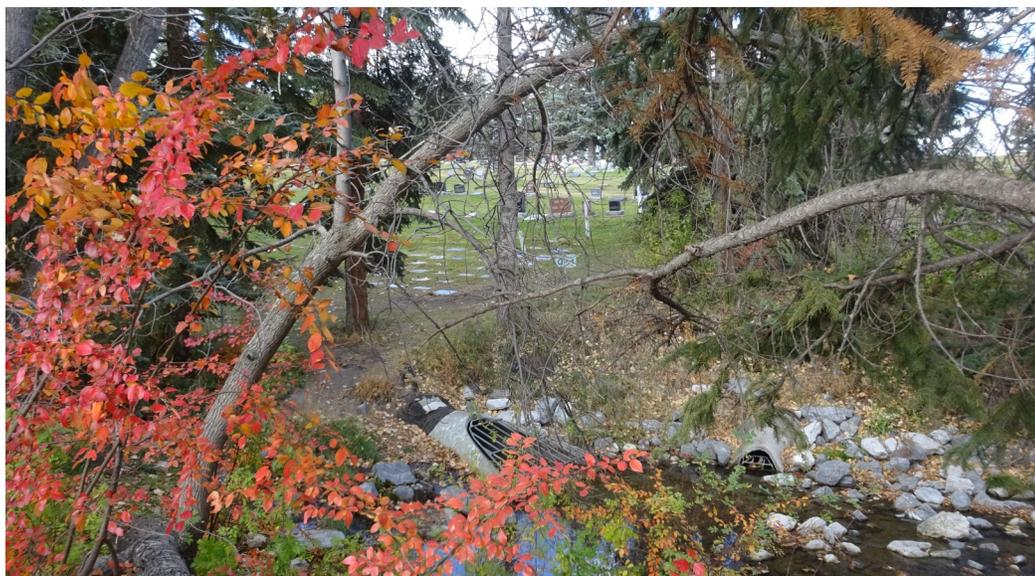
Jim Benedict

We celebrated Thanksgiving this year inviting our two grandchildren for turkey festivities and also our two neighbours, Jim and Edna Foley. Our friendship with the Foleys goes back a couple of decades now. We can see each other's homes across the back alley from us. We are similar in age, retired couples enjoying the adjacent park and occasional gossip across the way. Jim and I both belong to AFHS, and we chat about our family tree research.

The evening started out with the usual neighbour chatter, then it drifted to family heirlooms, what to pass along to the next generation, and then to where our parents were buried. Both the Foleys and the Benedicts agreed that we would be cremated and interred with our parents. Edna: "So where are your parents buried?" Jim: "Why, in Queen's Park Cemetery here in Calgary. It's so lovely, where they are interred, down a gentle slope and beside a water stream." Edna, excited, "So are my parents!"

I whipped out my phone and went to our Society's cemetery website, Alberta Ancestors. I asked, "What is the family name?" Edna replied, "Gardner. My father's name was Edwin F. Gardner and my mother was Mildred." I quickly found the cemetery marker and showed them a photo of the gravestone. Then I checked the burial location. Section K. This looks familiar. I then checked the information on my own parents and looked up my dad, Albert Charles Benedict, buried with my mom, Winnifred. A chill goes down my spine. Also Section K. Gulp.

"Okay, then," said Edna, "Whereabouts in Section K?" I replied, "Your folks are in Row 1A and my folks are in Row 2A". Nervous laughter broke out. The grandkids were baffled. We all thought it, but didn't say it, "We are going to be cremated, then buried as neighbours!"



To see if you may find yourself in a similar strange circumstance with your friends or neighbours, or just to see if you have family buried in Calgary, check out the AFHS Alberta Ancestors website:

<https://albertaancestors.ca>

Upcoming Events

CALGARY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Family History Coaching

In-person at Central Library

Calgary Public Library

November 29, 2025 1:00 – 3:00 pm

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

*all times listed are in MDT

*events are free unless \$

AFHS RESOURCE CENTRE EVENT

Sir John A. Macdonald: the Vision, the Controversy and the Cost of Nationhood

In-Person at AFHS Resource Centre or by Zoom (AFHS members welcome)

Calgary Association of Lifelong Learners

December 4, 2025 11:00 am

AFHS members who wish to attend, contact Jim Benedict at webmaster@afhs.ab.ca

Invaded! The Fenian Raids and the Canadian Response with Kathryn Lake Hogan

Virtual

Ontario Ancestors

November 6, 2025 5:00 pm

ogs.on.ca/november-webinar-invaded-the-fenian-raids-and-the-canadian-response-kathryn-lake-hogan/

Don't forget to sign up for RootsTech 2026!
Registration is open now.

March 5-7, 2026

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech>

Where are My Military Records?

Hybrid

BIFHSGO

November 8, 2025 7:00 am

www.bifhsgo.ca/events

Exploring Library and Archives Canada Online: Navigating the New Website with Ken McKinlay

Virtual

Ontario Ancestors, Huron Branch

November 11, 2025 5:00 pm

lambton.ogs.on.ca/events/lambton-nov-11-meeting-with-ken-mckinlay-exploring-the-archives/

The Lost Children Project

Virtual

Ontario Ancestors, British Home Children SIG

November 13, 2025 11:00 am

<https://ogs.on.ca/events/the-lost-children-project>

Using Homestead Records to Tell Your Ancestor's Story

Virtual

Legacy Family Tree Webinars

November 18, 2025 6:00 pm

<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/using-homestead-records-to-tell-your-ancestors-story>

Scottish Indexes Conference

Virtual

Scottish Indexes Conference

November 22, 2025

www.scottishindexes.com/conference.aspx

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About Our Society

Alberta Family Histories 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 most valuable resources - the **AFHS Resource Centre**! While our collection has an emphasis on materials pertaining to Alberta and Canada, we also have subscription databases, basic genealogy books and information from around the world. AFHS is a **FamilySearch Affiliate Library**, which gives you access to FamilySearch records you can't view at home. 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>. Our site features over 350 cemeteries and more than 260,000 memorials.

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 the **AFHS Society Meetings**, contact Marion at communications@afhs.ab.ca.

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AFHS RESOURCE CENTRE

**Suite 251S, 8500 Macleod Trail SE
Calgary, AB T2M 0J8**

Fall/Winter Hours

Thursday, 10 am – 2 pm

Friday, 10 am – 2 pm

Saturday, Noon – 4 pm

Check our website calendar for any time changes or closures.

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 Confederacy (comprising of the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani First Nations), the Tsúú'tínà, the Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki, Bearspaw and Goodstoney First Nations), the Métis Nation (Districts 5 & 6) and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.