



# THE BRITISH COLUMBIA GENEALOGIST



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# BRITISH COLUMBIA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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## BCGS GENEALOGICAL LIBRARY

211 - 12837 76th Avenue  
Surrey, BC

Telephone 604-502-9119

Email: [library@bcgs.ca](mailto:library@bcgs.ca)

The BCGS Library will be open on  
Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays  
from 10:00 am to 3:00pm.

Appointments are no longer necessary but masks  
will follow the direction of the BC Ministry of Health.



The **BRITISH COLUMBIA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY** was incorporated in 1978,  
and registered with Revenue Canada as a charitable society.

*The Society promotes and encourages interest in genealogy and family history  
in British Columbia.*

## OFFICERS AND BOARD of DIRECTORS 2022- 2023

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**The British Columbia Genealogist** is published four times per year (March, June, September, December)

### **Meetings**

Join us on the 2nd Wednesday each month, from 7:30-9:30 pm.

On our **Zoom** site.

*Details will be emailed to you prior to each meeting.*

### **Meeting Location**

**Online** for the present.

### **Membership Fees:**

\$65.00 per year (Individual)

\$10.00 per year (associate)

\$22.50 (Youth)

\$65.00 (Affiliate Society)

Annual Membership includes four issues of our e-journal, *The British Columbia Genealogist*, monthly newsletters, and use of our Walter Draycott Library and Resource Centre in Surrey.

For more information, contact Membership Committee at [membership@bcgs.ca](mailto:membership@bcgs.ca)

**Web Page** [www.bcgs.ca](http://www.bcgs.ca)

### **BC Research**

[queryrequest@bcgs.ca](mailto:queryrequest@bcgs.ca)

**Facebook** Discussion Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/bcgsdiscussion/>

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## A message from our President...

I hope you all had a chance to take in *RootsTech* this year. What an amazing variety of great presentations! One of the upsides of the Covid pandemic is how many genealogy organizations and societies opted to take to Zoom and other platforms to bring these speakers to all of us.

Now that restrictions in many areas are being lifted, we might be able to start thinking about visiting family and friends again. And if you are thinking of visiting an archive or library, check out their website to find out what their restrictions might be. But do your homework too. While visiting their websites, take a good look and see what records they do have. If you can't find it, then email the archivist, perhaps consider making an appointment.

Speaking of libraries, consider putting the BCGS library on your 'go to' list. While we have been closed to researchers, a great deal of work has been happening.

More about our activities in the past year is in the Annual Report.

Good luck in your researches!

**Eunice  
Robinson**

**President,  
BCGS**



## From the Desk of the Editor

Spring is almost here!

Some days have lovely, soft weather, and then there are the days that feel just like a middle of February stormy day. Our trees and gardens are starting to leaf out, and there is a feeling of 'more to come' in many gardens.

As I read the articles that our members have submitted this month, I am learning many things about this province in which we live.

This month, our Holden Committee has shared two articles again. **Janice Kidwell** tells of Rod MacDonald's wartime service in the Calgary Highlanders. **Marlene Dance** writes of Trooper Eric Goland Parr-Pearson and his service as an equipment driver. **Meg McLaughlin's** Road Trip travels south to Illinois this month. **Donalda James** has an overview of the very early inhabitants of our coast, with a new slant on their connections. From our Library files, **Eunice Robinson** has found an unusual name in our Library Index, one with a special connection to early BC development. One of our Directors, **Kim Kujawski** shares two articles this month, the first detailing the Famine times and the second about a very early Irish settler to Quebec to Canada. And Janice Kidwell's postcard takes us to Lund, B.C.

I hope that you will enjoy exploring these fascinating articles, too!

Lynne Fletcher

[Journal@bcgs.ca](mailto:Journal@bcgs.ca)

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## On Our Cover . . .

A unusual picture from Eunice Robinson's article about an unusual name in our Library records. Enjoy this article (on page 29) and find the connection to our province.

## GENEALOGY ON THE ROAD

### Genealogy on the road

Contributed by Meg McLaughlin

Member #3847

The inevitable happened, while searching for information about my great grandmother, Charlotte Tripp Gilchrist, I got sidetracked. It began innocently enough when I was checking to see if Charlotte, or Lottie as the family called her, was mentioned in her uncle's letters. In one of the first letters there was mention of Lottie close to the acknowledgement of the news of his sister Kate's death. Only natural, I supposed, as Kate was Lottie's mother who died shortly after she was born. But there was lots more information in the letters of Lottie's uncle, Alexander Mathison.

I set out to extract information from those letters and uncovered a story which took me on a trek through early Ontario, when it was still called Canada West, before heading south of the border. Even there he moved around a lot, something I don't usually equate with farming life. I believe it was a time when new territories were opening up. In one passage Alex stated that he and his wife had moved about 800 miles since they had been married. But that wasn't the only movement that Alex had been a part of while south of the border.

In 1861, shortly after he moved to Illinois, he volunteered for the Union Army and survived until the end of the Civil War. That was far from a sure thing, at one point in his army career when he was wounded and taken prisoner. But the timing of this event was in his favour. It was in late 1864, just before Sherman's march to the sea.



*At Lincoln's tomb in Springfield, Illinois. (His nose is shiny because lots of people reach up and touch it.)  
Not me, I couldn't reach.*

## GENEALOGY ON THE ROAD

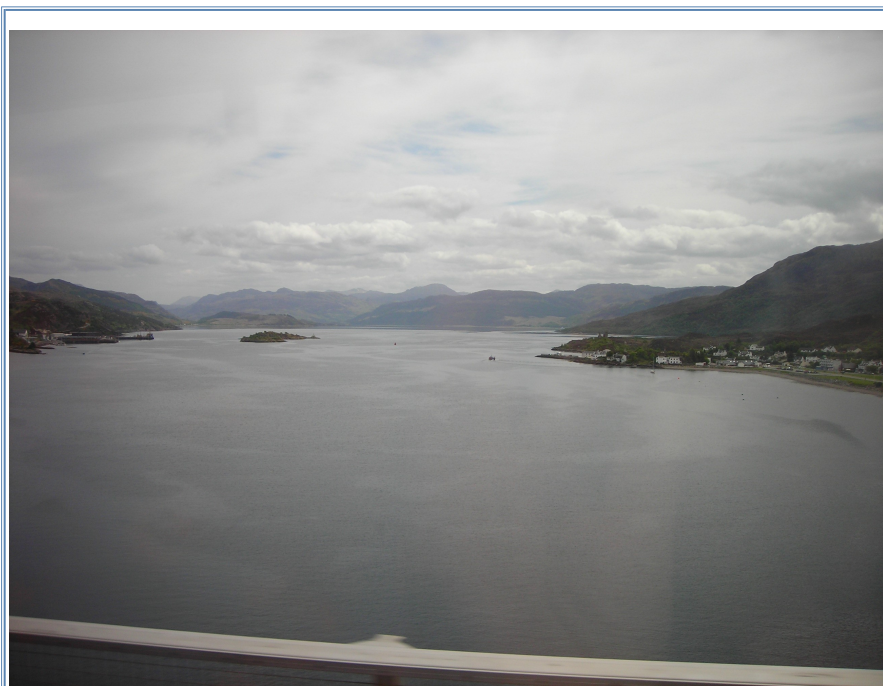
The hostilities must have been going well for the Union at that time as the war was to end by April of 1865 although it took a while longer for the Grand Army of the Republic to disband. Alexander Mathison was discharged in Springfield, Illinois on July 3, 1865.

All of the information I've gleaned by delving further into my records on Alexander Mathison has one thing in common. There's a feeling of movement, of going from one place to the next. I'm looking forward to plotting his movements on a map, both those in his farming life and the ones that his regiment followed in the course of the Civil War. There's much further research to be done here and perhaps even a genealogy trip or two to suss out the lay of the land if I'm lucky.

His movements in Canada West also bear looking into as they bring back a time when travel was difficult and places were just starting to open up; times we sometimes forget when seeing the urbanized centres prevalent in Ontario today. In 1896, Alex wrote that the trek he planned to take to visit his relatives in Owen Sound from his home in Letcher, South Dakota would take two to three days. Not only was this an interesting detail about travel at that time but it also showed his determination to meet up with his relatives. These family connections were obviously important to him.

If the information on some of his pension documents are anything to go by, what was less important to him was the need to tell the truth on government forms. In a questionnaire from 1915, in answer to a question about where he was born, he answered, "near

Hamilton, Ont, Canada", although this was less than the truth. I know this because I have a copy of his baptism at Portree on the Isle of Skye in my records. He knew this because in his second letter to his sister he informed her that they had come to Canada in 1849 or 1850. As he was born about 1837, that birth couldn't have taken place in Canada West or Upper Canada.



*Over the bridge to Skye where Alexander Mathison was born in spite of the information he gave.*

## GENEALOGY ON THE ROAD

In a strange way his prevarication on the government form made me feel closer to Alex. Perhaps he was unsure if he had been born in Scotland or during his family's time in PEI but the fact that he truncated his backstory to give a simpler place of birth reminded me of what I do sometimes when asked where I'm from. In this day and age, I would never get away with lying on a government form but in casual conversation I tend to tailor my response to where I'm from or how I ended up in Vancouver to the time available because, like Alex' story, it's complicated. Maybe that connection is why I feel compelled to learn more about Alexander Mathison's story. I can't wait until I am able to take my genealogy back on the road to discover some of the places with ties to his story. It's an exploration I started in 2013 when I visited Springfield, Illinois but after studying his records I know I should take my research farther afield.

Meg writes about history and genealogy in A Genealogist's Path to History at <http://genihistorypath.blogspot.ca/>. Read more about her findings in her blog.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2021-2022

The past year has been a busy one for BCGS, despite a lot of activities being curtailed by Covid. Zoom has become the 'new normal' for many organizations, and BCGS is one of them. If there has been a benefit, it has been that this technology has enabled us to keep connected and share our passion for family history with our members.

As restrictions are being lifted, we are still conscious that we need to keep each other safe. Our Library reopened at the beginning of March 2022, and we are looking forward to having our members and other researchers visiting our collection. Remember, we are an Affiliate of the Family History Library!

A recognition and thank you to our current Board of Directors. Over this past year, they have continued to work on improving our practices and processes. Without their dedication, our Society could not have accomplished all that we have done. My great appreciation to all of you.

We are also fortunate to have a strong core of volunteers who have been working on a variety of projects. When we look to where we were last year, we have, as they say '*come a long way, baby!*'.

To all our Volunteers, thank you for your time and energy – your contribution has been invaluable.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Some of our highlights:

- ➔ Adding over 1,000 books, this year alone, to our library collection, keeping the Catalogue Team very busy.
- ➔ Reorganizing, renumbering, re-labeling and rejuvenating our library collection. A monumental task.
- ➔ Continuing to add to *FindaGrave*. We have received several emails of appreciation.
- ➔ Upgrading of our computer network and backup processes.
- ➔ Creating and indexing our extensive map collection, with the index being added to our library computers.
- ➔ Creating a Vertical File collection which is on our library computers – will soon be added to our website.
- ➔ Scanning and indexing church records and adding them to our library computers.
- ➔ Adding more digital journals to our library computers, and to our website.
- ➔ Continuing our book indexing project – now almost 172,000 surnames – available on our library computers.
- ➔ Continuing to improve our website, revising and adding materials in our Members' Resources area.
- ➔ Continuing to produce high quality monthly Newsletters and quarterly Journals.
- ➔ Offering Spring and Fall Anniversary seminar series with excellent presenters, as well as the Thursday night Coffee Chats, and the DNA, Chinese & French Canadian sessions – all via Zoom.
- ➔ Outreach classes and presentations to Coquitlam, North Vancouver, New Westminister, Burnaby libraries, co-sponsoring events with the Cloverdale Library & Surrey Museum, as well as offering a couple of 6-week series of classes.
- ➔ Other projects such as the Holten Project, Newspaper Indexing and the Memorials – the list goes on!
- ➔ Fund-raising – bottle/can returns – this initiative has enabled us to do some extensive upgrades to our library facilities including the recent installations of new flooring and carpeting.

I'm sure I've missed a few, but as you can see, we have been very active despite the limitations due to the Covid pandemic.

And finally, a huge thank you to you, all our BCGS Members, for your continuing support of our Society. We couldn't do it without you!

Eunice Robinson  
President, British Columbia Genealogical Society  
March 8, 2022



## HOLTEN PROJECT

### LIEUTENANT RODERICK MALCOLM MACDONALD

Submitted by Janice Kidwell  
Member 5033

Roderick Malcolm MacDonald was born May 26, 1918 in New Westminster to parents Roderick Charles and Daisy Elizabeth (Wiltshire) MacDonald. He had three siblings, Evelyn, Donald and Walter.

Rod attended both elementary and high school (Junior Matric and two years commercial) in New Westminster. He was a member of the Rho Delta Rho fraternity, a social group for the “younger set” in the Royal City. His name was listed as one of the people on the organizing committee for the 1939 St. Patrick’s Day dance.

He worked for 5 years as a salesman in his father’s shoe store – *R.C. MacDonald Shoes* - which included retail and repairing. Rod was very personable and was well liked by the customers.

His military file also notes that he drove a car and truck and was an elementary machinist.

As far as hobbies, Rod was very keen about and enjoyed playing golf.

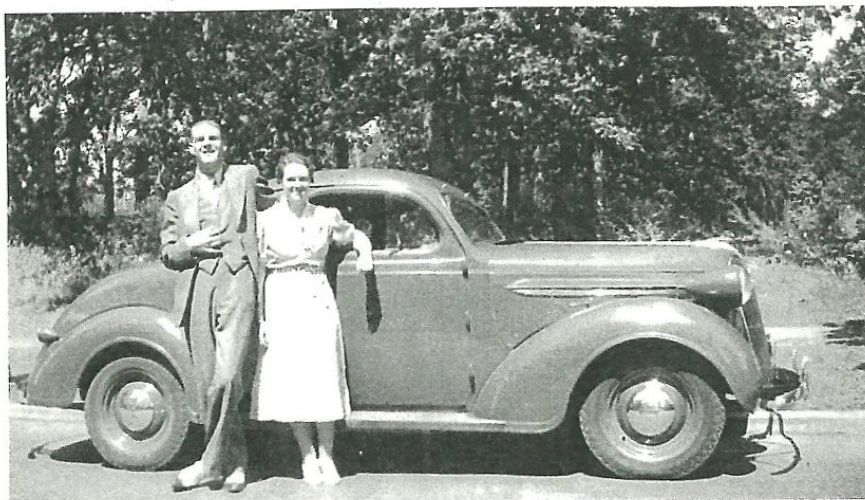
Rod’s religion was listed as Church of England and both he and his sister Evelyn were members of a Young People’s group at St. Stephen’s Church on Cameron Road in Burnaby.

Rod’s Attestation papers were signed January 15, 1943 in Vancouver. He served with The Calgary Highlanders,

R.C.I.C. His Regimental Number was K/49387. On that date he was appointed A/Sgt. OTC at Gordon Head in Saanich, B.C. Noted on his papers was that he had previously served with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn Westminster Regiment 1940-1941-1942 to date. Regimental Number was K/459174. Part of his training in 1940 took place at the Blair Rifle Range Camp (military rifle range), in North Vancouver which was used by the Canadian Armed Forces for military training from the 1930s to 1960s.

Rod went through the standard medical exams and receiving of vaccines. He also took various courses and training in Gordon Head, Long Beach, Esquimalt, Nanaimo and Vernon B.C.; Wainwright and Calgary, Alberta and in Brockville Ontario.

Throughout his service his Rank changed depending on his duties and promotions. Examples were Pte. Cadet, Lieutenant, and A/Sgt.



*Rod and his sister, Evelyn*

## HOLTEN PROJECT

Rod and Ella Yates were married at St. Stephen's Church (Cameron Street, Burnaby, B.C.) on September 23, 1943 – Ella's 23<sup>rd</sup> Birthday – by Rev. Frank Plaskett. Ella, a nurse, was born in Coleman, Alberta, daughter of James and Mary Yates and grew up in the mountainous coal country of Crowsnest Pass where her father worked in the mines.



Sept. 1943 - Rod MacDonald & Ella's wedding

Attendants: Evelyn Monk, Harry Monk, Groom, Bride ? Don MacDonald

R.C. MacDonald and family:  
Back Row: Roderick (soldier) and  
brother Donald  
Front Row: brother Walter, mother Daisy,  
father Roderick Charles,  
sister Evelyn



## HOLTEN PROJECT

Rod wrote a letter to his parents shortly after receiving a Christmas parcel from them in December 1944. Here is the letter as written:

*Return Address:  
Calgary Highlanders  
Canadian Army, Overseas  
26 Dec 44*

*Dear Mother and Father,*

*Well it's 7pm and Christmas and Boxing Day are pretty near over. What a difference between this Christmas and the last one which I spent with Ella in Calgary. Yesterday and today I've seen or heard nothing to indicate that it is Christmas, just the calendar. I will admit I heard one of our foes playing a carol on his bugle last night at a distance of approx 600 yds. Little things like that sometimes makes you wonder when the world will come to it's senses and end this war.*

*I want to congratulate you on your timing of my x-mas parcel. I received it, believe it or not on Christmas Eve, 24<sup>th</sup> Dec. You sent it Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> and it arrived in first class shape. I have eaten some of the cake which is exceptionally good, some chocolates and along with the cake yesterday I had the can of peaches.*

*My Sgt thinks you're a pretty good cook, he's married to a Scotch girl from the North.*

*Thank you ever so much for the stockings, cards, cigs, fruit, candy, etc. I rather like that large candy bar that Donny sent, I received another in one of your other parcels. I also opened up Ella's parcel which I received on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Tonight I received a parcel from Eve which I haven't opened yet, also a small parcel from the Van. Gaelic Society containing shaving cream, toothpaste, cigs and a nice pair of brown socks. I'm going to write Mrs. A. MacAulay and thank her.*

*All is well with me even inspite of the frosty weather we're having.*

*Love to you all – your son Rod.*

Lieutenant MacDonald's letter was written on the traditional blue airmail paper but has the wording ARMED FORCES AIR LETTER on the front. It was also stamped on the front with the wording 'Passed the Censor'. The stamp is of King George V1.

## HOLTEN PROJECT

On October 21, 1944 Rod suffered a mild concussion from a nearby explosion of a German shell.

On January 5 and 6, 1945 Rod and eleven men set out to take a German prisoner, making their way towards the German position, through a barrage of grenade explosions. As he reached the edge of the Germany trench, he was shot and tumbled into the trench. On January 11, 1945 a telegram was sent to his family advising that Rod “was missing in action”. On March 12, 1945 his family received a Telegram which officially declared that Rod had died of wounds on January 9, 1945 while a German Prisoner of War. He was hit in the spine by gunfire which caused him to fall into the trench. He was taken to a German hospital and died 3 days later. His death was caused by a bullet wound to his spine with secondary paraplegia and pneumonia.

The temporary burial took place in 1945 at the Catholic Community Communal Cemetery, Haldern, Rheinland, Germany. Grave 78.

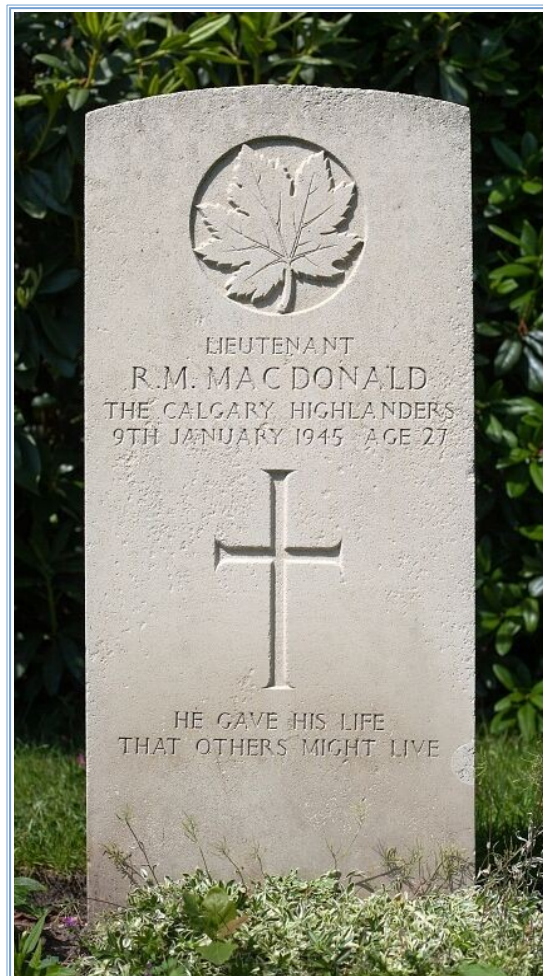
The reburial took place in October 1946 at Holten Canadian War Cemetery, Holten, the Netherlands. The gravesite location is Grave 16, Row H, Plot 12.

### Service

Canada	January 15, 1943 – June 1, 1944
U.K.	June 2, 1944 – August 25, 1944
N.W. Europe	August 26, 1944 – January 9, 1945

### Medals

- 1939-45 Star
- France-Germany Star
- War Medal 1939-45
- CVSM & Clasp (awarded August 11, 1944)
- Memorial Cross given to both Roderick’s wife and to his mother



Lt. Roderick Malcolm MacDonald is commemorated on Page 537 of the Second World War Book of Remembrance. This page is displayed in the Memorial Chamber of the Peace Tower in Ottawa on November 12.

Rod’s death greatly affected his family. Rod’s portrait photo in uniform was always displayed in a prominent location in his parent’s home.

## HOLTEN PROJECT

### ROD M'DONALD DIES OF WOUND

Lieut. Roderick Malcolm MacDonald, son of R. C. MacDonald, MLA for Dewdney, and Mrs. MacDonald, North road, Burquitlam, has died of wounds received during the fighting north of Antwerp, Holland, early in January, according to word received by his wife, a nurse on the staff of the Royal Jubilee hospital in Victoria.

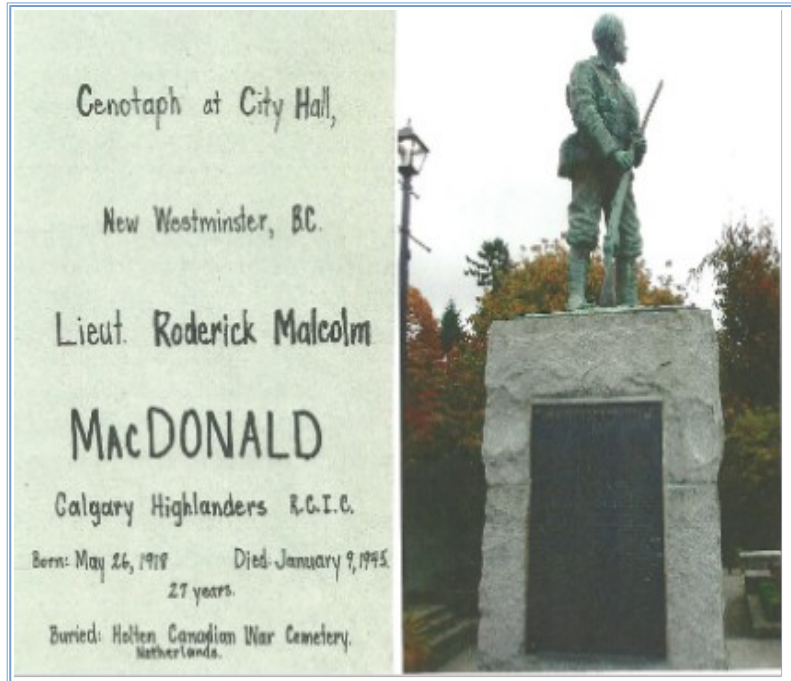


In the first report from Ottawa, Lt. MacDonald was mentioned as having been wounded but this was followed, a few days later, by the news that he had been posted as missing. Although details of his last fight are lacking it is believed that the young officer was leading a patrol of the Calgary Highlanders during the struggle around the dykes and flooded fields north of Antwerp and that he failed to return after a skirmish with an enemy force.

A subsequent advance of the First Canadian Army is believed to have produced evidence of the death of the officer and of his burial in Dutch soil.

Lt. MacDonald, who married Miss Ella Yates, RN, of Coleman, Alta., shortly before leaving for overseas, was chief assistant in his father's shoe business. He was a former vice-captain of the Vancouver Golf Club at Burquitlam and was sports officer with his unit during the training in England before they crossed the channel on "D" Day.

He had been wounded on a previous occasion, receiving injuries when an ammunition truck exploded and sent him to hospital. This was in October of last year.



#### Sources:

- Family photos and newspaper notices received from Rod's niece Barbara Wentworth, a BCGS member and my third cousin. Both of us have deep roots that go back to the island of North Uist, Western Isles, Outer Hebrides, Scotland.
- The Ottawa Journal - newspaper article – death notice
- Ancestry.com – military file
- Canadian Virtual War Memorial website  
<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2227581>
- Find a Grave <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/14041128/roderick-malcolm-macdonald>
- Blair Rifle Range  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/uxo/uxo-locations/practicing-uxo-safety-blair-range/youth-safety-former-blair-rifle-range.html>

## FIRST MIGRANTS

### PACIFIC NORTHWEST FIRST MIGRANTS AND HAPLOGROUP C

Submitted by Donalda J. James

Member #3070

Sixty thousand years ago, groups of the first humans began travelling north out of Africa, extending their hunter/ gatherer explorations as populations grew to overwhelm supplies of their edible flora and fauna. They moved north into the Middle East and into Europe in their search for food sources, moving ever further north and west. Others travelled East, through the Middle East and onwards. Thousands of years passed in this way.

#### STONE AGE MAN

Ten to Fourteen Thousand years ago human civilization was getting along in the bleak yet productive existence of the Stone Age, across Eurasia and bordering lands. Skilled flint nappers within these wandering communities had made progress in fashioning different stone implements with which life could be assisted. These included but are not limited to implements such as scrapers with a handhold and sharp working blade to clean animal skins; bone smoothers to make the skins waterproof; stone arrowheads with haft to attach to wooden arrows, larger stone blades to attach to longer wooden spears, and wood cutting stone axe heads; the foragers and gatherers used the pestle or hammer stone for grinding their foraged nuts, seeds and grains against the saddle stone; wooden or bone digging tools to remove the tasty roots, bulbs and corms growing alongside the trails; animal pelvic bones for scooping, digging or for serving up their hot foods roasted and steamed over open fires. Across the Middle East and South Asia these family units cooperated to maintain their lives. The hunters searched out and brought down the beasts, butchered and completely stripped each carcass because every part was necessary to the maintenance of their lives. Gatherers foraged for their firewood, greens, roots, corms seeds and nuts, or nutritional seafood along the seashore. Spear fishers brought in their catch. As these groups wandered in search of their sustenance, many continued to make their way East (China, Japan, Korea) and into the North (Siberia) across 'the land bridge' that took them further on to new and unpopulated places (Alaska and British Columbia). Ice and snow drove them further south in search of their food, following the wildlife to a warmer climate (California).

#### MIGRANTS

These Stone Age wanderers continually separated from their larger communities, ever trekking eastwards and probably never returning to their previous lands and not even joined by other groups from the west. The warming climate over thousands of years caused the rising waters of the oceans to flood the lowlands effectively cutting off access where the land bridge had once been. So accustomed to moving at all times there probably was no word in their simple language for 'motherland'. These were the first migrants.

## FIRST MIGRANTS

With their removal from the larger groups in Euro/Asia, there was little opportunity for collaboration on the richly advancing technologies which those they left behind developed over centuries to bring their communities out of the Stone Age, through the Neolithic, the Bronze Age of metal working and into the Iron Age, over three thousand years ago. The primary need for these new technology was wealth and WAR.

Over these thousands of years, those smaller family units grew in numbers with the bounty found all down the Pacific Northwest Coastal lands. Because of their adventure which undoubtedly came with many harrowing experiences, they developed their religious belief system which helped to sustain them in their sorrows and fearful, lonely existence. They developed a belief in a natural reliance on nature, and of each being an integral part of nature, for without the bounteous nature around them, they could not survive, and they knew it. An expression of thankfulness accompanied every incursion they made into the flora and fauna for their subsistence.

### AN UNTOUCHED LAND

The land and the seas had never before been seen or touched by humans. Wild animals, many who had led these humans over that land bridge, and the varied vegetation were all abundant for they only had themselves and nature to impact them. These early Stone Age peoples were probably feeling very blessed with the abundance, and their numbers would increase as they continued south into the warmer clime of the southern latitudes, with no competition from others. They made use of the forests for shelter; cedar boughs to roof their temporary shelters, and on the ground as beds with the furs they obtained from bear, beaver, otter, fox and ermine that they were accustomed to hunt or trap.

Their flint and stone knappers would be occupied with finding the appropriate stone to replace lost or worn implements. Water was abundant, and they fashioned sacs from animal stomachs and bladders to carry along with them on their journey. The hunters would travel ahead, marking their trail for the foragers to follow, meeting up with them where they smelled the smoke of their cooking fire. Along with the scents of roasting meat that following group would find the hunters busy scraping and stretching skins for drying and the making of their clothing, bedding and shelters. Others might be re-fashioning the animal bones for drying, and the making of cooking or foraging implements. In gratitude, nothing was wasted of the lives taken. Temporary camps were set up, but some might decide to stay near a river mouth which might boast reeds, seafood, decent sized trees and perhaps an appropriate source of stone for tools. So, another more permanent community would be established as others, perhaps the next generation, pushed on.

And so, human life now on the Pacific Northwest Coast, continued over the centuries with little or no change. So abundant with everything the people required that new technologies were not required. They thanked their forest gods for the giant cedars, always mindful that they were dependent.

## FIRST MIGRANTS

With no access to return west due to rising water levels, memory of their roots, and no written language, their storytelling history soon incorporated a more celestial vision of their beginnings. Petroglyphs might chronicle an interesting event, and their tall colourfully painted cedar totem poles gave them a venue for recording community and family history.

The Elders were those with the years of experience, teaching the younger members and forming community laws and realistic rules of living. Fashioning extra skins into drums encouraged music and dance, where stories of their family history could be told in song. As in any civilization there would be those who were natural leaders, teachers, healers, fishers, hunters and woodsmen. Identifying edibles, combining foods for satisfying and nutritious meals and healthy mother and childcare, plus the fashioning of suitable clothing occupied the women and girls. The abundance of wood allowed for artistic growth and expression with their canoes, totems and longhouses. However, they were never communities with a farming or cultivation culture, neither raising large crops nor the husbanding of domestic animals.

Prior to the 18th century, along the Pacific Northwest of the continent of North America, the first migrants had been proliferating on the land by the simple existence provided by a stone aged hunter gathering/ foraging lifestyle, with fishing and a kidnapping/warfare bordering their seasonal harvest of the flora and fauna. There was little to no contact with others.

Between the groups along this coast, infrequent war occurred mainly in the form of attacks from the Kuakiutl and Johnston Strait Yukulta, the Cowichans of Vancouver island, or the cannibalistic Clallum of Washington State, who would kidnap females to diversify their lineage, and the children as slaves. They would kill all of the men to avoid retaliation. Mainly the Stolo were attacked and abducted, as they were a quiet, peaceful and resourceful people offering little resistance.

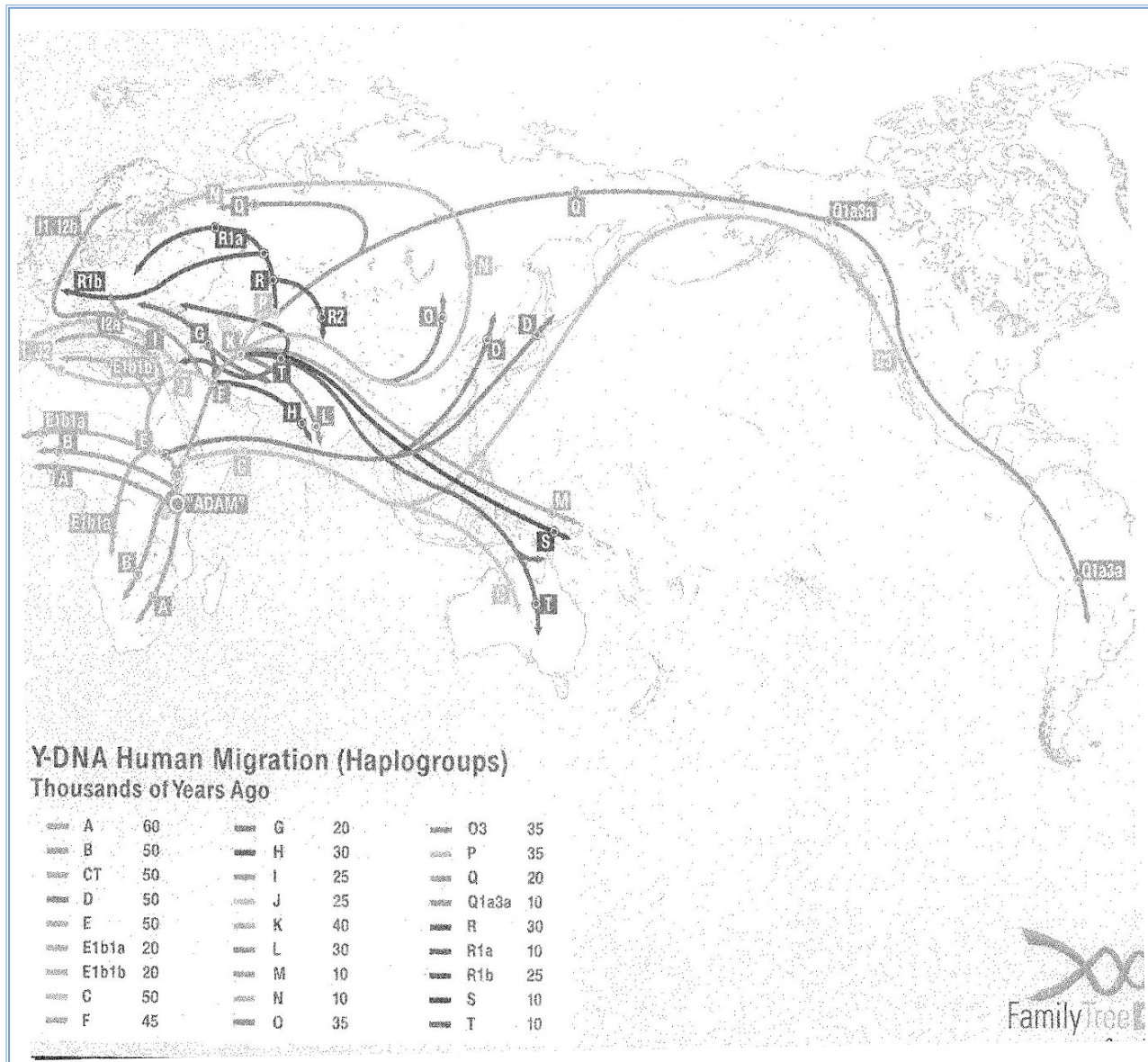
### Y-DNA HAPLOGROUPS NAMED IN THE WORLD DNA PROJECT

Haplogroups of Human Migration over 50 to 60 thousand years are shown on a Y-DNA Map provided by Family Tree DNA c2009 where it shows that a single group (Haplogroup C) which migrated right out of Africa, made their way chiefly to the East and across the southern coasts of Saudi Arabia, India and Southeast Asia. One group broke off and headed directly South and eventually into Australia, where two other Haplogroups (S) and (T) eventually arrived and settled as well.

Meanwhile, the rest of this Haplogroup C continued East and then North through China, Japan, Korea and etc. and on towards the land connecting Siberia with Alaska, and South down the Coast Range of British Columbia, continuing through Washington and Oregon States to California. They probably trekked along the exposed coastal beaches, that over time was flooded by the rising water levels. This was a 50,000 year journey, and many groups settled in to make their own place in each of those above named countries.



## FIRST MIGRANTS



These humans did not interact with others along the way, as they were always ‘there first’, and they remained quite separate communities from those groups further North and West mainly in the Mediterranean, West Asia and Europe. Those other western groups met up with and apparently interacted with Neanderthal peoples.

As the various family groups settled into the Alaska, Tlingit, Haida Gwai, Johnston Straits, Vancouver Island, Bella Bella and on down to the mouth of the Fraser River where the Stolo peoples (Musqueam, Tsawwassen, Hatzic) engaged in river fishing and seafood industry and the vast variety of flora growing on the land, some continued on up the Fraser River and further into the Interior and the Okanagan, while others continued on down through the Western States into California.

## FIRST MIGRANTS

Other migrating groups of Stone Aged people who had wandered away and were populating the North, South and Central Americas (Haplogroup Q1a3a) were also making their own organized forms of art, religion and community government. This group had made use of the land bridge 10,000 years ago, and making their way east and south down the centre of North America. They had no contact with the West Coast peoples, and it seems they were quite a different type of human, having had more interaction with other groups in EurAsia prior to their long trek east but further north through Siberia to the land bridge and across Alaska and Yukon. These groups gave rise to the Indigenous of the Plains, the Great Lakes and The Five Nations and others on the East Coast of North America, the indigenous of Mexico and Central and South Americas.

### EUROPEANS VISIT BY LAND AND BY SEA

The Spanish were first visitors in their 16th century explorations surprising the people with their ships 'flying with giant white wings'. However, their very lucrative gold and silver discoveries in South America and Central America kept them from venturing further north after their first mapping visit as far north as Georgia Strait, where there had been little contact.

The Spanish established a lucrative silver trade with China, whose Emperor demanded taxes be paid in silver, through ports in the Philippines (Philip II), from Mexican and Peruvian Silver mines. The Spanish unfortunately utilized the Indigenous of Peru to their decimation by enslaving them in the silver mines, and, later African slaves from the Caribbean were treated to the same brutality. It was not until the early 1800s that the Hudson Bay Company arrived in the north from Rupert's Land and from Fort Vancouver at the Columbia River mouth. In 1806, building their northern posts and Fort St. James, they competed with the American Fur Trade Company to establish their Trading Centre involving the Pacific and the South Seas (1826). The Company had a 300 year history of making as little impact on the lives and homes of the inhabitants, mainly encouraging engagement and cooperation in trade. Many employees engaged in country marriage with the Indigenous of the Central Plains, bringing their wives and children to the West Coast.



*Pacific West Coast Indigenous Nuxalk Mask Dancers 1886*

## FIRST MIGRANTS

We know from previous articles that Sir James Douglas, Chief Factor and then Governor of the Colony of British Columbia, did his utmost to deal fairly with the Vancouver Island inhabitants, offering the currency of the day in exchange for parcels of their ancestral homes which the company needed for their harbours, forts and farms, and making treaties with them. Trade for furs was the beginning of the introduction of metal tools, knives, axes, pots and buckets which the Indigenous peoples soon realized would make their lives so much better. They were equal to the use of these goods as fair trade for the seemingly boundless land on which they lived, not having experience of land ownership.

### EUROPEAN AND ASIAN ADVANCE TO THE AGRICULTURAL AGE

Meanwhile, the people that were left behind in EurAsia as the migrants trekked east, had advanced well past the Stone Age, due in part to increased populations interacting, cultural exchanges and war mongering behaviours over thousands of years, which encouraged greater thinking, planning and a need for better working and fighting implements. Development of the use of and firing of clay made food preparation, storage, cooking and eating a simpler task, freeing the people to develop themselves and become healthier with a wider range of diets. The discovery of metal technology beginning with copper (Iran) and then tin (Cornwall) discoveries, the bronze age of smelting, and subsequently the iron age of forging the metal into powerful and useful tools began over 3000 years ago. By the mid-1800s the Industrial Age was flourishing.

Discoveries of silver and gold and subsequent smithing resulted in currency based on precious metals. Development of the wheel and raising oxen and horses allowed for growth in transportation, efficient designs of the wheel, efficient felling of trees, engineering and ship building, cultivating, planting and harvesting of crops, husbanding of domestic animals and safer use of cooking and home heating fires, development of government, law, and organizing of religion and education. Introduction to and a desire for spices and exotic foods pushed the northern European countries to increase their world exploration.

The introduction of small farm agriculture and cooperative village life meant that people had more opportunity to learn from each other, passing along their knowledge, trading their goods with other cultures thus learning more about the wider world. The sharing or taking, building or tearing down, taking over or collaborating with others went along with developing and formalizing educational study, their languages and the written word, mathematics, science, governments, order and law to bring the western world into productivity to ensure the continuation of the wealth if not the species. (Gosh, sounds just wonderful doesn't it??)

Peoples of all of these so called advanced cultures eventually learned these truths of the civilization of which all of them were a part. Not all of it was a rose garden.

## FIRST MIGRANTS

### CHANGE IS COMING

The Indigenous of the PNW Coast and the employees of the Company were quite suddenly impacted by the Industrial Age when gold was discovered in British Columbia. With the thousands of men arriving by ship in the mid 1800s seeking this gold, their quiet and peaceful existence alongside each other was at risk of becoming another casualty of the



*Indigenous of Pacific Northwest showing a Long House with carved and richly painted front door Totems. These photos were taken in the later 1800s, and show the influence of the European culture on these people in the manner of their dress, within only 20 to 30 years.*

American settlers' way of dealing with their neighbours by guns and violence.

It was Governor Sir James Douglas who took matters into his own hands, calling in the British Military to assist in keeping New Caledonia under British law, rather than American. Within a period of about 50 years the Indigenous of the Coast were shoved from Stone Age to Industrial Age by events completely unexpected by themselves or by the quiet employees of the Company which had been about 300 years engaged in a trading lifestyle in this land. The Company lost their lease hold of the land, and it was put under the governance of the British Queen Victoria, along with all of the might of the British Law and Military.

The Colony of New Caledonia, which name Queen Victoria changed to Columbia and then to British Columbia (1858) became peopled by those who would bring the wilderness into a country which could withstand incursions from other countries by encouraging populations of Europeans interested in forming a new life. And there were many of those who were looking for a place free to raise their families and establish themselves and whatever they were most capable of achieving in this new and wonderful wild land.

Within only a few years the Colony was taken up by the new Dominion of Canada, and Federal Law took the place of the Colonial laws (1871). British Columbia was now a Province, and the industrial Age was in full swing on the rivers, in the forests and in building the cities and farming communities. *To be continued.....*

## FIRST MIGRANTS

### Sources:

1. Y-DNA Human Migration (Haplogroups) Thousands of Years Ago World Map FamilyTree DNA © 2009
2. First Peoples Public Television Series
3. Various Public Television Archeology and Anthropology Series Programming over about a decade

### BCGS Postcards – Lund, B.C.



The picturesque seaside village of Lund, B.C., known as the Shellfish Capital of the Sunshine Coast, is located 128 km north of Vancouver. It is a small craft harbour and unincorporated village in quathet (pronounced “ka-thet” and meaning “working together”) Regional District.

The Lund area was inhabited for thousands of years by the Coast Salish people who referred to the area as Tla'amin.

Lund has a population of approximately 300 people but during the summer there are many visitors who enjoy not only Lund’s quaintness but also other sites such as the Copeland Islands Marine Park (aka Ragged Islands) and the fact that Lund is the gateway to the world-renowned Desolation Sound. Activities include boating, hiking and sea kayaking.

## POSTCARDS

The first European settlers were brothers Charles and Fred Thulin (“too-lin”) who came from Tryserum, Sweden. They settled in December 1889, and named the harbour "Lund" after a city in their home country.

They built a dock on the harbour and set up buildings and services – a store and post office - to supply commercial logging and fishing. In 1891 the original Lund Hotel was built but was destroyed by fire in 1918. The Malaspina Hotel was built by the Thulin brothers in 1905. It burned down and a new hotel was built where the current Lund Hotel now stands.

In 1929, a community hall was built completely by volunteers. It had a hardwood floating dance floor, banquet kitchen and lower level.

It was the epicenter of the community at that time. In 2019 the old hall, located uphill from the Lund Hotel was torn down.

A paved road leading south to Vancouver was completed in 1954 and coastal steamer service ended two years later. The original wharf built by the Thulins was damaged by a storm in 1954 and replaced by a government wharf.

In the late 1960s B.C. attracted people who were searching for a different way of life and many ended up in places like Nelson and Lund. These people included a number of academics from the U.S.A. An article in the Georgia Straight by Oscar Green told readers about cheap land available in Lund. Those who made their way to Lund to live a new lifestyle bought land together and worked together learning the skills they needed from each other and from the locals – using tools, gardening, preserving, canning - in order to succeed for the life they yearned for. It was difficult but it was a strong community.

There are a number of very good websites and articles you can find about this era and the people who traveled to and in some cases stayed in Lund and raised families – or come back to visit - that are definitely well worth seeking out.

*The 13th Annual Lund Seafood Festival is tentatively to be held May 28 & 29, 2022. The events that have taken place at earlier Festivals make this a “must attend” event.*



Submitted by Janice Kidwell  
Member # 5033

The postcard above is addressed to a Mrs. J. ?  
(unable to read but first name is Mary) in Sidney,  
B.C. and is from ‘Jack’. It was postmarked June 1943.  
The stamp is of King George VI.  
There is no identification as to the printer.

## HOLTEN PROJECT

### In Memory of Trooper Eric Goland Parr-Pearson



K49280 British Columbia Dragoons  
R.C.A.C. 9th Armored Regiment

who died 25 September, 1945 age 24.  
Son of David Ambrose and Lavinia Parr-Pearson  
of Mission, British Columbia, Canada.

Remembered with honour.  
Holten Canadian War Cemetery.  
Commemorated in perpetuity by the  
Commonwealth War Graves Commission.



## HOLTEN PROJECT



The Parr-Pearson Family shows descent from the powerful and influential Parr family of 16th century England and thus the use of the hyphenated name. About 1903, 19 year old Daniel Ambrose Parr-Pearson (left), who was born in Liverpool, England, arrived in Canada and gradually made his way across the country to Vancouver, BC. In 1907 he met and married Lavinia (Vena) Rosella Fisher (left) who was born in Vancouver. This is where the first six of their ten children were born.



Daniel worked first for the Canadian Pacific Railway as a Brakeman and then for the BC Electric Railway as a Conductor. The Vancouver City Directory gives us the various addresses they lived at over the next fourteen years. The 1911 Census finds them at 134 Lorne Street, where they stayed until moving to Mission BC sometime in 1920.

It was in Mission that four more children were born. The eighth child, Eric Goland Parr-Pearson was born June 1st, 1921. This is the same day as the 1921 Canadian Census was taken. The family were probably enumerated the evening before and thus Eric missed out on

being recorded with the family. This family of eleven (one dying before her first birthday) resided in the little house shown at right below.

They were a very busy and active household. By 1926 the children's ages ranged from 18 down to a newborn. And by the mid-1930's two of the older siblings had married and were having children of their own. Eric would have started school about age 6 in 1927. He attended Cedar Valley Elementary located just up the road from his home, near the Dewdney Trunk Road. The school was built in 1923 and was used until 1989. With his brothers and sisters and all his friends at school, Eric enjoyed a normal fun-filled childhood. He liked football, softball and basketball. With all these kids to play with, they could easily organize teams to compete against each other. He also enjoyed reading westerns and detective stories. However, a lot of his spare time was used tinkering with his car.



Does this 1939 Hudson pick-up, in the picture beside, belong to Eric or does it belong to Bert?





## HOLTEN PROJECT

Eric did not particularly like school and missed a lot of days. He did finish grade eight. But then quit part way through grade nine to go to work at the P. Bain Lumber Co., located at Steelhead, BC. This area had no fewer than seven logging concerns and employed many people. Eric worked as a Edgerman on the Cut-off saw. In addition, he assisted the B.C. Lumber Inspector and drove 3-ton trucks for Bain Lumber. He worked there the four years prior to enlisting.

Eric grew into a tall, nice-looking lad who liked movies and dancing. His enlistment papers dated 8<sup>th</sup> January, 1943 say he is 6' 1" and 146 pounds, in good health with a better than average learning ability. When asked, he said he would like to stay with driving. His experience handling a 3-ton truck, and his "tinkering" with cars, probably led to his being assigned and trained as a Driver with the R.C.A.C. British Columbia Dragoons. He immediately arranged to have \$20 per month of his pay sent home to his mother in Mission. This was later increased to \$30.

In February he was assigned to the training facility in Grande Prairie, Alberta. We can follow Eric's progress, including a brief stay in the Peace River Military Hospital in March to have his tonsils removed. In early August of 1943, it is reported that he was a "Qualified Driver wheeled - and has passed basic gunnery. Is deemed suitable for overseas duty". His rank changes from Private to Trooper. He is granted a two-week furlough, probably spent with family. This turns out to be the last time they see him.

Upon his return to duty, he is then sent to Camp Borden in Ontario, Canada. Eric's next move is to Debert, Nova Scotia where he ships out to England, arriving about September 19, 1943. Eric remained in the UK for a short time, then his unit shipped out in November as part of the



CMF - Central Mediterranean Force in Italy. "Canada's longest WW2 army campaign was in Italy. Canadian forces served in the heat, snow and mud of the grinding nearly two-year Allied battle across Sicily and up the Italian peninsula - prying the country from Germany's grip". The vehicles pictured would be similar to the types of units driven by Eric. Tanks and other equipment could be hauled on a flatbed trailer and unloaded where needed. Then equipment would be retrieved and brought back to a collection area. This work was

done by a driver, sometimes with a helper or "swamper" on board.

## HOLTEN PROJECT

But you were never free from gunfire. Thus the need to be trained in “gunnery”.

Eric remained in this theatre of operation until February 19, 1945 - over 15 months. Then his unit was moved into N.W. Europe. D Day had taken place the year before and troops had been moving inland rapidly. By May of 1945 the war in Europe was over. Eric’s unit was in an area of Germany called “Stary Plzecec Czecho Slovakia”.

It was here on some down time, Eric and a friend find themselves some local Czech liquor. Sadly, it probably had not been distilled properly. Both became ill. But Eric more so, and he ended up in hospital, then died on September 25th, 1945. He was temporarily buried at the US Nuremburg Military Cemetery. In August of 1948, the family was advised that Eric had been “carefully exhumed and reburied in grave 15, Row E, plot 4 of Holten Canadian Military Cemetery in Holland where the grave will be cared for in perpetuity”.

The family chose the inscription on the headstone shown on page one.

**Of special note :** The Mission, BC Parr-Pearson family had ten children. There were seven sons. All seven served in WW2. Only Eric did not return home.

**Thank you all for your service.**



**Proudly displayed and in the possession of nephew Retired RCMP Sgt. Eric Parr-Pearson (Eric’s namesake) is the shadow box at left with the WW2 medals awarded to Trooper Eric Goland Parr-Pearson. In addition is the Silver Cross presented to his mother Vena Pearson.**

### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. Chilliwack Military Museum, 45915 Wellington Avenue, Chilliwack, BC with thanks to volunteer Corp. Robert Bussell, Royal Canadian Engineers, Retired.
2. Mission Museum and Archives online and by email.
3. Royal Canadian Legion Mission Branch Facebook
4. RCMP Sgt. Eric Parr-Pearson Retired. Personal family information and pictures page 1, 2 and 4
5. Library and Archives Canada via Ancestry.ca for military records.
6. James A. Morton, Master Cpl. Retired. Royal Canadian Legion Alta/NWT Commander Zone 3.
7. Page 3 pictures - from online Google sources.

**Submitted by Marlene Dance  
Member #3416**

### Note to Hyphenated Names.

The military was adverse to using hyphenated names, thus military records show Eric’s last name as Pearson. His file reads Eric G.P. Pearson and his tombstone reads E. G. P. Pearson. The correct name is Parr-Pearson. In city directories the name often recorded as Pearson. Some family members use Pearson, while some use the hyphenated name.

## DATABASE PUZZLE

### WHO IS ONDERDONK?!

Submitted by Eunice Robinson  
Member #0112

Many names of early British Columbia pioneers are familiar such as Simon Fraser, Judge Matthew Begbie, James Douglas, but who is Andrew ONDERDONK??

He appears in at least 18 books written of the early days in BC. But who was this man? Where did he come from, where did he go?

Turning to our trusted friend, Google, we learn that Andrew Onderdonk was an American construction contractor who worked on several major projects in the West. He was born on August 30, 1848 in New York City. He married Sarah Delia HILMAN.

According to Wikipedia, he started his career in New Jersey by surveying roads and town sites in that state.

He worked for a wealthy financier, Darius Ogden MILLS, and headed west.

For 3 years he worked on the construction of the San Francisco seawall. This is where his son Andrew Junior was born.

He then headed north, being employed by the Canadian government in 1879, to work on the western section of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Andrew, his wife and family moved to Yale, BC, so he could supervise the continuing construction.

The family was recorded on the 1881 census living in Yale. Along with Andrew and his wife Sarah, were 9 year old Sherly (born New Jersey), 7 year old Eva (born New Jersey), 3 year old Percy (born San Francisco), and 6 month old Arthur (born Yale, BC) – no mention of Andrew Jr.

According to the Wikipedia history, it is estimated that Andrew ONDERDONK was responsible for bringing over six and a half thousand Chinese from China and many more thousands from California.

Andrew Onderdonk



Andrew Onderdonk circa 1880



## DATABASE PUZZLE

After his work for the Canadian Pacific Railway, Andrew won many more contracts for railway and canal construction in Eastern Canada and the United States.

Mount Onderdonk, located in the northern Selkirk Mountains, near the head of the Goldstream River, was named for him. There was also a station on the Canadian Pacific Railway near Pitt Meadows that has a sign 'Onderdonk'.

He died on June 21, 1905 at the age of 56, in Oscawana-on-the-Hudson, New York. For more information on Andrew ONDERDONK and his exploits, there are many references to be found online. Below is a list of the books found in the British Columbia Genealogical Society library in our Book Index Database.

### Results of a Search for ONDERDONK

Surname	Given	Book	BCGS Ref	Notes	Maiden/Former/Spouse
ONDERDONK		Vancouver Historical Journal, No 1 - see pages 52,55,66	971.1 VHJ		
ONDERDONK		The Pioneer Women of Vancouver Island - see page 120	920.72 LUG		
ONDERDONK		This was the Kootenay - see page 80	971.145 GRA		
ONDERDONK		Vancouver Voters, 1886 - see page 688	971.133 BCGS		
ONDERDONK	A	Settler, Prospectors & Tourist Guide - see pages 28,35,36,37	971.11 CHI	Railroad Builder, Yale, B C	
ONDERDONK	Andrew	Langley Story, The - see pages 98,99,113,114	971.133 WAI		
ONDERDONK	Andrew	Vancouver Voters, 1886 - see pages 476,637	971.133 BCGS		
ONDERDONK	Andrew	Fraser Canyon: Valley of Death - see page 21	971.14 AND	Contracted to Build CPR 1880	
ONDERDONK	Andrew	Growing up in the Valley - see page 25	971.133 ORC		
ONDERDONK	Andrew	West to the Sea - see page 97	971.1 MAC		
ONDERDONK	Andrew	Ghost Towns of British Columbia - see pages 20,22,23,190	971.1 RAM		
ONDERDONK	Andrew	Tales of the Kootenays - see page 28	971.145 SMY		
ONDERDONK	Andrew	Maple Ridge, A History of Settlement - see page 24	971.133 CAN C2		
ONDERDONK	Andrew	Okanagan-Similkameen - see page 14	971.14 PAT	CPR Contractor	
ONDERDONK	Andrew	Agassiz Harrison Valley, The - see pages 20,42	971.133 WOO		
ONDERDONK	Andrew	Medical History of British Columbia, The - see pages 30,31	971.1 MON		
ONDERDONK	Andrew	Tales of the Fraser Canyon - see pages 54,57*,59-62,64,65,74,75,83,84*,85-87,89	971.133 WAI HIS		HILMAN, Sarah Delia
ONDERDONK	Andrew	BC Studies - No 04 - see page 46	971.1 BCS		
ONDERDONK	Andrew	Cannery Village - Company Town - see page 22	971.1 CAM		
ONDERDONK	Andrew	Life Not Chosen, A - see page 33-34	920.72 JAC	Railway Contractor Whose Former Home Became All Hallows School, Yale, BC	
ONDERDONK	Andrew	Vancouver, The Pioneer Years 1774-1886 - see pages 117,122	971.133 PET		
ONDERDONK	Andy	BC Studies - No 05 - see page 71	971.1 BCS		
ONDERDONK	Sarah Delia	Tales of the Fraser Canyon - see pages 75,84*	971.133 WAI HIS		HILMAN

## DATABASE PUZZLE

*Sources:*

1. Photos of Andrew Onderdonk and Sarah Hillman from Wikipedia.
2. Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume XIII (1901-1910)
3. Portrait of the two sons of Andrew Onderdonk, City of Vancouver Archives.



*Studio portrait of the young sons of Andrew Onderdonk*

## THE GREAT FAMINE

### The Great Famine

Contributed by Kim Kujawski  
Member #5575

*2022 marks the 175th anniversary of Irish mass immigration to Canada. Fleeing the Great Famine, many Irish families boarded ships for the U.S. and Canada to start a new life. "Black '47", however, was a devastating year for the Irish, both in their home country and for those who travelled to North America. The dirty, overcrowded ships had an unwanted and deadly passenger: typhus.*

From 1845 to 1851, Ireland experienced an extraordinary period of hardship dubbed the "Great Famine", the "Potato Famine" or the "Great Hunger." Potato blight caused crops to fail during successive years, leading to mass starvation and malnutrition. Over 1 million people are believed to have died from starvation or disease, while another million left Ireland for North America or Great Britain. Within a decade, Ireland's population went from 8.5 million to just over 5 million.

1847 was a particularly deadly year in Ireland. Not only was a large portion of the population affected by starvation, epidemics of typhus, dysentery and smallpox soon spread throughout the country. On April 17 the Roscommon Journal reported: "Deaths by famine are now so frequent that whole families who retire to rest at night are corpses in the morning and frequently are left unburied for days for want of coffins."

#### **Mass Emigration to North America**

Many Irish families had to make a difficult decision: stay in Ireland and struggle to survive or take their chances and sail to North America. Though the U.S. was seen as a more desirable destination, many chose Canada because tickets were cheaper (about £1 to £3 less). Once their passage was paid, the travellers soon discovered that the ships were ill-equipped to transport people for a long period of time. They were rat-infested, filthy and overcrowded, earning them the nickname "coffin ships." Many passengers came aboard with typhus, or "ship fever", and spread it to others during their six- to eight-week passage.

#### **A Dangerous Voyage**

During 1847 alone, over 100,000 Irish passengers travelled from the British Isles to the British North American Colonies. 90,000 sailed towards Quebec, 17,000 to New Brunswick, and the remainder to other Atlantic ports. Between 5,000 and 8,000 travellers died at sea and were thrown overboard. At least three ships sank en route to Canada: the *Exmouth* of Newcastle (241 passengers), the *Carricks of Whitehaven* (173 passengers) and the *Miracle from Liverpool* (400 passengers).

## THE GREAT FAMINE

### Typhus Arrives in Canada

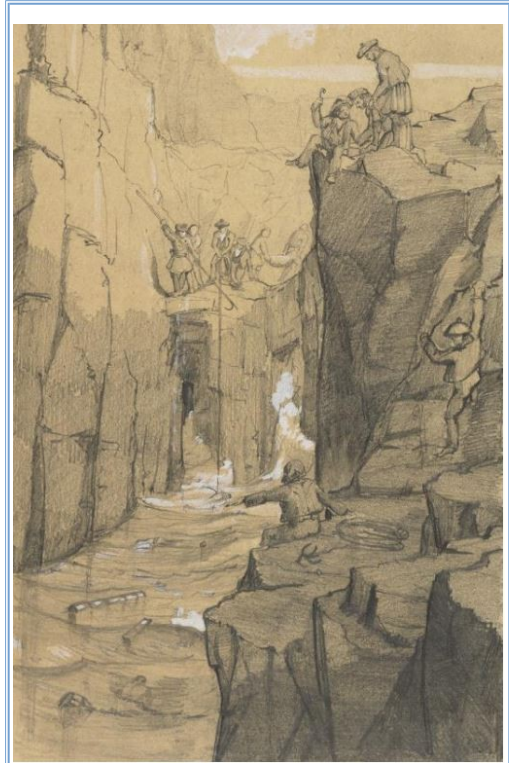
Typhus had been present in Canada previously, but there was only one typhus epidemic to ever affect the country: that of 1847 in Québec, Ontario and New Brunswick, brought about by the Irish immigration. At that time, there were many names for typhus: jail fever, camp fever, hospital fever, ship fever, road fever and Irish fever. Some newspapers even called it "Emigrant Typhus."

Grosse-Île was the first point of entry for most travellers who managed to survive the crossing. Located just upstream from Quebec City in the St-Lawrence, it was initially set up as a quarantine station to prevent the spread of cholera in 1832. Authorities used it again in 1847, hoping to stop "ship fever" from landing on Canadian soil. By May 20th, about 30 ships were anchored at Grosse-Île. The staff was quickly overwhelmed, having to examine over 90,000 passengers in one year, and burying at least 5,000 dead.

Some died from dysentery but most succumbed to typhus. Mass graves were dug, and men were paid \$4 per day to collect the bodies from the ship holds with hooks and bring them to the graves. Temporary "sheds" were erected, and new buildings were rapidly constructed on the island to house the many patients, but it still wasn't enough. Many passengers had to remain aboard their disease-infested ships because Grosse-Île was too crowded. Things weren't necessarily better on the island. The so-called sheds were never meant to house people—they had no ventilation nor privies, resulting in the rapid spread of disease. Over 9,000 deaths were recorded at Grosse-Île during the entire epidemic. Inspections were carried out hastily, allowing many immigrants with latent fever to pass as healthy and leave the island (it could take 10 to 12 days for an infected person to show symptoms). Some ships were diverted to Montreal, where fever sheds were set up in Pointe-Saint-Charles and Griffintown. Those who died there were buried in mass graves next to the sheds, often three coffins deep.

### Fighting Typhus in Canada's Cities

Despite these preventative efforts, typhus-infected passengers did come ashore and triggered an epidemic in Canada's cities. Over 1,000 typhus deaths were recorded in Quebec City, between 3,500 and 6,000 in Montreal and over 4,000 in various cities in Ontario (then called Canada West). The mayor of Montreal, John Easton Mills, died of the disease on November 12, 1847. The Montreal Gazette reported that "He was daily at the Sheds, sometimes for hours together, and has often been seen at the bedside of some miserable and dying emigrant, administering with his own hands that relief which he so much needed."



*Fishing out the bodies of the Exmouth by  
John Francis Campbell*

## THE GREAT FAMINE

In this discharge of a most painful and onerous office, Mr. Mills contracted the disease which has terminated an honored and a useful life".

Religion played a significant role in the epidemic, as religious orders were generally the ones called upon to care for the sick. In Montreal, the Grey Nuns were the first to visit the sheds in May of 1847, but they soon lost many of their own to the illness. The Sisters of Providence came to assist in June, then took over from the Grey Nuns entirely in July as they left to recover from the disease. The nuns from the Hôtel-Dieu also lent a hand but left quickly in order to care for the priests who had contracted typhus.

The Grey Nuns returned in September and remained until the closure of the sheds seven months later. At least 30 priests and nuns became infected with typhus. 21 of them later died of the disease.

### **In Canada West (Ontario)**

About half of the total immigrants were Protestants from Northern Ireland. They, along with a sizeable Irish Catholic contingent, made their way west of Montreal, settling in Bytown (now Ottawa), Kingston and Toronto. During the summer of 1847, roughly 38,000 Irish refugees arrived in Toronto, a city of only 20,000. 863 died of typhus in the fever sheds on the grounds of the hospital at King and John streets. Many bodies were buried in St. Paul's cemetery in the city's Corktown neighbourhood. As in Montreal, many priests and nuns, both Catholic and Protestant, lost their lives while treating the victims of typhus and contracting the disease themselves.

In Bytown, the sudden influx of 3,000 Irish immigrants triggered a typhus outbreak. Sheds were quickly constructed and about 200 people died while in quarantine. In Kingston, sheds were also erected. Over 1,400 Irish immigrants died there.

### **Blame and Discrimination**

Irish immigrants were blamed for the typhus epidemic and faced intense discrimination in their new country. In 1847, A. B. Hawke, Chief Emigrant Agent for Canada West, said "More than three-fourths of the immigrants this year have been Irish, diseased in body, and belonging generally to the lower class of unskilled labourers. Very few of them are fit for farm servants." In Toronto, anti-Catholic sentiment of many Protestant residents made settling there incredibly difficult for the Irish. A column from the *Globe* read "Irish beggars are to be met everywhere, and they are ignorant and vicious as they are poor. They are lazy, improvident and unthankful; they fill our poorhouses and our prisons." Many Toronto businesses posted signs reading "No Irish Need Apply". Unable to find jobs, many Irish left the city, some headed for the U.S. while others went to Niagara and Hamilton.

### **Cures and Remedies**

Newspaper articles of the time made it clear that typhus was associated with a lack of cleanliness, but the specific cause of the disease was yet unknown. Several preventative cures



## THE GREAT FAMINE

were suggested by the newspaper the Scottish Guardian:

- "Do not sit in the draught, it is dangerous."
- "Making up a warm or ill aired bed will produce disease."
- "Accustom your children not to be afraid of the cold water sponge. They will come to like it and apply it themselves."
- "Do all you can to avoid hanging your washings to dry in the rooms you live in. Nothing is more dangerous to health."
- "Never live on poor food that you may save money for drink. Simple directions for thrifty and good cooking will be sent to you. Strive to learn the best ways in the meantime from your neighbors who can cook well."
- "Lose no opportunity of walking and taking exercise in the open air."

And, as we've seen with other diseases during this time like cholera, alcohol was also blamed.

"Remember that no drinker ever rises above the lowest poverty. Mark this, too, typhus finds out the drunkard and fastens on him".

### The End of the Epidemic

As a result of the typhus epidemic, many boards of health were created throughout the Canadas. The public was encouraged to read their reports and comply with their recommendations which focused on cleanliness. Though cases of typhus were still being reported, the epidemic was officially declared over in April of 1848. The official cause of typhus, and its method of transmission, would only be discovered in 1916. The Canadian typhus epidemic is believed to have caused 20,000 deaths in 1847.

### Monuments

Many memorials have been erected in memory of the Irish that came and those that perished, as well as the Canadian victims who died while trying to help. A Celtic cross was erected in Saint-John, New Brunswick. A provincial plaque was installed in St. Mary's Cemetery in Kingston, Ontario. A statue was installed in Ireland Park in Toronto. In 2021, Grasett Park was also opened in Toronto, located where the fever sheds once stood. The park is named in honour of Dr. George Robert Grasett, the Medical Superintendent of the Toronto Hospital in 1847, who died of typhus.



Ireland Park, Toronto

*Note: the figures reported for infections, deaths and orphaned children vary greatly depending on source used (see sources below). The most commonly cited numbers were used in this article.*

## THE GREAT FAMINE

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## THECLE CORNELIUS AUBRY

### The First Irishman to Settle in New France.

Submitted by Kim Kujawski .  
Member #5575

*2022 marks the 175th anniversary of Irish Mass Immigration to Canada during the Great Famine. Though most Irish Canadians do trace their ancestors back to this period, the first Irishman to call Canada home landed here over 350 years ago. Meet Thècle Cornelius Aubry, the first Irishman to settle in New France.*

The surname Aubry: sounds French, right? Thousands of North American Aubrys can trace their roots back to the same ancestor: Thècle Cornelius Aubry. What many Aubrys might not realize is that the original surname is most definitely not French. The first Aubry to set foot on North American soil was an Irishman named Tadhg mac Conchziir Ui Braonain, whose anglicized name would have been Teague McConnor O'Brennan, and whose Frenchified name in New France became Thècle Cornelius Aubry.

Tadhg, or Thècle, has the distinction of being the very first Irishman to settle in New France. After a rather turbulent start in Montréal, Thècle married Fille du roi Jeanne Chartier. This is their story.

#### **Irish Name & Origin**

Thècle was born around 1636 in Ireland and is widely considered to be the first Canadian of Irish origin.<sup>1</sup> In New France, his first name was most commonly written "Thècle". On parish records and censuses, his surname has been spelled "Cornelius", variations of "Aubry", and variations of "O'Brennan". It's possible to see how "O'Brennan" became the shortened "Aubry" in French. His true first name was most likely the Irish "Tadhg", which would have been exceedingly difficult for French speakers to say. "Thècle" would have been a close approximation. "Cornelius" is the anglicized version of "Connor," or "Corneille" in French (which appears in some notarial documents pertaining to Thècle).

In Thècle's marriage contract and marriage record, his parents are recorded as "Connehour Aubrenam" and "Honorée Iconnehour," most likely Connor O'Brennan and Honora O'Connor. Author and historian John P. DuLong has posited that Thècle's real name in Irish Gaelic would have been Tadhg mac Conchziir Ui Braonain, or Teague McConnor O'Brennan in English.<sup>2</sup>

Thècle's exact origins, however, are murky. In the same marriage documents, he was from the parish of "St-Patrice" in "Diasony Hovillean." A search of "Diasony Hovillean" on modern maps yields no results. Unfortunately, several historians and genealogists have done extensive research in Ireland to determine Thècle's place of birth, without coming to a definitive conclusion.

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He was likely born in County Kerry or County Kilkenny, where the highest concentrations of O'Brennans are found, but we may never know the true origins of Canada's first Irish settler.

### **A Turbulent Start in New France**

The exact reasons why Thècle left Ireland are unknown, but the country was experiencing severe political and economic turmoil around the time of his departure. This was also an era of extreme persecution for Irish Catholics, owing to England's Oliver Cromwell. The opportunity to start a new life an ocean away may have been enough to incite Thècle to leave.

Thècle sailed to New France around 1660, settling in Montréal.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, he had a rather rough start in his new homeland. While labouring on the farm of Urbain Tessier in early 1661, he and other workers were attacked by a group of 260 armed Iroquois (more accurately called Haudenosaunee today, but "Iroquois" was the word used in this period). Four of the men were found dead a few days later, their bodies showing clear signs of torture. The remaining men were taken by the Iroquois.<sup>4</sup>

Thècle, included in the latter group, was presumed dead when an inventory of his goods was drawn up on May 5, 1661. The notarial record indicated he had been living in the home of Jean Gervaise, contracted as a domestic servant. The value of Thècle's goods amounted to a meagre 63 livres.<sup>5</sup>

Thècle and several other prisoners were taken to the village of Onnontagué (Onondaga in English; located in the present-day state of New York). The Jesuit priest Simon Lemoyne led a convoy there in an attempt to free the captives. His negotiations were somewhat successful; he and eight of the kidnapped men, including Thècle, returned to Montreal on October 9, 1661. The rest of the prisoners would only be freed the following August.

The next time Thècle appears in the public record is following an ordinance by Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve. On November 4, 1662, de Maisonneuve ordered all soldiers and domestic servants to clear seignorial lands. In exchange, they would be permitted to benefit from these plots of land until concessions were granted to them.<sup>6</sup>

On November 23, 1662, Thècle agrees to clear four arpents of land. The concession document records him as a "domestic servant of the Sainte Vierge" (Blessed Virgin), indicating that he was working for a religious order.

### **Militiaman**

A few months later on the first of February 1663, the Milice de la Sainte-Famille (Militia of the Holy Family) was organized in Montréal by de Maisonneuve. Forts urgently needed to be built in order to better protect residents from Iroquois attacks. Twenty "escouades", or squads, were formed, each containing seven men. Thècle was recorded in squad 7, under the command of corporal Pierre Raguindeau dit St-Germain.<sup>7</sup>

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### Voyageur

In 1667, Thècle, Mathurin Normandin and Robert Cachelièvre entered into a half-profit agreement with businessmen named Dugas, le Valon, and Peré to travel to the Outaouais region with merchandise to trade for furs. Once there, having travelled with another voyageur from Montreal, they met a group of fellow Frenchmen who were also involved in the fur trade. The group combined all of their merchandise and worked together. During their stay in the Outaouais, five of the Frenchmen died (from the other group), along with one of their own. The remaining men split their profits, and the group from Montreal returned home and gave half of their share to the men who had contracted them.

Once home, the three men petitioned the Conseil Souverain because they thought they deserved more after having risked their lives to continue trading after the deaths of their associates. On September 12, 1670, The Council ordered that, from the shares of the six deceased associates amounting to 156 beaver robes, 39 shall be taken to be given to each of the plaintiffs, 13 to serve as a reward and salary for having continued the trade in benefit of the company.<sup>8</sup>

### Jeanne Chartier

Thècle's future bride, Jeanne Chartier, was the daughter of bourgeois Pierre Chartier and Marie Godon. She was born around 1636 in the parish of St-Honoré in Paris, France.<sup>9</sup> Jeanne left her home country around 1670 and sailed to Québec with a 600-livre dowry. She was a fille du roi (daughter of the king), one of about 700 unmarried women sent to New France



between 1663 and 1673 by King Louis XIV to solve a gender imbalance problem and help populate the new colony. They were called Filles du roi because Louis XIV paid for their recruitment, clothing and passage to the new world and offered dowries to the women when they married.

Jeanne met Thècle soon after her arrival. The couple had a marriage contract drawn up on September 6, 1670, before notary Romain Becquet. Thècle was called "le Sieur Tecq Aubrenaue."<sup>10</sup>

Thècle and Jeanne were married on September 10, 1670, in the parish of Notre-Dame in Québec. Both bride and groom were about 34 years old. Thècle is described as an "habitant" from "la Rivière de l'Assomption." Jeanne, a fille du roi, received her gift of 50 livres from the king.<sup>11</sup>

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Thècle and Jeanne had at least seven children:<sup>12</sup>

- 1 Marie Madeleine (1671-1748) married Jean Cape dit Desjardins and Olivier Lainé dit Laplume
- 2 Marie Catherine (1673-1688)
- 3 Jean Cornelius (1675-bef. 1681)
- 4 Jean Baptiste (1676-?)
- 5 François (1677-1752) married Jeanne Tetu dite Bouthillier
- 6 Geneviève (1679-1679)
- 7 Étienne (1681-1681)

Thècle declared not knowing how to write or sign on his marriage contract, but a signature of sorts does appear on three of his children's baptism records.

After their wedding, Thècle and Jeanne settled on Île-Sainte-Thérèse. They baptized their first two daughters at Notre-Dame in Montreal, as no parish was established on Île-Sainte-Thérèse. Around 1674, the family moved to Lachenaie. Their next four children are baptized at Pointe-aux-Trembles on the island of Montreal.



In the 1681 census, Thècle (erroneously recorded as "Jacques") and Jeanne are enumerated living in seigneurie de La Chenaye (Lachenaie). They are both 45 years old. The family owned five heads of cattle and two arpents of cleared land. Their four children were also living in the household: Madeleine (10 years old), Marie (8), Jean (5) and François (4). Sadly, the two youngest children had not survived. Jean Cornelius likely also died before 1681, as he is not included in the census (no burial record has been found).

Thècle Aubry Cornelius died at the age of about 51. He was buried on November 24, 1687, in Pointe-aux-Trembles. The burial record indicates that he was an "habitant" from Île-Sainte-Thérèse.<sup>13</sup> Jeanne Chartier died at the age of about 59 on October 30, 1695. She was buried the same day in the parish cemetery of Notre-Dame in Montreal.<sup>14</sup>

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## BRITISH COLUMBIA GENEALOGIST

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