

## In This Issue....

This issue touches on matters of the spirit, not only through stories of clergy forebears and their ministries, but how cemeteries offer people a natural space for finding solace – and a rich source of genealogical information.

In her article about her cousin Euros Wyn Jones, Miriam Roberts introduces us to a caring and often playful minister in the Welsh Independent Chapel, and Denise Daubert introduces us to two ancestral brothers who took up the priesthood, while shedding light on the formative years of Alberta's Oblates.

While cemeteries offer a physical link with the past, it's perhaps most poignant for the small communities dotted across Alberta's landscape. We take a day excursion with Clara Iwaasa and three fellow genealogists to find the Cravath Corner and Patricia cemeteries near Brooks, while Iris Tuftin and Colleen Andersen recount how dedicated community members persevered to maintain or restore their community cemeteries at Sangudo and Moon Valley, respectively.

Ging Wei Wong shares the moving story of his sister, and the bittersweet occasion 40 years later that reunited his mother with her daughter's grave, while Shreela Chakrabartty offers an uplifting glimpse into the funeral rites of her South Asian heritage.

For John Althouse, a visit to the Union and Holy Cross cemeteries of Fort Macleod sets the stage for the fascinating history of the North West Mounted Police. Bob Franz's account of his grandparents' journey to Canada picks up on last issue's theme of language and immigration, while evoking the fortitude of Canada's early settlers. And for cemetery research, Kurt Paterson shares some online resources.

Our youth writer this issue, Sofia De Paola, recounts the journey of her grandfather and mother to Alberta and her pride in her Italian roots, while Lynne Duigou reports on the Genealogy 4 Youth Gala.

As always, I can't say 'thanks' enough to the RS team, from copy editing to layout and mailing, and especially to the authors who transport readers time and again into our province's history and, subsequently, that of our nation and the world community.

*Kate Wilson, Editor*

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## President's Message

by Al Bromling

The *Relatively Speaking* editorial team continues to use the structure of unifying themes to publish an exemplary journal for our Society. I think the method works. I hope that our readers will enjoy and learn from the articles included in this issue. I know from personal experience that family genealogy is not complete without the support of images of headstones, prayer cards, death certificates and obituaries.

It is not surprising that the theme *Cemeteries, Death Rites and Remembrances* would be selected by the team to highlight this important aspect of genealogical research.

Cemetery research and documentation has been a major activity of Society members since its founding in 1973. And *Relatively Speaking* has been a key player in this project. For example, *RS* Editor John Hughes, in 1973, urged members to take on the commitment to systematically record Alberta Cemeteries. More than fifty cemetery record sets were published in the early editions of this Journal.

The project grew and AGS Branches printed 250 books recording more than 1200 of Alberta's 1800 cemeteries. Society volunteers have since entered these records in the Alberta Record Names Index (ARNI). This important Society project has thrived with Norma Wolowyk's leadership, and ARNI now contains more than one million entries. Sixty per cent of them are cemetery related.

More recently, these AGS cemetery records are going digital on the *Internet Archive*. This is by means of a joint venture with Edmonton Public Library. On the AGS side the digitization project has solid leadership from Kurt Paterson, Lynne Duigou and Diane Wozniak. Our member's commitment to volunteerism is a foundation for these and other important projects.

In closing, I would like to thank all the contributing authors for helping AGS meet our strategic research goal – to develop, maintain and provide access to trusted sources for diverse genealogical research. To the reader: thank you for joining us on this journey.

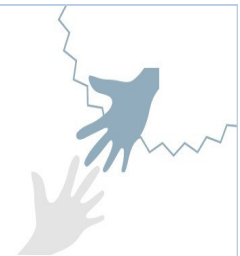
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# VOLUNTEERS

UNPAID NOT BECAUSE  
THEY'RE WORTHLESS, BUT  
BECAUSE THEY'RE  
PRICELESS!



*Miriam lives in Drayton Valley, Alberta. She is a retired Registered Nurse who met her husband after coming to Canada, and has two married sons, two granddaughters and one great granddaughter.*

*Along with singing and writing she likes gardening, family history, volunteering in the community and church. Prior to COVID 19 she had travelled to 74 countries, and has written many articles for different magazines and newspapers. She has also written a book about her travels. After COVID 19, she joined Wake Up and Write on Zoom from the Drayton Valley Municipal Library.*

## Cofio Euros Cyfrol goffa i Euros Wyn

Jones

### *Remembering Euros, a commemorative volume for Euros Wyn Jones*

by *Miriam Roberts*

*Cyfrol Deynged: A volume of tribute to Euros Wyn Jones was first published in Welsh in 2021, with Rev. John Pritchard as Gobygydd Testun (editor of text).*

I received this book about my first cousin about two years ago. Born November 30, 1950 in Wrexham, Wales, Euros was remembered as an amazing, caring and compassionate minister in the Welsh Independent Church (known as a Chapel), for which he had served in Carmarthenshire and Anglesey. He modelled his life and faith after his Lord and saviour Jesus Christ.

Scholastically he was a brilliant teacher, mentor and example to follow. His students, in the Church seminary at Aberystwyth, to his dismay called him the "Encyclopedia". Along with his calling he was a faithful and kind husband to his wife Sioned, and father to five very active and bright children as well as three grandchildren.

Euros took a keen interest in his student ministers and took them on historical tours of rural Wales in a minivan, sporting a Panama Hat, to show them where some of their predecessors came from. On one tour he did get lost, but wasn't afraid of showing his human failure by phoning a friend for directions. As you can imagine he was serious most of the time, but he did enjoy playing tennis and cricket as well as folk dancing.

When he first left school in Bala, it was thought he might continue in the farming tradition at his home Ty Mawr Morfudd, in Carrog near Corwen. However he chose to follow his brother Gwyndaf into ministry, making him the third in his generation in a family with a history of ministers in five previous generations. When Euros started his ministry at Smyrna Chapel in Llangefni in September 1983, he was following in the footsteps of our uncle Thomas Dewi Jones who was minister at the same chapel in the 1960s.

Whenever one of his farming congregation members needed help, he was more than willing to help during the hay harvest, and also helped pull a calf. One time he took time to help the district nurse visit her patients after a heavy snowstorm.

The volume was written by different members of his family, fellow ministers and students. One theme that shone through was that Euros was very friendly and personable, with a broad smile and true to his rural Welsh background.

At his funeral service, one of the hymns was written by the Rev. William Hughes, our joint 3x grandfather. Here is part of a tribute to Euros, most likely given by Rev. John Pritchard:

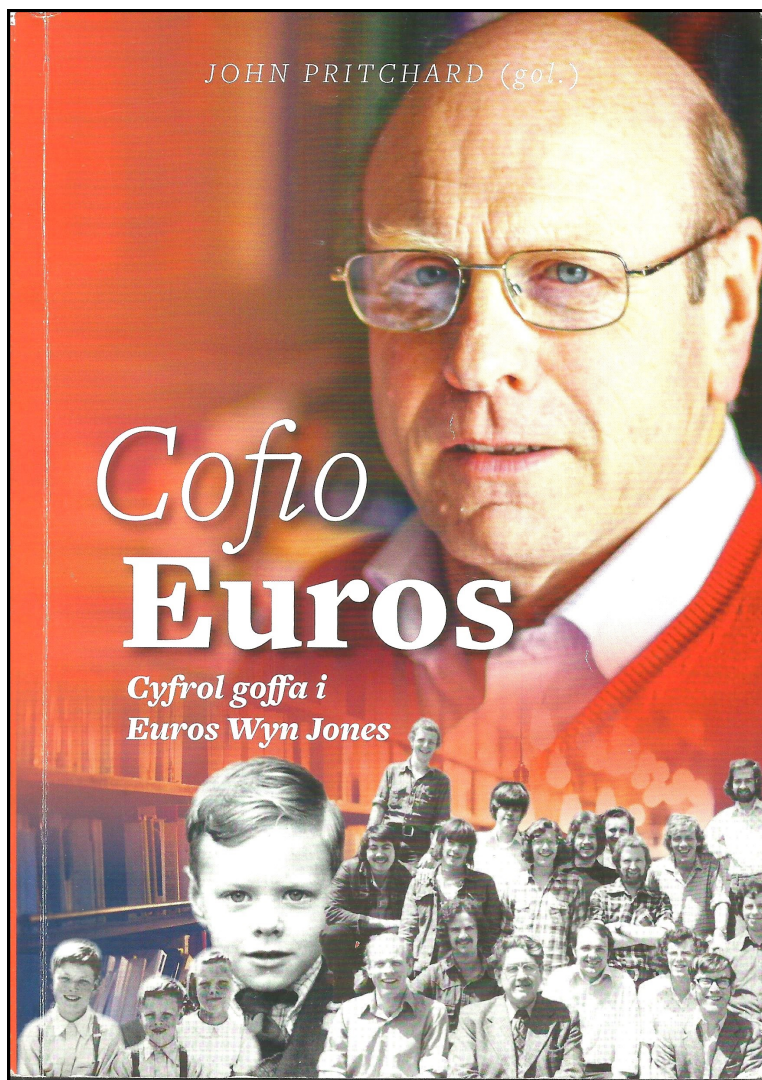
*I will give the last word to Euros himself, by using the last sentences of his volumes (of twenty years back). Listen to him and you will see from the beginning the key to things in his whole life; those that enabled him to face the tribulations that came to his life years later after he had written these words; the things that sustained him and motivated him in his ministry; and things that aspired the deepest things in his heart.*

*'Two things followed immediately from gazing at the glory of Jesus Christ. First we get strength and hope to live in the midst of difficulties and trials, temptations and life's tribulations. Secondly, we receive inspiration to share and spread the news to others. This is not a burden but joy. And part of the privilege every day, to increase in love from these graces that make us like our Lord Jesus Christ.'*

This book gave me a fuller insight into my cousin's life as a whole, and filled in some gaps about his family history. He died suddenly on November 29, 2018. Prior to 2018, he had started using the internet as a method of communicating with his audience. He was also a prolific writer.

### Visiting Manipur, India

Below is part of an article prepared by Euros for *The Golead (The Light)* following his visit to Manipur, North East India at the beginning of 2018. I translated the article from Welsh, with the help of iTranslate, as follows:



*There has been a close relationship between Wales and North East India for many years, especially between the Welsh Presbyterian Church and this extensive area. Names such as Hills of Cassia, Shillong, Lushai and Mizoram are familiar to hundreds of Sunday school children in Wales, through the frequent reports about the progress and troubles the missionaries, teachers, and doctors in these distant lands have had. In their turn, the various countries are more than ready to acknowledge the connection, and they appreciate their debt to the missionaries from Wales who brought the Gospel out for them to hear.*

*At the invitation of the Presbyterian Synod of Zou, the Presbyterian Church of India (PCI), I received a memorable experience spending almost two weeks of preaching, teaching and touring in the state of Manipur, which borders Myanmar to the east, Assam to the west and Mizoram to the south.*

*It is a mountainous state, but there are plains and wide valleys that allow their people to grow rice and other crops in the valley floors. There are several towns of substantial size, like the capital of Imphal and Churachandpur where I stayed. But there are other villages extending to the north and the south with a nomadic population. To make things worse the road conditions are terrible, which makes travelling back and forth very difficult.*

*Only the roads of the capital city and the main road through Churachandpur toward the west had a relatively respectable surface. The other roads were nothing but dusty tracks that shook a man's gut!*

*The Zou tribe is the oldest, and the only one bearing the name of father of the Mizo-Kukt-Chin tribes in the northeast of India, and was spread through the hills of Chin of Myanmar and Chitagon hills of Bangladesh. They are a remarkable people, originally tracing their history to Mongolia before settling in Tibet. But because of China's oppression they moved to these valleys where they became one of the most cultured nations, and understand us. Manipur was a monarchy in its own right until it was conquered by the nation of Meiting, and in the nineteenth century by armies of the British Empire and incorporated within India.*

*There is so much feeling for national pride and isolation among these people that they have repeatedly rebelled against imperialist oppression. From 1916 to 1919 they took up rebellion against Britain, because they [Britain's leaders] were trying to conscript soldiers to fight in France, Macedonia and other places during the great war. It was only after the war ended in Europe that these freedom fighters were defeated. It was only after the second world war that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945) raised an army with the Japanese to fight against Britain, and managed to successfully chase the invaders out of the country. In Moirang, by beautiful Lake Loktak, Chandra Bose raised the Indian Freedom flag on April 14, 1944, but he was killed in an air crash on his way to Taiwan on August 18, 1945 without getting to see the freedom that came to India in 1948. The museum in Moirang is worth seeing. It shows a very different view of what happened in that country in that troublesome time and the spirit of rebellion is strong in the land today.*

*The Christian Mission began in Ukebrul in the northern part of Manipur in 1896, but did not have much of an effect on the southern parts until Watkin Roberts, who was affiliated with the medical work of Dr. Peter Fraser in Mizoram, came to work among them. At the invitation of the head of the village Sevann, not far from Churachandpur, the first mission was established in this the southern part of Manipur. The mission opened May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1910 by becoming the vehicle for spreading of Christianity into Southern Manipur. The traditional religion was animism, and it was not easy to spread the gospel among them. But part of Roberts' secret was that he allowed the native peoples to be missionaries among their own people, and today 98% of the people of Manipur are Christians. Indeed, it could be said that this was an Indigenous mission rather than an import of the Western Christianity. The nuances of the Indigenous culture remain in the hymns and dancing of the services.*

*Fifty years would pass, however, before they formed their own Synod and were recognized by the PCI General Assembly. That happened on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009 which was a landmark moment in their history. They have three presbyteries, 64 churches, 16 ministers, 185 elders and a total membership of 10, 316. They have a powerful mission department, a vibrant youth department and a women's department which is responsible for supporting orphans. It can be said that this small denomination has made great strides in recent years, but it is quite poor in comparison with the denominations and synods of tribes of neighbouring countries.*

*They can be said to have very limited resources in their own language. There was a New Testament translation of the Zou language in 1967, but it was not until 1992 that there was a translation of the whole Bible. Even then, the translation did not please everyone as those who prepared it confused the language of the Mizo and the language of the Zou. Therefore, someone needs to improve the translation and provide more Bibles. They also have few resources for hymn singing. I saw one service hymn book, with the precentor singing one line and the congregation joining in afterwards. They used to use a drum when singing, which allows for a perfect pitch. However, the younger generation formed choirs and sang with exceptional tuning in worship. Some have released a CD of their songs.*

*Another thing that struck me in comparison to Wales was that young people were present in the services, and were keen to carry on the mission. There were no obvious tensions between them and the older generations either, as was seen in the singing. The Elders sang monotone hymns to the beat of the drum, but the youth sang unaccompanied in a charming and captivating harmony.*

*Preaching services were held not only on Saturdays and Tuesdays. Sundays I saw 300 present in one place, and out in the villages about 40 including children of all ages (as well as a few dogs joining in the praise).*

*In Spirituality, they are far more diligent in prayer than we are in the West. Stephan Chinzanhang would not venture far in his vehicle without stopping at the roadside to offer a prayer for a safe journey. It was also a privilege to join the small family in a small devotion in the home before bedtime. Likewise in public life, no one in the provincial government was afraid to kneel to pray when coming to office or when starting their senate session: something our little Parliament in Cardiff does not allow. A strange world!*

*They do not have a theological college, and it was my privilege to be training ministers and elders of this congregation's Christian history. Their good and warm response was appreciative. They also had the opportunity to enlighten me about many things, especially family life*

and the role of the family in church life. The Church is considered a place for the whole family, and not a place to leave the children for an hour or two while the parents go shopping.

The biggest impression on me was that of the social impact of Christianity on the population, which had been staggering. There was a time when problems of binge drinking and drug taking were prevalent in Churachandpur, devastating the lives of individuals and their families. During the sixties heroin was a plague in the area. Today, through the rising influence of Christianity on the population, very few people remain addicted to drugs. That is undeniable proof that Christianity can change lives and revolutionize people's social attitudes. What a shame that we still won't believe it in the West!

RS

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## Two Catholic priests serving God in early Alberta and Saskatchewan

by Denise Daubert

*This is the first of a two-part article about two brothers from Quebec who served as priests in western Canada, within the Oblate order. They are the ancestors of the author's husband.*

Neither my husband Rick nor I grew up in the Catholic faith, even though his maternal grandparents and my paternal grandparents were Catholic. Sets of circumstances with mixed religions for our parents meant we grew up Anglican (me) and Lutheran (Rick) but as a married couple decided to worship at a small Lutheran church near Ardrossan, close to where we live. Our children were baptized, confirmed and married at this church.

When my interest in genealogy began a number of years ago, I began a journey researching and writing stories of ancestors on both sides of the family. And when I heard that one of the themes for this issue of *Relatively Speaking* was “ancestors who were clergy”, I knew it was the perfect time to write the story of my husband’s maternal grandfather’s two uncles (who were brothers) and their lifetime calling to serve as Catholic priests in early Alberta and Saskatchewan.

### How did I first learn about these two priests?

I began dating my husband in 1972 and was delighted to meet his paternal grandpa, Wilfrid Pilon. As I got to know him better, he was pleased to share with me that he had been born in Quebec – and in turn was interested to learn that both my grandmothers were of French (European) ancestry. He was always happy when I tried to converse in French and we got by using a combination of my halting high school French and his Quebecois French/English. He learned English when he left Valleyfield, Quebec as a young man to farm in Saskatchewan. He married there in 1925 and he and his wife raised a family in Cut Knife, Saskatchewan with an eventual move to Edmonton, Alberta in the 1950s for their retirement years, and to join children who already resided in Edmonton.

He told me his story of being born into a very large Quebecois Catholic family and that he had many uncles, aunts and cousins – all his relatives were big families with lots of children!

Before he died in 1998 I would use visits to ask him about his family. Several things he said amazed me ... that in Quebec it was not only expected but an honour for Catholic couples to have one or two of their sons enter the priesthood (in fact it was he that his parents hoped would be a priest). Two daughters become nuns so that was good, too!

He talked about two uncles, Uncle Maxime and Uncle Leandre who became Catholic priests. As a young man in his early 20s, Grandpa ventured out to Saskatchewan in the early 1920s and his Uncle Leandre was posted as parish priest at the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church there. It was in fact his uncle who married my husband’s grandfather Wilfrid and his 17-year-old bride Margaret in 1925 – and when the couple had their first son born the next year, they named him Leandre in honour of the uncle.

<b>Certificate of Baptism</b>	
Parish of	<i>Our Lady of Perpetual Help</i>
Mission of	<i>Cut Knife, Sask.</i>
<b>THIS IS TO CERTIFY</b>	
That	<i>Joseph Leandre Alfred Pilon</i>
Child of	<i>Wilfrid Pilon</i>
and	<i>Marguerite Long</i>
who was born on the	<i>7<sup>th</sup></i> day of <i>Aug.</i> 19 <i>26</i>
was	✠ Baptized ✠
on the	<i>11<sup>th</sup></i> day of <i>Aug.</i> 19 <i>26</i>
<b>According to the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church</b>	
by the Rev.	<i>L. Pilon O.M.D.</i>
Sponsors:	<i>Alfred Pilon (representing his father) &amp; sister Marie Alfred Desjardins (representing his mother)</i>
as appears from the Baptismal Register of said Church.	
Dated,	<i>Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup></i> 19 <i>50</i>
Confirmed	<i>Oct. 13<sup>th</sup> 1935</i> by <i>Alfred Pilon</i>
	<i>Louis Leandre Pilon</i>

*While serving in Cut Knife, Saskatchewan, Father Leandre signed the baptism certificate of his nephew Leandre (Leon) Pilon, 1926.*

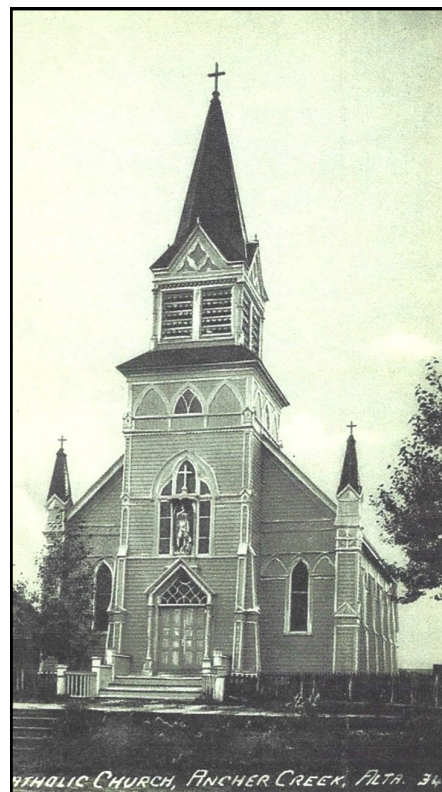
Well, the things he shared with me piqued my interest. So after all these years I am finally putting pen to paper. I am glad I kept my notes from those talks and think Grandpa Pilon would be proud of the story being recorded now in 2024.

Father Leandre Pilon was called back to serve in Alberta where he had been previously. When Grandpa and Grandma Pilon moved to Edmonton in 1952, Father Leandre was stationed at St. Albert. Sadly, Father Maxime had died in 1947. I do not recall in any of our conversations that Grandpa Wilfrid Pilon ever attended a mass by his uncle Father Pilon in St Albert, as not long after their move to Edmonton, Father Pilon was called to Pincher Creek and for just a bit of time again at St. Albert until his death in 1959. Wilfrid and Margaret attended St. John's Catholic Parish in west Edmonton, and parishioners usually worshipped at their home parish for Sunday masses. It is thus possible that Grandpa Wilfrid Pilon never had the chance to meet his Uncle Maxime Pilon, except perhaps when he was a little boy in Quebec.

**Researching Father Maxime Pilon & Father Leandre Pilon**

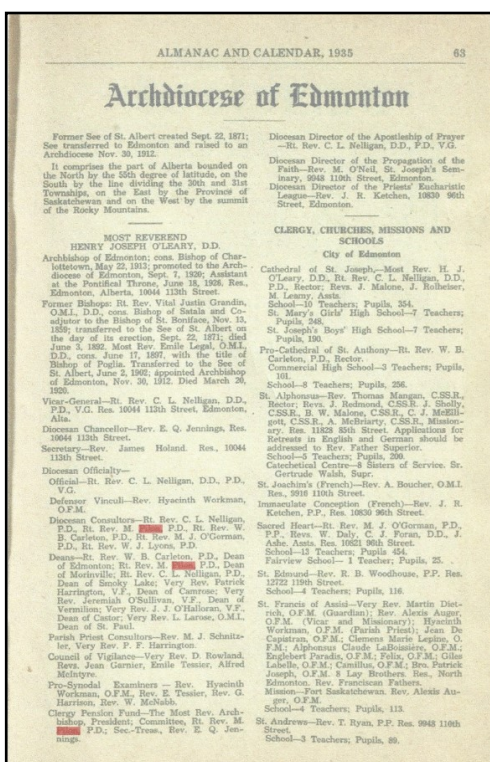
I was truly grateful that researching opened door after door for me to learn about these two brothers – considering all I really had at the beginning were their names, when and where they were born and that they had been Catholic priests in the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in the early 1900s.

What sources could I use for information? Years ago, it would have meant telephoning and writing to or visiting archives, but today's technology encompasses websites and digitization of newspapers. One of the most valuable pieces of advice I received when my interest in genealogy began was to utilize



*Catholic Parish, Pincher Creek, AB where Father Leandre served. (Source: Peel's Prairie Provinces website, postcard collection)*

newspapers in my research. We are fortunate that people who came before us microfilmed newspapers – and now newspapers are digitized online.



Researching would take me to the websites of Peel's Prairie Provinces, Archives Canada, Musée Heritage Museum in St. Albert and to the Provincial Archives of Alberta, to not only access community history books but to see some of the online Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) files. I also searched digitized community history books in Saskatchewan websites.

Peel's Prairie Provinces is an undeniably fabulous resource – digitized newspapers had many articles for me to find using surname or church name searches. Within pages of French-language newspapers *La Survivance*, *Le Patriote de l'Ouest*, *L'Union* and *Le Courrier de l'Ouest* I discovered articles about the two priests and the parishes where they served.

My very basic understanding of written French meant that I could understand the gist of articles, but not the specifics – and the specifics

*Archdiocese of Edmonton Almanac and Calendar, 1935, featuring Father Maxime. (Source: Peel's Prairie Provinces website)*



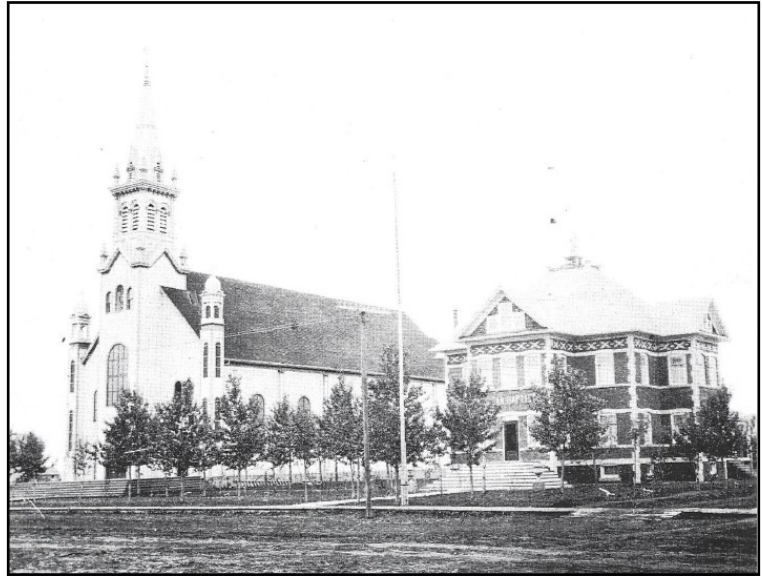
dination sacerdotale de son vénéral pasteur Monseigneur Maxime Pilon, P.D. Né à St-Louis de Gonzague, comté de Beauharnois, P. Qué., le jubilaire fit ses études chez les Sulpiciens de Montréal et fut ordonné prêtre dans sa paroisse natale le 29 juin 1887.

L'abbé Pilon fut d'abord professeur au petit séminaire de Valleyfield, de 1887 à 1901, puis vicaire à la cathédrale de 1901 à 1909. Venu alors dans l'Alberta, il desservit temporairement la petite mission d'Edson. Il fut curé de Lamoureux de 1909 à 1912; puis il passa à Edmonton comme curé-fondateur de la paroisse du Sacré-Coeur, de 1912 à 1921.

Il fut en même temps vicaire général du diocèse à partir de juillet 1918. A la mort de Monseigneur Legal il était élu vicaire capitulaire. L'année suivante, il était nommé curé de Morinville, en remplacement de M. l'abbé Gauthier, décédé. Sous la direction de Monseigneur Pilon, la paroisse de Morinville a fait des progrès considérables. Progrès spirituels: Monseigneur a l'honneur d'avoir fourni huit prêtres et plus de 20 religieuses. Progrès matériels: embellisse-

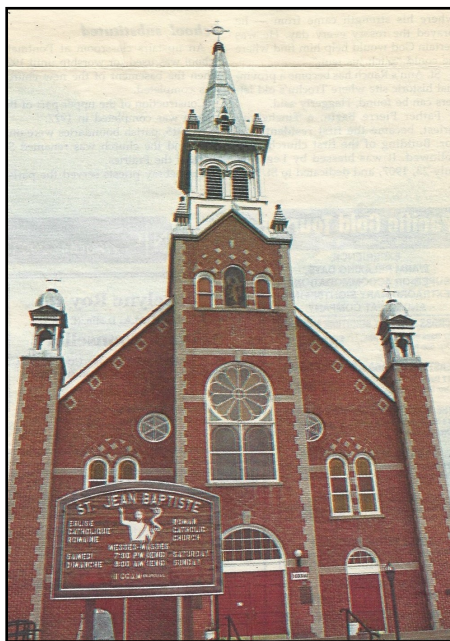


ment de l'église et des terrains, réfection du presbytère, aménagement d'un cimetière, installation d'un orgue et d'un carillon, inauguration d'un chemin de croix au cimetière, etc. . . . De belles fêtes se sont déroulées hier à la paroisse. Il y eut messe solennelle à 10 heures, suivie d'un magnifique banquet; et le soir séance en l'honneur du jubilaire. Nous donnerons de plus amples détails la semaine prochaine. Nous offrons de nouveau les nos hommages et nos meilleurs vœux à Monseigneur Pilon.



St. Jean Baptiste Catholic Church in Morinville. (Source: *The Morinville Book of Pictorial History*)

Father Maxime Pilon in his early years. (Source: *Peels Prairie Provinces website, La Survivance newspaper*)



St. Jean Baptiste exterior, where Father Maxime served. (Source: *The Western Catholic Reporter, July 2, 2007*)

Father Maxime (in 1947) and Father Leandre (in 1959) provided me with solid details about both of them. Due to the Archdioceses keeping such good records, and because an obituary of a priest or information given to a reporter and funeral mass notices for a priest fell to them, they did a really thorough job.

Another valuable place to research was on the National Library and Archives Quebec website where I was able to access the 1924, 1945 and 1950 *Le Canada Ecclesiastique Annuaire Du Clergé* – listing Catholic clergy across Canada and of course finding the names of the two Pilon priests.

were important for my research. Enter my very good friend. She's French Canadian and truly a wonderful person. Her name is Claire. She translated 37 articles from French newspapers into English for me. She is an angel and I was so appreciative.

As well on the Peel's website there were three digitized English-language newspapers: *The Edmonton Bulletin*, *The Edmonton Capital* and *The St. Albert Star*. Digitized copies of *Henderson's Alberta Gazetteer* were also helpful. A good number of articles either about one or both of the Pilon priests or name mentions in church columns or within community news were found, making for exciting searches.

I needed to learn who the Oblates of Mary Immaculate were/are. I didn't get to spend as much time as I would have liked at the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) with the files of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, but I will return. At The Sandra Thompson Reading Room at the PAA, I was fortunate to locate community history books of many of the Alberta communities the two priests served.

Information about each brother and their birthdates and the community in which they lived while growing up in Quebec came about in two ways – birth information was found on FamilySearch. Names of the seminaries they attended and some of their religious life "history" came in a surprising way. The write ups I found in newspapers about the death of

A wonderful source was digitized records of booklets produced by the Archdiocese of Edmonton, of priests and the churches they served. Here I could pinpoint where each of the brothers was serving and in what years.

I could also access Library and Archives Canada to view specific censuses, which would provide me with good information (1911, 1916, etc.)

**How would I find photographs?**

Photographs would be hard to come by and I would

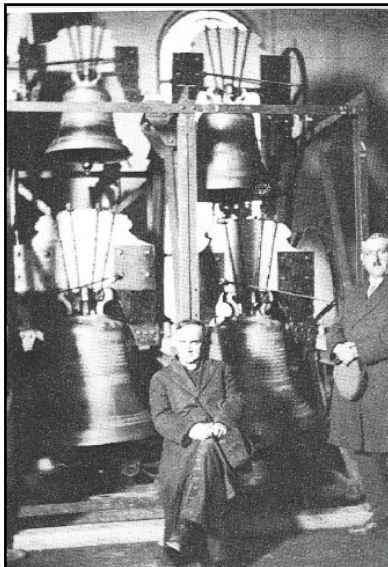


*Valleyfield Seminary students in Morinville. Young Leandre Pilon is in the centre of the photograph. (Source: Musée Heritage Museum, St. Albert)*

almost need a miracle, with no photographs in Grandpa Pilon’s photo albums of his uncles. I had to depend on photographs that appeared in newspapers or community history books from the communities the two brothers served in.

I lucked out with a photograph of young Leandre when I learned that the Musée Heritage Museum in St. Albert had a photo of a group of seminary students who travelled to Alberta (specifically St. Albert) to visit and see if the Canadian West was where they wanted to serve. Amazingly, the photo had names for the boys – Leandre was in that photo!

For photographs of the churches they served at, community history books were also a great resource. I took photographs of two of the churches connected with the lives of the brothers – the Catholic church at Morinville and the Catholic church at St. Albert. While there, I also took photographs of both Fathers’ gravestones.



*Father Maxime with the church bells in the Morinville Church (Source: The Morinville Book of Pictorial History)*



*Monseigneur Maxime Pilon in his later years. (Source: The Morinville Book of Pictorial History)*

**Morinville Priest, Msgr. Pilon Dies**

Msgr. Joseph Maxime Pilon parish priest at Morinville for the past 26 years and prominent Roman Catholic churchman with more than 50 years in the priesthood, died early Friday at the age of 74.

Msgr. Pilon was born in Ste. Louis de Gonzague, Quebec, and took his primary seminary course at the Sulpician fathers' seminary, Montreal. He was ordained as a priest in June 1897 and spent his first year as a professor at the seminary in Valleyfield, Que.

In 1901 Msgr. Pilon was appointed assistant priest at the cathedral in Valleyfield, a post he held for eight years.

In 1908, he came to Alberta to accept his first post at the Edson mission. He served as parish priest at Lamoureux, near Fort Saskatchewan, for a short time and in 1912 came to Edmonton as first pastor of the newly-organized Sacred Heart parish on 96 st.

In 1918 Msgr. Pilon was named vicar general of the Edmonton archdiocese. On the death of Bishop Emile Legal he acted as administrator of the diocese for several months until the arrival here of Archbishop H. J. O'Leary.

Priests in the days of the Fathers Pilon were very involved in the communities they served, with fundraising efforts and activities such as festivals and music concerts, and sometimes there were photographs in community history books of these events.

*The life and times of the brothers, as well as an account of the OMI order, follows, next issue.*

RS



**Shreela Chakrabarty** is a highly acclaimed movie director of the suspense thrillers 'Rock Paper Dice Enter' and 'Lake Shore Drive'. Known for spinning contemporary stories representing the arts, culture, history and heritage, she also directed the documentaries 'Spirits' and 'Punjabi Pioneers of Alberta', which sheds light on South Asian history in the West. She is currently working with Soni Dasmobapatra to research and develop South Asian History Tours, and sits on the City of Edmonton Archives South Asian Advisory Committee to raise awareness of the importance of representation in private records.

## From Asia With Love

by *Shreela Chakrabarty*

I have an elevator pitch for you. Does the topic of death make you cringe? Fear not and enter the creative realm of South Asian burial rituals to reveal the path to a life well lived. Come on follow me. You are trudging through an Edmonton river valley trail in February on a sunny blue-sky afternoon. You are carrying an ethically sourced box containing chunks of fruit, seeds and snowballs made from rice flour, honey and ghee.

These ingredients are what was left over from a ritual ceremony I actually performed in 2022 in honour of my ancestors, as part of my father's burial rituals at a Hindu temple. In the parking lot I was surrounded by my brother, nephew, niece and her husband. None of us knew anything about what we were doing, other than following a suggestion by the Hindu priest. I lifted up the panel in the trunk of my hatchback and pulled out a portable jack. "This should do the job" I said, feeling the weight of it against my palm. We walked alongside the river through a forest trail randomly lobbing fruit and rice balls that would ricochet off branches, occasionally landing with soft crunchy sound as small branches snapped and dropped into the snow.

The birds and squirrels observed us from a distance to see whether we were stark raving mad or posed a threat. The late afternoon sun began to cast tall shadows across the snow, ever so laced with bird claw patterns, as we carried out our instructions. Eventually they came closer and accepted our offerings.

This act in the woods was a revelation to me. It was an innovation introduced to our family in Canada that connected us with nature and with our heritage. I felt such a sense of peace, gratitude and continuity in the circular nature of life amidst the mystery that lay beyond it. Ever since this day, I have felt compelled to share with my fellow Canadians, especially the younger generations whose presence I was acutely aware of throughout the memorial services. These personal experiences can shape our



*Sujit Kumar Chakrabarty in February 2022, at the Hindu Society of Alberta Temple in Edmonton, is attended by close relatives, friends and community. (Photo: Khalid Hossain)*

understanding of rituals in general and how these actions help us understand the truth behind the nature of who we are and why we do what we do. It also led to my curiosity about burial rituals performed by other Asians in this part of the world. Our collective intelligence has so much to offer that we need not be as scared as our ancestors.

The night my father died I was concluding a Zoom call with the Edmonton & District Historical Society on the resilience of Punjabi pioneers of Alberta. As soon as the call ended, I rushed to the hospital where my mom had broken COVID protocols. The Omicron wave had spiked as my father lay in the comfort care phase of dying. His oxygen and saline drip were turned off. We flanked him, gowned, masked and gloved, while gently holding his hands. My phone was on speaker near his head, my brothers were on conference call as we listened to music from an iPad. Dad had been unconscious pretty much the whole day. Music was the only thing that lifted his mood. He particularly responded to hymns of the Holy Mother. Hmm, an end of life playlist...

None of us knew this was how the evening would end, but looking back, even during this end of life period, a ritual was being formulated when my dad started to consider his mortality. We arranged a video call with a monk from his spiritual order to put him at ease. For me this experience was making me question, when does life begin and end? My mom struggled with the trauma of the moment but in her wisdom embedded in her memory, instructed me to pour water on his tongue.

I never argue with end of life rituals. I'm grateful she had the presence of mind to even suggest it. There was no audible last gasp, his jaw slacked and that's how I knew that my dad left his body. My mom sat quietly in a state of disbelief. I held it together as we waited for the doctor to witness and record the official time of death. I owe the knowledge of my heritage to my solo travels to Kolkata where I was privileged to attend the burial rituals of my grandmothers, and in Edmonton to the pioneering spirit of my parents and the communities they built when they settled here the 1960s.

I am experiencing how heritage and culture keeps changing, by watching them live the best life in formulating responses that include accidents, Alzheimers, suicides, child deaths, terminal illness and assisted dying.



*A Shradha puja (burial ritual) honouring the ancestors of Dr. Sujit Kumar Chakrabarty, February 2022, at the Hindu Society of Alberta Temple in Edmonton. It is presided by the head temple priest, Shiv Shankar Dwivedi, and Sujit's children. (Photo: Khalid Hossain)*



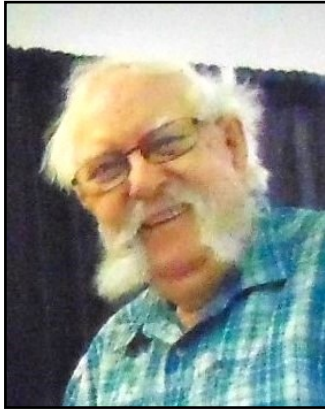
*Sujit Chakrabarty's brothers have their heads shaved as part of the burial rituals for their mother, held on the banks of the Hooghly River in Kolkata, India in May 1993. (Photo: Shreela Chakrabarty)*

Having relatives from India on livestream video for my dad's funeral service was a remarkable technological enhancement that enabled yet another layer of support in our grieving process.

Deep in the woods we set the coconut in the middle of the path as instructed, and whack! My nephew cracked it with the car jack, then we turned and walked away. This act let my dad know that he should carry on in his journey and not be pulled into our sadness. We all have different beliefs about spirits, souls and ideas around reincarnation, but none of it means we should wish our loved one to linger. In this passage of grief, the noblest thing we can do is wish them a fond farewell. The experience of being in nature together made the act so special. We have no way of knowing whether some form of my father or our ancestors were present, but at least we could feel good about this extended celebration of a life well lived.

When I listen to stories of bravery and innovation from Asian communities, I'm reminded of the universal quest for meaning in the face of mortality. Whether it's the Jain funeral processions or recent Japanese burials at sea, each ritual offers lessons in resilience, community and the enduring bonds that connect us all, and provide tools to resolve the problem of death and our response to it. As we navigate the complexities of existence we may give ourselves permission to draw inspiration from the wisdom of diverse cultures, embracing the continuum of life and celebrating the richness of human experience.

*RS*



**Bob Franz** is a Past President and life member of the Alberta Genealogical Society. He has written several articles for genealogical and history publications. Besides genealogy, Bob enjoys reading and writing science fiction, high fantasy and alternative lifestyle fiction. His short stories have appeared in assorted print and digital anthologies and Ezines. He has also had various shows of his artwork and holds "Master Artist" status in the Alberta Community Art Clubs Association.

## Bananas and Letters, Bibles and Nobles

by Bob Franz

My paternal grandfather Carl Heinrich (Charles Henry) Franz, like many men, emigrated in search of work, and once finding meaningful employment saved up his wages until he could afford the passage for his wife and children to join him. My paternal grandmother Emma Franz (née Rudolph) emigrated a year after her husband, travelling from Germany to Antwerp, Belgium and then on the passenger ship *Montezuma* to Quebec City. Arriving on November 8, 1908, she continued across Canada by train to Frank, Alberta, where she was met by her husband, and they walked (I assume) the three miles to Hillcrest Mines where he lived and was employed.

It had to have been an arduous journey, especially considering she was only twenty-four years of age, travelling with her three young children Rose (four years old), Heinrich (three), and Emma (two) with Alberta temperatures hovering around the freezing point and winter approaching. Added to that, she knew no English and relied on communicating by mime. She told me once of a fellow traveller seeing her struggling with three restless youngsters, giving her some bananas for the children. My grandmother was most grateful but faced a dilemma – she had never seen or heard of bananas before! Were they to be eaten like an apple, or did they have to be peeled first like an orange?

Imagine travelling thousands of miles and across a foreign land unable to speak the language or even read the signage. Like other new arrivals, she and her young family settled in with other immigrants. Her husband having learned English through his work, and she being a homemaker, Emma relied on "her man" when it came to interacting with neighbours. Then on my father's ninth birthday, her husband was killed in a rockslide while away working on the construction of the Cascade Railway Tunnel in Washington, and she had to continue on her own, now with a family of eight children. Living ninety miles away, a challenging distance in the 50s, I had little opportunity to know my grandmother – it was one overnight trip a year and a few hours when she came to my hometown to visit my aunt and was brought to see my father. She was a stranger, a short stout woman with a strange accent. It was not until I attended university that we began to correspond. She was one of the few relatives who wrote to me, and being away from home for the first time I cherished those hand-written letters in her limited and broken English, old-world idioms and grandmotherly encouragement. Then and now, I so cherished them that I saved them.

My maternal grandparents on the other hand had no such language difficulty. My maternal grandfather Adam Hammer was born in Ayton, Ontario. His father Johannes had emigrated from Germany in 1852 at the age of five with his father Heinrich, settling in Waterloo County in what was then known as Upper Canada or Canada West. Canada had not yet become a nation and the area was in need of farmers and farm labourers. Little is known of their lives but school rules in Ontario were quite generous to the German residents and permitted bilingual instruction in German and English, though English schools were the rule. English instruction did not become mandatory until the 1890s but this was largely accepted, as the German immigrants saw the economic benefit of learning English and felt learning German in the home was sufficient.

As the west opened up in the 1860s they moved from the crowded and congested



Johan Gottlieb Meinhardt Kroesing born 13 April 1854 in Baerwalde Germania  
 Augusta Marie Elizabeth Kroesing (Saus) born 31 August 1861 in Magdeburg Saxony Province Kingdom of Prussia  
 Otto Paul Erne Kroesing born 9 September 1879 in Baerwalde Germania  
 Carl Friedrich Wilhelm Kroesing born 9 November 1887 Baerwalde Germania  
 Carl Herman Kroesing born 14 February 1884 Magdeburg  
 Friedrich Wilhelm Kroesing born 25 November 1886 Box Butte Nebraska  
 Ernst Meinhardt Kroesing born 9 January 1889 Box Butte Nebraska  
 John Albert Kroesing born 24 April 1891 Box Butte Nebraska  
 Bertha Elise Auguste Kroesing born 24 April 1893 Box Butte Nebraska  
 Christina Maria Kroesing born 9 September 1895 Box Butte Nebraska  
 Mathilde Kroesing born 7 August 1898 Box Butte Nebraska

Grandmother Saus died 5 March 1896 in Magdeburg Germany  
 Carl Friedrich Wilhelm Kroesing died 27 July 1895 buried (name crossed out) cemetery Nebraska  
 Friedrich Willy Kroesing died 9 November 1896 buried Box Butte (crossed out) Nebraska Both buried at Alliance cemetery  
 Otto Kroesing 18 April 1908 Buried by the Evangelical Church. They were lost (disappeared) 27 January but happily (luckily) found again and buried 1908  
 Hermann Joni 20 June 1908

Translation of birth dates inside Great-grandmother Kroesing's family Bible. The actual pages are shown below right.

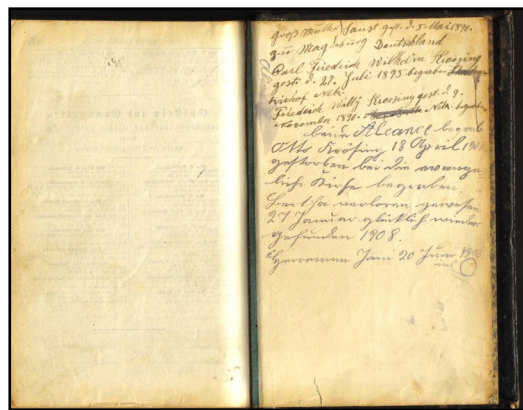
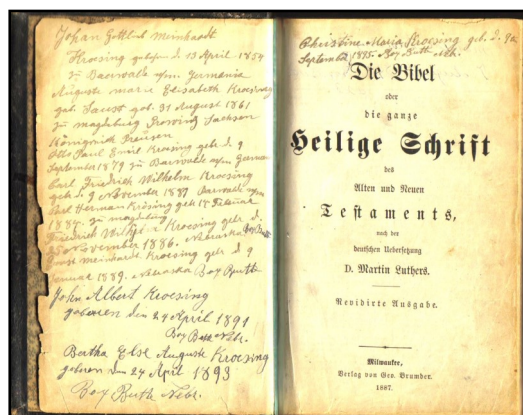
Waterloo County. Some of the family moved across the border to another German concentration in Detroit and the rest to Bruce and Grey Counties where Germans had an absolute majority, with a large minority in surrounding counties. Census records indicate there were 6992 Germans in Grey County by 1881. German was the everyday language, with a newspaper printed in German and religious life centered around Ayton. Language was not a problem and the agricultural nature of the settlements has not changed much to this day. Today's immigrants are criticized for living together and retaining their language, customs and biases instead of integrating into Canadian society, but our ancestors were no different. It is a simple matter of survival and maintaining one's cultural identity.

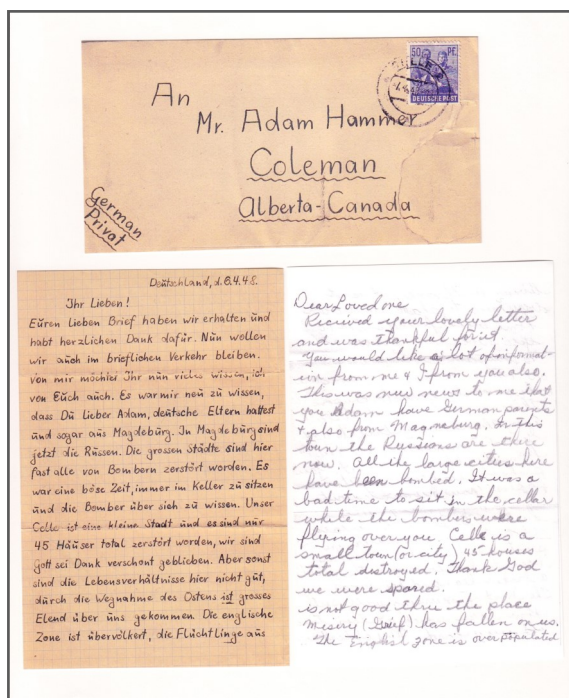
I know very little about the ancestry of Great-grandmother Augusta Kroesing, but I know she and her husband similarly settled where there were relatives and other Germans around Alliance, Nebraska. She had difficult times in her life. She had a Bible printed in German in which with great hopes she entered in the front pages the date of the birth of her eight children and sadly, in the back, the date of the death of at least three who predeceased her – Carl Friedrich Wilhelm and Friedrich Willy at the ages of 8 and 10, and Otto at 29.

She passed the Bible on to her eldest daughter, my grandmother, who passed it on to her eldest daughter, my mother, who, having no girls, passed it on to me. I have added pages to the front and back recording the births and deaths of my mother and her siblings and will be passing it on to my granddaughter, who in turn hopefully will pass it on to her daughter.

So, my Grandmother Bertha (née) Kroesing was born in Box Butte, Nebraska where there was a concentration of Germans, attracting friends and family and where German was spoken in the home and community and English taught at school. In the 1890s cheap land was becoming scarce, just as the Canadian west was opening up, resulting in a large immigration of Germans from the USA to what would become the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. My grandmother immigrated to Canada in 1904 shortly before her eleventh birthday along with her parents, older brothers and two younger sisters. They travelled to her new home by freight train, the family riding in the freight car with their livestock. They headed east, passing through the Crowsnest Pass half an hour before Turtle Mountain slid and buried the railway tracks and a portion of the sleeping town of Frank.

They joined relatives who had immigrated earlier and started farming in the district of Drywood south of Pincher Creek. One of the first initiatives of the residents was to erect a local school. Land was donated by an uncle, and Bertha's father was elected one of the trustees of the new school board. Again, the children had the benefit of an education in English at school and practising German at home. According to the postal history of the area, there were many French and German homesteaders in the district receiving mail from the old country. The wife of the postmaster had difficulty reading their names in the elaborate script of the era so she showed the envelopes to her customers and they picked out the





The letter on the left was written to the author's grandfather Adam Hammer. It shows the use of umlauts, while the handwritten notes on the right show the translation the author received.

Besides using FamilySearch and the script generator [deutsche-handschrift.de/adsschreiben-#schrifftefeld](https://www.deutsche-handschrift.de/adsschreiben-#schrifftefeld)<sup>1</sup>, I have had assistance in translation by a local individual acquainted with the German language and have sought assistance from a friend from one of the nearby Hutterian Colonies, where they continue to teach and speak the German of their ancestors. Still many words escape us.

I know little of my maternal great grandmother, Elizabeth Christina Hahn, the wife of my grandfather's father, Johannes Hammer. My mother and aunt described her as an imposing woman, who, unlike most women of the time, was highly educated. They also told me she was literate in six or more languages including Latin. Her ancestors ruled the ancient County of Katzenelnbogen (Cat's Elbow) from their castle on the river Lahn and over the centuries collected lucrative tariffs from merchants using the Rhine to transport their goods. Many of their descendants married into the royal courts of the Holy Roman Empire which spanned Central and Western Europe, leaving a legacy of very detailed genealogy and a jigsaw puzzle of languages. Language barriers would not have been a problem for her nor her ancestors.

Lastly, my wife's maternal grandfather came from London, England. English, you say, how fortunate! No language problem there with immigration or searching the homeland. If you said so, you have never stepped off a train in Liverpool and asked a local for directions. My father-in-law did, and he told me the man spoke English, but he did not understand a single word he said!

applicable letters. My grandmother is on the school register, but she said, being the oldest girl, she quit school to help out at home.

During this time Germans from Ontario began migrating west, attracted by large tracts of fertile, virgin land and low taxes, settling in clusters around Edmonton and Pincher Creek. In 1899 Johannes Hammer and his family packed up their belongings, along with seven neighbours and relatives, and travelled by Grand Trunk Railway and then CPR, a seven-day trip, to Pincher Creek where my maternal grandparents met. Grandfather Adam spoke Hochdeutsch of the southern highlands and grandmother spoke Plattdeutsch of the northern lowlands. The difference in pronunciation was evidently not a problem in communication, as they went on to have seven children and were married for over fifty years.

I recall learning to count in German and a few basic words at my grandmother's knee, my grandparents living only two houses away. I have also come to possess several photographs, letters and postcards which fortunately were named and dated and often with brief notations. Unfortunately, they were written in German which has four letters in the alphabet not found in English and uses umlauts. Besides, they were written in Gothic Script and handwritten, and I know now from whom I have inherited my poor handwriting.



The author's great-grandfather Johannes Hammer and his wife Elizabeth (née) Hahn picking fruit.

<sup>1</sup>Full website: <https://www.deutsche-handschrift.de/adsschreiben.php#schrifftefeld>





**Ging Wei Wong** (黃景煒) was born into a market gardening family. He helped on the family farm for 20 years, attended the University of Alberta, and is retired from a 35 ½ year career in air traffic services. Wei continues to research the lesser known history of the immigration of Chinese to Canada. He has written several historical accounts of his family, published by AGS, and was winner of the Peter Staveley Memorial Award in 2018. His family artifacts are featured at the Chinese Canadian Museum in Vancouver, the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library's at the U of A, and the Mab Society of Edmonton exhibition – *The Journey of the Horse*.

## A Grave Injustice: Lilly Mee Wong Remembered

by *Ging Wei Wong*

The Chinese Exclusion Act was responsible for separating my parents for almost nineteen years. After spending nine years in *Gold Mountain* (what the Chinese called Canada then), my father, Wong Bark Ging 黃柏振 made the voyage from Edmonton to his ancestral village Chew Ging, China in 1930 for an arranged marriage to Young See. He was 22, she was 18.

He returned to Canada alone because of the harsh restrictions of the Chinese Immigration Act, also known as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1923. His bride was not allowed to accompany him. The Act prohibited Chinese from coming to Canada with few exceptions.

They were both isolated, forced to live separate lives 11,000 kilometres apart divided by the vast Pacific Ocean and the Rocky Mountains. The Act was repealed after the Second World War, in 1947. After obtaining his Canadian citizenship, Bark Ging applied for Young See to come to Canada.

They were finally reunited in Edmonton in 1949. He was now 41, she was 37. They made their home at 12782 – 113 Street in the Calder neighbourhood. New to this country, Young See had a lot to learn in short order. Their home did not have indoor plumbing. Water was delivered weekly. Meals were prepared with a wood stove and oven. They did not have a telephone.

Bark Ging was self-employed as a market gardener, and Young See was introduced firsthand to this occupation in the fields surrounding their home and his enterprise in the community of Riverdale.

It wasn't long before the couple was expecting a baby. A daughter, Lilly Mee, was born on May 25, 1950. The couple must have been excited, as she was their firstborn on Canadian soil. In the Chinese tradition, a month-old party was celebrated with family and friends.

Sadly, a few days later, on June 29, 1950, Lilly Mee died.

Lilly Mee was my sister, whom my parents never spoke of. We have no photographs of her. It must have been too painful for either of them to talk about this tragedy. It wasn't until my father passed in 1988 that my mother mentioned that I had a sister! Astonished, I wanted to know more about her, but my mother was reticent, quiet.

PROVINCE OF ALBERTA  
Record No. 110461 of 1950  
REGISTRATION OF A LIVE BIRTH

Child's Name: LILLY MEE WONG  
Sex: Female  
Date of Birth: 25 May 1950  
Place of Birth: ROYAL ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL  
Residence: 12782-113 Street, Edmonton  
Father's Name: Bark Ging Wong  
Mother's Name: Young See  
Occupation of Father: market gardening  
Occupation of Mother: at home

GENERAL PURPOSES ONLY

Birth registration for Lilly Mee Wong.

I requested genealogical records from Alberta Health, Department of Vital Statistics. Two documents arrived on September 6, 1990 – a Registration of a Live Birth and a Registration of Death. The Registration of Death was redacted so that the Cause of Death was not visible.

An obituary was published in the *Edmonton Journal* on Friday, June 30, 1950 but is yet to be found.

Thirty-eight years after the baby's death, Young See wanted to locate the final resting place of her beloved daughter, Lilly Mee.

In 1990 my brother and I inquired at the office of Beechmount Cemetery. We were told that she was buried there on July 3, 1950 under the name of Lilly Mee Wong. Location: Grave 9, Block 256. We followed the directions given to us and found the gravesite in the shade of half-century-old conifers with decomposing leaves, stems, and bark on a thin grassy area.

We discovered a primitive discoloured rectangular headstone with Chinese words that were scratched into a poured concrete form. It was the only one of its kind in the area. We took some photographs on the spot. We delicately broke the news to my mother and decided on a date to bring her to see Lilly Mee's gravesite.

When my mother stood before the original grave marker, tears ran down her face. She expressed her desire to replace it with a new polished granite headstone. On September 19, I accompanied my mother to Dominion Granite, Northgate Memorials located at 12325 – 97 Street. She lovingly selected the design, lettering and Chinese words to be inscribed on the new marker.

Sadly, my mother never saw the new headstone because, only days later she died of a massive heart attack, on September 28, 1990. The new monument wasn't installed until the following spring.

**Background on Lilly Mee**

Bark Ging had some English language skills but Young See practically had none, so communication must have been difficult outside of their circle of Chinese friends, none of whom lived close by in those early years together. Lacking English, most of their friends were in the same situation.

I knew some of their contemporaries who all had busy lives. On the south side of the North Saskatchewan River, Ang Bing Fat and his wife Hum Kai operated Bing's Grocery at 10768 Whyte Avenue. Don Shew and his wife Yet operated Jerry's Café on Jasper Avenue. Kong Mah and family operated a laundry business on 97 Street. Sack Wing Wong worked in a restaurant. Tom W. Mah and his wife Gin Gee (Pearl) ran a restaurant in Spirit River, Alberta. Yuen Wong and family operated Crown Food Store at 11302 – 107 Avenue. There was little time to socialize with these friends.

Registration of death for Lilly Mee Wong

In the 1951 Census, there were only 29 Chinese women between 35 and 44 years old in Edmonton.

It wasn't until years later that I learned the possible causes of Lilly Mee's death. It is well known that older women are more likely to have babies with birth defects. It may have been a combination of things gone wrong.

The average age of mothers at first birth in 1950 was 24 1/2 years. Young See was 38. The infant mortality rate in 1950 for Canada was 41%.

Sew Wong, my father's closest friend hailed from the same ancestral village. His gift to the family was a highchair presented at Lilly Mee's month-old party. He observed that Lilly Mee's head was misshapen as if there were two halves visible from the back. It is unknown if this was the result of a difficult birth or a birth defect.

Being first-time parents, without the benefit of family support or advice, they must have been overwhelmed. Dr. Max Dolgoy was the attending physician. Bark Ging was one of the doctor's first patients since he graduated from the University of Alberta Medical School in 1936. In those days, doctors made house calls if it was necessary. Man-

aging as best they could, their understanding of the importance of sterilizing glass baby bottles may have been lacking – as a result the baby got sick. Before Young See gave birth to her second-born, the good doctor ensured that a member of the Victorian Order of Nurses instructed my mother on how to sterilize baby bottles.

Regardless of the cause, the burden of their loss must have been unbearable. My father never talked about it and took it to his grave. My mother couldn't talk about it with my father, but finally, she was able to share her pent-up grief with me and my brother after 40 years of silence. Since it was found, we brought our children to Lilly Mee's gravesite, and now our grandchildren too, to place flowers and pay our respects to her every year.

Reunited in death, may the baby rest in her mother's loving arms for all of eternity.

In 2019 Alison Glass, who has been associated with the Alberta Genealogical Society and volunteers with Find a Grave, posted the photos of Lilly Mee's grave markers which can now be found online, updated with family members who have passed.

**Cemeteries**

We currently have over 60,000 electronic records of people who were interred more than 25 years ago in Edmonton Municipal Cemeteries.

The Northern Lights Cemetery and South Haven Cemetery do not appear in the search criteria as the first burials took place in these cemeteries in 1989. These records are protected under FOIP for 25 years.

**Search**

First Name: Lilly Begins with ▾  
 Last Name: wong Begins with ▾  
 Cemetery: BEECHMOUNT ▾

1 records returned

Last Name	First Name	Burial Date	Cemetery	Section	Block	Plot
WONG	LILLY	07/03/1950	BEECHMOUNT		0256	0009

Note: Beechmount and Little Mountain cemeteries do not have section numbers.

**WONG, LILLY MEE**  
 Description of Grave Child  
 Grave 9 Block 256 Subdiv. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cemetery Beechmount  
 Age 1 month  
 Date of Burial 3 July, 1950  
 Owner Name Bark Jing Wong  
 Address 12782 - 113 Street  
 Undertaker Park Mem. Invoice No. 1996  
 Headstone Application Approved 2 August 1950



*The original, left, and current gravestone for Lilly Mee.*

References:

Wong Bark Ging 黄柏振: A History of My Father's Market Gardens

<https://citymuseumedmonton.ca/author/ging-wei-wong-%E9%BB%83%E6%99%AF%E7%85%92/>

Chinese Exclusion Act 1923-1947

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/chinese-immigration-act>

1951 Census, Edmonton Alberta: Table 6, Chinese Population, page 110 of 1018

[https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2017/statcan/CS98-1951-2.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/statcan/CS98-1951-2.pdf)

Average age of mother at first birth in 1950

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-630-x/2014002/c-g/desc2-eng.htm>

Canada Infant Mortality Rate 1950

<https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/CAN/canada/infant-mortality-rate>

Graves bring peace to the living

<https://www.stalbertgazette.com/local-news/graves-bring-peace-to-the-living-1279720>

*RS*



*Iris was raised the third child of Clifford and Gladys Lowry, attending school at Sangudo, Alberta and obtaining a teaching degree at the University of Alberta, Edmonton. She taught various subjects at many grade levels. She lived with her husband and two boys mostly at Drayton Valley, where they pursued busy lives involving their horses. Iris achieved a high level of competition in barrel racing.*

*After many winters in Arizona, they are now settled on the original riverside Sangudo farm, where Iris volunteers with multiple community organizations and entertains regularly at local seniors' lodges.*

## South Park Cemetery, Sangudo, Alberta

by Iris Tuftin

### In the beginning

When Charles Franklin (Frank) Wright decided to leave his home and family in Highbridge, Wisconsin and venture to the woods of Puyallup, Washington, taking his son Lorne with him, it was with the hope of improving prospects for his family. In spite of becoming known as the best axe-man in the woods, notching huge cedar and fir, Frank dreamed of applying his skills toward land of his own. So, when he heard of homesteading in Alberta, where a plot of 160 acres could be had for the small sum of ten dollars, along with the stipulation of “proving it up” by building a habitable house and clearing 30 acres, he and Lorne jumped at the chance and took the train north.

It was 1904, and his visit to the Edmonton Land Office led him to choose a route west to an area along the Pembina River that he felt held the promise of a future. It was another seven years before he was able to convince his family of three daughters and another son to join him and Lorne.

On October 26, 1906, after surveys in the area had finally been completed for the newly formed Province of Alberta, the two men realized their dream of ownership by registering their homesteads: Frank’s on the NE quarter of section 26, township 56, range 7, west of the 5<sup>th</sup> meridian and Lorne’s across the Pembina on the NW quarter of the same section. This location was on the well-travelled trail known as the McLeod Trail (this section locally known as the Stanger Trail) that came from the Roman Catholic settlement of Lac Ste. Anne, west of Edmonton. By this time Lorne’s label for his often cantankerous and gruff father, “Cougar,” stuck, and the name Frank was forever relegated only to Lorne’s brother, Frank Jr.

When Indigenous bands or other settlers travelled the trail and wished to cross the Pembina, there were times when a crossing was impossible due to high water or unsafe ice. Cougar convinced the authorities that a ferry, similar to the one used at The Narrows on Lac Ste. Anne, was needed. With Cougar as ferryman, the ferry was installed in 1909 beside the Wright cabin. In 1911, his remaining family joined him as much needed helpers for his thriving operation of the Stopping House, bunkhouse and barns, and huge garden. Operating and maintaining the ferry provided a guaranteed income but kept everyone busy day and night.

Thankfully, the young family was not yet in need of a cemetery, but in 1917 the death of a railway worker from St. Paul prompted Cougar to donate a piece of his land for that purpose. The approximately two acres were not from the river flat, but rather sat next to the government trail as it cut across the upper portion of his land on the high riverbank. We can only guess why a piece of land closer to the newly named community of Sangudo was not chosen. Cougar’s property was only a mile or so from the young village, but that was as the crow flies. It was considerably farther via the winding trails and crude roads.

Perhaps Cougar happened to be in the village lifting a pint, as he was known to do, when the question of what to do with the body of Alfred Dickerson arose. Cougar may have been feeling noble and generous, or on the other hand may have wanted to impress his cohorts with a magnanimous offer. In any case, his offer was accepted and shovels went into the ground on November 11, 1917. Why weren’t the remains of Mr.

Dickerson returned to his home community of St. Paul? That, too, would be a guess. But it is not unreasonable to imagine that the logistics of transporting a body that distance at that time may have been prohibitive for his family, if indeed, he had a family.

The new cemetery site may already have been cleared of timber, but it is far more likely that it was not. They were likely dealing with raw land. Thankfully, the digging was easy with a layer of clay under the sod, but a light sandy soil beneath with no rocks. As long as the casket went in six feet down with the occupant's face to the east, no other rules were in play.

### Family history

Little did Cougar know in 1917 that he would bury his own dear granddaughter less than four years later, following her murder and husband's subsequent suicide. The full truth of that fatal incident did not come to light until 1998 when we buried our mother, Gladys Lowry, next to Aunt Florence. The digging of Mom's grave turned up the bones of Florence's husband, Billy Jarvis, who had been improperly buried next to his wife in a north/south position, likely by a crew of his neighbours after nightfall. My research at the Provincial Archives of Alberta turned up the ghastly details and led to the book *Cougar's Crossing*, authored by our mother's sister, Lillian Ross.

### Cemeteries Act of 1922

In 1922 the Province of Alberta enacted legislation to govern the operation of cemeteries.<sup>1</sup> The lengthy document reveals some interesting stipulations. It made good sense that the people of the young province could not continue to bury their dead without regulation, in back yards, beside waterways or wherever it suited them as dictated by their location and means. Government had to keep track of its citizens, alive and dead. The first part of the enactment was in regard to the formation of incorporated companies. No longer could individuals make decisions about burials. There are detailed rules as to how these companies were to be formed and run, all in formal "lawyer-speak." Then follows regulations governing the operation of cemeteries. I've selected some of them to exhibit here:

*... company shall furnish graves for strangers and for the poor of all denominations free of charge.*

*... trustees shall within two years from their appointment inclose by walls or other fences every part of any cemetery held by them . . . [note the misspelling of 'enclose']*

*If the company or trustees as the case may be at any time cause or suffer to be brought to or to flow in any river, spring, well, stream, canal, reservoir, aqueduct, pond or watering place any offensive matter from the cemetery whereby the water is fouled the company or trustees as the case may be shall forfeit for every such offence five hundred dollars.*

*... shall make regulations to ensure all burials within the cemetery being conducted in a decent and solemn manner.*

*... burial sites shall be exempt from taxation of any kind and shall not be liable to be seized or sold under execution.*

*... trustees may frame regulations for the laying out, selling and management of the cemetery and for regulating the erection of tombs, monuments and gravestones therein; . . .*

*... the directors and trustees respectively shall also keep a separate record of all burials showing name, age, occupation and date of burial of all persons buried within the cemetery and in case they are unable to obtain all the particulars a note to that effect shall be made in the margin.*

*... Any person who in a cemetery established under this Act— (a) plays any game or sport; (b) discharges firearms (save at a military funeral); or (c) commits a nuisance, shall on summary conviction therefore be liable to a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars and costs of prosecution.*

One wonders at what point our early cemetery administrators were made aware of the Cemetery Act of 1922. Research tells me that the governing Cemeteries Act in force today is called “*Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Current as of November 16, 2022.*” Note that the current act took effect exactly 100 years after the original in 1922.

### South Park Cemetery Company

My visit to the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton revealed that it wasn't until the spring of 1959 that a group of local people registered the name of “*South Park Cemetery Co.*” with the Alberta Registrar of Companies. “South” because it was located south of the Village of Sangudo. Those seven individuals were: Mrs. H. Heckel, Joseph Weiss, Karen Crothers, Frank Weiss, Mrs. Lloyd Hansen, Cecil Hansen and Clifford Lowry.



In addition, some correspondence took place between my father, Clifford Lowry, and the registrar: a misunderstanding that caused some delay, about a needed certificate from the treasurer, Mrs. Heckel, stating that 25% of the company's stock had been received. In addition, a correction of the spelling of “cemetery” to “cemetery” was needed. The handwritten letter from my father explaining his tardiness in completing the requirements touches my heart and highlights the ease with which we can, today, communicate and solve such business affairs. Dad was a graduate of grade eight who devoted himself to farming, as did most rural young

men, not academic pursuits.

By 1984, it was evident that additional land would be needed for cemetery expansion, so Dad donated a one-acre extension to the west. A few years later, in 1992, Joe and Grace Weiss gave up an acre to the east as a much-needed increase of parking space.

### Caretaking and administration

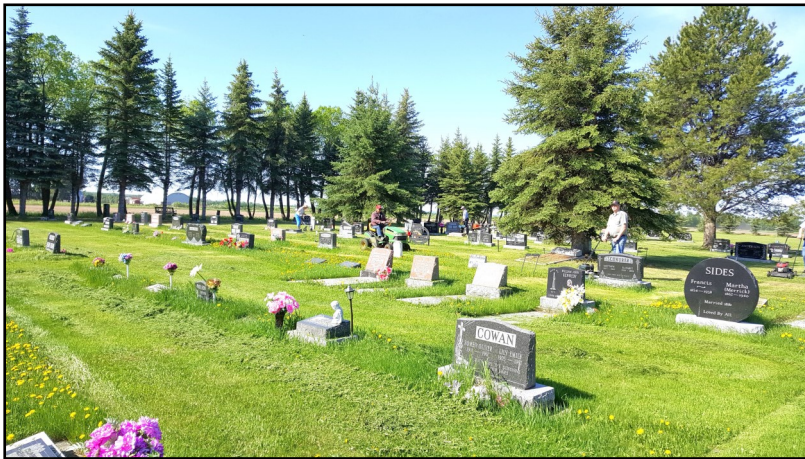
When Cougar's middle daughter Lelia (one of the few eligible females in the area) married a popular local named Scotty McHardy, they settled on the quarter immediately south of the cemetery location. So Scotty became the first official caretaker. As you can imagine his duties would not have been comparable to those of today's maintenance staff, with its John Deere backhoe and computer-programmed map of grave sites. Cougar's grandson Clint Lowry took over from Scotty, and when Clint left for the coast his younger brother Clifford (my father) took over until his passing in 2002.



*A beautiful view of the South Park Cemetery.*

My brother, Denny Lowry, carried on the family involvement in recent years. Ralph Eichhorn was another devoted community member and caretaker until illness forced his retirement. Many others, too many to mention, have participated in the care of South Park. One member, with the unique ability to “witch” for human remains, was called upon to locate a burial site when no marker existed. His name was Frank Wilkinson and he amazed us with his accuracy on many occasions.

Our tireless Secretary/Treasurer has been Val Jeffreys Chay, who lost her husband Stan Jeffreys in 2005, and has devoted her services ever since. Our current president is Darin Kastelic, who demonstrates leadership and skill, particularly in handling the paperwork necessary for big fundraisers such as casinos.



A very creative neighbour lady, Millie Kozushka keeps the cemetery flower beds and gazebo decorated in welcoming and distinct displays that change with significant dates throughout the year.

Besides work by a designated maintenance person, an annual clean-up day has always been organized for late May, when many willing folks show up with an assortment of tools and an offering of lunch goodies. Trimming trees or planting new ones and making a variety of improvements have led to the overwhelming number of compli-

ments from visitors that our cemetery enjoys.

**South Park remembers**

Desiring to hold a special day to invite the public and families of the interred, our cemetery board declared the second Sunday of September as a day of reverence and commemoration. We call it “South Park Remembers.” Held in the cemetery, with our gazebo as the focal point, we bring lunch, tables, chairs and an amplification system to enhance the event. A clergy member in the area is invited to give a blessing, often calling upon those in attendance to call out the names of their beloved at rest. Each year a new cast of speakers entertains and honours us with historical accounts of family and friends. Most recently, the occasion has been videoed and subsequently posted on the Sangudo Public Library Youtube channel. The fall colours and fellowship make it a special day, indeed.

**South Park data**

We now have 747 interred in our cemetery. The following two charts show the data by age and chronological timelines:

AGE	NUMBER
Babies -2	26
3-12	10
Teens	8
20-29	18
30-39	14
40-49	22
50-59	58
60-69	98
70-79	179
80-89	188
90-99	91
100 +	6

DECADE	NUMBER
Prior to 1920	7
1920s	35
1930s	26
1940s	42
1950s	18
1960s	56
1970s	116
1980s	87
1990s	109
2000-2009	94
2010-2019	110
2020-2023	47

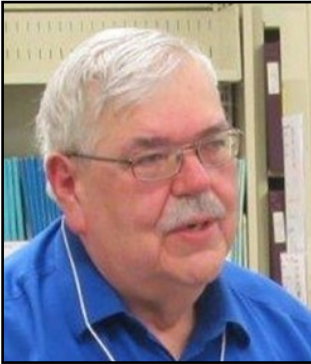
You may access our website at [southparkcemetery.org](http://southparkcemetery.org)<sup>2</sup>. There you may open such categories as History, Fees and Policies, Directions, Contacts and a new one yet in the working stage – Monuments. Currently the board is in the process of formulating a policy on Green Burials. Enjoy the photos and links to South Park Remembers videos.

<sup>1</sup>Alberta Cemeteries Act: <https://www.canlii.org/en/ab/laws/hstat/rsa-1922-c-166/latest/rsa-1922-c-166.html>

<sup>2</sup> Full web address: <https://www.southparkcemetery.org/>

RS





**John Althouse** was born in Canora, Saskatchewan but moved with his parents and brothers to Edmonton in 1956. He attended the University of Alberta and worked as a teacher for Edmonton Catholic Schools for nearly 35 years. In retirement he was able to begin seriously researching his family roots in Canada, the USA, Germany, Volga German Russia, and Ukraine.

John does regular presentations for AGS and other groups and has been a regular contributor to *Relatively Speaking*, the *Saskatchewan Genealogical Society Bulletin* and other genealogical publications. In Edmonton, he has moderated the *German and Post Scripts* [family history writing] *Special Interest Groups* and is an instructor in the *Tracing Your Family Tree* courses. His true love is experiencing and writing about the history of our Prairie Provinces.

## The North West Mounted Police Cemeteries at Fort Macleod

by John Althouse

*"It is a very difficult reminder that police officers across our country put their lives on the line every day to serve and protect our communities and keep us safe." ~ Prime Minister Stephen Harper (in a statement on the death of Edmonton Police Officer Constable Daniel Woodall)*

Too often lately we have been reminded that policing is perilous work, in events that ultimately have tragic outcomes. One day prior to the funeral for Constable Daniel Woodall, I strolled through the Historic Cemeteries of Fort Macleod – the Union Cemetery and the Holy Cross Cemetery.



*Detailed signage at Fort Macleod's Union and Holy Cross Cemeteries' North-West Mounted Police Field of Honour tell their history. Photo: John Althouse*

In both cemeteries there were sections fenced off by white picket fences. These sections are the final resting places of several members of the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP). The earliest of the tombstones is dated 1874. This visit confirmed that not only is policing a dangerous career today, but it has always been so. Too often, the deceased may be remembered solely as a recitation of names, dates, and places; it is essential that we not let this happen and remember not only the sacrifice of each constable but just as importantly, remember each of these individuals as the human being they were.

The two historic cemeteries in Fort Macleod are quite easy to find, as their locations are well indicated by signage. They are located almost but not directly adjacent to each other. Both have signage detailing their history in general, and histories of some of the NWMP members buried in them. In Union Cemetery, the larger of the two, established in October 1874, the graves are in the rear area. Many of the older tombstones are grouped near the NWMP graves, suggesting that at one point this area was the central part of the cemetery.

Within the white picket fence are 41 graves, each marked by tombstones. Most of these stones are reminiscent of the granite markers on military graves. These replaced wooden markers which identified the graves prior to 1962. Four of these wooden crosses were resurrected after their replacement, and now are in St. Martin's Church

Graveyard in Heritage Park, Calgary, a pseudo-cemetery where no person has actually been interred. Some others can be found at the Fort Museum of the RCMP in Fort Macleod.

The earliest death of a member of the NWMP at Fort Macleod happened at the culmination of the Great March West, the only death on the March. The actual March began once the recruits reached Dufferin, Manitoba. They mounted horses and traversed over 1,200 km across prairie grasslands to what is now Southern Alberta.

This was an extremely difficult trek. Constable Godfrey Parks is identified as the “Primus Moriri” or “First to Die” of the Force. Parks acquired typhoid fever during the march and succumbed on October 26, 1874, a little more than a week after the NWMP arrived in Fort Macleod. Yet he was not the first to be buried in the NWMP plot in Union Cemetery. He was first interred at the Island Cemetery. A few years later that cemetery was ravaged by floodwaters and erosion, leading to Parks being reinterred in Union Cemetery.

In Union Cemetery, the earliest burial of a member of the NWMP (now RCMP) “Honour Roll” occurred in March 1876. The Honour Roll are those members who died while actively performing their duties. A listing can be found online at [rcmp-grc.gc.ca/honour-roll](http://rcmp-grc.gc.ca/honour-roll).<sup>1</sup> This burial was that of Sub-Constable John Nash who died March 11, 1876 in an accident of an unspecified nature near Fort Macleod. Now, there is a rich set of resources on NWMP members, as their personnel files have been digitized and placed on the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) website. However, in the case of Nash, this is not much help as the bulk of the record was destroyed in a fire that swept the West Block of the Parliament Buildings in 1897, and does not reveal specific details of his service or death.

What we know of him was gleaned from a series of documents gathered through the years from various sources which are not consistent, and at times even in conflict. Other sources tell us that Nash worked as a clerk of stores at Fort MacLeod. His regimental number is 135 indicating he was one of the original 275 who made the great trek west, as these numbers were assigned in sequence. There are six burials of members here with regimental numbers lower than 275. This means they too were Mounties who made that initial trek, although one of these died in 1942 at the age of 87.



*Left: The gravestone of Jerry Potts, Métis Special Constable Interpreter-Guide, is in the Union Cemetery in Fort Macleod. Photo: John Althouse*

*Right: Jerry Potts, also known as Ky-yo-kost, meaning “Bear Child”, was a Métis guide and translator for the NWMP. Photo: Wikimedia Foundation*

When dealing with NWMP regimental numbers be careful as the system of numbering changed in 1878, as by then the original method of assigning numbers had been compromised and was no longer uniform. This can lead to problems. See “Regimental Numbers” at [library-archives.canada/nwmp-personnel](http://library-archives.canada/nwmp-personnel).<sup>2</sup>

Not all buried within this plot are members of the NWMP. Jerry Potts, a legendary Métis guide and translator who provided invaluable service to the NWMP, is buried with members of the force. His grave is number 19.

There is another Potts, William who died 10 years before Jerry, but no one appears to be certain about who he is. Among the others buried here, there are relatives of the NWMP members: a mother, two wives, and a son. Also laid to rest are people who served in ancillary roles, but were not members, who died while working for the force. The identity of the occupant of grave number 15 has been lost over time and is simply now listed as “Unknown.”

Some buried in the NWMP section are former members who settled in the area around Fort Macleod. What wonderful tales these veterans of the force had to share!

The graves are well kept, the lawn mowed and the stones upright and in good repair. A monument placed in the centre of the plot gives testament that this is a place of honour. Engraved upon it are the words *“Erected to the Memory of Their Deceased Comrades by the North-West Mounted Police Fort Macleod.”*



*Of the Holy Cross Cemetery NWMP burials, most gravestones bear no names.  
(Photo: John Althouse)*

As one leaves the Union Cemetery, it is just a short distance down a gravel road to the south to Holy Cross Cemetery. It was established a short time after Union Cemetery in 1888 by Father Albert Lacombe. It is not nearly as large as the older cemetery, containing only eleven graves, of which three are identified. The stones of the remaining eight bear the inscription *“known only to God.”* Here the NWMP graves, also protected by the white picket fence, are located quite near the front entrance.

The NWMP sections in both cemeteries are located on flat patches of ground devoid of the shelter of trees. This is reminiscent of the stark prairie landscape where they lived and enforced the law so long ago. Standing on this open ground, the summer heat can be oppressive. Enameled pickets have replaced wooden ones that once girded the two cemeteries. They likely were put up in response to the powerful winds that roar through the area year-round. In winter these winds propel snow; in summer, dirt. Both are abrasive enough to remove paint from pickets. Imagine the effect either would have on a single constable on horseback on patrol?

The causes and circumstances of death of those buried in the two cemeteries are many and varied. Most were attributable to circumstances related to the work they performed in a setting that was remote and anything but hospitable most times. A few died of circumstances likely brought about by the stress of the work or the setting in which the work was done. Although it was not yet identified, it is very likely that some men suffered what today we know as “post-traumatic stress disorder” (PTSD).

The inscription on the Alberta Police Memorial on the Legislative Grounds in Edmonton charges each of us to *“To Remember, To Honour, To Love, To Respect and To Recognize.”* For this we need detailed knowledge of the fallen individual – as a police constable. Library and Archives Canada (LAC) has an excellent online database which provides the *“North West Mounted Police (NWMP) Personnel Records, 1873-1904”* at [library-archives.canada/northwestmountedpolice-personnel](https://library-archives.canada/northwestmountedpolice-personnel).<sup>3</sup> They vary significantly in size, but most often provide a wealth of information on individuals of the early force. Yet, it is disappointing to recognize that the documentary record needed to offer a complete and appropriate tribute is lacking in some cases, for some of its early members buried in the Fort Macleod cemeteries and others at other locations.

Despite our attempts to honour these men for their service, it is surprising how little information about them exists, especially information that extends beyond matters necessary for the force’s bookkeeping. There are often valid reasons for this. As for details of their lives outside the force, there is very often less information. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police have tried to maintain a record of their members through obituaries which appear in the *“RCMP Quarterly.”* Many obituaries of members who died prior to the establishment of this publication have been included. The Saskatchewan Genealogical Society has prepared an index of these obituaries, now available on the internet at [saskgenealogy.com/wp-content/RCMP\\_Obituary](https://saskgenealogy.com/wp-content/RCMP_Obituary).<sup>4</sup>

More recently in 2022, the military service of ten veterans who were also Mounties buried in Union Cemetery and Holy Cross Cemetery was recognized with special headstones. These had all served in the NWMP prior to 1904. The North-West Mounted Police veterans who received these military headstones were Captain William Winder, Ellis Challis Miller, Lance Corporal Thomas Hugh Dinnis, Constable James John (Jim) Brown, Sergeant Brenton

Haliburton (Doc) Robertson, Sergeant Frederick Cochrane Roby, Constable Daniel Horan, Constable William S. Wilson, Constable Edward Larkin, and Constable Andrew (Andy) Grogan.

In the past year, the deaths of Constables Travis Jordan and Constable Brett Ryan of the Edmonton Police Service and Constable Harvinder Singh Dhani of Sherwood Park and Constable Rick O'Brien in Coquitlam, members of the RCMP while on duty, have again instilled a need to honour those who serve us by maintaining law and order. The two cemeteries featured in this article serve as final resting places of members of one police force, the NWMP, and remind us of the sacrifice required of those ensuring law and order in Canada.

Whether long ago or today, these men and more recently women have willingly taken up a calling where danger and the possibility of death are ever present. To recognize those constables who paid the ultimate price, we must come to know them not only in their role as police officers but also celebrate them in terms of the person each was. Only when we do this can we truly come "To Remember, To Honour, To Love, To Respect and To Recognize" each of them.

To do this we, as genealogists and family historians, can research records of these family members and provide written portraits of these officers. There are many additional resources that can assist us, for instance living family members who can develop more detailed and complete portraits. For a quick outline of the history of the Mounties see "Historically relevant dates to the RCMP" at [rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/historically-relevant-dates](http://rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/historically-relevant-dates).<sup>5</sup>

To learn which members were interred in Fort Macleod see the listings on *Find a Grave* for Union Cemetery at [findagrave.com/union-cemetery](http://findagrave.com/union-cemetery)<sup>6</sup> and for Holy Cross Cemetery at [findagrave.com/holy-cross-cemetery](http://findagrave.com/holy-cross-cemetery).<sup>7</sup> The NWMP Field of Honour - Fort Macleod, Alberta contains short biographies of a few of the Mounties buried here at [waymarking.com/NWMP-Field-of-Honour\\_FortMacleod](http://waymarking.com/NWMP-Field-of-Honour_FortMacleod).<sup>8</sup>

For Mounties who died while serving in Alberta see "Alberta RCMP's Honour Roll" at [rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ab](http://rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ab)<sup>9</sup> and "RCMP Graves Alberta" (an online article) at [rcmpgraves.com/vetcorner](http://rcmpgraves.com/vetcorner).<sup>10</sup>

There are other articles for cemeteries with members of the force elsewhere, like one at *"The RCMP National Grave Discovery Database & History Website: A Unique Canadian Legacy"*. To access this database, you will need to create an account. See menu on left of the page at [rcmpgraves.com/database](http://rcmpgraves.com/database).<sup>11</sup>

Another source of the more recent passing of force members is *Gone But Not Forgotten from the RCMP Veterans' Association* at [rcmpveteransvancover.com/gone-but-not-forgotten](http://rcmpveteransvancover.com/gone-but-not-forgotten).<sup>12</sup>

The Canadian Virtual War Memorial (CVWM) also includes entries for many of the Mounties buried in these cemeteries, which can be found by searching them by name. These entries contain a brief biography, service number and more. You can find entries for John Nash with a photo of his tombstone and Constable George Ernest Willmet along with his tombstone, a newspaper report on his death, another on his funeral, a historic marker from the cemetery and his photo. Even later Mounties like Corporal Leonard Victor Ralls may be found on this site. To search this data base, go to the search page at [veterans.gc.ca/canadian-virtual-war-memorial](http://veterans.gc.ca/canadian-virtual-war-memorial).<sup>13</sup>

At times, the researcher may be fortunate enough to find a short article on the life of a force member like "John Nash – the first RCMP Constable to die in the line of duty" on the LAC Blog at [thediscoverblog.com/royal-canadian-mounted-police](http://thediscoverblog.com/royal-canadian-mounted-police)<sup>14</sup> or "Honorary Member John Kennedy Ryan" an extensive family connection to the NWMP. See

The screenshot shows the profile for Constable George Ernest Willmet on the Canadian Virtual War Memorial website. The page includes the following information:

- Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada**
- MEMU** (Menu)
- Home** > Remembrance > Memorials > The Canadian Virtual War Memorial (CVWM) > George Ernest Willmet
- Canadian Virtual War Memorial**
- In memory of: Constable George Ernest Willmet**
- April 12, 1908**
- Frank, Alberta**
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police**
- Additional Information**
- Service Number:** 4584
- Age:** 27
- Born:** August 2, 1880, Taylor Terrace, Dertyshe, England
- Enlistment:** May 9, 1907
- Biography:** Constable Willmet was originally a house painter and came to Canada in early 1907. He was murdered by a burglar while on night patrol in the town of Frank, Alberta. It took over three years of undercover work to find out who was responsible. Constable Willmet is buried in the Union Cemetery, Fort MacLeod, Alberta.
- Commemorated on:** Page 32 of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Honour Roll Book.
- Digital Collection:** Includes a photo of his tombstone, a newspaper report, a historic marker, and his photo.
- Send us your images** button.

*This information about Constable Willmet is just one of many pages referencing past RCMP officers on the Canadian Virtual War Memorial site.*

“History of Calgary Division RCMP Veterans’ Association PART TWO – THE YEARS 1975 – 2000” at [calgaryrcmpvets.ca/Lacey-Historical-Report](http://calgaryrcmpvets.ca/Lacey-Historical-Report).<sup>15</sup>

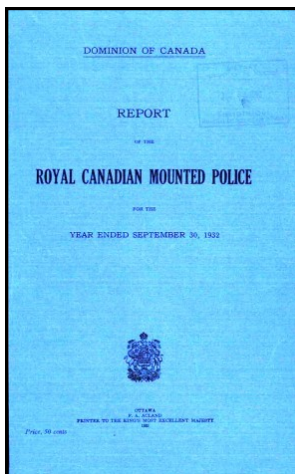
The “Royal Canadian Mounted Police obituary card index and Notices” may also be helpful in developing a record of your Mountie. For this site, see [familysearch/RCMP-obituary-and-Notices](http://familysearch/RCMP-obituary-and-Notices)<sup>16</sup> or connect directly at [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org).<sup>17</sup> Also, see the “RCMP Cenotaph, Honour Roll” at [rcmp-grc.gc.ca/honour-roll](http://rcmp-grc.gc.ca/honour-roll).<sup>18</sup>

There are articles that provide information on the cemeteries and Mounties in Fort Macleod and elsewhere in the west, such as “Union and Holy Cross Cemeteries, Fort Macleod”<sup>19</sup> by the Travel Geek at [wend.ca](http://wend.ca)/<sup>9</sup>, “The Mystery of A Mountie: Good Enough for Two Graves” by J. J. Healy (an online article with links to nine series of other Mountie related mysteries) at [rcmpgraves.com/mysterymcleod](http://rcmpgraves.com/mysterymcleod)<sup>20</sup>, “The First Bastion of the Foothills: the NWMP in Canada’s Wild West” by Alex Dagan (an online article of the Mounties early years in Fort Macleod along with a guide for a related walking tour of the town) at [onthisspot/fortmacleod/barracks](http://onthisspot/fortmacleod/barracks).<sup>21</sup>

There are also many gems that can be found within the collections of archives and libraries. I will mention just a few. “Funeral of Constable Ernest Usher, Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer, Fort Macleod, Alberta” is a set of photographs from 1920 on the Glenbow Library and Archives Collection, Libraries and Cultural Resources Digital Collections, University of Calgary at [Funeral-of-Constable-Ernest-Usher](http://Funeral-of-Constable-Ernest-Usher)<sup>22</sup> and at [Grave-of-Corporal-Ernest-Usher](http://Grave-of-Corporal-Ernest-Usher).<sup>23</sup>

There are significant documents within the collections of the Provincial Archives of Alberta. See [provincialarchives/royal-canadian-mounted-police](http://provincialarchives/royal-canadian-mounted-police).<sup>24</sup> The Galt Museum & Archives Collections also has collections related to these early Mounties, such as records of James Macleod listed at [collections.galtmuseum/JamesMacleod](http://collections.galtmuseum/JamesMacleod)<sup>25</sup> and *North West Mounted Police and RCMP Library Archives Canada* at [library-archives.canada/nwmp-rcmp](http://library-archives.canada/nwmp-rcmp).<sup>26</sup>

The LAC also provides the service files for the NWMP on “North West Mounted Police: Personnel files for members of the NWMP (1873-1904)” at [heritage.canadiana.ca](http://heritage.canadiana.ca)<sup>27</sup> and an alternate set may be found at “North West Mounted Police (NWMP) - Personnel Records, 1873-1904” at [library-archives-canada/nwmp-personnel](http://library-archives-canada/nwmp-personnel).<sup>28</sup>



Further information on the Mounties is also in book form, in the *Report of Royal Canadian Mounted Police for 1932*.

Also, research historical newspapers for the place and period in which relevant events occurred. As one of my relatives was involved as a guide during the hunt for killers of Constable Ralls in 1932, I have a special interest in that case. Google Books provided a book *Honoured in Places: Remembered Mounties Across Canada* by William Joseph Hulgaard, John Wesley White Heritage House Publishing, 2002, 224 pages of which provide excellent background on that case. If you wish further information on the Mounties or even an individual member see copies of “Report of Royal Canadian Mounted Police”, like the one for the year ending September 30, 1932 at [archives/rcmp-1932](http://archives/rcmp-1932).<sup>32</sup> If you wish to find these reports for other years

Some members of the Force also served as soldiers in times of war. For these, one should seek their war records. These are available online and free from the LAC website for all who served in the Canadian military in World War I and those who died in WW II. The site of the Commonwealth war graves commission at [cwgc.org/find-war-dead](http://cwgc.org/find-war-dead)<sup>29</sup> will be helpful in the cases of those who died while in the service. Again, you may find magazine or newspaper articles on some individuals like “The Dieppe Mountie” an article originally in the *Legion Magazine* at [legionmagazine/the-dieppe-mountie](http://legionmagazine/the-dieppe-mountie)<sup>30</sup> or “Dedication of a Stone of Remembrance Inspector Montague Henry White-Fraser, O.50.A, North West Mounted Police” at [rcmpveteransvancouver/henry-white-fraser](http://rcmpveteransvancouver/henry-white-fraser).<sup>31</sup> It is amazing what a simple Google search may uncover.



This 1932 newspaper showcases a hunt for bandits who killed a Saskatchewan Mountie, found on [newspapers.com](http://newspapers.com).

from roughly 1930 to 1960, use the URL for the 1932 copy as shown above, and replace “1932” with the year you seek.

The NWMP came to Western Canada to provide law and order, eventually taming the frontier and making it ready for settlement. The work of police on all forces in the West and throughout Canada have provided equally important services in communities where they serve or have served. There have been members of police forces in our family, however, I am aware of only one who was a Mountie, my uncle Charlie through marriage. His career in the force was a rather short one. I also have a friend, Roger, from my school days who was a career Mountie. They and all members of police forces throughout our nation have done much to ensure that we have been able to enjoy our lives in relative safety and peace. We need to remember their contributions and celebrate them regularly. I wish to dedicate this article to Uncle Charlie, my friend Roger, and all who are or have been members of police forces anywhere in Canada.



*The author's uncle is the only member of his family, that he is aware of, who served as a Mountie.*



*The author's Uncle Charlie Cue was a member of the RCMP, 1928 – 1930.*

*The following is a list of full web addresses in this article. Unless shown otherwise, place https:// before each address:*

- 1 [www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/hon/honour-honneur-roll-tableau-eng.htm](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/hon/honour-honneur-roll-tableau-eng.htm)
- 2 [library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/research-help/politics-government-law/pages/north-west-mounted-police-personnel-records.aspx#a2](http://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/research-help/politics-government-law/pages/north-west-mounted-police-personnel-records.aspx#a2)
- 3 Google search for “LAC North West Mounted Police (NWMP) Personnel Records, 1873-1904”
- 4 [saskgenealogy.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/RCMP\\_Obituary\\_Index.pdf](http://saskgenealogy.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/RCMP_Obituary_Index.pdf)
- 5 [www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/historically-relevant-dates-rcmp](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/historically-relevant-dates-rcmp)
- 6 [www.findagrave.com/cemetery/1968318/union-cemetery](http://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/1968318/union-cemetery)
- 7 [www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2427812/holy-cross-cemetery](http://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2427812/holy-cross-cemetery)
- 8 Google search for “Waymarking NWMP Field of Honour - Fort Macleod, Alberta”
- 9 [www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ab/Waymarking NWMP Field of Honour - Fort Macleod, Alberta mem-eng.htm](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ab/Waymarking_NWMP_Field_of_Honour_-_Fort_Macleod,_Alberta_mem-eng.htm)
- 10 [www.rcmpgraves.com/vetcorner/gravesAB.html](http://www.rcmpgraves.com/vetcorner/gravesAB.html)
- 11 [www.rcmpgraves.com/database/search.html](http://www.rcmpgraves.com/database/search.html)
- 12 <http://www.rcmpveteransvancouver.com/dec-11-16-gone-but-not-forgotten/>
- 13 [www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial](http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial)
- 14 [thediscoverblog.com/tag/royal-canadian-mounted-police/](http://thediscoverblog.com/tag/royal-canadian-mounted-police/)
- 15 [calgaryrcmpvets.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/View-the-Lacey-Historical-Report-1976-2000.pdf](http://calgaryrcmpvets.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/View-the-Lacey-Historical-Report-1976-2000.pdf)
- 16 Google search for “familysearch Royal Canadian Mounted Police obituary and notices”
- 17 Google search for “familysearch.org identity login”
- 18 [www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/hon/honour-honneur-roll-tableau-eng.htm](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/hon/honour-honneur-roll-tableau-eng.htm)
- 19 [wend.ca/?p=37073](http://wend.ca/?p=37073)
- 20 [www.rcmpgraves.com/buffalo/mysterymcleod.html](http://www.rcmpgraves.com/buffalo/mysterymcleod.html)
- 21 [onthisspot.ca/cities/fortmacleod/barracks](http://onthisspot.ca/cities/fortmacleod/barracks)
- 22 Google search for “U of calgary funeral of constable Ernest Usher”
- 23 Google search for “U of calgary grave of corporal Ernest Usher”
- 24 [searchprovincialarchives.alberta.ca/royal-canadian-mounted-police](http://searchprovincialarchives.alberta.ca/royal-canadian-mounted-police)
- 25 [collections.galtmuseum.com/en/list?p=2&ps=20&q=James+Macleod](http://collections.galtmuseum.com/en/list?p=2&ps=20&q=James+Macleod)
- 26 Google search for “Archives Canada genealogy family history employment RCMP and NWMP”
- 27 [heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac\\_mikan\\_158709](http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_mikan_158709)
- 28 Google search for “LAC North West Mounted Police (NWMP) Personnel Records, 1873-1904”

**RS**



*Clara (Stratton) Iwaasa was born and raised near Plamondon on the shores of Lac La Biche, on a mink ranch. She married Mitsuo Iwaasa in 1959, together raising two sons and two daughters.*

*She is a Charter member of the Brooks & District Branch, and has been since 1981. She was President in 1989 and 1990, and is an AGS Life Member.*

*Clara's research focuses on Scotland on her father's side and Canadian history on her mother's Métis side, as well as Mit's Japanese lineage, having visited his family farm near Hiroshima. She has also visited Scotland and her many relatives there several times.*

## Sunday afternoon drive to Patricia and Cravath Corners Cemeteries

by Clara Iwaasa

Four members of the Brooks & District Branch of AGS set out from Brooks on a sunny spring Sunday afternoon in 2019, heading the 31 km to Patricia, Alberta. We then followed the sign to the cemetery, which is located five kilometres southwest of Patricia.

Patricia Cemetery was set aside by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1921 or 1922, on the NE corner of 2-20-13- W4. It is located on the open prairie and is not fenced in. There is a metal sign "Patricia Community Cemetery" and also a large rock with a plaque on it. There are a few scattered grave markers. They are mostly older grave sites and very few recent ones. We checked it out, then headed back to the main road to try and locate the Cravath Corners Cemetery north of the Red Deer River.



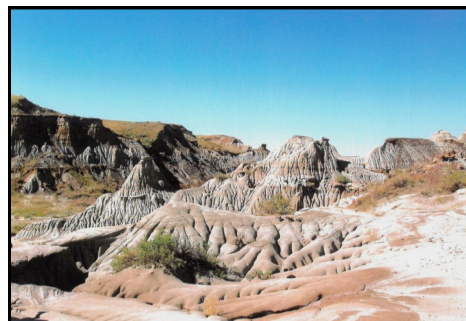
*This wrought-iron sign denotes the community cemetery of Patricia.*



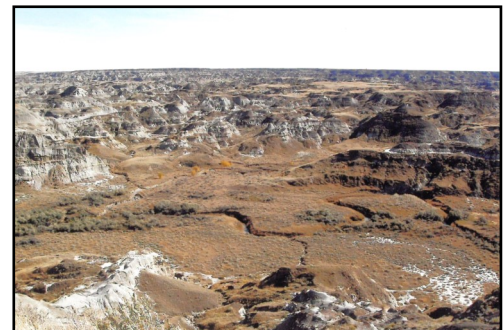
*The plaque at Patricia Cemetery is dedicated to pioneers of the area.*

We stopped just before the main road to watch a herd of cows. One was separated some distance from the others and acting in an unusual manner. Pacing back and forth, and then laying down, up again, more pacing. This went on for some time; we realized that the birth of her calf was imminent. No calf yet so we headed to the hamlet of Patricia, but

instead of heading straight north we went into Patricia and headed east on the road to the Dinosaur Provincial Park. None of us had been to Cravath Corners Cemetery prior to this. Next thing we knew we were at the "lookout" heading into the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Dinosaur Provincial Park.



*Dinosaur Provincial Park from the top of the hill*



*A close up of badlands formations at Dinosaur Provincial Park*

Back 19 km to Patricia and on Highway 876, we headed north and crossed the Red Deer River over the Steveville Bridge and followed the only road going in any

direction. We kept going what seemed a long distance, and still nothing in sight and wondering just how far we still had to go. Lo and behold, down the dusty highway we spotted a truck coming our way. We stopped and the vehicle also stopped, an oilfield worker checking some wells in the area. We asked him where Cravath Corners Cemetery was and he didn't know.

On we went, and at the next intersection there was a truck waiting for us. The man in the first vehicle had phoned someone he knew who lived in the area and told him there was a car load of lost women looking for an abandoned cemetery. This kind gentleman told us it was just down the road a short distance, and there was a sign indicating where to turn. This sign was on the road that the first vehicle had just come past and had probably passed many times, but it hadn't registered with him. With nothing else to see for miles in any direction, one would think it should have stood out.

We found this well-kept, fenced in cemetery with some very unique headstones and markers indicating that it was definitely ranching and cattle country.

### History of the Cravath Corners Cemetery



One of the grave sites at Cravath Corners Cemetery is embellished with commemorative ironwork.



Loved ones buried at Cravath Corners Cemetery are memorialized with artifacts of prairie life.

Following is a history of Cravath Corners, from files at the Brooks & District Branch and quoted from an account by Margaret E. Bell and Mrs. Emil Sandgathe.

*The Cravath Corners Cemetery serves Wardlow, Steverville, Cravath Corners and Howie Districts. It is located at NE 09-22-11 W4, about eight miles east and two miles south of Wardlow. It is a cemetery of mainly unmarked, unnamed graves. In 1976 local residents, with the aid of an Alberta Government grant, erected a cairn bearing the names of 34 pioneers and their children interred there. The original records of the cemetery were lost; hence the list of names on the cairn is only approximate. It was first settled in 1910 by Mr. and Mrs. J. Cravath, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Bell, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Kin and Mr. and Mrs. Milo Cravath. They each bought a section of land with adjoining corners. Each of the four families had a member of the Cravath family in it. Hence, the name Cravath Corners was given to the post office started by J. Cravath. Mrs. J. Cravath died in 1914 and Mr. J. Cravath moved away in 1919. Mr. and Mrs. Bell moved to Bassano in 1921 and Milo and Betty Cravath left in 1926. The post office was closed and Cravath Corners ceased to exist.<sup>1</sup>*

The first interment in 1916 was that of a young homesteader, David Thomas Jones, who suffocated in his shack. Here also lie the two Parker brothers, George Nelson and Jesse Calvin, both with young families who died within days of each other of the influenza epidemic that followed World War 1.

Also buried here was a young homesteader, Peter Thompson, who drowned in the Berry Creek south of Wardlow at a place long since known as the Thompson hole. An infant son is in the same cemetery.

There have been several members of the Coultis family, former area residents, buried here in recent years, one being Irene Vanderloh, 1917 – 2009. She was a member of the Brooks & District Branch of AGS.

By late afternoon we were glad that we had thought to bring water with us. A road map would have been handy also. Back to Patricia and heading home, at the intersection where we had seen the cow, she was still there, now with her new-born calf.

<sup>1</sup>Excerpt obtained from "This is Our Land: A Centennial History", 1967 by Blumell, James E, part of a Centennial project of the English 10 and 20 classes of New Cessford School, courtesy of Local Histories Collection, Libraries and Cultural Resources Digital Collections, University of Calgary



Signage and plaques at Cravath Corners Cemetery

RS





*Colleen Andersen has been a member of the AGS Drayton Valley Branch since its inception 30 years ago, and served in just about every position on the executive, from Librarian to President. She is very involved with the local historical society and legacy project, collecting the history of the area. She was also editor of the community history book published in 2004. The local Legion recently appointed her their official historian, and in her spare time she helps her husband and two sons on the ranch, with their 400 cows and about 600 yearlings.*

## Moon Valley Cemetery

by Colleen Andersen

In about 1939 a group of residents of the Moon Valley area, south and west of Violet Grove, got together to put together a cemetery in the area. The nearest one was in Drayton Valley, and in those days that was some distance. Fred Berezowski donated 1.92 acres of land situated along a deep ravine that divided his quarter. It was never officially surveyed, but it was legally divided out. In March of 1940 the Moon Valley Cemetery Company became an official society. Gurnick, Turtiak, Ewanicke, Mikulin and Smithinsky are names on the papers and minutes.

September 18, 1940, Felix Gurnick – one of the founders – lost a son, Michael, aged 3 years and he was buried in the corner of the new cemetery overlooking the ravine.

The following year on July 16 he lost another infant son, John, and he was buried with his brother. Through the years the trees and brush took over the area they are buried in.

In the early 2000s the house of one of the Gurnick families was being torn down and found in the wall was the Certificate of Title as well as minutes of the meetings over some years. It was assumed that the minutes were written in Ukrainian, but upon examination it was found to be Russian. The minutes were translated and it appears that for some years, the group met and the cemetery faithfully maintained to some degree through the years. Three plots were paid for at a cost of \$5.00 each.

The group fenced it along the lines they thought were the correct ones. The grass was cut and in later years someone hayed it. A large cross was erected in 1951 to indicate that it was a cemetery, and there was a headstone placed for the two children buried there. Unfortunately, other than the Gurnick children, none of the original founders' families are buried here. Times and rules changed and when the father of the two boys died, he could not be buried there as he wished, as the cemetery had never received a "Final Certificate of Approval".

Nature finally did its job and took over. The trees grew up and brush invaded. At one time the county administration wanted to exhume the two boys and rebury them elsewhere, but that idea was squashed by residents.

In order for this cemetery to be active again, our group had to get either a religious organization or a municipality to take ownership. Our group is made up of a few local residents who want to have a cemetery for their and their family's use.



*The son of one of the cemetery's founders is buried at Moon Valley Cemetery.*

In 2014, our group approached the County of Brazeau and they, after four years and some pressure, did what was necessary to obtain title and get the approvals in place so that burials could occur. It is now a registered cemetery.

The Moon Valley Cemetery Society was formed so that there was an organization to properly care for it. The journey to get to this point was not easy. It took some years for the legalities to happen. Because the cemetery was then owned by the County, we had to get them onside to get this cleaned up and in useable condition. That was not without its own roadblocks.



*What we started with*

Everyone had always assumed that the cemetery followed beside the large coulee. They even fenced it accordingly. Surveyors came out and staked the boundary. Well, now it turned out that the farmer who now owned the rest of the quarter had followed the old fence line with his driveway, so it was on the cemetery which is legally not allowed. The County had put his approach in when they redid the main road, and they had placed it wrong. It took some doing to get this remediated.

The County replaced his driveway and part of the old driveway became a parking lot. An agreement for the Society to operate the cemetery was reached with the County.



*Moon Valley overview*

An application was made through the CFEP (Community Facility Enhancement Program of the Alberta government) to clear the regrowth, get the ground in seedable condition and install fencing and signage. Funding was approved. Matching funds had to be raised or donated. Then the real work began.

A contractor came in the fall of 2018 and took down the trees. Some were not very large, as part of the cemetery had been hayed up until the late 1970s. A grove of large spruce trees were left but the rest were taken down and piled in two large brush piles. There was a lot of hand labour involved with this work. The contractor then followed up and the piles

were burnt. The contractor generously did all this work at cost, so some of his work qualified as donation for the grant.

A mulcher followed in the spring and started the process of getting the land in grass-growing condition. One of the



*Moon Valley Cemetery gates*

volunteers farmed the next quarter over, and he brought in a big disc and worked it up. Some of the other volunteers picked roots and picked roots and picked roots. Then the farmer came back and worked up some more roots for them to pick until he was happy with the soil condition. Another volunteer brought in a smaller disc and some harrows and we picked more roots. The ground was finally in shape to seed grass. Grass was sown and rolled and rain was prayed for.

Once the grass was established to some extent, the surveyors came in and marked out rows, sections and plots. A fence and proper gates were installed so that the area could be secured. Small trees were planted around the perimeter where needed. Signage, as required by the Cemetery Act, was installed and it was ready for opening.

The cousin of the two boys, who is ordained, came and blessed the cemetery. The father of the minister, the boys' brother, came also and it was the first time in many years that he had seen the grave.

The two little boys are no longer alone. We buried the ashes of the wife of one of our volunteers. And on March 30 of this year another lady, Shirley Okenyan, joined them.

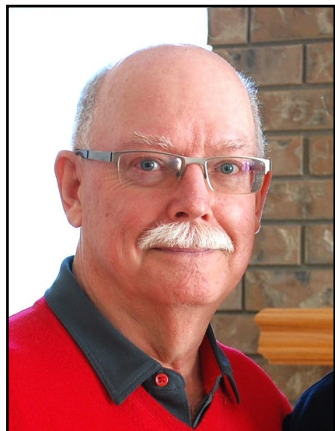
*RS*

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## *Relatively Speaking Guidelines for Authors 2024*

1. We prefer original articles, never-before published, but we do accept articles previously posted on an author's blog or website or previously published in a genealogy newsletter, journal or magazine provided they meet the following criteria (#2-11).
2. We will accept submissions in the following order: 1. Members, 2. Youth, 3. Non-members. We will also take into consideration how closely the article fits with the theme for each issue.
3. Articles should be in Garamond font, in a digital Word format, 1000-2500 words maximum except for the rare, longer article which will be serialized and is published in two parts.
4. A maximum of 4-6 photos/illustrations submitted in JPEG format will be accepted. Do not send original photos or documents. Please include information on the photos: who, what, where and when.
5. We request a 100-word maximum biography and an author photo. We cannot be responsible for outdated author information that we keep on file. Please ensure your bio is up to date.
6. We try not to publish the same author in two consecutive issues except for our regular columns such as: *Spinning Webs*, *Finding Alberta's Past* and *Youth Write On*.
7. We reserve the right to edit and select the articles on basis of relevance, quality, and space using *The Canadian Style – A Guide to Writing and Editing* and the *Oxford Canadian Dictionary of Current English*. We will acknowledge that an article was previously published in another publication, in a blog or on a website. We're happy to let you see your article before publishing, but please let us know.
8. Articles and biographies must contain no promotion of author's products or services.
9. Due to privacy and protection of personal information, we will not publish exact birth dates of people still living. A month and year are acceptable.
10. Due to space restrictions, we do not publish footnotes/references except in exceptional cases. We do state that "references are available upon request from [rseditor@abgenealogy.ca](mailto:rseditor@abgenealogy.ca)" if references have been provided with the article.
11. For reader friendly formatting, we request that long web addresses be a shortened link within the article, and the full web address(es) be listed at the end of the article.

*RS*



*Kurt is the AGS project leader behind the cemetery book digitization project with Edmonton Public Libraries and Internet Archives since its start in 2020. He is President of the AGS Edmonton Branch, where he's been actively involved since his term as Branch Trustee in 2022-2023.*

*From volunteering with Junior Achievement to supporting Special Olympics and the Edmonton Christmas Bureau, he's always lending a helping hand. His helping expertise can also be found with City of Edmonton Street Labs projects, MacEwan University Community Partnerships, CPA Canada Financial Literacy, and more.*

*Kurt also enjoys capturing moments through photography, getting his hands dirty with landscaping and gardening alongside his wife, and having a blast with his three adult sons in their various businesses and adventures.*

## A few Cemetery resources online

by Kurt Paterson

Some popular websites, such as Find a Grave (<https://www.findagrave.com/>) and BillionGraves (<https://billiongraves.com/search>) have made it easy for researchers to locate records of gravestones online.

The value of cemetery records in genealogy research is well documented. A search in the AGS online library catalogue (<https://16282.rmwebopac.com/>) using the term “cemetery” shows over 400 items in the AGS library collection.

As highlighted in the November 2021 (Vol 49. No 4, pages 168-170) and November 2023 (Vol 51. No 4, pages 161-162) issues of *Relatively Speaking*, AGS has been working with Edmonton Public Library (EPL) to digitize the cemetery record books published by AGS since 1974 and make them available through Internet Archive. EPL has made these publications available through their catalogue, either as a physical item or by providing a direct link to Internet Archive. This link will take you to the collection online:

<https://archive.org/search?query=alberta+genealogical+society+cemetery>

With over 800 Alberta cemeteries to research, these publications are now available 24/7 from anywhere in the world where there is internet access. These online cemetery books may contain maps, cemetery history, plot maps, plot number indexes, or surname indexes. If you are lucky, they may also contain some very unique and interesting stories about your relatives. The surnames from these publications are now captured in ARNI as described below.

### How you can help

- Go to Internet Archive to research your ancestors and give us feedback at [digitize@abgenealogy.ca](mailto:digitize@abgenealogy.ca)
- Volunteer to assist the AGS Cemetery Book Digitization Committee
- Write short summaries of cemetery books
- Share your experience with others by providing a written testimonial and providing us with permission to share it after you have explored Internet Archive
- Volunteer to learn how to assist others at your branch to use this research
- Spread the word about this amazing resource to others

Another great source, Alberta Records Name Index (ARNI) at (<https://ani.edmontongenealogy.ca/>), consists of surnames and any other data that may be pertinent to the individual such as: given name, birth and death date, age, cemetery name, source, nearest town, and plot/grave number. With over 600,000 cemetery records and over 300,000 local history entries it is one of the first places I look when starting a new research query.

In addition, the Alberta Name Index (ANI) (<https://ani.edmontongenealogy.ca/>) offers a simple unified search for Alberta residents named in various sources including Probates, Local Histories, Obituaries, Coroner Records, Land Records (not early homesteads), Newspapers and more.

RS

## Alberta Genealogical Society

# *Relatively Speaking*

## *Submissions Requested*

**Deadline – July 1, 2024**

### **August Theme**

#### **Politics and Leadership**



Do you have ancestors who participated in politics? How about activism or working for a cause? Were you or any of your family an MP or MLA? A Chief or Band Councillor? Have you researched in the Legislature to find ancestors who were involved in politics? Where have you found the best resources for finding out more?

Send these or other family history stories  
Max. 2500 words (Word Doc), 4-6 pictures (JPEG) to:

**[rseditor@abgenealogy.ca](mailto:rseditor@abgenealogy.ca)**

**Youth Write On** is a regular feature of *Relatively Speaking* which focuses on the work of young writers and family historians in an effort to support and encourage their study of family history and genealogy.



**Sofia De Paola** is a grade six student at St. Thomas Aquinas School who did a family history project in grade five. She likes to draw, play with her friends and neighbours and spend time with her family. She helps take care of her younger siblings. During the week, she enjoys going swimming and taking gymnastics lessons. She is very proud of her Italian heritage and goes to Italian school Saturday mornings. She loves cooking and eating all kinds of Italian dishes, especially pizza. She enjoys traveling to visit her family in Italy. When she grows up she would like to be a teacher. Sofia was honoured to have her poster displayed at the Genealogy 4 Youth exhibition at the Art Gallery of Alberta, and again at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference of the Alberta Genealogical Society.

## My Family's Journey From Italy

by Sofia De Paola

My grandpa Costantino De Paola was born in Zungoli, Italy in the spring of 1956.

Zungoli is a small medieval agricultural community in the province of Avellino, Campania in southern Italy with a current population of around 1000 people.

Grandpa (nonno) immigrated to Edmonton by plane on April 12, 1975 at the age of 18. It was really hard for him to say goodbye to his family and friends in Italy. Even though he was far away from his family, he came to Canada to find a better life.

My grandpa became a Canadian on October 12, 1993 in Edmonton, AB.

My grandpa met my grandma in Canada. Her name is Luisa and she is also Italian. They were married April 7, 1979 in Edmonton. They had two children.

In 1983 they had their first son Marco De Paola, my dad. He grew up speaking both Italian and English. When he was 21, he met my mom, Raffaella. She was born in the same town in Italy as my grandpa. After four years, Marco and Raffaella were married. Raffaella moved to Canada in 2008 and had three children – Sofia, Matteo and Luca.



11th century Norman castle in Zungoli

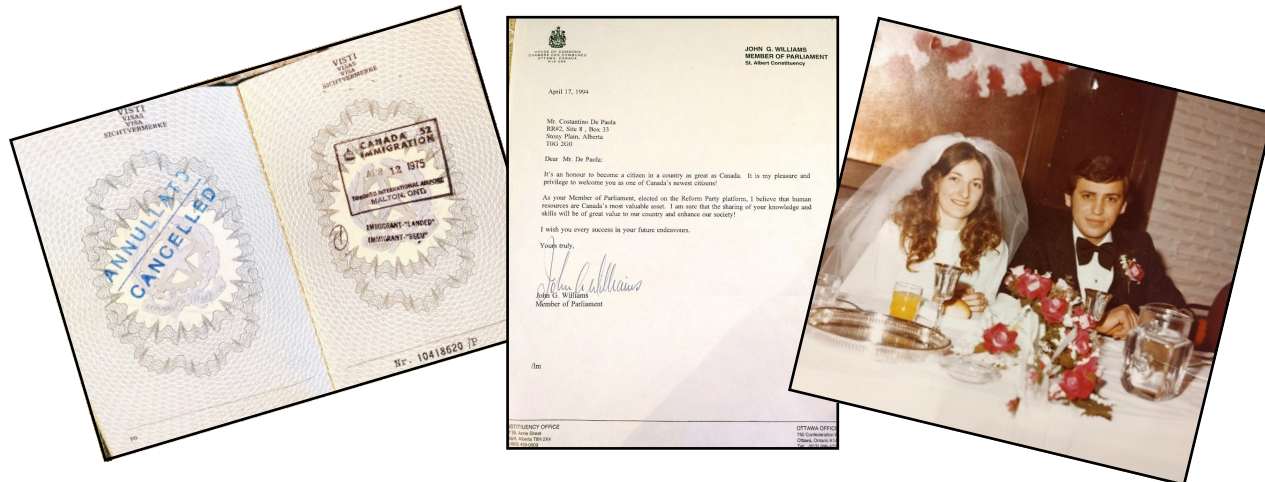
In 1987 my uncle Peter De Paola was born. Peter also speaks both Italian and English. On May 27, 2017 Peter married Sophia. My aunt Sophia was born in Canada to Italian parents. They had a son named Federico, who is now two and a half years old.

Today Costantino is in his late 60s. He is happily married with two children and four grandchildren. He has been living in Canada for approximately 50 years.



Sofia's grandpa Costantino De Paola was born in Zungoli, Italy on May 23 1956. This is a photo of Costantino, around nine years old, on his Confirmation at the Santa Maria Assunta Church in Zungoli.

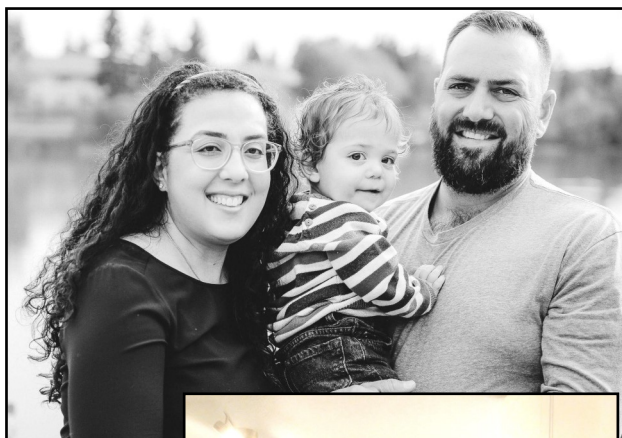




Left to right: Costantino’s first passport when he came to Canada; official letter from the Member of Parliament to welcome Costantino as one of Canada’s new citizens; Costantino and Luisa on their wedding day

I know it was not easy for him to immigrate to Canada. It was also challenging for my mother. I am proud of how much they have accomplished and achieved while living in Canada. I will cherish and celebrate my Italian traditions as I get older. One aspect that I value the most about being Italian is family, and the importance it has in my life.

Italians are known for their big, vibrant families and I wouldn’t have it any other way. Thousands of people immigrated to Canada from Italy, and they have helped make Canada the wonderful place it is today.



Clockwise from top left: Sofia with her brothers Matteo and Luca; her Uncle Peter and Aunt Sophia with their son Federico; Marco and Raffaella, Sofia’s parents.



Above, Sofia stands with her grandpa, Costantino, at the Art Gallery of Alberta where her family roots poster was displayed. Sofia is very proud of her grandpa’s journey and story.



RS





## Genealogy 4 Youth – Our Family Roots Project

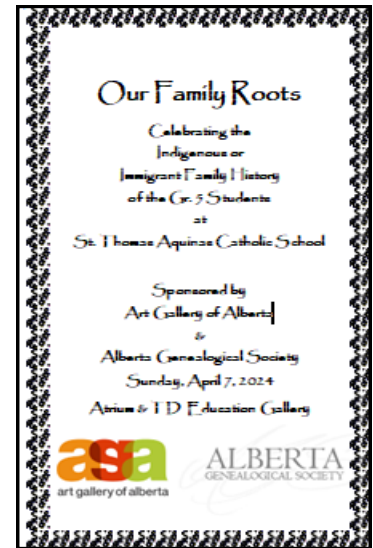
by Lynne Duigou

On Sunday, April 7, 2024 the Alberta Genealogical Society presented 48 Grade Five St. Thomas Aquinas School, Spruce Grove students with certificates for the completion of a poster on their Indigenous or Immigrant Family History. Sponsored by the Art Gallery of Alberta, the students' posters were on exhibition for almost a month in the TD Learning Gallery. Approximately 210 students, parents and family members gathered for the presentation of certificates, viewing in the gallery and the juice and cookies reception sponsored by St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. A newspaper account of the event was published in the Friday, April 12, 2024 edition of the *Spruce Grove Examiner*.

Marion Rex, Grade 5 teacher, spearheaded the project which saw her make an initial Family History/Genealogy presentation to each of the six Grade 5 classes at the school. With the help of their families and teachers, 150 students completed posters. Lou Duigou, retired Edmonton Catholic Schools Area Superintendent and Lynne Duigou, retired Edmonton Catholic Schools Assistant Principal and AGS Past President, judged the posters as to genealogical content, documentation, family tree, story and presentation of material.

The students chose to research the following: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia, Canada (including Plains Cree, Denesuline, Nunatukavit and Métis), Croatia, England, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Kenya, Lebanon, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Scotland, Sweden, Ukraine, USA and Zimbabwe in the 48 posters exhibited at the art gallery.

Invitations to the Celebration were sent to all families of the students, Edmonton Heritage Council, Historic Resources Management Heritage Division, the Alberta Department of Arts, Culture, and Status of Women, the Mayor of Spruce Grove, Evergreen Catholic Schools administration and Trustees, St. Thomas Aquinas school administration and Grade 5 teachers. Not all were able to attend, but Mayor Jeff Acker, Principal Lynnette Tarr and Assistant Principal Keri Cyr were present and congratulated each of the students. Mayor Acker presented each student with a Town of Spruce Grove pin. The families received free admission to the Art Gallery of Alberta for the day.



Following presentation of the certificates in the Atrium of the Art Gallery, the families were invited to the Education Gallery to view the posters and enjoy a juice and cookies reception sponsored by St. Thomas Aquinas School.

**RS**

*Pictures of each of the students with their certificate were taken and later given to the students. Waiting to congratulate the students on their achievement are (left to right) Keri Cyr, Assistant Principal and Lynnette Tarr, Principal of St. Thomas Aquinas School; Mayor Jeff Acker, Spruce Grove; Marion Rex Howard, Grade 5 teacher; Lynne Duigou, Past President Alberta Genealogical Society and Dara Armsden, Head of Education and Learning, Art Gallery of Alberta.*

## Spinning Webs

by Denise Daubert



digitized opportunity to view these photos plus a collection of documents as well.

**umanitoba.ca/libraries** This is a wonderful resource if you are researching ancestors who settled in Manitoba. An amazing set of black and white photographs includes farms, schools, homes and churches. As well, you will discover a collection of digitized newspaper clippings. *The Prairie Immigration Experience* allows a



**oldmapsonline.org** This is a website with which to spend an entire afternoon or evening! Historical maps from around the world are found – from various years by an array of cartographers including Rand McNally and Company. The website is easy to navigate, and the maps are in categories of both “countries” and “cities” from around the globe.



**cityarchives@edmonton.ca** The City of Edmonton – over recent years – has digitized a number of their holdings, allowing genealogists to search resources online versus actually going to the archive itself. One such publication that has been digitized, and I found fascinating, is the 1899 *Lowe's Directory of the Edmonton District* – a real treasure for anyone with ancestors who resided in the area just before the turn of the century. There are people and businesses listed, as well as a listing of churches and school districts. The publication is 196 pages in length and at the time of publication ... the cost was \$2 to own one of the directories!



**legal.ca/experience/local-tourism/mural-walk** With spring here, maybe a road trip is in order ... especially if your family had roots in the Town of Legal/Ville de Legal or the surrounding area. The town is known as “*The French Mural Capital of Canada*” and bilingual guided tours are available. Watch for street signs as you tour the 35 murals, as many streets and roads are named for pioneer families. On this website you can view all the murals, and there is a link to a mural map showing where in the town they are located.



*Commerce: A History of Canadian Mail Order Catalogues*. This is an online display and provides a fascinating look at catalogues from 1880 to 1975, including those produced by Eaton's, Simpsons and Dupuis Freres (plus others).

**historymuseum.ca** Mail order catalogues were a very big part of life for Canadians who lived in the late 1800s up to the 1970s – it was a way of shopping, especially for those in rural areas across the country. The Canadian Museum of History's website features a display titled *Before E-*



**https://albertaancestors.ca** A part of The Alberta Family Histories Society, this website catalogues many cemeteries and tells the stories of these cemeteries located in the southern Alberta region. As well, you can read stories written about notable Southern Alberta residents in the early days of the province. There are also stories about people who were instrumental in the growth of Southern Alberta, even though they were not residents.



**memorysask.ca** A website hosted by the Saskatchewan Council for Archives & Archivists, this is a database of descriptions revolving around materials held in archives across the province. If you have Saskatchewan roots, be sure to spend some time with the scanned photographs (numbering almost 38,000 and being added to as time goes by) to discover black and white (and colour) photographs depicting some of the battalions formed in World War I, streetscapes of towns, farm equipment, cars, etc.



And finally, here are two websites from Wikipedia to spend some time with. The first is [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:List\\_of\\_online\\_newspaper\\_archives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:List_of_online_newspaper_archives). On this website you will see listings of both free and paywall-blocked digital archives re: Canadian newspapers. Within the listings, it offers a very comprehensive list of Alberta newspapers – those published in cities, small towns and rural areas.

The second is: search phrase **“Wikipedia demographics of (province name here)”**. If you are writing an article or collecting data and information on the lives of your ancestors in any of the Canadian provinces, type in the “search phrase” shown above in the address and then type in the name of the province (e.g. Alberta) and you will find a chart of population numbers for years – beginning in the late 1800s in

some instances – and in the early 1900s in other instances. Knowing the population (or an approximate population number) during the years your ancestors settled is an interesting piece of information for your records, or to add to a family story.

## Charles Denney Collection/Métis Family History

The Denney Collection is an exceptional resource for anyone researching their Métis family history in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Some coverage of Métis families in the NWT, BC and Northern Ontario.

The Collection has genealogical data on 1,200 families descended from the original Red River Settlers and Métis families who prospered over the Prairie fur trade era.

Visit

[www.edmontongenealogy.ca/charles-denney-collection-metis-family-history](http://www.edmontongenealogy.ca/charles-denney-collection-metis-family-history)



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