

Splitting Heirs

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Vernon & District Family History Society

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Many thousands of Canadians alive today have ancestors or ancestral relatives who sacrificed themselves a hundred years ago on the soil at Vimy pictured here. We have the story of one soldier who survived, and settled in Vernon following the war. [See page 15.](#)

Medical reasons can be behind genealogy research. Read one story [starting on page 4.](#)

There are a variety of ways to display your family tree. Don't just stick with one. Make it interesting! Read how to do it [starting page 6.](#)

How an immigrant couple can impact more than one community. The **Dobbyn Family** saga continues on [page 20.](#)

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President's Ramblings



At our January General Meeting I was very impressed with the high quality of questions and comments made by members in response to my tutorial on analyzing family photographs. My thanks to all members who contributed to that successful event and made it a fun time for all of us who attended, and I hope you learned as much as I did.

Recording Secretary **Sheila Copley** organized a fine table discussion on family documents, our Journal Editor **Larry Gilchrist** did a terrific job with writing tips on social events, and **Arnold Badke** helped members learn about how to document history via timelines. Very well done by all, including the fine member attendance at the meeting.

At my photo analysis table, one example photo I talked about is my circa 1920 photo of my Norwegian grandparents and their children standing in front of their North Dakota prairie homestead house (*see photo*). One member at the table, who is an expert in house design and architecture, offered the opinion that he is sure that Grandpa's house was what is called, a "kit-built" house, based on the type of construction and trim. I quickly learned from the discussion group that these kit-houses, popular from early 1900s to the 1930s, could be ordered from catalog sales, such as T. Eaton Co. in Canada, and Sears Roebucks in the U.S.

As we were discussing this, one of the ladies present searched on her smartphone, and found a

site showing Sears Roebuck kit homes with diagrams and floor plans. I found that discovery quite amazing because I had never heard of these kit-built houses prior to that table discussion, so I am thrilled with this new perspective on my Grandpa's house.

A main point I am trying to make in this column, is that you can learn a lot more about your family history research by actively joining in our VDFHS meetings and activities, because you will always learn much from the experiences of other members.

Regarding my Grandpa's house that we think was built in 1913, I have found a similar but slightly different house design in the Sears 1910 catalog and have perused one of the Eaton catalogs that is online. Needless to say, I am continuing my search for his exact house plan, and have ordered three books on the subject, that I will probably report on in the future.



Our Journal Editor, Larry Gilchrist is promoting the good idea that we need an additional Publications Director, who would coordinate additional Society news, perhaps in a new informal newsletter, and also coordinate media communications including our Twitter feed, Facebook page, and our website postings. This coordination responsibility would be a welcome addition to our Board of Directors and should greatly increase the quality of information circulated to members. Other good ideas are to start a DNA interest group, and a family history writing group, but again, we hope new volunteers might come forward to catalyze these good SIG

ideas. We hope to again offer many interesting General Meeting topics this coming year. If you have suggestions for topics or speakers you'd like to have covered or invited, talk to a member of our Program Committee (Sheila Copley, Larry Gilchrist) or myself.

In closing, I would urge you to **be active; get involved. Your participation is needed and makes a difference to all!**

Your President, Jerry

VDFHS Resource Centre Hours

(Lower level, Peace Lutheran Church 1204 – 30th Avenue,)

Tuesday: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Wednesday: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Saturday: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Upcoming Events

08 Mar 2017	7:00 pm	<p>Annual General Meeting Agenda will include: Special Resolution to amend the Society's Constitution and Bylaws; election of Vice-President, Treasurer, Journal Editor, Researcher and Directors The meeting will be followed by an open forum with the Board members to find out about the activities of the Society and provide in-put to Board members about activities and topics the Society should be pursuing.</p>
12 Apr 2017	7:00 pm	<p>General Meeting Program: "Succession Proofing Your Work" Jim Benedict of Alberta Family Histories Society and Guild of One Name Studies, will conduct a live webinar on the subject. Find out about organizational and storage methods to ensure that all your hard work is not lost. An excellent introduction to the nuts and bolts of genealogy for the beginner, but also a wake-up call for the more experienced genealogists among us. A not-to-be-missed presentation.</p>
10 May 2017	7:00 pm	<p>General Meeting Program: VDFHS Vernon WWI Internment Camp book project</p> <p>Agenda for General Meetings 6:30 pm - Doors open 7:00 pm - Announcements, Bits and Bytes 7:30 pm - Program 8:00 pm - Break - Refreshments 8:15 pm - Program continues</p>

Family Tree Research for Medical Purposes

Laurie Williams

My dad, **Robert (Bob) Sturgeon** died about 3 years ago, at the age of 81. He had Huntington disease, often referred to as HD. He lived longer than most people affected by HD, as our family seems to be most affected by late-onset HD. Huntington disease is an inherited brain disorder. It was named after the doctor who first described it in 1872 – George Huntington – and used to be called Huntington's chorea. As brain cells die, people with HD become less able to control movements, recall events, make decisions and control emotions. The disease leads to incapacitation and eventually death.

It was 1980 when I first learned of HD in our family, when Dad's older half-sister was diagnosed with it. The geneticists at University of B.C. wanted detailed family tree information about our family to try to determine if there were any risks of my dad developing HD. I had been doing genealogy for about five years at that point, so Dad and I used those connections to try to piece together the puzzle of where this disease came from in our family and who might be affected. Dad's efforts to document HD in our family were very appreciated by the geneticists, as very little was known about late-onset HD in 1980. It is now very evident that Dad's father, **Silas Sturgeon**, my grandfather, who died at age 72 of a heart attack, must have carried the HD gene, although he showed no visible symptoms of the disease. My grandfather's sister did develop HD, as did at least four of her children.

In recent years, through records at the Ontario Archives, I have been able to document a more distant branch of our family that is affected by HD. Interestingly enough, four family members affected by HD in this line were aged 47 to 52 at the time of death. This is in stark contrast to my line, and shows an occurrence of the HD gene likely mutating, resulting in an earlier-onset strain of the disease, by about 30 years.

I have Ontario Archives death records for three of these individuals. The oldest death record, from 1897, is for **Mary Thomas**, my first cousin three times removed. She died

Died. May 18th 1897. She has been failing gradually and has been mostly very noisy & restless. She died this morning of Chronic Chorea, 47.

in Rockwood Hospital at age 50. Her cause of death is shown as "chronic chorea, years". I still remember the chills going through me when I found this record on the microfilm reader at the Ontario Archives. Her son **Albert Thomas** died at age 47, and her daughter **Jennie Thomas** died at age 48.

Physician's Return of Death	
Surname of Deceased.	Thomas
Christian Name.	Albert
Date of Death.	16 th Nov 1910
DISEASE CAUSING DEATH.	Chorea
Duration.	Several years
Immediate Cause of Death.	Acute Pneumonia

Of interest to genealogists will be the detailed records kept by hospitals and institutions in Ontario, such as the Rockwood Hospital, that can

be accessed through the Ontario Archives. These records include:

an Abstract Of Preliminary History

(information about the person, medical certificates and general history leading up to admission);

Condition On

Admission (listing of physical and cognitive condition); and Clinical History (detailed account of condition, including treatments), and record of death.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH		
Name of Deceased	Jennie Thomas	
Date of Death	June 3 rd 1921	
Dates from which to which Medical Practitioner Attended Deceased	from October 5 th 1920 to June 3 rd 1921	
CAUSE OF DEATH	Primary	Huntingdon Chorea
	Duration	Indefinite yrs.
	Contributory	Huntingdon Chorea

I have a copy of Mary's case record at the Rockwood Asylum, from "Kingston Psychiatric Hospital Patients' Clinical Casebooks, Vol. 4, AO Microfilm #MS717". This record provides a

fascinating glimpse into the life of my relative in the year leading up to her death in 1897. The record states in part, "Her case is one of chronic chorea, with mental dementia resultant, chorea 10 years". It also remarks that her speech is indistinct, jerky & guttural; that she has very well-marked spasmodic twitchings; and that her gait is shuffling with her feet widely separated in her walk. These are all classic symptoms of HD. In one of the two medical certificates included from local doctors, prior to Mary's admittance to the hospital, the following comments are made about Mary. "Has an insane look and action. Wanders about without an object in view. Gets lost – gets excited and uses profane and vulgar language. Constantly talking when excited. Has filthy habits. Has no respect of person. Pays no attention to family matters or religious duties. Benjamin (her son) told me while trying to quiet her she attempted to cut his throat with a knife. Her husband says she has threatened to do him harm many times. Family say they have to keep a constant watch over her to keep her from wandering out nights, also in day and sometimes in a nude state even in cold weather."

In reading this account of what this family faced, I came to admire them for keeping Mary at home as long as they did. I imagine that in 1896 this situation would have been very challenging for the family. Luckily today families affected by Huntington disease can receive support services from the Huntington Society of Canada.

I wanted to know more about the Rockwood Hospital, as I had two relatives that lived there. A history of the Rockwood Insane Asylum, along with a list of early inmates, can be found at <http://www.ontariogenealogy.com/kingstoninsaneasylum.html>. This website, by **Michael Stephenson**, provides a history of treatment of mentally ill persons and criminal lunatics in early Ontario, with links to insane asylum databases for Toronto, Malden, London and Hamilton facilities. If you find a relative in one of these databases, he provides research services for the relevant documents for a fee. The Rockwood Asylum became a tourist attraction, as early as 1882. An interesting history of this facility is provided at

<http://www.museumofhealthcare.ca/explore/exhibitions/rockwood-asylum.html>. This website discusses improvements in living conditions that came about at the Rockwood Asylum, changing approaches to patient care, work as occupational therapy, and recreational activities. This history portrays a facility where the staff genuinely cared about the well-being of their residents.

In looking at Mary's case report, it notes that she was sent to receive a massage in October 1896, and that in early May 1897 she was placed on a water bed to try to relieve pressure and discomfort from constant shuffling. It seems to me that she was receiving kind and compassionate care at the Rockwood Hospital.

This family line has the surnames of **Kelly** and **Thomas**, both very common names and sometimes difficult to track, so the presence of HD in the death records has helped me to confirm their links to my family. These death records also clarified the source of HD in my family. Previously we had thought that HD had been passed down through my great-grandfather's father, who trembled and was an alcoholic according to several family members. However, it now appears that HD actually came through my great-grandmother's line.

My love of genealogy gives me a way to analyze this horrible disease, and put some order and sense to it through research and statistics, as it is a disease that cannot yet be controlled.

But my bigger passion lies in trying to help to find meaningful treatments for HD. I volunteer with the Okanagan Chapter of the Huntington Society. We raise awareness about HD and raise funds for research and family support services. We are having our 10th annual walk/run event at Kin Beach in Vernon on Saturday, May 27, 2017. If you would like to participate in or support our event, please visit www.hscevents.ca/VernonRun. To learn more about Huntington disease, please see www.huntingtonsociety.ca or call our national office at 1-800-998-7398.

* * *

100 Years Ago: WWI

February 1917 to April 1917

Jerry Thompson

During this period 100 years ago, the Canadian Corps was very busy preparing and rehearsing a major assault to be launched on Vimy Ridge. At Vimy, the Germans considered their positions to be impregnable and holding that high ground had the advantage of a field of fire over all the Canadian front. Canadian troops knew that the planned assault would be a severe test of their courage and fighting ability, since previous attacks by French and British troops at Vimy had ended in defeat with over 100,000 casualties.

The Canadians spent the cold winter and start of the year practicing manoeuvres including a practice replica of the German lines and fortifications such that every soldier was thoroughly drilled in every detail of the assault plan. News articles during that period in the Vernon News gave no hint of the extensive preparations that were taking place.

The Vernon News - February 22, 1917 My Dear Mother: Just a line to let you know how I am, and to give you a little news of my doings though I must not tell you where I am. I told you in my last what a nice Xmas we had in a French Village, and the splendid dinner they gave the soldiers. It is surprising how well I keep, what with the rain and snow, mud and cold, sleeping as we do in old

barns, in straw, etc., though they issue rum to us which helps a lot.

One key to victory was a planned massive artillery barrage starting two weeks in advance of troop movements to soften up and destroy positions and force the Germans to stay in their dugouts away from their machine guns. At 5:30 a.m., April 9th, 1917, Easter Monday the Canadian artillery barrage moved steadily towards German lines with 20,000 soldiers following in the first attack wave under adverse weather conditions of heavy sleet and snow. By noon April 9th, the Canadians had captured key positions on the high-ground, as planned, and by nightfall 12 April the Canadian Corps was in complete control of the ridge. The corps, totaling about 100,000 soldiers had suffered 10,602 casualties including 3,598 killed.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge was considered a very significant victory for Canadians, and in the words of Brigadier-General Alexander Ross, "This victory marked the birth of a nation." At the 100th anniversary of this battle, on April 9th 2017, an official Canadian delegation will take part in commemorative events at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial, France, as well as in many locations across Canada.

References:

[http://www.warmuseum.ca](http://www.warmuseum.ca;);
www.veterans.gc.ca

Rayment, Hugh, and Sherlock, Patrick, *Camp Vernon: A Century of Canadian Military History*, Kettle Valley Publishing, Vernon BC.

* * *

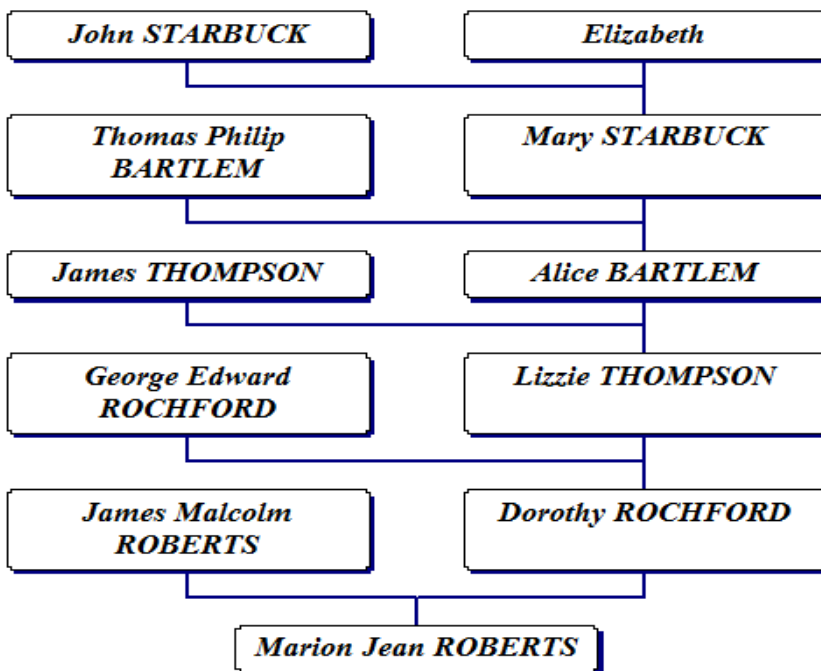
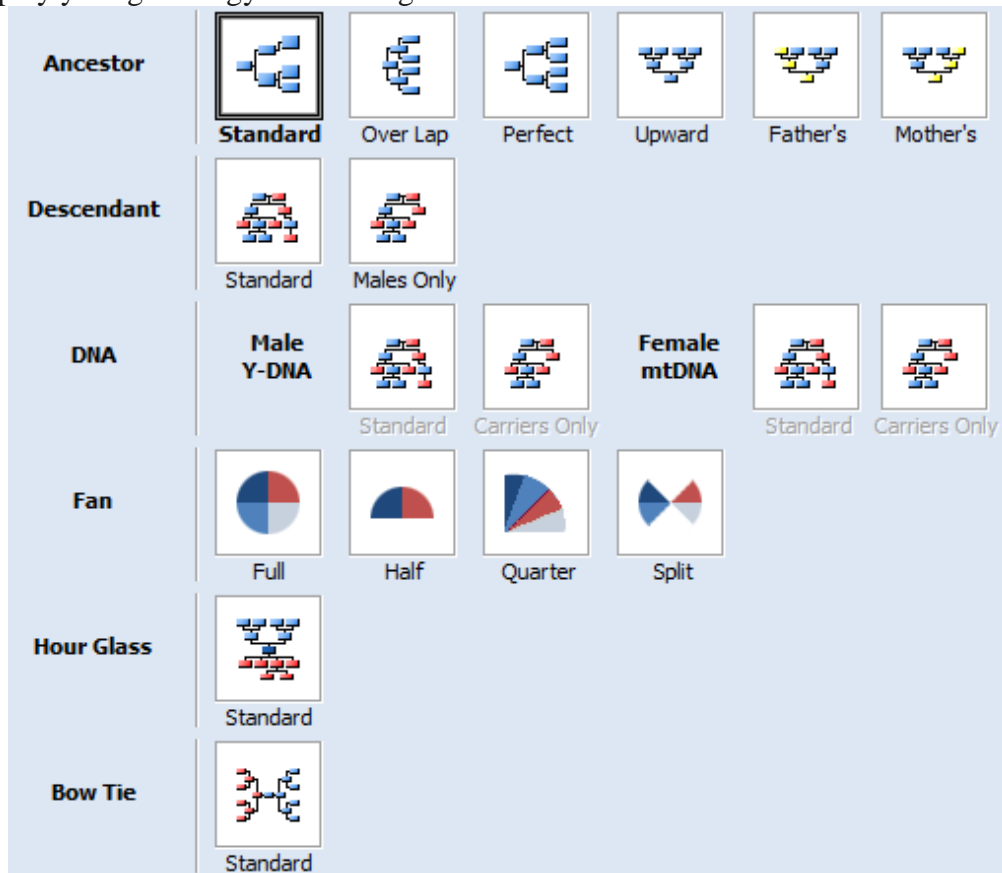
Charting your Family Tree: How to show off all your hard work!

Joyce Young

Have you ever tried sharing your latest discovery with someone only to watch their eyes glaze over? Someone once said a picture is worth a thousand words and never more so than when trying to share your family tree with someone unfamiliar with genealogy research. **Why not chart your efforts?**

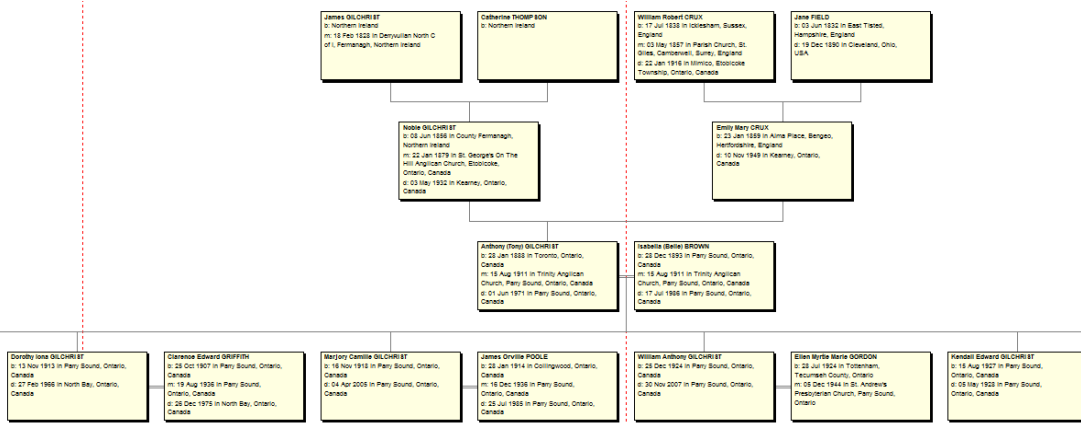
There are so many formats available! From Family Group sheets, individual reports including chronologies or timelines to Pedigree and Lineage charts. You can start with a person and work forward in time to produce a Descendant chart or work backward through an Ancestors chart. There are many layouts you

can use to display your genealogy. Following is a look at some of the formats available:

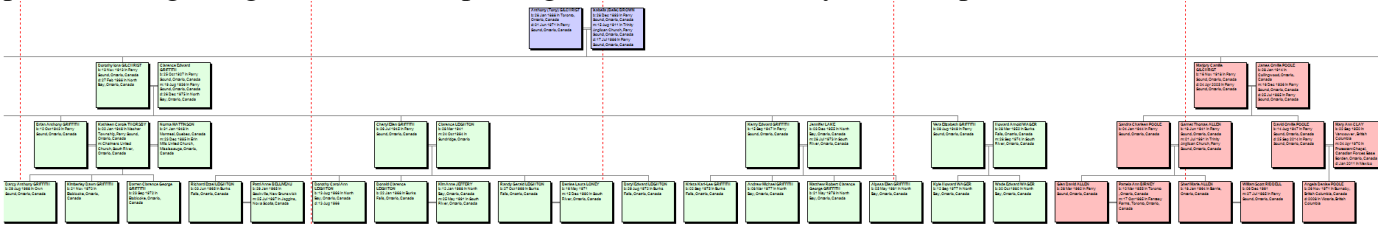


One of my favorites is the **Mother's Tree** or **Woman's Chart**. I've worked very hard for all those maiden names! A Mother's Tree is an ancestor chart which traces the woman's line back rather than the traditional surname pedigree chart. Here is mine!

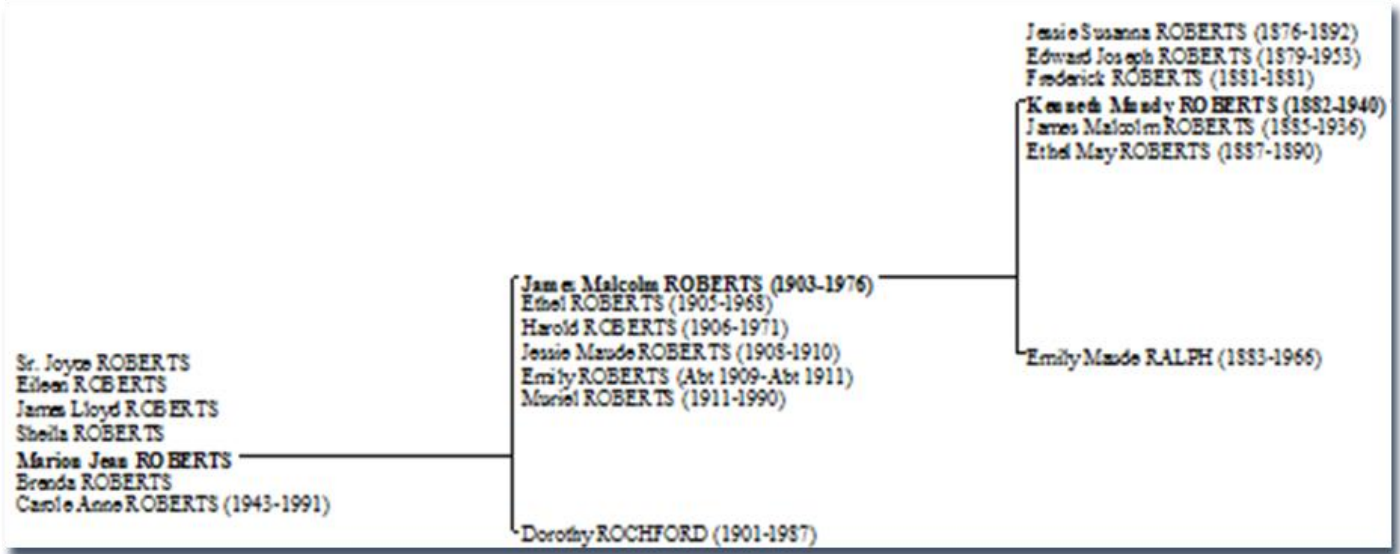
An **Hourglass** format starts from 1 person and includes ancestors, their spouse and their offspring for as many generations in either direction as desired.



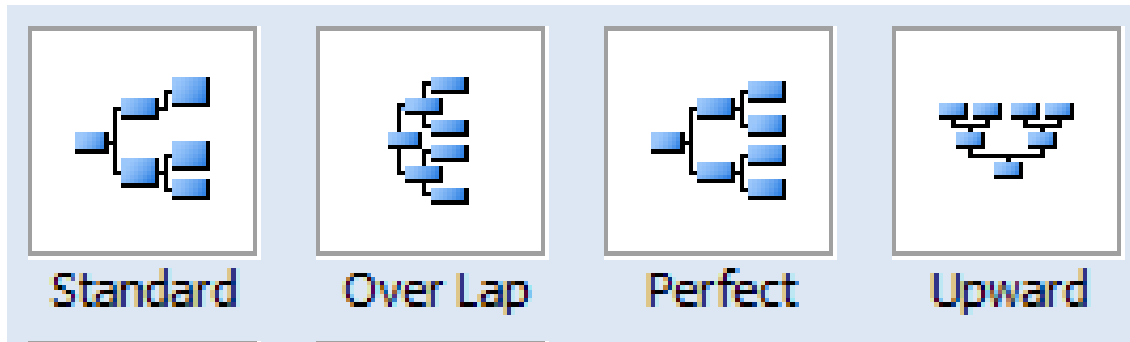
A **Descendant** chart follows the line from one person forward through time. A line is drawn linking persons of a given generation. The plus sign + is used to identify each couple.



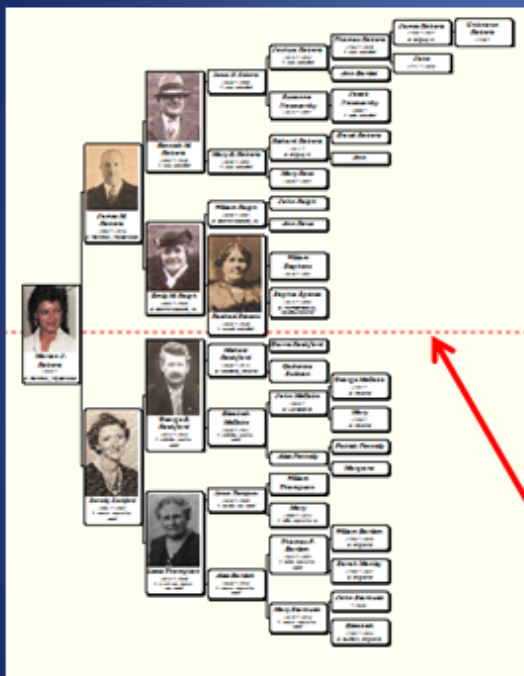
Lineage charts include the siblings of each generation following the surname back in time:



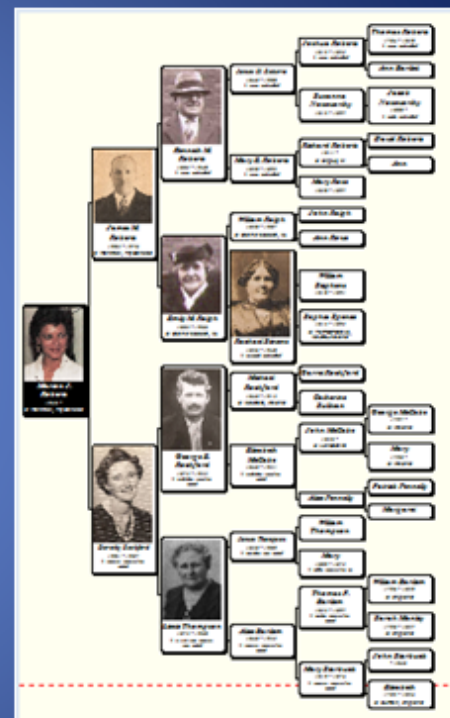
Formatting your chart can be a challenge and a pleasure. Consider alternative layouts to find the “prettiest” presentation - it’s now about art not content! Your layout can overcome uneven length in the family lines, etc.



This is a Standard Ancestor for 8 generations. Notice I have more people listed for the top line...

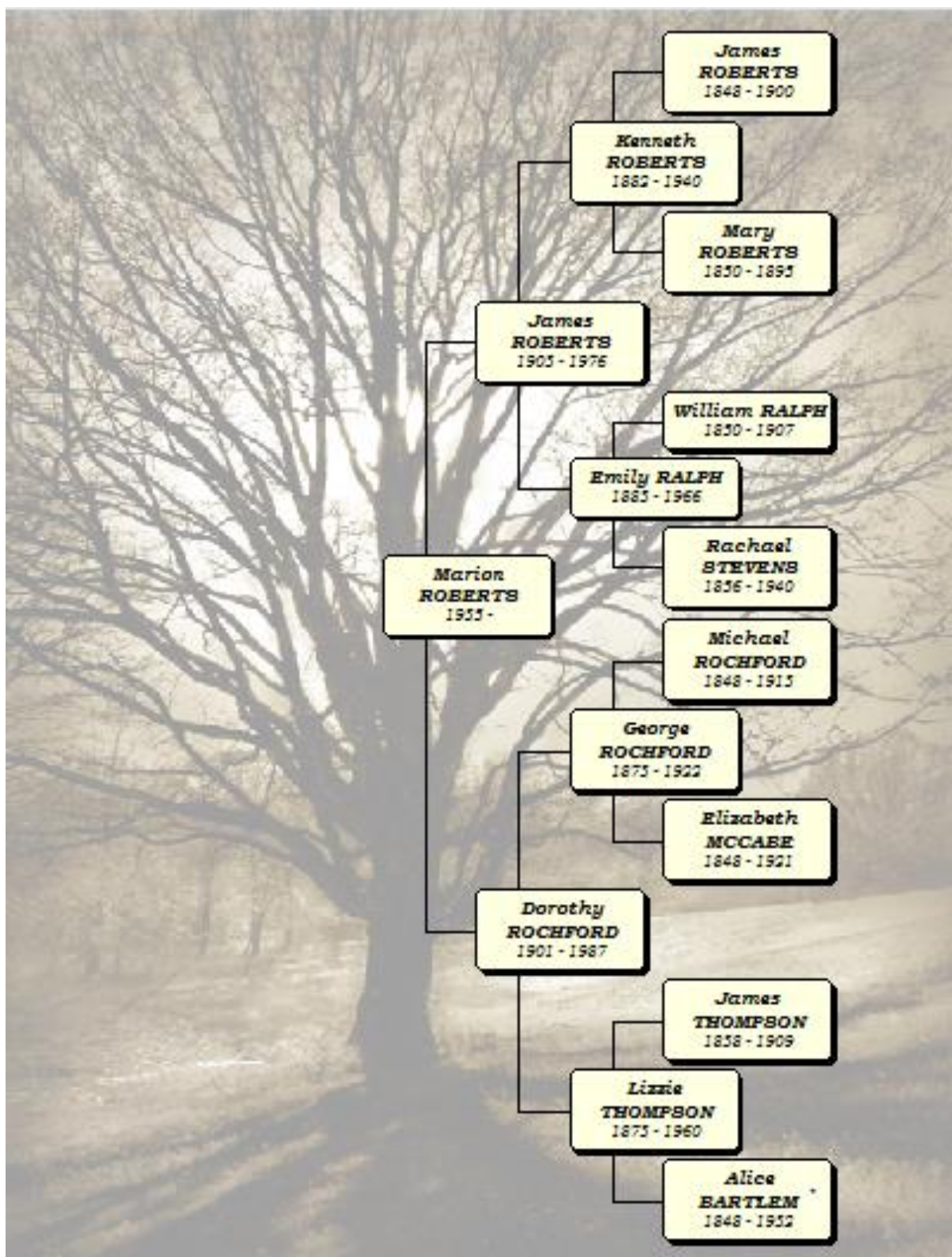


While I want to brag about how far back I've gotten, it might LOOK better without them!



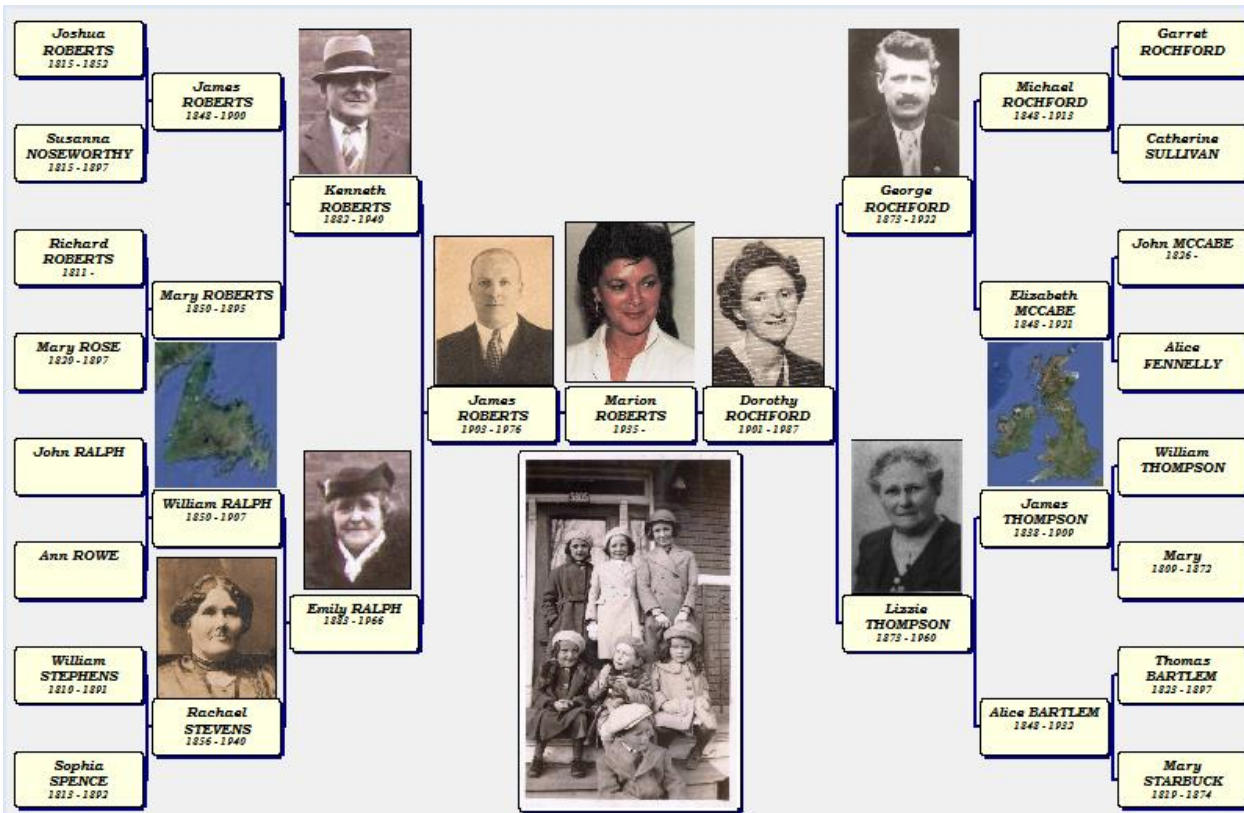
Notice the telltale red line warning I'll need to splice two sheets of paper to print either of these charts

Next, the **Ancestor chart** has an overlap format allowing the tree to take less space for the number of generations, and I've included a background image:



Beyond the background image is choosing the size of the font. The trade-off is the size of the chart required vs. legibility of the text.

Consider adding portraits & other photos, maps, coats of arms, or flags



Have fun!

* * *

Some Candid Pictures from last December's Luncheon Meeting



The Indices for Volume 32

After each issue of “Splitting Heirs” is published, **Fay Atkins** assiduously goes through it to note each surname and each place mentioned within its pages. At the end of each year, she compiles an index of names and an index of places, so you don’t have to guess in which issue you saw that ancestor/relative of yours mentioned. The indices are published in the first issue (#1, March) of the following year. The “**N**” number gives you the issue (e.g. N1 = March; N2 = June, N3 = September, N4 = December) while the “**P**” number gives you the page in that issue). Following are the indices for issues published in Volume 32 during 2016.

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MCCLUSKY	N3P9
MCCULLOCH	N4P4
MCDONALD	N2P3
MCGEE	N1P5
MCGEE	N4P17
MCGIMPSEY	N4P4
MCLEAN	N4P10
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ROBERTS	N4P13
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Belgrade, Minnesota	N4P2
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Brinkhausen, Poland	N2P6
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Grey Co., Ontario	N2P3
Josefow, Poland	N2P5
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North Dakota, USA	N2P14
Okanagan Mission	N3P9
Pennsylvania	N1P11
Radawczy, Poland	N2P5
Redruth, England	N4P14
Rosebud, Alberta	N2P10
Salmon Arm, BC	N1P5
Saskatchewan	N2P10
Shetland, Ontario	N4P12
Tacoma, WA	N1P5
Toronto	N4P5
Vancouver	N4P14
Vernon	N3P9
Victoria	N4P14
Washington	N3P9
Wellington County	N2P3
Whitby, Ontario	N2P11
White Oak Township, Iowa	N1P11
Ypres	N3P9

More Christmas Lunch Candid Shots

Tidbits, Bytes & Comments

Larry Gilchrist, Editor

My apologies for the journal being a little late. I kept having layout problems, particularly with the Indices article. I tried several times to organize it properly, but each attempt failed. So I called for help from **Lawrna Myers**, and she was able to set it up properly. Looks, good, don't you think?

You may wonder why a family history journal publishes such a detailed article on the WWI Battle for **Vimy**. It was the first of three victories in 1917 for the Canadian forces fighting together that strongly influenced the transformation of the colony of Canada into a self-confident and sovereign state. As I mention on the journal's cover page, there are thousands of Canadians who had an ancestor or an ancestral relative involved in that battle, and I think everyone deserves to have the opportunity to read about what happened. The article by **Bob Passmore** is more specific to the action in which the 5th Bn. Western Cavalry, his father's unit, took part. But it contains good background information about why the Canadian soldiers succeeded where other countries' soldiers failed.

I've received information that the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) now has **95 years of city directories** on its online database. We can now search years from 1860 to 1955. This is an incredible resource for genealogists whose ancestors lived in British Columbia

How much do you know about the **Protestation Returns of 1642**? They could be a substitute for a census record for those researching in England, because all adult males had to swear an oath of allegiance to the Protestant religion that year. Digitised images of some of those returns now are available on line. See the 3rd of March 2017 "**LostCousins**" newsletter for more details.

If you're researching **Northern Ireland**, also check the March 3rd newsletter for information about 1939 Northern Ireland register extracts being available through PRONI.

Speaking of Ulster, the Ulster Historical Foundation will host two **Tracing your Irish Ancestors** family conferences in 2017. Running from 14-21 June 2017 and 06-13 September 2017, both events combine a varied and exciting mix of assisted research opportunities in the archives (including the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland in Belfast and the National Library and National Archives in Dublin), talks from acknowledged experts and a choice of tours to a number of historic sites. If interested, contact: enquiry@uhf.org.uk

Volunteers are the main reason you have a Family History Society to which to belong that provides you with research information and opportunities, and a quarterly journal to peruse (and hopefully gain some insights or at least useful information!). Membership would be a lot more costly if it was paid staff that opened the Research Centre for you so you could use the library or one of the six computers through which you can access paid genealogy research sites. Or if we had to pay for someone to look after our financial records. All of this as a lead-up to say: **WE NEED SOMEONE TO VOLUNTEER TO BE THE SOCIETY'S TREASURER! Is it you?!?!**

If you haven't paid your 2017 membership fee yet, remember you have to be a paid-up member to vote at the Annual General Meeting Wednesday evening, 7 pm, March 8th. Membership Committee members will be present early so you can renew before the meeting begins. Also, remember, if you don't renew, you won't receive any more copies of "Splitting Heirs"! Now that would be a shame, eh?

Findmypast genealogy web site (available through our Resource Centre computers) keeps adding thousands of records from around the world. If you want to keep up on genealogy records that are being put on-line by this and other sites, sign up (free) for GenealogyInTime Magazine. It maintains the most complete list available on the internet of the newest genealogy record sets from around the world. "We tell you what you need to know."

* * *

Battle at Vimy Ridge

Bob Passmore



On Easter Monday, April 9th, 1917, the Canadian Corps, its four Divisions fighting together for the first time, stormed and captured Vimy Ridge, the strongest German defensive position on the Western Front. This position had successfully withstood repeated attacks by the Allies over three years. More than 130,000 French soldiers had been killed or wounded in 1915 trying to take the ridge. In late autumn 1916 the Canadian Corps moved north from the Somme to relieve British formations that had been unsuccessful in their efforts to take the ridge. The plan was for the Canadians to attack in the spring as part of a British and French offensive against German positions on either side of the ridge.

Retention of the ridge was vital to the Germans. The great barrier, rising 61 meters above the adjacent plains, covered the junction of the main German Hindenburg Line and their defence systems running north to the Channel Coast. It also protected mines and factories in France that were in full production for Germany.

Over the previous years the Germans had constructed three main defensive lines on the ridge

woven with barbed wire, consisting of a maze of trenches, concrete strongpoints, deep dugouts and bunkers all linked with trenches and subterranean tunnels. Some of the vast underground chambers were capable of sheltering an entire battalion from hostile shells. Pillboxes and machine gun nests were positioned in each of the three defensive lines and bunkers enclosing artillery were located in the third line. The steep reverse slope was heavily wooded providing cover for reserves and heavy guns.

The commander of the Canadian Corps was British Lieut.-General Sir Julian Bing. All of the four Canadian Divisions were commanded by Canadians with General Currie of the First Division being the Second in Command. The Canadian Corps was now operating as a small Army. Each Canadian Division numbered over 20,000 men, almost twice the size of British or Australian Divisions and included a battalion of Engineers to build railways, bridges and demolish barbed wire and enemy bunkers. Each brigade of four infantry battalions included a trench mortar battery. Supporting each of the 3 infantry brigades in each division was a field artillery battery, a howitzer battery, an ammunition supply column, a signal Company, a machine gun Company as well as Service Corps, field ambulances and administrative personnel. Additional artillery, tanks, trucks and other equipment were directly under the command of the Canadian Corps.

The Canadians expanded on the underground tunnels and caverns built by the French and British. The first wave would pop up from their forward cave in no man's land at zero hour and the next wave would move up to that forward cave and wait for the order to attack. The use of these tunnels meant that stretcher bearers and ammunition carriers following the first waves no longer had to traverse hundreds of yards through enemy fire.

Each infantry Company had four platoons of about fifty men divided into four sections. Spread among these sections of about 12 men were six Lewis Guns, eleven special rifle grenade launchers, eleven bombers and fifteen riflemen along with

scouts and stretcher bearers. Two heavy Vickers machine guns and trench mortars were attached to each Company. This armament meant that considerable fire power was available to repel counter attacks after an objective was reached. The rifle grenade could fire a grenade about fifty yards. Prior to Vimy, the British and French went over-the-top and attacked while walking forward in waves into the face of machine gun and artillery fire that had been set on fixed lines by the enemy. The enemy machine guns were fixed to fire at a height of about 4-½ feet, thus hitting the attackers in the chest.

Rather than attacking in waves, each Canadian section would advance about thirty yards then fall down before enemy machine guns could line up on them. Another section would then run forward, under the covering fire from the prone sections, before falling down. They then provided covering fire for another advancing section. When they got to within 30 yards of the German trench, they would all rise and charge with fixed bayonets and hand grenades. Each man was well briefed on his objective and knew where to go and how to get there. A Vickers machine gun was assigned to each attacking Company. This machine gun would be brought forward when the first objective was captured. The extra manpower and armament in each battalion enabled the Canadians to attack the initial objective with two Companies. After reaching the first objective these Companies would then be leap frogged by the other two Companies that attacked the next objective. The British on either flank of the Canadians did not adopt these tactics, preferring to go over the top and attack in waves. This was to result in heavy casualties, not only to the British, but also to the Canadians adjacent to them when the British failed to reach their initial objectives on schedule. In addition all four Canadian Divisions were ordered to send out patrols into no-man's land the night before the attack to identify any barbed wire that had not been destroyed by the preparatory artillery barrages. These defences were then targeted by the Canadian artillery. The British to the right of the Canadians did not send out patrols and were held up by barbed

wire, with the result that the Canadians on their flank took heavy casualties.

The Canadian artillery spotters had identified each German gun emplacement on the ridge and destroyed most of these before the infantry attacked. The heavy German guns beyond the Ridge in Farbus Wood were almost all put out of action by the barrage. At zero hour a creeping artillery barrage would move forward in front of the attacking infantry.

In a short article such as this, it would be impossible to cover the details of the attack by all forty-eight battalions of the four Canadian



Pte. Ernie Passmore

Divisions, I will concentrate on the attack by the Fifth Battalion Western Cavalry which was part of the Second Brigade of the First Canadian Division. The story of the attack was similar to most other Canadian Battalions.

My dad, **Ernie Passmore**, was in "A" Company of the Fifth Battalion. Although he enlisted at Weyburn, he came to Vernon after the war in 1920 where he met my mother. They were married on New Year's Eve 1921 at All Saints Anglican Church.

George Ernest Passmore (Ernie) was born at Glammis, Bruce Twp., Bruce County, Ontario, Oct. 12 1896. The record can be found on page 89 of the Register of Baptisms kept at the Church of England Rectory, Bervie, Ontario, The Baptism was recorded as # 168 on Feb. 16 1897, residence: Glammis, Officiating Clergyman E. A. Hall.

Ernie Passmore, as he was known, lived on a farm with his parents and siblings, on Con. 9, lot 15, near Glammis, Ontario. Ernie and his entire family moved to Briercrest Sask. in 1908. His family rented a farm at Drinkwater in 1908 and then moved to Lafleche in 1910 when their homestead

was proved up. He was educated in Lafleche but not much is known about him until he joined the army at Weyburn, Saskatchewan, on Mar 14 1916 and was posted to the 152nd Bn. C.E.F. at Camp Hughes in Ontario, Canada. His Regimental No. was 925525.



Alfred Hayes,
Edward Passmore,
Ernie Passmore and
Catherine Passmore
at Lafleche 1916.

Grandma Catherine Hayes wrote on the back of the picture "My soldier boys".

On Oct. 3, 1916 Ernie embarked for England with the 152nd Weyburn Battalion on the SS Miisanabie and arrived at Liverpool on Oct.13. He was transferred to the 32nd Bn. at East Sandling on Oct 21 1916 and was admitted to Moore Barracks at Sutcliffe on Dec 25 1916 where he was diagnosed with mumps. He was discharged from the hospital on January 6 1917. That must have been some way to celebrate his first Christmas and New Years away from home! He then proceeded to the 15th Reserve Bn., back at East Sandling on Jan. 6, 1917.

On Mar. 5, 1917 dad was transferred to France where he was taken on strength with the 5th Battalion Western Cavalry on March 16, 1917. This was just in time to take part in the Canadian Corps epic attack on Vimy Ridge April 9, 1917. He was assigned to "A" Company, fifth Battalion, Second Brigade of the First Division. In 1952, while playing snooker with him in the Legion, I asked him if he was scared when he took part in his first action. He replied that a week before the attack on Vimy, he and several other new replacements were sent into a night raid on German front line trenches. He said that he was scared and even though it was cold he was sweating so much that sweat was running down into his eyes blurring his vision. His outfit was to be in the first wave on the

extreme far right of entire Canadian attack on April 9. The Division's ultimate objective was to link up with the 2nd Division and take Farbus Wood on the eastern slope of Vimy Ridge. This was to be the longest advance of any of the four Divisions, a distance of four thousand yards.

The Canadians Attack Vimy Ridge

The following was taken from the War Diary of the Fifth Battalion:

"About 10:00 PM on April 8 the Battalion moved forward into no-man's land with "A" and "B" Companies being situated about 75 yards from the enemy's front line. They had to crawl quietly forward through mud and shell holes and remain in position until 5:30 AM. At zero hour the artillery bombardment thickened into an intense barrage. At zero plus 3 minutes, when the barrage lifted, "A" and "B" Companies went rapidly forward occupying the enemy's front line with little opposition from the surprised Germans. Immediately after advancing from that front line position they encountered severe hostile machine gun fire from a sunken road which killed several officers and a large number of other ranks. After a very stiff fight, using their bayonets to good effect, they cleared the enemy from the German second and third lines of defence and took several prisoners. Several machine guns held up the advance to the trenches comprising the black line that was our next objective, but these were effectively silenced by our rifle grenades. The plan was to have "C" and "D" Companies pass through them once the black line was reached but heavy machine gun fire was raking the trench and could have compelled "A" and "B" Companies to withdraw or be cut to pieces. With great initiative they decided to deviate from the plan and attack beyond their objective to the Zwischen Stellung trench to put the troublesome machine guns out of action. This action drew the fire from enemy guns at the final objective and enabled "C" and "D" Companies to swiftly move forward towards their objective. At this time a bombing party from "A" Company, supported by Lewis gunners and riflemen was ordered to silence several machine guns to their right that was causing heavy

casualties. This was in the area allocated to the British 51st Highland Division that had been held up by barbed wire and heavy machine gun fire from the German 2nd and 3rd lines. After a stiff fight utilizing rifle grenades followed by a bayonet attack, the machine guns and dug outs were put out of action and the attack towards our objective was resumed. The Battalion successfully reached the red line on high ground and put many of the enemy out of action. Our troops dug in and consolidated the position. The enemy underground position on the Red Line contained ample provisions and almost luxurious conditions of life. Electric lights were still burning, elaborate telephone systems were still in operation, hot coffee, fried eggs and other refreshments provided a well-earned respite for our troops.”

This was the German main defensive position and it was taken by the Canadians by 9:00 AM. Of the 803 men of the 5th Bn. who went into action at 5:30 AM, 364 were listed as casualties.

In the book “Vimy Ridge”, the author, **Alexander McKee**, devotes several pages to the attack by the Canadian Second Brigade including the Fifth Battalion. Included are comments by **Michael Volkheimer**, a German soldier of third Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment that was responsible for the defence of this area. The leading battalions of the Second Brigade were upon the Bavarians almost without warning and Volkheimer saw the Canadians break through the German lines in the area that the Fifth Battalion attacked. He realized that, if they did not retreat immediately, they would be cut off. He ran along a communications trench slanting up the Ridge toward Thelus yelling “Get out, the English are coming”. He hurried on to the Bavarian Regimental Headquarters at the top of the ridge and reported to the Regimental Commander, **Colonel Maier**, that, unless strong reinforcements were available the entire Regiment would be taken prisoner. No such reserves were available and the entire ridge from Vimy to Thelus fell to the Canadians. Only a quarter of the Bavarian Regiment managed to get away and that included the men from the rear echelons such as cooks clerks and carrying parties. The men from the First

Division then made contact at the top of the ridge with the Second Division on schedule and sprung the trap. This forced a great many Germans to surrender. The Canadians then swarmed down the reverse slope in a snow storm and attacked the German heavy gun batteries in Farbus Wood. They found that the guns were out of action. The Germans manning the guns were sprawled around the guns, dead. The Canadian artillery had silenced the big guns, but heavy machine gun fire caused heavy casualties to the advancing Canadians before the German position was over run. This was the first time on the Western Front that any allied forces had advanced deep enough and swiftly enough, to take a German heavy gun area behind their front lines.



This is the part of Vimy Ridge that the Fifth Battalion attacked

The sun, for a brief moment, came out revealing the southern summit of the Ridge alive with Canadians in their “teller helmets” and the Germans knew that they had lost **Vimy Ridge**. The First Division had to advance 1000 more yards than the Second Division to the planned junction. This illustrates the speed of their advance up to the top of the ridge.

The Canadians dug in while stretcher bearers swarmed around the battlefield tending to the wounded. German prisoners were put to work carrying the wounded of both armies back to the aid stations.

The attacks by most of the other Canadian Divisions were equally successful. After a long artillery bombardment that began on March 20 and intensified on April 2 with a crushing effect, the infantry attacked at 5:30 AM April 9 following creeping barrages to their objectives. One objective after another was secured; and by midday the three Canadian Divisions on the right had captured their objectives on schedule. On the left the 4th Canadian Division's principal objective was Hill 145 the highest and most important feature of the ridge. The German front lines here were the closest to the Canadian lines and the terrain the steepest on the ridge. The Germans had established their strongest defenses in this area and were largely unharmed by the barrage while they huddled in the underground bunkers. When the barrage lifted they quickly emerged and manned their guns, checking the Canadian advance in this sector. A renewed assault by the North Nova Scotia Highlanders at 6:45PM succeeded in the taking of Hill 145. This is where the current War Memorial stands. The "Pimple" on the far left flank was not an objective for the first day of the attack. It fell to the Canadians on April 12.

The Canadian achievement in taking Vimy Ridge was owed to sound planning and thorough preparation, but above all to the splendid fighting qualities and devotion to duty displayed by the officers and men on the battlefield. The bulk of the Canadian soldiers were from rural parts of Canada. Loggers and miners from the Maritimes and British Columbia together with farmers from Ontario and the prairies formed the backbone of the Canadian Corps. Men from the fifth Battalion were from South Western Saskatchewan. Most were born from 1885 to 1898 when the west was being settled. Many were put to hard work on their parents farms breaking the land and harvesting the crops when they were as young as six. At the age of 13 they were able to do a man's work around the farm. They became hardened, tough and were well conditioned for the rigors of trench warfare. Captured German prisoners stated that the Canadians kept coming at them through heavy German fire and were ruthless when they leaped into German trenches, yelling and coming at the

Germans with bayonets and Mills bombs. The Canadian Corps suffered 11000 casualties in the attack, 3600 of these were fatal.

The official history of the Canadian Expeditionary Force simply mentions that the 5th Battalion took their final objective at 9 AM. It fails to mention that the 5th Bn. was faced with heavy German machine gun and artillery fire and that their objectives were only taken after fierce hand to hand fighting and many acts of individual bravery. Nor does it mention that they incurred over 45% casualties in 3 1/2 hours of fighting.

Pierre Burton sums up the action by stating that it has become commonplace to say that Canada came of age at Vimy Ridge and because of Vimy, he states, Canada found its manhood. "But was it worth it?" he asks. "Was it worth the loss of thousands of limbs and eyes and the deaths of 3600 young Canadians at Vimy to provide a young and growing nation with a proud and enduring Myth? The answer of course, is no."

In the overall scheme of battle on the Western Front, the capture of Vimy Ridge was only a tactical victory. But to Canadians, who were previously looked upon as only "colonials" by the British, the victory established that Canadians were capable of succeeding where others had failed. The Germans now regarded the Canadians as "storm troops" or "shock troops" and reinforced any front where the Canadians appeared. Future battles proved them correct!

Ernie Passmore served in all of the major Canadian battles after Vimy and was wounded twice, spending about six months in Hospitals. He was awarded the Military Medal for Bravery in the Field on September 27, 1918 when the Canadian Corps broke through the Hindenburg Line. After serving in the Army of Occupation in Germany, he was returned to Canada for his discharge in the Spring of 1919. He served overseas in England for nearly four years during World War #2. He died at age 67 in Vernon in 1963.

The above was compiled by me over the last 66 years from interviews, military records and various books

relating to World War I. Other than one on one discussions with my Dad, the most significant of these sources were the following:

- An interview in Victoria in 1949 with Dad's platoon commander George B. B. Shaw,
- "Shock Troops" 2nd Volume by Tim Cook,
- Dad's War record obtained from Archives Canada,
- the World War I Diary of the Fifth Battalion Western Cavalry,
- "Vimy Ridge" by Alexander McKee
- "Vimy" by Pierre Burton.

* * *

Dobbyn Family of Euphemia

Larry Gilchrist and Allan Hooper

Richard Dobbyn and his family moved into Zone Township in the County of Kent, Upper Canada in the spring of 1824. They were among the first settlers in the vicinity of Bear Creek, (later to be called the Sydenham River). and settled on Lot 26, Concession 2.



This was the second homestead for this family. The couple had first settled in Dunwich Twp., possibly in Tyrconnell, (or Little Ireland as it was once known), on the shore of Lake Erie in Suffolk County, Ontario, part of the Talbot Settlement. But their arrival there was not without adventure!

Richard was born in Wexford County, Ireland on the 22nd of February, 1794. It is reported in later documents that he gained an education in Dublin then became a school teacher for a time. He gave that up shortly after marrying **Mariah (Maria) Bobier** in Castlecomer, a coal-mining community in Kilkenny County, Ireland in 1815. She too had been born in Wexford County, in 1796. They were married by Rev. **Ormsby**.

The couple decided to leave Ireland behind and emigrate to Canada. It was agreed they would

travel separately, with Richard going first and his young wife joining him a few months later, by which time he hoped to have a home prepared for her.



Maria (Bobier) Dobbyn

When he arrived in Bristol, England to seek passage to Canada, he discovered a merchantman in harbour offering passage for those willing to work their way across the Atlantic. He decided to do it; an almost fateful mistake, for shortly after leaving harbour, the merchantman turned into a British privateer. He had unknowingly been the victim of a pressgang scheme.

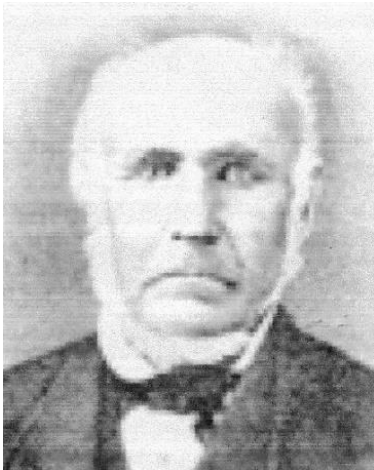
A possibility of escape presented itself after a couple of months at sea. A ship thought to be American was seen about three miles distant. Unfortunately for the privateer, the wind was light and as night fell the ship became becalmed. Young Richard, a proficient swimmer, managed to lower himself undetected into the water through a portal and swim to the other ship. Totally exhausted he managed to find a way to climb on board before collapsing temporarily. After sufficient recovery time, he made himself known and was made welcome. In fact, the captain of the brig carefully hid him as the privateer approached, and the privateer's crew failed to find him during a search of the brig.

Richard was taken to the port of New York and subsequently was able to make his way overland to Montreal. Upon his arrival, much to his delight, he learned the ship on which his wife Mariah had taken passage had arrived just three days earlier! But to his chagrin he then found out the party with which she had been travelling had already left for Upper Canada.

Upon making his way to Government House to make further enquiries, he spotted Maria just leaving the building. A happy reunion ensued, and the couple eventually made their way to Dunwich

Township, where they settled on the South West quarter of Lot 13, Concession 9. There they stayed for about five years. And during that time, Maria bore five children, four of whom lived.

Perhaps it is difficult to speculate at this point in time as to why Richard, a 30-year-old with a wife and four children decided to leave Dunwich Twp. for a less settled township. One can speculate that the prospect of a larger piece of land to be had was an appealing enticement: a full lot, on a river, instead of a quarter lot near Lake Erie. Also appealing, perhaps, was the prospect of being one of the first families in an area with no settled community, so you could have in-put into the development yet to take place.



Richard Dobbyn

The Richard Dobbyn family did make its mark on the community, as a browse through the book “Shetland, Church and Community, 150 years” by **Mary Cross** will attest. The location of his homestead, on the Sydenham River (Bear Creek), was an important spot. In the early days of the settlement, when the river was the main artery of travel, the bank below the homestead was used during the winter to store logs cut from the forest and kept there until spring thaw, when the logs could be floated down-river to a mill. The first bridge across the river (other than a foot bridge) was built for the road adjacent to Dobbyn’s property, and it was built by two of his sons, John and James.

It did not take many years for the small settlement to gain the name “Dobbyn’s Mills”. The name didn’t remain, however, as the postal department in May 1865 decided to rename the community “Shetland”, after the Scottish islands.

But Richard’s background also was important in establishing his influence in the community. He re-activated his teaching profession, and to quote from Mary Cross’ book: “...it no doubt was his influence as a teacher, which laid a firm foundation in academic education for the early inhabitants of the Bear Creek community.” She also notes he served as a magistrate for a number of years.

The northern part of Zone Township in 1848 was renamed Euphemia Township, and its first Township Council took office in 1850, with Richard Dobbyn as reeve! His eldest son **John** held the same position some 18 years later, in 1868, and another son **William**, was the Township Clerk at that same time.

We wrote about his second son, William, in the September 2016 issue of “Splitting Heirs”, telling you of his adventurous streak. Richard’s eldest son John, although very involved in the Shetland community (he had a homestead not far from his father’s, and owned a grist and saw mill just downstream from the village), also was open to adventure.

John married **Jane Laird** in 1847 and had three children by the time in the early 1880’s he decided to pack up and move from Shetland to new land opening up in Manitoba. John travelled to the Melita area in the southwest corner of Manitoba in 1881, selected a homestead, then returned for his family. They moved in the spring of 1882, arriving during a time when there was anticipation of a railroad being built.

Speculating that the rail line would cross the Souris River near his property, John had a town site surveyed which he called “Dobbyn City”. Unfortunately, when the railroad did come, it crossed the river about a mile farther north. “Dobbyn City” was no longer a prospect. Nonetheless, the John and Jane Dobbyn family became well established and well respected in the Melita area, as the Richard and Maria family had done in Shetland.

Back in Shetland, the family continued to thrive and be involved. Active in the community; active in the Methodist (later United) Church; active in business. Over the years, descendants have been involved in the car repair business, saw mill and grist mill enterprises, a natural gas distributing company, and operation of a weigh-scale. In the 1980's, part of the original building that had housed the weigh-scale could still be seen on the original homestead property, at that time owned by **Roland Own Dobbyn**. Owen, as he was called, owned the property until he sold it in about 2015.

Wives and daughters equally were involved in the community and church. It's noted that a "**Miss E. Dobb**" gave a paper on "housecleaning" to the second meeting of the Women's Institute; and a photograph of "Institute Grandmothers in 1947" includes Mrs. Jim, Mrs. Alex and Mrs. Joseph Dobbyn.

Members of the families also were instrumental in establishing (about 1909) and maintaining a public library in the community.



*A Memorial to the Dobbyn Family
Richard 1796-1878 and
his wife Mariah Bobier 1799-1869
erected 1954*

Memorials to various Dobbyn descendants have been donated to the United Church over the years: a brass vase, a pulpit drape and communion table scarf. In 1954, a stained-glass window was installed in memory of Richard and Maria and family.

The Dobbyn family story is just one of many stories of the impact early immigrant settlers had on the development of the nation of Canada. In this, the 150th year since Confederation, it is a good time to talk about them. Does your family history reveal a similar story? If so, let us know about it.

<splittingheirs_vdfhs@vdfhs.com>

References:

- *A History of Shetland Church and Community, 150 years 1835 – 1935* by (Mrs.) Mary E. Ross; published by Quad Printing (Bothwell) Inc. Available on 'Our - Roots' web site
- *Dobbyn Family History* by Norine Wolfe
- *Unpublished document by and email correspondence from Allan Hooper*
- *email correspondence from Michelle (Dobbyn) Bidner*
- *We Made Melita, Notable People from Melita's Past, A Project of the Melita Heritage Advisory Group*
- *Dobbyn City, Vantage Points-stories Turtle Mountain-Souris Plains Heritage Association*
- *A Short History of Melita, Melita Manitoba, Our Heritage*

FUNDRAISING

Through the generosity of local supermarkets, we can raise funds for our Society by saving their cash register receipts from the following stores: **Butcher Boys, Buy Low Foods and Coopers (Polson Mall).**

The gift certificates we can purchase are used for food supplies at our seminars and socials.

We also collect **Canadian Tire** money for office supplies.

Used stamps of any kind are collected and sold. Please bring your receipts, Canadian Tire money and used stamps to the Resource Centre.

New Journals in Our Library

By Sally Harrison

Bruce & Grey Branch O.G.S., Vol. 46, #4 Nov. 2016

- Archives of Ontario Offers New Digitized Patent Plans
- BGOGS Townships Online
- BGOGS Surname Collection

The Okanagan Researcher – Kelowna and District G.S., Vol. 33, No.2 Dec. 2016

- Missing the Treasure
- Transportation and Richard Pell Loasby
- Our Dad Earl Neil and his Guitar
- Am I a Thief?

Grapevines – South Okanagan Genealogical Society, Issue 8, Vol.24, Nov/Dec 2016

- Veteran's Stories
A Christmas Gift From 1912

The Tracer – O.G.S. Oxford Branch, Feb. 2017

- So I had my DNA tested
- Nursing Sisters of World War 1 from Oxford County

The Ottawa Genealogist – Ottawa Branch OGS, Vol. 50 No. 1 Jan - March 2017

- Christchurch Burial Ground & Plan in the Sandy Hill Cemeteries (1845-1872)
- Ponies of Anglo Saxon Tea Put Ottawa On Map in Nineties
- Mechanics' Institute Was A Social Centre
-

Bruce Bulletin – Bruce County G.S. Vol. 27 # 4 Nov. 2016

- Is There A Doctor In The Gillies Family?
- Bruce County Cemeteries
- Window and Village
- Bruce County Women's Institute

Tree Tracer – Prince George Gen Soc. Vol. 37, #4, Dec. 2016

- Letters From The Front Lines
- The 4th & 5th Dorset Regiments In The Second World War
- Cpl. Darren James Fitzpatrick

The Treehouse - Campbell River G.S. Vol. 29, #4, Dec. 2016

- You've Gotten Your DNA Results Back: So Now What

The British Columbia Genealogist - Vol. 45, No.4, Dec. 2016

- Weaving The True Story
- **Georgina's Adventure**

Tree Talk – Powell River Genealogy Group Vol. 26, No 3, Nov. 2016

- Left Dustbowl Farming
- Recollections of Grammie Sketchley

Chinook - Alberta Family History Society, Vol. 37, No 1, Jan. 2017

- History On A Slow-Turning Spit
- Post Cards
- Calgary Connections

Bulletin – Saskatchewan Gen. Soc. Vol. 47, No. 3 Dec. 2016

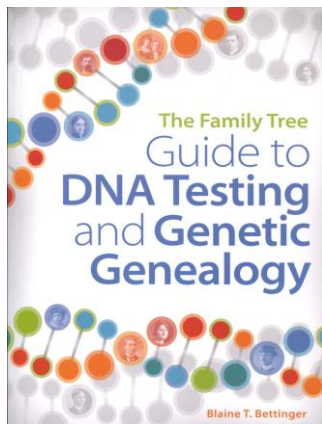
- Seeking Our Young Henry
- Researching Your Ancestors in England and Wales in the Digital Age – Church Records

Newsletter - Dumfries and Galloway Family Hist. Soc. Nov. 2016

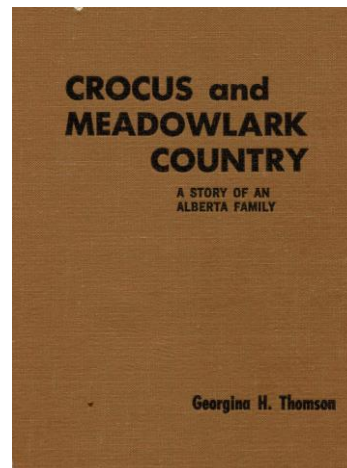
- Parishes and Other Areas of Administration in Scotland
- Temperance Grand Excursion
- Murder in Coffee Close

Librarian's Corner

By Nancy Hanson

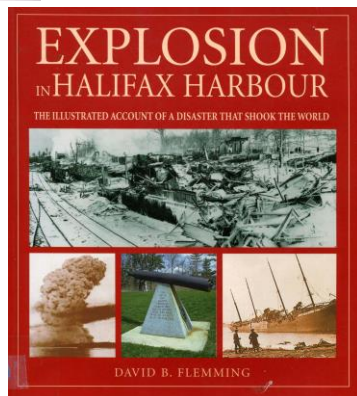


Book 1: This guide will demystify and explain how to interpret DNA test results what tests are available, compares the three main testing companies. 238 pgs.

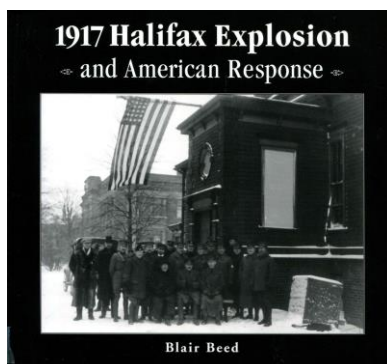
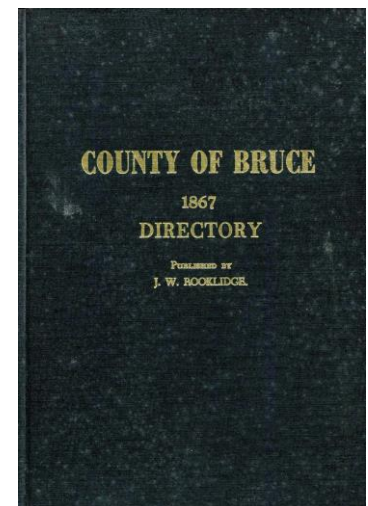


Book 5: The story of a family that settled in Southern Alberta and their neighbours and what homesteading on the prairies was like in 1904. 276 pgs.

Book 2: An illustrated account of the destruction of the explosion of a fully loaded munitions ship in the Halifax harbour. Index. 96 pgs.

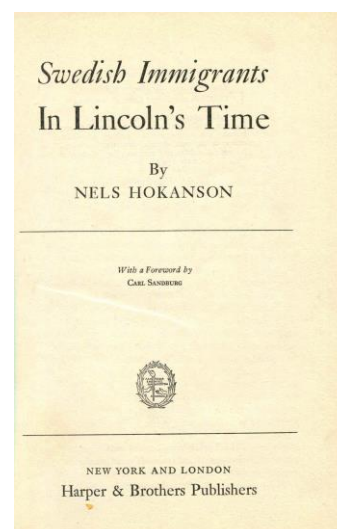
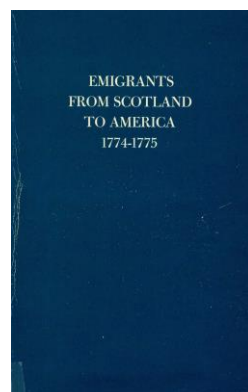


6: Lists of everything from the Royal Family, British and Foreign Ambassadors to residents and history of each township in Bruce County in 1867. Illustrations of advertisements of many businesses. 211 pgs.



Book 3: A story of the Halifax Explosion and American Relief efforts, survivor accounts, newspaper articles and official reports. Photos. 134 pgs.

Book 4: Immigrants from Scotland to America 1774 – 1775. Names copied from a bundle of Treasury Papers in the Public Record Office, London, England. Index. 117 pgs.



Book 7: Pioneer Swedes in America. Some photos, documents, index. 259 pgs.

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The Quebec SIG is for anyone who has family history research in the province of Quebec

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Contact: Joyce Young

Wales SIG

Anyone with Welsh ancestry in their family tree is welcome to come and meet other genealogists with similar interests

Meets: second Wednesday of the month (excluding July and August) at 3:00 p.m.

Contact: Marjorie Allen (250-542-5367 or wales_vdfhs@vdfhs.com)

The purposes of the Society are:

- To encourage and instruct members in the ethical principles, scientific methods and effective techniques of genealogical research
- To collect and preserve information, books, manuscripts, typescripts, charts, maps, photographs, microfilms and related material relevant to such genealogical study and performance.
- To publish and distribute books, bulletins and other printed material as may from time to time be desirable to further the foregoing objects of the society; and
- To raise funds and, in so doing, to accept grants, donations, gifts, legacies and bequests for any of the foregoing objects and, in accordance with the condition that the Society shall be operated without the purpose of gain for its members, any profits of or other accretions to the Society shall be used in promoting these objects.

Any person interested in the objects of the Society and willing to subscribe to its Bylaws may become an Individual Member or Family Member (must be members of the same family and reside at the same address) upon payment of dues. The annual membership fees for 2017 are:

Individual	\$30.00
Family	\$35.00

The fiscal year of the Society is the calendar year and dues are payable on the first day of January in each year. Only paid-up members may vote at the Annual General Meeting in March.

Announcements

If you are missing an issue (electronic version June 2009 to current) of *Splitting Heirs*, please contact us at splittingheirs_vdfhs@vdfhs.com

Do you have an article or an idea for an article for *Splitting Heirs*? Please contact us at splittingheirs_vdfhs@vdfhs.com

Members: please remember to submit your Member Surname Interest and Areas of Research lists to the Resource Centre (mail slot of Eileen Gilbert or Barb Tait).

Vernon & District Family History Society

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