

ROOTS AND SHOOTS

May 2022

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Table of Contents

Branch News, SIGs, Upcoming Events	Page 2
AGS President's Award 2022 – to CGS President Deb Trout	Page 3
Disaster Proofing your Genealogy Records – Deb Trout	Pages 4-6
Writing your Family Story – Cindy Mailer	Pages 7-8
Story Tellers – Author unknown	Page 9

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Newsletter Editor	Joan Conley
Webmaster	Deb Trout
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Camrose Branch e-mail: camrosegeneo@gmail.com
Camrose Facebook page: [facebook.com/CamroseGenealogy](https://www.facebook.com/CamroseGenealogy)
Alberta Genealogical Society website: www.abgenealogy.ca

Camrose Branch Mailing Address:
6130-39 Ave., Camrose, AB T4V 3B1

CAMROSE BRANCH WEBSITE: www.camrosegenealogy.weebly.com

[Murphy's Genealogical Laws](#)

Genealogy: It's all relative in the end anyway!

Branch News

Camrose Branch - Monthly meeting at Camrose Public Library in person or by Zoom – President Deb Trout sends out the Zoom link prior to each meeting - 2nd Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. (except for holidays falling on those days.)

News: Camrose Public Library Director Alyssa will be putting Camrose Branch on the Library website, stating that appointments can be made with us for Queries. CGS members are asked to help with this.

Discussions at our May 12, 2022 meeting:

1. Working on holding a workshop titled “Writing your Family History” – date TBA
2. Discussing having a 2nd Writing Group in the evenings for those who can’t attend during the day – TBA
3. Doing Family Trees with Kids on Canada Day July 2022 – TBA (Lynne Duigou stated that AGS will provide Certificates to kids who make a Family Tree - this under the AGS Genealogy for Youth Project.)

Special Interest Groups (SIG)

Writing Family History – SIG – meet via Zoom every Monday at 10 a.m. for 1 hour of sharing and encouragement.

Organizing your Genealogy – SIG – Meet via Zoom on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 10 a.m.

Upcoming Events

Thursday, June 9 – Education: How to plan for a genealogical road trip; Discussion: What are your summer genealogy plans?

Sunday, August 7 – Summer Social – Myrna Cemetery – meet at 1 p.m. (from Killam, get onto Hwy 36, turn left at the United Church)

Sunday, August 21 – Scottish Highland Games in Sedgewick, AB – we can have a free table to demonstrate what we do and to encourage new memberships. Volunteers needed to “man” the table. Contact Camrose Branch President Deb Trout at camrosegeneo@gmail.com to help.

No meetings are held during July and August but please join us for the Summer Social on Sunday, August 7 (information above), and the Scottish Highland Games in Sedgewick are always fun!

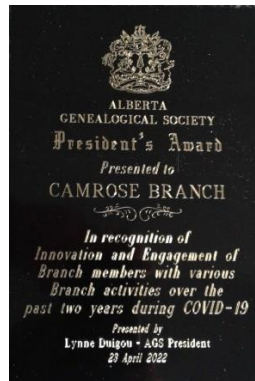
Thursday Sept. 8 – Field House in Camrose – for further information, check out our website: www.camrosegenealogy.weebly.com

Thursday, Sept. 8, 2022 – Regular meeting – Camrose Public Library 6 p.m. in person or by Zoom (link will be sent prior to meeting)

President's Award 2022

Every year, the Alberta Genealogical Society presents the President's Award to a branch's outstanding leader. This year, Camrose Branch President Deb Trout was presented with the award by AGS Immediate Past President Lynne Duigou. Lynne and her husband Lou attended our meeting on Thursday, May 12, 2022. Lynne praised Deb's efforts at keeping our meetings going during the Covid-19 pandemic. Deb has worked very hard to find interesting topics for our meetings. She has organized our Zoom meetings when we could not meet in person, and now has learned how to host Hybrid meetings (in person and on Zoom). It's all thanks to Deb that we were able to keep in touch and keep the interest in genealogy moving forward. Congratulations, Deb!

Note: Lynne also reminded us that My Heritage is free through our AGS membership!



Inscription reads: ALBERTA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, President's Award, Presented to CAMROSE BRANCH – In recognition of Innovation and Engagement of Branch Members with various Branch activities over the past two years during COVID-19, Presented by Lynne Duigou – AGS President, 23 April 2022 (AGS elections have been held since 23 April, so Lynne is now Immediate Past President).



Disaster Proofing your Genealogy Records

Submitted by Deb Trout, CGS member

What kind of disasters are we talking about?

- house fire, water damage, and power failure
- floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, tsunamis or even volcanic eruption.
- water leaks that cause floods in the home
- moisture that causes mold in the home
- fire
- computer Melt Down

What to do

1. Organize and Digitize

Photos: Before you digitize, organize. Group photos by events and people. Separate duplicates. Dispose of blurry or poor images. Sort piles by date. Scan using a flatbed scanner or a scanning app on your smartphone. There are also photo digitizing services that will do this for you. Simply ship them your photos and media in a provided insured box, and they do the rest.

Never frame and display original photographs. Obtain good quality copies and display the copies.

Tip: This is a great opportunity to create a private online family album or family photo books as gifts.

Family Heirlooms and Keepsakes: Your heirlooms and keepsakes include treasured items passed down from generation to generation, such as jewelry, china, furniture, memorabilia, clothing, instruments, and collections.

Create a Family Heirloom Inventory List, noting each item, who it belonged to, why it's significant, the value, and where it is kept. Take pictures and video of these items. While heirlooms are not replaceable, a photo or video can preserve their memory.

Tip: Take this opportunity to create a Family Keepsake Album, including photos of the items and their stories to share with family members.

Family Records, Papers, and Books: As you did with photos, organize before you digitize. Gather birth certificates, diplomas, marriage licenses, deeds, and letters. Look for scrapbooks, baby books, and school yearbooks and records. Organize by individual and then by year. Scan using a flatbed scanner or scanning app on your phone.

2. Preserve Photos Heirlooms and Keepsakes

Once items have been organized, digitized, and documented, those not on display should be preserved.

Store these treasured items in archival quality boxes in a safe place.

Keep them away from windows, vents, pipes and electric wires.

Do not store records in a basement, attic or garage.

Store records in the coolest part of the house, preferably where the temperature is between 35-65 F°, the colder the better. Be sure the storage area has a steady temperature and does not fluctuate by more than 5 degrees.

Store records where the humidity is between 30%-50%. Keeping records as close to the 30% humidity is preferred to slow the deterioration rate of documents.

Keep away from sunlight at all times. Sunlight will fade writing on records and images on photographs.

Boxes should be at least a foot off the floor in case of flooding.

3. Genealogy Research

If genealogy is your hobby (or obsession) create an inventory list of your genealogical binders and research materials. Make sure you have digital copies of everything. Create an inventory list of your passwords for important online accounts and genealogy websites. Encrypt the list and store it in the cloud or your safe deposit box.

4. Back-up Digital Files Using the 3-2-1 Rule

Regularly back-up your digitized items and files. Follow the 3-2-1 Rule: Three copies stored on two different media and one copy off-site. Multiple back-ups in different locations increase the chances of your back-up survival. Use external hard-drives and thumb drives, keeping one copy in a safe-deposit box or with a relative. Set-up regular back-ups to a cloud service such as DropBox, Carbonite, or iCloud. Backblaze backs up your computer and attached external drive on a schedule. However, it's a point in time backup. The backup for Google Drive, One Drive, DropBox and iCloud will have your information in searchable format.

5. Get an Insurance Checkup

Using your Family Heirloom Inventory List, contact your insurance agent about extra coverage you might need for family heirloom items. Find out exactly what emergencies you're covered for, and whether archival restoration is included in your policy.

6. Create a Genealogy Evacuation Checklist

If you were told to evacuate, what family keepsakes and documents would you grab? Stressful situations make it hard to think of everything. Plan ahead and create a list of the items and their location so you can move quickly. Safety first! After loved ones, pets, and emergency supplies, consider what you can realistically fit in your vehicles.

7. Create a Genealogy Disaster Kit

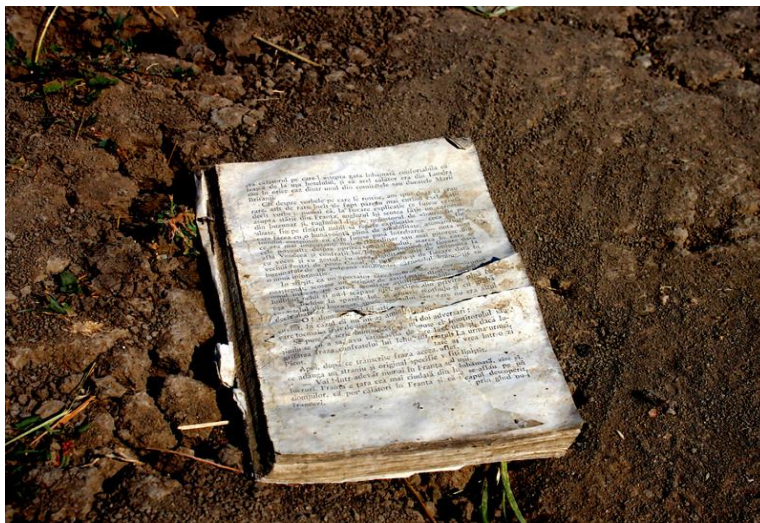
After the disaster, you'll want to be ready to handle damaged items when you return home. Quick action can prevent further damage. Create a Genealogy Disaster Kit and keep it with your stored genealogy items. It should include the following:

- gloves and face masks (damaged items can pose potential health risks) Nitrile gloves are well fitting and still give you dexterity
- large plastic tubs
- wax paper to interleave wet papers and photos, so they don't stick together
- paper towels, clean rags or other blotting material
- circulating fan to facilitate drying
- large garbage bags
- resealable plastic freezer bags for refrigerating or freezing wet photos
- bottled water to rinse soiled items*

Tips for handling damaged items are available at [Archive.gov](https://www.archive.gov).

- Compiled by Deb Trout, CGS member from the following blogs/articles:

Ancestry Academy, Melissa Barker, Family Tree Magazine



“Writing Your Family Story”

Submitted by Cindy Mailer
Camrose Genealogical Society member

As family historians, we research and gather data and eventually must decide what to do with the information. Maybe you didn't start your genealogy journey thinking you'd become an author, but spending all that time and effort is pointless if not sharing it with others. Many of us are not natural authors, but it is a skill that can be learned.

Unfortunately, when discussing the topic of genealogy with family, it's often met with the rolling of eyes and the statement, "It's so boring!" The average reader is not a genealogist and requires their reading material to be entertaining, so the thought of a long list of names, dates and facts can indeed be boring. That is why writing our family history excitingly and engagingly is necessary. Your audience may have lots of knowledge about the family but others nothing at all. ¹

Making your writing enjoyable to read is the most critical aspect of a family history book, but the trick is to balance the inclusion of details and make it attractive to the reader at the same time. Most family histories are narratives with a combination of personal stories, photos and family trees. If you don't feel up to the challenge of a book, you could use other formats like a cookbook or scrapbook, including family trees, stories, recipes and photos. If you haven't already, be sure to interview your relatives. Recording their account and using a talk-to-text app is a good starting point that you can build on. ²

Gather all your information together. Photos, scrapbooks, journals, genealogy records, and history books. Organize your data by family and into a timeline. Whatever works best for you to access what you need. Determine if you have gaps in your research and fill in the gaps. As genealogists, we know how easy it is to get sidetracked, so we need to do what it takes to help us focus on the writing process. Schedule writing time and set realistic goals to help you focus. Joining a writing group will keep you on track and help with your writing skills.

To help you remain focussed, you first need to determine the goals for your story and an overall plan or outline. Many writing techniques can be used to help create a more engaging account. These methods were likely taught to us during our school years and can be utilized in our family story writing. Methods include 5WH, Show don't Tell, and KWL.

Utilize the 5WH Method. Who, What, When, Where, Why and How? Answering these questions will keep you on track and organized. Who will you write about? What events happened in their lives? When did they live, or when did these events happen? Where did these events happen? Why did it happen? How did these events happen?

Show don't Tell adds details to help your reader feel a part of the story. Think of your ancestors as characters in a plot and ask yourself: what problems or obstacles do they face? What was their journey like? Specific details will fill in the gaps and bring life to your scenes. Create a balance between show and tell. Show during a climatic or pivotal moment and tell when linking dramatic scenes together or when relaying information that the reader needs to know. ³

¹ Natalie. "From Boring to Brilliant, Family History Writing." GenealogyStories.Co, genealogystories.co.uk/how-to-go-from-boring-to-brilliant-family-history-writing/

² Powell, Kimberly. "How to Write Your Family History." ThoughtCo, Aug. 27, 2020, thoughtco.com/steps-to-writing-your-family-history-1422877.

³ Bunting, Joe. "Show, Don't Tell: The Secret to Great Writing with Show and Tell Examples." The Write Practice, <https://thewritepractice.com/show-dont-tell/>

If you have an event or situation and there are a lot of unanswered questions, create a KWL- 3 column chart. List what you KNOW in one column, what you WANT TO KNOW in the middle and WHAT I'VE LEARNED in the 3rd column. Answering the questions will give you the information you need to complete your story.

Supposing there are no written accounts of your ancestors, social histories can fill in the details of life. Research historical events to determine if any might have influenced their life. Luckily in Alberta, Community History books are an excellent resource for social history. Include information on fashions, art, transportation, and common foods or celebrations to help add context to your story.⁴ Don't let the story get too long and bogged down with unnecessary detail.⁵

Improve your vocabulary using a thesaurus and a grammar program to polish the story to perfection. Other tips include adding images to break up the text and add to your story. Pictures don't have to be of your ancestors. Use maps, artwork, and newspapers but ensure you are not breaking any copyright laws and give credit where credit is due. On Google Images, select **Tools**, select **Usage Rights**, select **Creative Commons Licenses** to find images marked as shareable.⁶

With your writing complete, prepare other parts of your book before publishing. The book's front matter consists of the title page, table of contents, dedication and acknowledgments, etc. Your writing may benefit from a Table of Contents, headings or sub-headings. My front matter had information that would help the reader understand the naming patterns of Scandinavian surnames. The back matter can offer readers further context or information about the story or simply a thank you.⁷ Endnotes and Footnotes are for content that adds to the story but is not imperative to the story.

Source citations are essential to provide credibility to your research and leave a trail that others can follow. There are many citations formats, but generally, a resource citation includes TITLE, AUTHOR, DATE, PUBLISHER, PAGE #. Internet and article citations are different, and Google is a great resource.

Once your story is completed, put it away for a while and then start editing. Ask someone to proofread your work. A writing group will help with editing and proofreading. You need a catchy title and an enticing cover to encourage readers. Numerous publication options are available: Family History Publishers, Self-publishing or an e-book. Distribute at family get-togethers and consider donating a copy to the local museums, libraries, and historical societies.

The writing can be just as obsessive as the research and a lot of fun. "But be honest with yourself. If writing your family history feels like a form of torture, then don't do it." ⁸ Provide all your research to a writing service or another family member who likes to write.

The cited resources are excellent, and I encourage you to check them out for more in-depth information.

Submitted by Cindy Mailer, CGS member

⁴ Powell, Kimberly. "How to Write Your Family History." ThoughtCo, Aug. 27, 2020, [thoughtco.com/steps-to-writing-your-family-history-1422877](https://www.thoughtco.com/steps-to-writing-your-family-history-1422877).

⁵ Bunting, Joe. "Show, Don't Tell: The Secret to Great Writing with Show and Tell Examples." The Write Practice, <https://thewritepractice.com/show-dont-tell/>

⁶ Natalie. "From Boring to Brilliant, Family History Writing." GenealogyStories.Co, [genealogystories.co.uk/how-to-go-from-boring-to-brilliant-family-history-writing/](https://www.genealogystories.co.uk/how-to-go-from-boring-to-brilliant-family-history-writing/)

⁷ ReedsyBlog, Understanding Publishing, Parts of a Book Explained: Front Matter, Body, and Back Matter." Nov 13, 2019, <https://blog.reedsy.com/guide/parts-of-a-book/>

⁸ Natalie. "From Boring to Brilliant, Family History Writing." GenealogyStories.Co, [genealogystories.co.uk/how-to-go-from-boring-to-brilliant-family-history-writing/](https://www.genealogystories.co.uk/how-to-go-from-boring-to-brilliant-family-history-writing/)

Story Tellers

We are the chosen. Somehow, we feel that we must tell our ancestors' stories. We become "story tellers".

How many graves have I stood before now and cried? I have lost count. How many times have I told my ancestors: "You have a wonderful family; you would be proud of us"? How many times have I walked up to a grave and felt somehow that there was love there for me? I cannot say.

It goes beyond just documenting facts. It goes to who am I and why do I do the things I do? It goes to seeing a cemetery about to be lost forever to weeds and indifference and saying "I can't let this happen. The bones here are bones of my bones and flesh of my flesh."

It goes to doing something about it. It goes to pride in what our ancestors were able to accomplish; how they contributed to what we are today. It goes to respecting their hardships and losses, their never giving in or giving up, their resolving to go on and build a life for their family.

It goes to deep pride that the fathers fought and some died to make and keep us a nation. It goes to a deep and immense understanding that they were doing it for us.

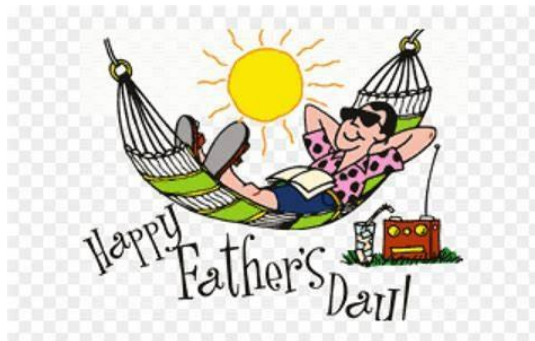
It is of equal pride and love that our mothers struggled to give us birth. Without them we would not exist, and so we love each one, as far back as we can reach, that we might be born who we are; that we might remember them.

So... we do, with love and caring and scribing each fact of their existence, because we are they, and they are the sum of who we are.

So, as a scribe called, I tell the story of my family. It is up to that one called in the next generation to answer the call and take my place in the long line of family storytellers. – Author Unknown



June 19, 2022 is Father's Day!



HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!



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