



Camrose Branch Alberta Genealogical Society

ROOTS AND SHOOTS

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Webmaster	Deb Trout

Camrose Branch website: www.camrose.abgensoc.ca

Camrose Branch e-mail: camrosegeneo@gmail.com

Alberta Genealogical Society website: www.abgenealogy.ca

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

NEW! CAMROSE BRANCH WEBSITE: www.camrosegenealogy.weebly.com

A Family Tree can wither if nobody tends its roots...

Branch News

At our Oct. 12, 2017 Regular Meeting, our topic was “Using Land Records” – Presenter Rosella Peterman – Rosella’s bio follows:

“We used to live in Edmonton and I was a member of the branch there. At one of the “Finding Your Family Tree” courses I presented a power point segment on the use of land records. I worked for many years in a Legal Land Surveyor’s office so have gathered experience and history of many land records and have used homestead records, etc. to round out the information for my own family research. I feel the information, thus gathered, can give a peek into some of the struggles and achievements our ancestors made.”

Editor’s Note: Our branch is in the process of transcribing the Bashaw Cemetery for Bashaw. Rosella gave her presentation free of charge, in appreciation for our help with the transcription of the cemetery. Thanks, Rosella!

News Flash!

At our Thursday, Nov. 9, 2017 Regular Meeting, we held a Press Release re Camrose Branch’s Third Edition of the Camrose and area BMDs (Births, Marriages and Deaths). Members of our branch have been extracting this information over the years from our local paper the Camrose Canadian. Camrose Branch Librarian Bev Webster has collected all of our notes and compiled them into the 3rd Edition. The Camrose Booster was present at the Press Release, with Lori Larsen taking the picture below. Issues of the 2nd & 3rd BMD books will be for sale at \$45 each. This price simply covers the cost of printing. These are priceless volumes of information for family historians looking for their ancestors in Camrose and surrounding area.



These CGS members worked on the three (3) volumes of Births, Marriages and Deaths.

Back: Left to right: Bev Webster, Alora Nelson; Front: Left to right: Fay Carlson, Joan Conley

Photo Credit: Lori Larsen, Camrose Booster

Upcoming Events

Thursday, Dec. 14, 2017 – Regular meeting – Topic: “Canada 150: Where was your family in 1867? In 1967? Where were you in 1967? When did your family come to Canada?” Please bring your stories and/or a family heirloom. **CHRISTMAS SOCIAL – Please bring goodies. Coffee, etc. will be provided.**

Thursday, Jan. 11, 2018 – Regular meeting – Topic: “Legacy Family Tree Program” – CGS Member Fay Carlson will share her newly-gained knowledge from a cruise featuring speakers on this program.

Thursday, Feb. 8, 2018 – Topic: “I Found my Great-grandfather at Grosse Ile Quarantine Station!” - CGS Member Joan Conley will talk about her recent trip to an island on the St. Lawrence River.

Tidbits

Family Search announced its plans to discontinue its 80-year-old microfilm distribution service as of 31 August 2017.

Digital images may now be accessed at FamilySearch.org at home or through your local Family History Library. There are 3 ways to locate these records by using the Search feature in Records, Books or Catalogue.

<http://media.familysearch.org/familysearch-digital-records-access-replacing-microfilm/>

AGS MEMBERSHIP FEES

For the past several years with rising costs and declining revenue and membership, the AGS Board has struggled with the need to increase membership fees and has managed to maintain the status quo. The time has come unfortunately that this is no longer possible. At the September meeting it was passed that the AGS membership fees be increased to:

- Individual or Family ... \$60.00
- Senior (65+) (Individual or Family) ... \$55.00
- Young Adult (18-23 years) to remain at \$25.00
- Student (grades 1-12) to remain at \$5.00
- That there be a **discount of \$10.00** for those new or renewing Individual, Family or Senior memberships opting to receive *Relatively Speaking* in digital format

THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



"Mommy, how did Daddy get little?"

In Search of Harland, Part 2 by John Althouse

In my earlier article, I told you about my research in gathering the basic information about the location of Harland, Alberta. This was pretty much “bare bones” information. What I desired was a more detailed account, preferably first hand, but for many years I had been unable to find any such sources. Recently, I have found resources which provided this type of information on Harland.

Two factors helped me locate these resources. The first of these factors was making myself aware of what resources were becoming available. As part of my daily routine, I spend a little time checking what new resources have come online on ancestry.com. I do the same for familysearch.org and Library and Archives Canada but on a less frequent basis. If a newly listed source might potentially be relevant, I conduct a search for the family or families I seek. Secondly, I have become aware that the information that we need to answer our genealogical and historical questions may not necessarily be where we expect it to be; on the contrary, it may be housed in a source where we would not expect to find it. Both of these factors aided in my search for detailed information on Harland, Alberta.

I had discovered two new resources on American newspapers. First, through a Facebook post, I had learned of a free site named “Chronicling America” at <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> from the Library of Congress. It contains many US newspapers some dating as early as 1789 to others as recent as 1924. The other site which I purchased through ancestry.com was newspapers.com. I searched them both for my ancestors and was very successful. I had searched for the relevant family names, but also searched for the places in which they lived, especially those that did not have large populations. This is even useful in places that may never have been large enough to have their own newspaper. Often, the nearby centre with a newspaper would have a local correspondent to record local events and send them to the paper who in turn would publish them in a section for that community. These place searches can serve two useful purposes. First, the search results can provide you with a sense of a place in which your family once lived and perhaps even some enlightenment on that phase of your family’s life. Secondly, it may bring you extra information on the family which you might not have found by researching by the family name such as in cases where the family name is misspelled or where an event which you have determined they were involved in does not provide names.

One day, with these in mind, I also decided to use the place name “Harland, Alberta” for the search term in a search of these two US newspaper sites. There was some historic background and experience that suggested that this might be useful. In 1905 when Frank Oliver had become the Canadian minister responsible for immigration there had been a significant change in immigration policy with the preferred immigrants becoming those who had North American farming experience. This coupled with the realization that good, cheap agricultural land in the USA was virtually unavailable led to an increased US migration to the homestead lands of the Canadian West. These two factors brought many Americans into the Canadian West between 1905 and 1914. In early research on my own family, I had discovered that there were many references and even in cases long detailed articles on relatively small places in the Canadian West. It was my hope that there might be something related to Harland. So, I searched the two newspaper sites.

The search yielded information beyond my wildest expectations. There was a single account from Mrs. Walter Jones in the Journal Gazette of Mattoon, Illinois on April 24th, 1907 which provided details of her family’s journey from the USA to the Viking area and significant details about Harland, “*Our postoffice is in a small store about four miles west in the little town of Harlan [sic].*”

However, the greatest collection of information came from the pages of The Willmar Tribune in Willmar, Minnesota. Mr. Solomon Stenberg, a former Willmar area resident who had moved to the Harland area, sent regular letters back to Willmar which recounted the happenings in the area. These letters were published in whole in the Willmar newspaper. Stenberg (in his words) had been “*a regular contributor to the TRIBUNE for a number of years...as the Lake Elizabeth [MN] correspondent.*” However, before leaving Minnesota for Alberta, he also resolved “*We will try some time thru our worthy paper to let our old friends know how we are getting along and also something about the country.*” These letters do provide many of the details one would commonly expect in reports from rural farming communities including weather, crop conditions, crop yields and prices, stock counts and taxes. They also provided a rich array of details about the development of Harland and area as well as life there in the years prior to World War I.

Below is a sampling of some of those details:

Viking, May 13, 1906 - *"As I promised when I left Minnesota to let old friends hear from me when I have settled, and as I have seen in the Tribune that some of the other scribes would like to know how "Pen" is getting along and how he likes Canada, I will send a few lines... after eleven days we arrived [on April 30] at Ranfurly on the Canadian Northern railway, 30 miles north of our claims. On the evening of May 1 we arrived at our claims and put up our tents... We are busy breaking and seeding oats... We are assured of having the Grand Trunk railway coming three miles north of our place. This will certainly give this country a good and needed lift."*

Harland, July 7, 1907 - *"myself and my family enjoy ourselves here after pulling through a 'hardhanded' winter.... We have railway work here... Winter started in Nov. 14, and kept on for seven months with lots of snow and severe cold. We have summer wood, but to get coal for winter use we have to go about forty miles to the mines, and it was very difficult to reach them on account of the deep snow. We had a late spring and the seeding was consequently delayed."*

"All homestead land for some distance from here is taken up except some poor quarter sections. There have been no sales of railway lands as yet, as the settlers do not know how much land they want."

"We are located between 3 and 4 miles from a townsite, formerly called Viking, now Harland. Grading is now in full swing on both sides of the townsite, but it does not look as if the 'black horse' would reach us this fall, but next fall we are sure he will be ready to carry our products. Lots of businesses have already sprung up, and a score more have their eyes on our new town, so we are looking for a lively business place in Harland."

Harland, October 8, 1907 - *"Threshing will begin tomorrow at Viking."*

"A railroad has just been graded thru the townsite which will have the new name 'Meighen.' This townsite is four miles from my homestead. We had a fair in town on Oct. 8 and for a new country town like this the exhibits were splendid. The new townsite has not been surveyed yet, but we have two towns, Harland and Viking, one mile apart."

Harland, April 26, 1909 - *"Viking, our town on the Grand Trunk railway has had a phenomenal growth. A hotel 46 X 82 X 40 has been built this winter at an approximate cost of \$20, 000. Our temperance association could not prevent a saloon going in there. A few weeks ago the hotel opened and free drinks were given, and I understand that there were many who took chances."*

"But to return to the subject we started to tell about, our town has grown rapidly and is still progressing. Three brick houses, two banks and one drug store, are going up early this summer. We are promised to have trains running between Winnipeg and Edmonton in June. The railway-laying crew is ten miles east of here now, but as yet nothing has been done since they laid up in February..."

"Wild land is high now, \$15 to \$25 an acre, while three years ago it could be bought from \$6 to \$9 an acre."

Viking, March 6, 1911 - *"The last two years have been dry. Id [sic] this locality and to the north small crops have been harvested, but south of here they have had splendid crops, as more rain fell there... Settlers from the States are coming in more this spring than ever before, and in time you may be glad to send your hard-working boys to a country where they can get cheaper land... Land may still be purchased here from \$1,500 to \$3,000 for the quarter section."*

Viking, November 18, 1914 - *"Solomon Stenberg of Viking, Alberta, sends us a copy of the Viking News which has a headline across its first page which rivals Hearst's most lurid headlines. The cause of this unusual demonstration is the fact that a gas well was successfully drilled to a depth of 2340 feet which produces 9,357,000 feet of natural gas a day. The Vikings see visions of tremendous growth and industrial development to follow the discovery, and hence may well indulge in the 3 inch black letters on the first page of their paper."* (A print collection of Viking News can be found in the Viking Museum.)

Thanks to these reports, we have details about Harland and the melding of the two communities. One can only imagine what the simultaneous use of three different names may have engendered. Mr. Stenberg appears to flip between them rather indiscriminately. However, by 1910, Viking had emerged as the accepted name for the community. Some things simply don't disappear and the name Harland would continue to appear in copies of Henderson's Directory for some time after it ceased to exist. In the meantime, Viking grew and prospered. For anyone interested in family history in Viking and surrounding area, it may be well worth visiting their local museum. In it, you can find a wealth of artefacts connected to Viking's early history. These include such items as butter making tools such as pioneers like the Stenbergs who were award winning butter makers would have used; advertising media used to advertise and promote Hilliker Brothers Store; an extensive collection of early area photographs including one showing the crude

log shack that served as Viking's first post office. Outside in the yard, you will find a number of early buildings from the area and large farming implements. You may even find some remnant of your family past there.

So, if you have ancestors who first settled in the USA before travelling across the border to settle in Western Canada, see if you can find an online archive of newspapers for the US town from which they came. These newspapers may hold interesting bits of family information to add to and enhance your family record. Examine everything; nothing is insignificant. A report of a visit home may provide names of additional family members. A list of tax arrears may provide the location of property once owned by your family. A report of a trip may be tied to some significant family event. All articles in which family members are mentioned have the potential to contain interesting details of the life and events of your family.



Victory at Vimy – 100 Years

World War 1: On 9 April, 1917, after months of training, all four (4) Canadian divisions went into action together for the first time. Their challenge: take Vimy Ridge! Most of the Ridge was captured from the German army by noon that day. The Canadians took over the remainder of the Ridge by April 12. Our loss was great: 3600 Canadians were killed and more than 7000 were wounded. Many have said that the Battle of Vimy Ridge was a pivotal chapter in Canada's development into a strong and independent country. This year, 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the Canadian victory at Vimy Ridge in northern France.

Vimy Memorial

Some of us have ancestors who died in France during WWI. The Canadian Veterans Affairs website covers much of the background on this memorial, and the history behind the Vimy Ridge victory.

<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/overseas/first-world-war/france/vimy>

Battle of Passchendaele – 100 Years Ago

The battles of World War 1 were often fought in difficult terrain, and under terrible weather conditions. The Third Battle of Ypres, better known as the Battle of Passchendaele, was launched by British, Australian and New Zealand forces in Belgium at the end of July in 1917. Canadians moved to this front in the autumn of 1917 and on 26 October, they attempted to drive the German army back. Heavy rains turned the battlefield into a sea of muck. On 6 November, the village of Passchendaele was captured and by 10 November, Passchendaele Ridge was in Allied hands. Although it was a great victory, almost 16,000 Canadian soldiers were killed, wounded or captured by the German army.

Editor's Note: all info re: Vimy & Passchendaele gathered from "Canada Remembers Times", Veterans' Week Special Edition – November 5 to 11, 2017



Merry Christmas, everyone!

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