



## ROOTS AND SHOOTS

Aug 2019

Vol. 16, No. 3

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**NEW! CAMROSE BRANCH WEBSITE:** [www.camrosegenealogy.weebly.com](http://www.camrosegenealogy.weebly.com)

[Murphy's Genealogical Laws](#)

“Genealogy is like playing Hide and Seek...they hide, I seek...”

## Camrose Branch Meeting Changes

PLEASE NOTE:

EFFECTIVE SEPT 2019 – MEETINGS WILL BE HELD THE 3<sup>RD</sup> WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH

MEETING TIME WILL BE 6 P.M. AT CAMROSE PUBLIC LIBRARY,  
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM

### Upcoming Events

**Potluck Summer Picnic – Sunday, Aug. 11, 2019** - Branch members will meet at the Camrose Public Library and carpool to Vang Cemetery which is located north of Wetaskiwin. Janine will tell stories about prominent area citizens who are buried there. Watch your email Inbox for the meeting time!

**Saturday, Aug. 24, 2019** – Sedgewick, Alberta – Annual Gathering of the Clans Festival presented by The Flagstaff Scottish Club...Highland Games, Bagpipe music, Highland dancers, 18<sup>th</sup> Century artisan skills like candle making and knife making, petting zoo, sheep herding demonstration, ax-throwing, a fiddle demonstration and more. Barr Estate Winery fruit wines and Back 40 Distillery will have local spirits and local craft beer for sale. Our Camrose Branch of the Alberta Genealogical Society will have an unmanned table with information on our Society. We can meet at the Library and carpool we could arrange a carpool. Contact CGS President Deb Trout at 780-781-5100.

**Thursday, Sept. 5, 2019** – Community Registration Night – 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Camrose Field House – 4516-54 Street in Camrose. CGS President Deb Trout and Vice President Janine Carroll have volunteered to “man” the CGS table. Thirty-six organizations have already registered. Find out what Camrose has to offer for arts, recreation, learning, sports and volunteer opportunities.

**Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2019** – CGS Regular Meeting – 6 p.m. at Camrose Public Library, downstairs meeting room – Topic: “Let’s catch up on the genealogy research or trips we made over the summer!”

**Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019** – CGS Regular Meeting – 6 p.m. at Camrose Public Library, downstairs meeting room – Topic: “Writing your Family History” – CGS Vice President Janine Carroll will facilitate

**Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2019** – CGS Regular Meeting – 6 p.m. at Camrose Public Library, downstairs meeting room – Topic: “Military Searches” and U.S. searches (because this is American Thanksgiving month).

**Wednesday Dec. 18, 2019** – CGS Christmas Meeting – 6 p.m. at Camrose Public Library, downstairs meeting room – Topic: “Discussion: 5 pictures/items in 5 minutes about your childhood”  
Please bring Christmas goodies – Coffee and tea will be supplied.

**Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020** – CGS Regular Meeting – 6 p.m. at Camrose Public Library, downstairs meeting room – Topic: A webinar will be presented – subject TBA at a later date

**Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2020** – CGS Annual General Meeting and Regular Meeting – 6 p.m. at Camrose Public Library, downstairs meeting room – Topic: Bring an artifact and a story to accompany it.

Camrose Canadian Club, the History of  
Submitted by CGS member Janine Carroll

Every community has that one house...

In Camrose, it was the Mah house - a deserted, downtrodden hovel which incited a chilling reaction from anyone who had resided there. I loved to take people to this site. (Editor's Note: Janine has collected Camrose and area ghost stories for years. Now she hosts ghost tours in Camrose.)

I would stand on the steps facing my audience so they could watch the house while listening to my stories. Perhaps they would see some shadows lurking behind glass, or maybe see the little boy who would often peer from the living room window.



But alas, my ghost house was demolished, leaving a big hole in my downtown Camrose Ghost Walk.

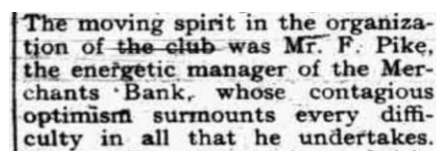
And so, as I prepared for a ghost walk organized by the Camrose Chamber of Commerce for their "Be A Tourist in Your Own Town" week, I began developing some stories about another historical building, which is likely haunted and won't be pulled down anytime soon.

Contained here, and continued in the next issue of 'Roots and Shoots', is a bit of the Main Street 1908 (as it is known at the moment) "genealogy". This majestic building was "born" on October 22, 1908. Mr. Allan, contractor, built it for \$50 below budget, at a cost of \$4,600, which calculates in today's economy as \$128,071. It was contracted by the Camrose Canadian Club, an organization of high repute which had chapters in many communities across Canada. Camrose had the bragging rights as the first chapter to own their own property and building. The building was, and is, majestic.



The following was penned by George P. Smith, Editor and Managing Director of the Camrose Canadian newspaper: “The object of the club is to encourage the development of a healthy Canadian sentiment and incidentally to make a small prairie town more habitable and more homelike for the wanderers within its borders,” He goes on to describe the Canadian Club to his readers: “The downstairs is fitted with billiard and pool tables and the upstairs is a home-like and cheery reading-room, where all the best journals and magazines of the day may be seen.” The mission was “to promote Canadian patriotism, share ideas, and help communicate important news from the Prime Minister to the citizens across the country”.

Membership in the Canadian Club cost \$10 for the first quarter of the year and \$5/quarter after that. Sounds reasonable... Transferred into today’s currency, a 1908 \$10 bill would hold a value of \$280 and \$5, \$140. A membership in the Canadian Club would cost \$700/year in today’s market. This would have been prohibitive for the average working man which is likely why Mr. Smith also suggested that the Canadian Club “foster an interest in public affairs and provide **businessmen** a place to read, play billiards and socialize” and, “The privileges of the club are always available, through the courtesy of members, to **commercial** men and others who may spend evenings or Sundays in town.”



The moving spirit in the organization of the club was Mr. F. Pike, the energetic manager of the Merchants Bank, whose contagious optimism surmounts every difficulty in all that he undertakes.

Credit behind establishing the Canadian Club, and the ensuing building, was given to Mr. Pike.

Women were not welcomed as members nor admitted entry into the Canadian clubhouse...except on Wednesdays. “At the meeting of the Camrose Canadian Club last Friday evening (would have been early December 1908), it was decided that the lady friends of the members should have the freedom of the entire club every Wednesday afternoon and of the reading room every Wednesday evening.”

The right for a woman to vote was likely incomprehensible to most of the Camrose population at this time in history. I did find the word “suffragettes” used with regard to the Canadian Club. To put it into context, I must first mention a favourite role-playing game which enthusiastically occupied members’ time on every 2nd Friday night and was recorded at length in the newspaper.



**Mock Parliament.**  
At a well attended meeting of the members of the Camrose Canadian Club on Friday night last, it was decided to form a mock parliament to meet every second Friday evening in the club reading room during the winter months. The parliament will be patterned after the Federal House at Ottawa.

Parliamentary and opposition positions were filled. How the roles were filled is not quite clear in the newsprint records, perhaps by election or perhaps roles were randomly chosen?

The Canadian Club was sold to the provincial government just 10 years later, in 1918, likely as a result of the downturn in the economy and because of WWI. Later I will investigate that in the pages of the Canadian.

Watch our next issue of “Roots and Shoots” for topics debated by the mock parliament; other happenings in Camrose during the early days of the Canadian Club and some comparisons/contrasts between then and now.

## A Scottish Connection

Submitted by CGS member Lilyon Lundy

My mother-in-law was a child in the Depression year. One day her father went to town to get supplies, and returned with the provisions...and a hired man! Mac was a Scottish gentleman in his late 30's, who had descended from the train in Sedgewick, Alberta and was looking for work. It was a lucky day for both parties, and Mac became a part of the Pottage family for about 5 years. Every Christmas Eve, the 4 young Pottage children would be taken to the barn to care for the animals (plus, it probably gave time for the meal to be prepared with some peace!) When the children returned to the house...Santa was there! After the time of the excitement of Santa had ebbed, the family sat down to dinner. At the dinner table, Mac related that he never saw Santa...every year! The adults exchanged knowing glances and smiles, but somehow the children never noticed that Santa had a strong Scottish accent!

Years went by, and Mac found his way to Edmonton to find employment. Sadly, he contracted tuberculosis and passed away in 1948. He had little in the way of funds so Grandfather Pottage paid for his burial at Mount Pleasant Cemetery, next to the Pottage family graves....and the story lay dormant for over 60 years.

In 2009, my mother-in-law received a puzzling telephone call from Scotland. The caller, Seoras, was trying to locate some genealogical information about his Uncle Donnie who had come to Canada seeking work in the 1930's (a fishing moratorium was then in effect on the Isle of Barra). Seoras (born a few years after his uncle had died) claimed to have many photos of the Pottage children and family (including my mother-in-law). She was somewhat baffled with the accent, the situation and the name. Eventually, it was determined that Uncle Donnie and Mac were one and the same (Donald MacDonald). Seoras was pleased to finally find where his Uncle Donnie had been, and indicated that he would like to meet someone who knew his uncle. My mother-in-law replied, "Well, I'm 82 and my husband is 88, so if you want to meet us, you better come quick!" In a couple of weeks, we met Seoras (an architect).

Being interested in the searching of ancestors, I asked Seoras how he located the Pottage family. Seoras' father (also named Seoras) and Donnie, respectively, were the youngest and oldest members of the family, with 8 sisters in the middle. Seoras Sr. was only 4-5 when his big brother left for Canada, and he had minimal memories of Donnie.

Donnie sent photos back home, and when one of the last aunts died, Seoras Jr. acquired the box of photos. He noticed that there was a studio photo taken of Donnie in Wetaskiwin. He could tell from a torn letter that some mail was sent from a town starting with the letter "S". He drew a circumference of 100 miles of Wetaskiwin, and started contacting every Bed & Breakfast within the circle. At that time, Sedgewick had a B&B. The current owner didn't know of any Pottages in town, but small towns being what they are, a quick trip to the Post Office was all that was needed to inform the new owner that "Miss Pottage" did indeed live in Sedgewick (with her married surname of 60 years). The information was exchanged and Seoras was enroute to Canada to track down where Uncle Donnie might be buried. I asked Seoras why he contacted B&Bs and he related that B&Bs often knew more about the history of a community than hotel owners. He certainly lucked out!

My mother-in-law (and eventually her 3 siblings, who also had fond memories of Mac) shared many stories of this adventurous Scot to his nephew. The Christmas story touched many hearts. Seoras had a photo of Uncle Donnie along with 5-6 other gentlemen (it must have been a Sunday, as all were dressed in suits and wearing hats) taken in Edmonton. I recognized the marquee of the Gem Theatre (I grew up in Edmonton and the Highlands ETS bus route down Jasper Avenue was very familiar to me.) We could then determine that Donald MacDonald worked in a nearby hotel, and we were able to take Seoras to visit the Hub Hotel where his uncle worked before he became ill.

It was a moving moment when Seoras was taken to Mount Pleasant Cemetery (does anyone know how many Donald MacDonalds are on Find-a-Grave?) to pay homage to an uncle who had left the beloved land of his birth over 80 years ago.



This story of searching and (successfully) finding an ancestor was very touching for me.

This June, my husband and I were touring Scotland and made contact with Seoras (and his brother Arthur, a crofter farmer) in Inverness. They brought the large “living room” photos of their grandparents (parents of Donald, Seoras Sr. and a bevy of girls) to show us. They were grateful to make contact again with the Canadian family that had been so important to their uncle. I was grateful to see them, and marvel at how we meet new family while searching for ancestors.

Submitted by CGS member Lilyon Luntz



Submitted by CGS member Fay Carlson



## Emile Bosmans 1921 Memorial Garden

I went for a drive in the country one day last week...heading for Tofield just to see how far it was, and what sights I could see on the way. I discovered this cemetery.



There was a monument to the local men who gave their lives for our freedom.  
Their names: George Bosmans and George Matthews in World War I;  
Walter Gill, Robert Moorby and Louis Starchesky in World War II.



The memorial inscription reads:

“DEDICATED TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND TO THOSE WHO SERVED THEIR COUNTRY”

“AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE MORNING WE WILL REMEMBER THEM”

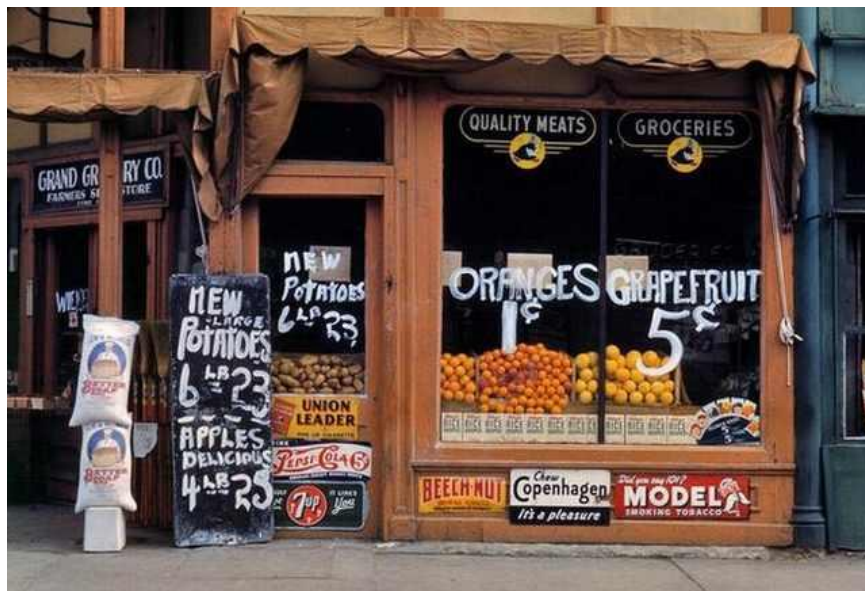
This is a picture of the oldest style of gravestone in the cemetery.



Clara Drolet  
1888 – 1957

Submitted by CGS member Joan Conley

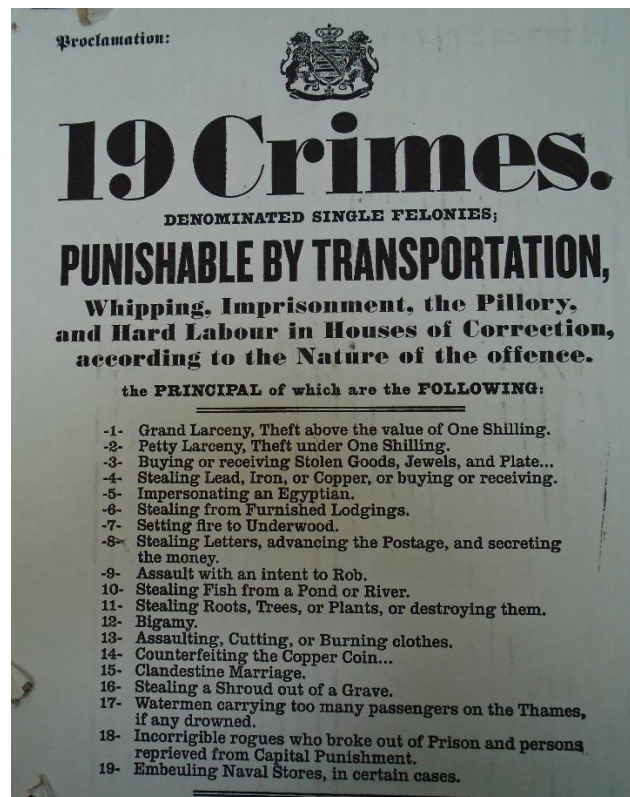
### Remembering the “Good Old Days”







Steam Threshing, Portage La Prairie, Manitoba 1887



Submitted by CGS member Joan Conley



Hope you are enjoying your summer  
while searching for your elusive ancestors!  
- Editor

“Roots and Shoots” is published quarterly: Feb, May, Aug & November.  
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