



## ROOTS AND SHOOTS

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### Murphy's Genealogical Laws

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture  
 is like a tree without roots.” - Marcus Garvey

## Upcoming Events

Summer Social – Due to Covid-19 issues, Camrose Branch will not be holding a Summer Social. Hopefully, the year 2021 will be a safer year.

Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2020 - Regular Meeting – LOCATION PENDING DUE TO COVID-19

Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2020 – Regular Meeting - LOCATION PENDING DUE TO COVID-19

Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2020 – Regular Meeting – LOCATION PENDING DUE TO COVID-19

Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2020 – Christmas Social - LOCATION PENDING DUE TO COVID-19

FYI – Due to Covid-19, Camrose Public Library is currently not booking room rentals.

The Executive is looking at an alternative for our Fall meetings.

## Branch News

You can “Follow” us on Facebook. Our “handle” is Camrose Genealogy.

Worker Bees are held every 2 weeks at the Camrose Museum. Interested?

Contact CGS President at [camrosegeneo@gmail.com](mailto:camrosegeneo@gmail.com)



Founders Days August 2016

Camrose, Alberta

## **Veterans Affairs Canada Adds British Home Children to Its Website**

Veterans Affairs Canada is recognizing the importance of contributions to Canada's military history by British Home Children. Along with a page describing British Home Children, the website offers pages about British Home Children in the First and Second World Wars and in the inter-war years, along with stories of soldiers awarded the Victorian Cross, and additional information on the legacy of British Home Children in Canada.



Visit the Veterans Affairs Canada website for more information here: <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/people-and-stories/british-home-children#06>.

## **Early Alberta Pioneers**

Many of us did not know that some black Americans who were fleeing from the United States came to Northern Alberta. They settled on land in the Canadian western provinces, which was promised to all immigrants by the Canadian government, free of charge, in exchange for clearing and farming the land. The black Americans named their Alberta towns Keystone (established 1909, renamed Breton in 1927); Junkins (established 1908. The railway arrived in Junkins in 1908. People arriving at "end of steel" transferred their goods to wagons and travelled to their homesteads. The town was later renamed Wildwood); Campsie (the hamlet took its name in 1909, from [Campsie](#), in Scotland, the ancestral home of an early postmaster. The post office operated until 1969. The community was a [block settlement](#) established by [Black Canadian](#) homesteaders from Oklahoma and Texas, within four to five years of Alberta becoming a province in 1905); and Amber Valley. The latter was the most successful.

The following tells some of their history:

## **Black History Month**

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of blacks in U.S. history. Also known as African American History Month, the event grew out of "Negro History Week," the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history.

Source: <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-month>

Editor's Note: Black History Month 2020 in Canada – Feb 1-29

## **Alberta's Black Pioneer Heritage**

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-month>

## Amber Valley, Alberta – black pioneer settlement



The largest and most resilient black community in Alberta seems to have been Amber Valley. In 1911, a group of settlers, some of whom had been brought from Oklahoma under the leadership of clergyman and Mason Parson H. Sneed, met their friends and family in a small hamlet north of Edmonton near a U in the Athabasca River. The community had already developed a certain unity because of a shared investment in the Masonic organization, which had spread information about Canada to blacks in the United States.

Like other pioneers transplanted to a land with a harsh climate and poor farming conditions, the settlers in Amber Valley found life difficult for the first few years. They had to clear the heavily-treed land and build houses. Repeated crop failures meant that they relied on wild flora and fauna, and on keeping cattle and chickens for food. The weather alone would have been almost unbearable, even if one wasn't accustomed to the relatively mild climatic conditions in Oklahoma. But the settlers in Amber Valley were as tough as their surroundings. Over three quarters of them remained on the land long enough to receive patents for their homesteads, a much greater success rate than among Alberta settlers generally.

Amber Valley residents began a school in 1913 and a nondenominational church in 1914. After 1915, the Amber Valley picnic was an established and popular event. It featured many kinds of sporting events, games, and dancing. The town's baseball team would eventually become known throughout the north.

The large percentage of people of black ancestry and strong community structures meant that Amber Valley continued to be a major settlement for black people in Alberta until the 1930s.



Source: [https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/eppp-archive/100/200/301/ic/can\\_digital\\_collections/pasttopresent/settlement/amber\\_valley.html](https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/eppp-archive/100/200/301/ic/can_digital_collections/pasttopresent/settlement/amber_valley.html)

Editor's Note: pictures are from the Glenbow Archives, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta.

## Music Lovers – Canadian drummer in “Three Dog Night” band

**Floyd Chester Sneed** (formerly **Floyd Chester Chuck**; November 22, 1942) is a Canadian drummer, best known for his work with the band [Three Dog Night](#).

While with Three Dog Night in 1972

Born in the Canadian city of [Calgary](#), Sneed grew up in a musical family (his parents were both musicians at their church) and became interested in drums at an early age. His first drum kit was a gift from his older sister Maxine, who at the time was married to the musician-actor [Tommy Chong](#). He was in a band called the "Calgary Shades" that included his pianist older brother Bernie Sneed (1940–2016). He soon began performing in the [Vancouver](#) area as part of Chong's band, [Little Daddy and the Bachelors](#).

In 1966, Sneed formed his own band and moved to Los Angeles, California. In 1968, he met a trio of vocalists ([Danny Hutton](#), [Chuck Negron](#) and [Cory Wells](#)), who had a contract with [Dunhill Records](#) and were looking for backing musicians. Sneed joined their new band, Three Dog Night, which became a commercial success in the late 1960s and early to mid 1970s. Sneed sang backup on only one song with the band; he did the deep vocal on "[Joy to the World](#)", singing the lyric "I wanna tell you." After Three Dog Night broke up in 1977, he continued to work with other groups, including an extended tour with [The Ohio Players](#).

He and other backing musicians from Three Dog Night worked together in a short-lived group named SS Fools. He reappeared briefly with the reincarnated Three Dog Night in the mid-1980s. In 1990, he had a minor role playing a drummer in a Chong film, [Far Out Man](#). In 2002, he toured and recorded with the band K.A.T.T., and has formed his own band called Same Dog New Tricks.



The band K.A.T.T. in 1998, Joe Schermie/Bass, Katt Kleiber/Vocals, Floyd Sneed/Drums, Ron Diego Johnston/Guitar

Sneed and original Three Dog Night bassist [Joe Schermie](#) appeared on the cooking show *Food Rules starring Tom Riehl* in 2000. This was Schermie's last television appearance.

Sneed is descended from the original black settlers to Alberta's [Amber Valley, Alberta](#)<sup>[1]</sup> – their migration to Canada under [Clifford Sifton](#)'s campaign to entice US farmers to settle in the prairies led Canada to implement racist policies that lasted until 1962.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Floyd\\_Sneed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Floyd_Sneed)

Thomas Arthur Carson letter to Orangeville Banner newspaper

Orangeville, Ontario, Canada

World War 1

**LETTER FROM FRONT**

**Orangeville Boys are "Carrying On" Bravely -- Capt. Carson Writes in an Interesting Manner About Local Soldiers**

The Banner has received the following interesting letter from Capt. (Dr.) T. A. Carson:

As I am enjoying a few days of masterly inactivity at our wagon lines, gradually developing a condition very rare in the British army, overfed and under exercised, and have been perusing a copy of the Orangeville Banner -- (it's a terrible war!) -- more particularly your "military column," I concluded that perhaps some account of the many Orangeville boys who are covering themselves with mud, glory and vermin on the soggy fields of so-called sunny France, might interest your readers. I have met a number of them during the summer, though there are many I can only locate by reports. All are remarkably healthy, rugged and fairly cheerful, but, as a rule, filled with a Divine discontent at the length of the war and its probable duration.

Ross MacPherson is with the P. P. C. L. I., a captain now, having risen from the ranks, and I feel quite certain his ascension is not yet complete. He has cultivated a true military moustache, an English accent and looks every inch a soldier.

Gerald Preston is an officer with the artillery, that branch of the service that helps to make Canadians famous, and has distinguished himself on several occasions. His latest exploit was rescuing the body of his brother officer, Lieut. Jack Gooch, killed during the Hill 70 show, after several hours strenuous work under shell fire. He is in the best of health, except for an attack of herpes labialis (Editor's Note: definition: "a common name for a "cold sore"), which, while it somewhat mars his beauty, does not in the least lessen his ability and usefulness. Gerald has a weakness for Paris leave, a straight stemmed pipe, and forward observation posts.

Hutch Keith is a signaller with the artillery, and has performed many daring acts since coming to France. He went over the top with the infantry at the Vimy Ridge fight, and has had many hair-raising experiences. Hutch has a fondness for "Vingtet un" and plays it with an astuteness which leaves much to be desired in the pockets of his opponents. Recently he spent two weeks at the Canadian rest camp, and returned looking exceedingly fit.

Earl Stevenson is with the same unit, also a signaller, and an expert at threading his way on the darkest night through trenches, around shell holes and over barbed wire in the most amazing manner. Earl looks well, never has a grouch and has recently received a well-deserved promotion.

Frank Jackson is also with the 33rd -- a driver -- and during the Somme fighting endured hardships and dangers hard to describe to one who has seen nothing of this country. Night after night, wet through and almost numb and cold, he delivered ammunition to the guns, over roads knee deep in mud, and receiving constant attention from the Hun, who knows every inch of the country he is being forced to evacuate. At present Frank is in the hospital in England being repaired. He injured his side some time ago plunging into a trench in order to avoid meeting a German 5.0.

Bert Booth, another 33rd man -- and a gunner. When I saw him last, he was nursing a badly blistered neck -- the result of a Boche gas attack, but seemed rather delighted it was nothing more serious. He has developed wonderfully in his French, and should he continue as he has commenced, I feel sure, shortly, he will be unable to make himself understood in any language. Like Job, Bert suffers from boils, but I fear is scarcely as patient.



Mervin **Leighton** is now what in military language is called a P. B. man, i.e., Permanent Base duty and unfit for active service. While working his machine gun close to one of our trenches last spring, a shell landed sufficiently close to tumble Mervin, and his pom-pom into the trench. His knee was badly twisted, hence his retirement. At present he is with the Y. M. C. A. corps as book-keeper. Mervin came out with the infantry and went over the top several times in the Somme. He is one of the very, very few, who had a German whizzbang land in a shell hole where he had taken shelter and lived to relate his experience.

Percy **Leighton**, formerly a gunner in the 33rd, now attached to the Divisional train, is as fair, fat, and foxy as ever. His conduct sheet is still unsullied, and he has never been detected in any misdemeanor contrary to K. R. & O. It was rumored that on one occasion he was caught attempting to do another man's work and his own, but his officer indignantly denies this. Percy has promised himself two whole weeks in bed after the war.

"Doad" **Patterson** is a driver in the 33rd and is the picture of health. He is recognized in the Division as an authority on the characteristics and idiosyncrasies of mules and any moke (sp?) that shows symptoms of intelligence is at once transferred to Doad's care.

Lester **Arnott** is with the D. A. C. and is thoroughly familiar with everything relating to this branch of the service. Lester is the same modest, unassuming chap as ever and does not conceal the fact that he is "fed-up" with war.

Don **MacPherson** is also in the artillery. I saw him last at Vimy where he had a most miraculous escape, when several bombs dropped in his vicinity. Don is an excellent signaller, deserves more than ordinary commendation for enlisting as he did, and I have no doubt he will receive a commission before long.

Alan **Cameron** is with the same unit as Don. I tried to meet him several times but failed. He has been slightly wounded twice, but none the worse as a result.

Stewart **Porter**, another artillery man, is a gunner. During the summer we were quite close, in fact, I was his medical officer at times. Stewart's initiation into the fighting area was rather trying. He landed at the guns one night during a terrific gas bombardment by the Hun, and at once replaced a man who had been killed a few minutes previously. Every gun was in action. Stewart, encased in a box respirator, set fuses for some hours without a stop. At present he is in a Hospital in England suffering from gas poisoning, a remarkable disability for one accustomed to political arguments at Hewson's blacksmith shop.

Lindsay **Morrison** is also with the artillery. I have seen very little of him though he is quite near. As I was M. O. to his battery for several weeks, and he never appeared in a sick parade, must conclude he is enjoying average health.

Have tried to locate Matt **Denton** and Jimmy **Dawson**, but so far have been unsuccessful, nor have I been able to find Jack **Aiken** and Bert **Wheelock**, though they must be in this district, not far away. Dug. **Endacott** is Quartermaster at a training school some miles from here. I have not seen him for two or three months but he looked well then.

Alex. **Fleming** is in the D. A. C. I ran across him not long ago, mounted on the back bone of the British army -- a mule -- looking as cheerful and happy as in pre-war times and wearing a smile that had Sunny Jim completely outclassed. There are many others "carrying on" in the various branches but it's somewhat difficult to hunt them up -- Ward **Nicholson**, Jimmy **Collins**, Gint **Camplin**, Harold **Marshall**, Hugh **Laverty**, Jack **Saunders**, Harvey **Banks**, Leonard **Cavers**, Bob **Pratt**, etc., etc.

As for myself, I am still medical officer in the artillery, and while I cannot conscientiously claim the life is "delightful," it is full of excitement, not too much work and an abundance of discomfort, but it is remarkably healthy. Part of the time I am at Rear Headquarters (sounds Irish, does it not?) some distance back of the line, but as a rule, camp at the guns. Here one is domiciled in a dugout, resembling, in many respects, a converted sewer, with the added advantage that it is 5.9 proof at least we hope so. Exercise in the open is not particularly fascinating, and is in fact usually prohibited, consequently one is compelled to stay in doors, wondering, not so much as to "where did that one go," as to "where will its successor come." However, I am in the very best of health, have lost a few pounds avoirdupois, but fortunately from portions of my anatomy where I can quite readily spare it, gradually developing an increasing maturity of appearance which ordinarily lends no little weight to a physician's opinion. While I would scarcely admit that I am enormously happy or contented here, it's some compensation to remember that the only really contented individuals are usually found in asylums.

Before closing, just a word for those who have shed their young life's blood in the call of duty, who have "fallen-in" at the bugles call for "Last Post," and are silently sleeping in heroes graves, marked by crudely fashioned wooden crosses, over which the blood red poppy of France blooms, a mute and significant sentinel. In our memories they are still with us, accompany us on our marches, mingle with us in our billets and cheer us in our discomforts. They have but gone forward, a brave little scouting party, helping to guide us, we trust, to those immortal mansions, eternal in the Heavens. And there they wait to welcome us with outstretched hands, when we have, painfully and patiently, fought the good fight and finished our course.

With kindest regards,  
T. A. **CARSON**

Submitted by Joan Conley, member of Camrose Branch of the AGS

Thomas Arthur Carson was Joan's great-uncle, her paternal grandmother's brother.

Dr. T.A. Carson returned home safely after the war ended.

**Summer Social**  
**Camrose Cemetery Scavenger Hunt**  
**July 2016**





## History of a Welsh Castle



**Beaumaris Castle** ([Welsh](#): *Castell Biwmares*), in [Beaumaris](#), [Anglesey](#), [Wales](#), was built as part of [Edward I](#)'s campaign to conquer north Wales after 1282. Plans were probably first made to construct the castle in 1284, but this was delayed due to lack of funds and work only began in 1295 following the [Madog ap Llywelyn](#) uprising. A substantial workforce was employed in the initial years under the direction of [James of St George](#). Edward's invasion of Scotland soon diverted funding from the project, however, and work stopped, only recommencing after an invasion scare in 1306. When work finally ceased around 1330 a total of £15,000 had been spent, a huge sum for the period, but the castle remained incomplete.

Beaumaris Castle was taken by Welsh forces in 1403 during the rebellion of [Owain Glyndŵr](#), but recaptured by royal forces in 1405. Following the outbreak of the [English Civil War](#) in 1642, the castle was held by forces loyal to [Charles I](#), holding out until 1646 when it surrendered to the [Parliamentary](#) armies. Despite forming part of a local royalist rebellion in 1648, the castle escaped [slighting](#) and was garrisoned by Parliament, but fell into ruin around 1660, eventually forming part of a stately home and park in the 19th century. In the 21st century, the ruined castle is still a tourist attraction.

Historian [Arnold Taylor](#) described Beaumaris Castle as Britain's "most perfect example of symmetrical concentric planning". The fortification is built of local stone, with a [moated](#) outer ward guarded by twelve towers and two gatehouses, overlooked by an inner ward with two large, D-shaped gatehouses and six massive towers. The inner ward was designed to contain ranges of domestic buildings and accommodation able to support two major households. The south gate could be reached by ship, allowing the castle to be directly supplied by sea. [UNESCO](#) considers Beaumaris to be one of "the finest examples of late 13th century and early 14th century military architecture in Europe", and it is classed as a [World Heritage site](#).

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beaumaris\\_Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beaumaris_Castle)



**Stay safe!**

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