

ROOTS AND SHOOTS

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[Murphy's Genealogical Laws](#)

“Take nothing but ancestors, leave nothing but records.”

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2020 – Regular Meeting 6 p.m. – Topic: Stories of the 1918 Spanish Flu Epidemic, Polio, TB or other medical crisis involving your family, neighbours, community or stories you have heard

Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2020 – Christmas Magic 6 p.m. – Bring artifacts, photos and stories about how your family celebrated the holiday season

Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2021 – Regular Meeting 6 p.m. – Winter Wonderland – stories about why your ancestors, or you, settled in cold Alberta

Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2021 – Regular Meeting 6 p.m. – What person/people or stories motivated you to become a family historian

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

Watch your email Inbox for meeting place.

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

In Memoriam

John “Jack” Robert Cunningham, OC PhD

January 5, 1927 – January 4, 2020

We all knew him as “Jack”, Camrose Branch Genealogical Society long time-member and Newsletter Editor. “Jack leaves his wife of 68 years, Sheila Margaret (nee Reesor)” and 5 children to mourn his loss. “Jack served in the Canadian Technical Training Corps just prior to the end of World War Two and then studied Engineering Physics at the University of Saskatchewan (1945) and was awarded a PhD in Physics at the University of Toronto (1955). He joined the Physics Division of the Ontario Cancer Institute at the Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto in 1958 where he remained Chief of Clinical Physics and Professor at the University of Toronto until 1989. In 1964-65 he spent a year as a consultant with the International Atomic Energy Agency working in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon)....In 2005 he was installed as an Officer of the Order of Canada, recognizing his lifelong contributions to the betterment of Canadians as “one of Canada’s most distinguished medical physicists”.....he had a wonderful smile and exceptional sense of humour, epitomized by the devilish delight he took in playing the part of Jimmy the (naughty) Clown at the Princess Margaret Hospital Children’s Christmas parties for many years.”

Note: Jack’s full obituary and tributes can be read on the Foster’s Garden Chapel Funeral Home & Crematorium (3220-4 St. NW, Calgary, AB) website by searching his name. Wikipedia also has a short article on “John R. Cunningham”. Jack’s wife Sheila passed away just months after his death, in May of 2020 – see portions of her obituary below.

In Memoriam

Sheila Margaret Cunningham

October 8, 1927 – May 13, 2020

“With sadness we announce the peaceful death of Sheila Margaret Reesor Cunningham on Tuesday, May 13, 2020 in Calgary, Alberta at the age of 92 years. Born in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan on October 8, 1927, Sheila always loved the prairies with their constant breezes and big sky. Sheila valued education, inquiry and harmony.” She earned her BA in English at the University of Saskatchewan in 1949 and worked in library science. Sheila married Jack in 1951 and they had 5 children. As her children left the nest, Sheila dove deeply into genealogy, an interest that arose from her Mennonite Reesor ancestry. Prior to the internet, she identified Jack’s birth parents (he was adopted), a feat of characteristic quiet persistence. Jack was very proud of Sheila’s efforts in finding his birth parents. Note: Sheila’s complete obituary can be found on the website of Foster’s Garden Chapel Funeral Home & Crematorium, 3220-4 St. NW, Calgary, AB.

Recap of Camrose Branch AGS Beginnings 20 Years Ago

Submitted by Camrose Branch Member Fay Carlson

Our Camrose branch of AGS began in 2000 so is now twenty years old. I am the only member who has been a continuing member since that time so I am delegated to give a peek into our past.

In 2000, I saw an ad in the local paper that a group of people were meeting at Camrose Library to form a geological society. I was at the start of my quest in family history so I went. Norm Prestage was the head of this group. (Since then, Norm has served as President, Vice President and worked on the Newsletter Committee).

Our branch has had up to 27 members. Unfortunately, some are long distance members and do not attend our local meetings. We have a written agreement with Camrose Library that we may have our meetings there and that we will provide two workshops per year. Our members are very knowledgeable. Jack Cunningham was a great help when we started our newsletter and our webpage. Sorry to say that Jack and his wife, Sheila, who was also a member, have both died this year, 2020.

One huge project our branch has done was the books of births, marriages and deaths from records of The Camrose Canadian. We have published the years of 1908-1945 in three books.

Over the years I have solved many of my family puzzles. I have proven my Mayflower ancestry back to William Bradford, received my membership into the Daughters of the American Revolution and researched my father’s Swedish background. I was able to complete a book on this, took it to Sweden and met with newfound relatives.

I have learned much from my fellow members and my membership in Camrose AGS. The support and advice have been priceless. I am glad I went to that first meeting and that I joined.

Fay Carlson

19 September, 2020

Summer of 2020 Project
Submitted by CGS member Bev Webster

We, the Camrose Branch of the AGS held our September meeting outdoors at the Camrose Museum. Members were asked to tell about our activities since the Covid-19 pandemic shut down many of our pastimes and hobbies. This is Bev's story:

"This is the story of my 2020 Summer Project.

Diane and I were at a hospital reunion of the staff who had worked at the second John Neil Hospital in Cold Lake, Alberta last September. This John Neil Hospital was replaced in 1988 by the Cold Lake Regional Hospital. The original John Neil Hospital was built in 1935 and was in operation until 1957 when it was replaced by the second hospital of the same name.

I was asked if I would like to build a model of the original John Neil Hospital. Not being very wise in the ways of the world, I said "Sure, I will give it a try." I was then given two photographs of the old hospital: one of the front and left end of the building and the other of the left end and the back. The instructions given were that it was not to be too large and was to look like the original, as close as possible.

I started in March with a drawing of the footprint – to some kind of scale. After much consultation and many drawings, it was decided that the model should be about 22" long, 19" wide and 14" high. The model is about half finished, with about 90 hours spent on it to date. It took a while of trial and error to get the roof correct as the original building had gables on the upper floor. It was changed to the whole roof at a later date. The window frames took extra time to make and the siding is especially time consuming as each piece is 5/8" wide by 1/8" thick and has to be beveled to give the effect of clapboard siding, then glued in place. The siding is about 3/4 done.

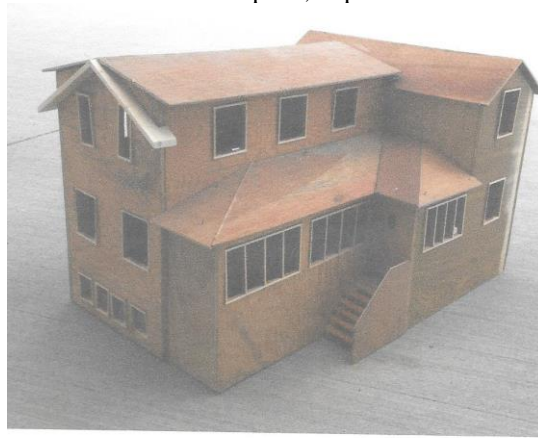
There is a fire escape slide from the second floor at the back. The roof will be covered with simulated shingles. The siding will be painted white with brighter white window frames. The windows themselves will be blacked out so you will not be able to see inside. The lower part of the building will be gray.

The plan is to mount it on a board to support all appendages."

The original John Neil Hospital, Cold Lake, AB



Bev's almost-complete, unpainted model



Congratulations, Bev! What a worthwhile, valuable summer project!

My Soldier Ancestors

Stories from Camrose Branch Members

The following stories have been submitted by CGS Members, proud descendants of their ancestral soldiers.



Clifford James Challenger enlisted in the RCAF on March 24, 1941 at the age of 19. He trained as a pilot but washed out. He trained in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Scotland and England. He became a tail gunner on a Lancaster. He flew RAF (second from the RCAF). On his last flight, he was a Flight Sargent. On a night mission June 13, 1942 to Germany, the plane was shot down and no plane or bodies were ever found. He was posthumously promoted to P.O.

Cliff was my uncle.

Submitted by CGS Member Wendy Thompson

Ewart Pearce Taylor



Enlisted Jan. 5, 1916 at the age of 20. Discharged after 14 months of active duty in March, 1919. He was injured in battle at Vimy Ridge on Feb. 13, 1917 and again on the Amiens front on Aug. 10, 1918. As was common with veterans, he wouldn't talk much about his service.

Ewart (pictured on the left) was my maternal grandfather.

Submitted by CGS Member Wendy Thompson

Remembrance Day Nov. 11, 2020



HIDDEN IN THE RAFTERS

CGS Member Lilyon Lundy

My sister and brother were 7 and 4 respectively when their father left Sylvan Lake to serve in W.W. II. During the period of over 5 years that they were apart, my parents wrote to each other weekly. My siblings wrote regularly, and received letters and cards from their "Daddy" overseas. I was born a couple of years after my father's return, to complete the family, becoming part of the Baby Boomer Generation.

My father died suddenly when I was in High School. At that point in my life, I wasn't terribly interested in the family's history - although, it was always "neat" to relate that my father was born in India. I had no idea why his (British) family was there, nor did I have any idea why my father would emigrate to Vermilion, Alberta in November 1928. Quite a climate adjustment!

Some 20 years later, it was necessary to move our mother out of her house. During the cleaning, sorting and purging process, I was assigned to housekeeping "stuff", while my siblings sorted through the memorabilia (after all, these were more their memories than mine). When the dust literally settled, my sister shared with me that in the army trunks were the letters that my parents had written to each other during the War: she had thrown them aside, feeling that it was a violation of our mother's privacy.

This winter (35 years later) my brother's home in Calgary had to go through the similar moving process. Upon the final inspection of the garage (automatic door closed), my niece noticed a rather large object in the rafters. How my brother got our Dad's army trunk up there will never be known, but my niece felt that I would be interested in some of the contents.

There were postcards and letters sent to her father (my brother) by a grandfather that she never knew, expressing kind gentle words to a little boy growing up. These she kept. But for me, these precious mementoes would have been "lost" forever!

There were over a hundred letters written to my mother (and a few that my mother had written). Most of these related day-to-day occurrences, but for me, these were an insight into my parents as a younger couple that I never knew. My parents were in their 43rd and 51st years when I was born (my friends thought that I lived with my grandparents!). They had only been married 8 years before War separation, then the 5-6 years of Wartime, and then a daughter to raise in their "Golden Years". During this time of Covid-19, I've been reflecting a lot upon the uncertainties of life.

My father's older brother Bernard served with the Royal Horse Artillery based out of Bangalore (India) during W.W. I. Bernard survived the War, but contracted the Spanish Flu during Christmas week 1918 and died 6 weeks later. Enroute to Canada, my father picked up his brother's personal effects (a few shillings and pounds, watches, papers and Army medals) from St. George's Hospital in London. These are now precious saved, along with the black-lined envelope that likely contained news of Bernard Hale's passing.

Enclosed in the trunk were military buttons from my father's uniform (I already had the summer uniform) and many small kit-bag items and his tobacco pouch. (Dad requested cigarettes and chocolate to be sent to him overseas, while he sent books, silverware and woollens to his family back home in Sylvan Lake, Alberta). Included among these treasures was the wristwatch that he was wearing the morning that he died. I wound it up (remember those watches?!), and 56 years later, it still works!

Some of the letters have given me clues of names in my genealogy searches, but mostly, these letters have had the power to bring my parents alive, as they were in the 1940 – 50's.

Eric and Inger Hale, Lilyon's parents)
before he went off to serve in World War II
(Note the outline of the pipe in his pocket!)



War Envelopes



One of the letters, opened by censor, and the black lined one, which usually meant bad news.
The black-lined envelope likely contained news of Bernard Hale's passing (my uncle).

Submitted by CGS Member Lilyon Luntz

My Soldier Ancestors

CGS Member Fay Carlson

I have a father and son, Edward Ruggles Sr., and Edward Ruggles Jr. who are my Revolutionary ancestors. They both served as Minutemen in 1775 at Lexington. They were farmers who were given the name, “minutemen” because they had to be ready to serve at a minute’s notice. Edward Ruggles Jr. served his first time for 11 days. Later in 1779, he served as a Lieutenant and in 1787 as a Captain. He helped in the defense of the American government against the insurrection of “Shays” and shared in the perils and discomfort of the memorable march from Hadley to Petersham which resulted in the dispersion of the Rebel British. I used this proven lineage to apply for and receive my membership in the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 2008.

The other soldier in my family story is William Paton, born in 1892 in Aberdeen, Scotland. He came to Canada, at the age of 18 in 1911 on the ship Scotian with 50 other children aged 17-19 to have a better life in Canada. This group were slated for different locations and varied jobs as laborers or domestics. William came to Edmonton and worked as a teamster. In 1916, at the age of 24, he joined the Canadian Army and went overseas. He listed his grandmother in Scotland as his closest relative. He sent some of his army pay back to her for years. When the war ended, he returned to Edmonton and married my father’s sister, Mildred Edenloff in 1936. He lived the rest of his life in Edmonton and died of ALS in 1959.



Submitted by CGS Member Fay Carlson

Fred A. Shoemaker 1918 – 2002 (Deb Trout's uncle)

Fred volunteered in 1941 and started out in the 11th Field Regiment RCA based in Ontario. The division was re-organized and became the 15th Field Regiment, 95th Battery. He went to England in December 1942 and onward to Europe. A major battle he was involved in was one of the Battles of Monte Cassino, Italy in 1944.



Leo E. Shoemaker 1912 – 1999 (Deb Trout's uncle)

Leo served in the 13th Field Regiment RCA as a Gunner and received a commendation for bravery. The story is that he prevented his fellow soldiers from entering a village in France where the German Army was ensconced.

He told a story of himself and a fellow Canadian taking refuge in a large factory building in England with bombs hitting close by. He said he and this other fellow found a small closet that they ducked into and then pulled a curtain closed. He said after the bombing stopped, they both broke out laughing about how much safer they felt with that curtain pulled.



Harry E. Trout 1908 – 1992 (Deb Trout's uncle)

I don't know the exact branch of the military Harry served with but I think it was the Railway Troops. (I have requested his service file to confirm). He was injured overseas.



William R. Trout 1913 – 1996 (Deb Trout's father)

Bill enlisted Feb 12, 1942 in the Army. He trained in Ontario and shipped out to England in July 1943. He was assigned to the Medical Corp as an orderly in the Army hospital at Basingstoke, England.



Henry G. Trout 1770 – 1852 (Deb Trout's 3rd great-grandfather)

Henry's father wished him to have a career on the high seas so he embarked on a voyage to the West Indies. He was seasick both ways so he enlisted in the British Army twice, with his father buying him out both times. Henry was determined and in 1790 he enlisted again with the 29th Regiment of Foot of the Worcestershire Regiment.

In Feb 1792, he was transferred to the Queen's Rangers commanded by Col. John Graves Simcoe. April 1792 the Rangers embarked for Canada, arriving in Quebec in May. July found them at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Upper Canada (Ontario).

The Rangers were instrumental in building Upper Canada through Simcoe's road building campaign. In 1795–6 they blazed the trail for Yonge Street, and then turned to Dundas Street and Kingston Road. They also built the original Fort York, where they were stationed.

The Rangers disbanded in 1802.

Henry was called back to the military for the War of 1812. He had the rank of Lieutenant and served as adjutant in 3rd Regiment, Lincoln Militia.

Stanley Henry Trout 1896 – 1917 (Deb Trout's Great Uncle)

Henry enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force March 1916 in Winnipeg. He was with the 78th Battalion Manitoba Regiment and was killed in fighting at Vimy Ridge on Feb 19, 1917. The Canadian soldiers' task that day, according to the field diary was to 1. Kill Germans. 2. Take prisoners. 3. Destroy German mine shafts and dugouts. 4. Gather information.

Nine (9) soldiers were killed in the action. A grenade thrown by a Canadian landed in a loaded mine shaft and the resulting explosion created a massive crater. The falling earth from this crater killed at least one and buried the bodies of other comrades.

Henry was buried in Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France but his grave cannot be identified as there was heavy fighting in the area and the graves were disturbed.



Pandemic Pastimes of Camrose Branch Members

During our outdoor meeting in September at the Camrose Museum, we told about our activities during the Covid-19 ongoing shutdown...new/renewed hobbies and pastimes. Ten (10) members enjoyed the sunshine, and later a chilly evening.

Bev Webster told us about discovering the obituaries of past CGS members Jack and Sheila Cunningham (as reported on Pages 2-3 of this newsletter).

Wendy Roth reported that she completed a photo album of her mother's side of the family. She is also making a family history scrapbook for her daughter and grandchildren. "It's a work in progress", she said.

Fay Carlson stated that this is the 20th Anniversary of Camrose Branch's beginning (see Page 4 of this newsletter). Fay also spoke about her Mayflower ancestors who sailed from England to Plymouth, Massachusetts. Fay is quite an artist. She makes soapstone objects. She gets the soapstone from Brazil since it is a softer soapstone. Fay never knows what she will make. She feels that the stone tells her what it wants to be.

Gary Barach has been working on his family tree online, researching Serbia. Once a week, the information is translated to English.

Maureen Scrutton has been researching her Kelly side online. She discovered that they came from Ireland to the U.S. and then to Ontario. Maureen has found that both of her maternal sides were French Canadian. She has also been doing a lot of gardening at home this year.

Joan Conley has been decluttering her home, growing tomato plants on the patio, writing letters and phoning to reconnect with old and new friends. She has also made discoveries on Ancestry, including a family picture of her paternal grandmother and her siblings. It is a professional photograph and the family were all dressed up for some occasion.

Lilyon Lundy discovered a trunk in her uncle's garage with many exciting mementoes (see "Hidden in the Rafters" on Pages 7-8 of this newsletter).

Janine Carroll reported that The Camrose Booster has copies of every edition they have printed. Copying has proven interesting..."turn the page, push your foot down..." Janine has 20 tubs of her mother's "stuff". She thinks that should fill 10-12 photo books. The old pictures from the albums sometimes stick to the album pages. Janine said that she obtained information from the Provincial Archives on removing the black album paper from the photos, using dental floss.

Charlotte Curtis continues to work on the website of burials that she is researching in Flagstaff County. She has 2400 obituaries in a binder, sorted from A-Z. Charlotte hopes that her final work will be posted on the Flagstaff County website. Charlotte has been enjoying family visits and gardening. She laughingly stated that she is not letting genealogy interfere with her life.

Deb Trout scanned her father's photo album and sent some to her aunt and uncle in Saskatchewan. She has been reorganizing stuff on her computer, and gardening.

So, even with physical distancing and minimizing our contact with others during the current pandemic, we genealogists have continued to "Search".

The origin of Halloween is found in Celtic Ireland

To find the origin of Halloween, you have to look to the festival of Samhain in Ireland's Celtic past. Samhain had three distinct elements. First, it was an important fire festival, celebrated over the evening of October 31 and throughout the following day. The flames of old fires had to be extinguished and ceremonially re-lit by druids.

"A **druid** was a member of the high-ranking class in ancient [Celtic](#) cultures. Perhaps best remembered as religious leaders, they were also legal authorities, adjudicators, lorekeepers, medical professionals and political advisors. While the druids are reported to have been literate, they are believed to have been prevented by doctrine from recording their knowledge in written form, thus they left no written accounts of themselves." – Wikipedia

Halloween was also a festival similar to the modern New Year's Day, carrying the notion of casting out the old and bringing in the new. To our pagan ancestors, it marked the end of the pastoral cycle, a time when all the crops would have been gathered and placed in storage for the long winter ahead, and when livestock would be brought in from the fields and selected for slaughter or breeding.

But it was also the time when the souls of the departed would return to their former homes, and when potentially malevolent spirits were released from the Otherworld and were visible to mankind.

The Celts believed that the passage of a day began with darkness and progressed into the light. So, the 1st of November, Samhain, was the Celtic New Year, and the celebrations began at sunset of the day before i.e. its Eve.



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