

Family History Newsletter

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The Family History Group meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 7pm at the Maple Ridge Library.

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Subscriptions are a benefit of membership in the Maple Ridge Historical Society. Please send membership applications, with \$20 to the Maple Ridge Historical Society.

Reminder

The Maple Ridge Family History Group is a Committee of Maple Ridge Historical Society; memberships are coming up for renewal in December.

Remembering the War Brides from WWI

By Annette Fulford

Ninety years have passed since the end of WWI, yet we are just beginning to learn about the experiences of the war brides that came to Canada after the Great War. Thankfully, a few of these women wrote about their experiences in local histories, but for the most part, their collective history remains to be told.

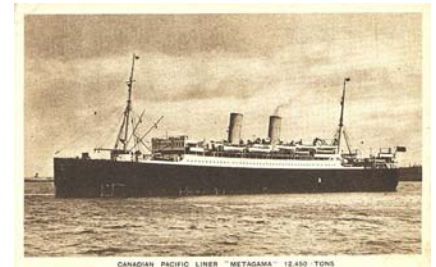
Over 35,000 European women came to Canada as war brides after the First World War. Most were British, but a number of women originated from France and Belgium too.

By war's end soldiers from the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) had married over 20,000 women. And, while waiting to be demobilized to Canada after the war, CEF soldiers married an additional 15,000 women between November 1918 and the end of 1919. It is not known how many women travelled to Canada afterwards to marry men they met during the war. I know of a few who were married at Pier 2 in Halifax, just after arriving on Canadian soil.

Some war brides travelled to Canada during the war, but most came in 1919 after the government offered to repatriate soldiers' dependents in January. Many of these new brides were

able to travel on the same boat as their husbands, but were berthed in separate locations on the ship.

A few Maple Ridge soldiers returned home with new brides. The British Columbian newspaper reported that Vaughan Webber of Haney, who left with the First Canadian Contingent in 1914, spent most of the war in a prison camp. He was sent to England after the armistice to recuperate from his ordeal and while there married Agnes Dukes. They came to Canada in August 1919 on the *Metagama*, which landed at Quebec on the 12th.



Another soldier from Haney was Edwin Kendrick. He enlisted in the 29th Battalion, CEF on November 12, 1914 at Vancouver and went overseas. Edwin met and married Annie Littleworth in England in 1917 and returned to Canada with his English bride on the *Melita* in May 1919.

British-born Ernest Beckham joined the 158th Battalion, CEF at Vancouver in January 1916. He listed his sister Mrs. Florence Parkes of Whonnock as his next of kin. While overseas he married

Hannah Downing in England in 1918.

Hannah travelled to Canada on the *Melita* in September 1919 with her 10-month-old daughter, Joan. She was fortunate to travel in an intermediate class cabin instead of steerage. Most war brides at this time were given berths in the overcrowded steerage section of the ship, which was located below deck and lacked proper amenities for women travelling with small children.

The pay-for-view website Ancestry has made it easier to learn when individual war brides arrived in Canada in their new database Canadian Passenger Lists 1865-1935. Copies of passenger list pages can be obtained online or at libraries that carry Ancestry Library edition, including Burnaby, Cloverdale and Vancouver Public Library, for a small fee.

For more information about WWI war brides, check out my web page Canadian War Brides of the First World War at <http://ww1warbrides.blogspot.com> or send me an email at wwiwarbrides@shaw.ca.

Honouring Our Military Heroes

In commemoration of the 90th anniversary of Armistice Ancestry is offering free access to key First World War records until 30th November 2008.

- Canadian Soldiers of World War I. 1914-1918
- British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920

- British Army WW1 Pension Records
- British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920
- Rebellion of 1837, Upper Canada

To view the First World War records you will need to register for a free account with Ancestry.

http://landing.ancestry.ca/intl/canada/remember.aspx?o_iid=37406&o_lid=37406

http://landing.ancestry.co.uk/intl/uk/worldwar1.aspx?o_iid=37264&o_lid=37264

Also check out the records online for free at Library and Archives Canada:

www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/veterans/index-e.html

Display at MR Library

"Family history projects in Maple Ridge" is the subject of our November display at Maple Ridge Library. Check out the window box to learn how you can take part in The Hammond Story So Far... by Maple Ridge Family History Group, World War I War Brides by Annette Fulford, and the Royal Engineers Families Project by Jacqueline Gresko and Anita Bonson.



Family History Events

Surrey Arts Centre

Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak is coming to the Surrey Arts Centre for a day of lectures March 7, 2009!

For information about Megan, her ventures and expertise, see www.honoringourancestors.com

Tickets go on sale later this fall. Add your name to our wait list by calling 604-598-7328, or emailing genealogy@surrey.ca

Cloverdale Library

5642-176A Street, Surrey offers free orientations the 1st Saturday of every month 9:30 – 10:30 am.

Winter 2008

- **Land Ahoy! You See Land, but Where are the Records?** with Laurie J. Cooke, Saturday, January 10, 2009, 10:30 am – 12:00 pm. Fee \$10.
- **Start Searching/Writing Your Family History** with Brenda Smith, Saturdays, January 17, 31, February 14, 28, & March 14, 2009, Searching @ 10:30 pm – 12:30 pm. Writing @ 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm. Fee \$100 for series.

Pre-registration is required – please check the Genealogy section of the Surrey Public Library website www.spl.surrey.bc.ca or call us at 604-598-7328 for further information and updates.

Vancouver Public Library

- **Key Canadian Genealogy Websites**, Wednesday December 17, 2008, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm. Free.