

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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www.mapleridgemuseum.org

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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.

Family History Group Meetings

The October meeting will be October 6, 2010.

'Somewhere in the West'

By Janice Brown

When I started my adventure into ancestry, my hope was to see a record of my mother, born in Toronto 1916, with the common last name, Harvey. She grew up in Saskatchewan, ending life back in Toronto, where I was born. Surely, that would be a snap – but, no – even with the known statistics . . . nothing in Toronto. First lesson: not all vital statistics are available.

I posed the question to the charming ladies of our Historical Society and soon an email arrived with a website for me to research. This link to my mother's prairie town newspaper archives nearly knocked me from my chair.

In Preeceville, Saskatchewan, where Hilda Harvey resided from age 5 to 18, pictures, editorials, stories, class photographs, and sports teams showed smiling faces of many family members enjoying life as she had always portrayed it to me. She would croon the old song: "With someone like you . . . a pal good and true . . ." and we would end it in a comic harmony, our arms outspread like the width of her beloved blue-sky prairie horizon.

Again, with aid, more details emerge. William J. Harvey, born into a military family in Fort Amherst, England, set out for

Canada with his brother, Harry, for better prospects. Another brother headed to New Zealand, but I have yet to follow that trail. Although married with 3 children and 1 expected, he enlisted on December 15, 1915 at Toronto, served as a Gunner, and later with the Medical Corps. He was mustard-gassed while on stretcher-bearer duties, arriving home from the war on the *Royal George* in February 1919.

Receiving a land grant recorded in Saskatchewan Homestead Index, this encompassed a grueling train journey from Toronto with four small children (my mother being the baby), a horse and rickety wagon with provisions for the coming winter, and a scooped out home beside a hillock that was on their own meager 'land'.

Her Gentry parents, not understanding their circumstances, sent a dining room set to help them start in their new home. It lived in the snow, crowded under a lean-to with chopped firewood over it and under it, filling the shelves of the beautifully carved buffet as the young couple cracked the ice on their outside fireplace to heat water for their children's meals.

Fortune found them and thanks to Will's army experience, there before me, in the Preeceville newspaper archives, were photographs of the telephone

office/house where they raised 6 children to high school completion, in the heart of the growing town with wooden boardwalks and wagons passing.

My grandfather's mother joined them for some time, from England, and ran a bakery in a small shop next to the telephone office. There is a photograph of her, with her white cockatoo on her shoulder. She was a mid-wife, nurse, and exceptional gardener, growing the herbs she used in healing.

Job scarcity of the Depression Era brought the family back to Toronto — that's another adventure!

Additional tales linger, haunting now that I have such renewed faith in verbal history, such as: Was there really a 'mystery woman' that followed my grandfather home from the war and was, mother and child, turned away in a train station?Sigh!

Does it really matter? Perhaps not, but what we build will be accepted as history, hence the care in the details.

Happy trails!

Online Resources

US Newspapers

Some online and free at <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/search/pages/>

Irish Church records

<http://www.irishgenealogy.ie/>

Foreign Word List

These lists are for those who are researching in countries where you do not know the language.

http://www.familysearch.org/eng/search/RG/frameset_rhelps.asp?Page=.%2Fresearch%2Ftype%2FWord_List.asp&ActiveTab=Type

Newfoundland in WWI

http://www.therooms.ca/regiment/part1_entering_the_great_war.asp

Nova Scotia Historical Newspapers Online

http://librariesns.ca/content/news_paper-digitization

Family History Events

Abbotsford Genealogical Society

Meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm at the Clearbrook Library 32320 George Ferguson Way in Abbotsford.

- **Irish Genealogy** with Joyce Nagy, Sept. 21, 2010.
- **Home Children** with Marlene Dance, October, 19, 2010.
- **Can You Prove That? Standards of Proof for Family History Research** with Brenda Smith, Nov. 16, 2010.

Cloverdale Library

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

- **First Steps on the Ancestral Trail** with Brenda Smith, Saturday, September 11, 2010, 11:00am – 12:30pm. Fee: \$10.00

- **Start Searching Your Family History** with Brenda Smith, September 20, October 4 & 18, November 1 & 15, 2010, 5:30pm – 8:30pm. Fee \$100 for series.
- **Resources for Discovering First Nations Heritage** with Laurie J. Cooke, Saturday, October 2, 2010, 10:30am – Noon. Fee: Free, but donations welcome.
- **Second Annual Family History Show and Tell!** Last year we invited people who document their family history to bring in their creations - there were family quilts, artfully done scrapbooks, storyboards, digital collages and much more. We invite you once again to join us and bring whatever you've made to honour your ancestors. Saturday, November 13, 2010, 10:30am - Noon No charge, donations welcome.

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.

15th Annual Tri-Stake Family History Seminar

- **Finding Your Roots Family History Seminar**, October 23, 2010, 8:00am – 4:00pm. Fee Free.

6270 - 126th Street Surrey, BC, 604-597-9695

<http://www.findingyourroots.ca/>