

Family History Newsletter

Contents

Uncomfortable Truths	1
Online Resources	2
Family History Events	2

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

Find us on the web:

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 July meeting will be July 4, 2012.

Uncomfortable Truths

By Andrea Lister

If you watch *Who Do you Think You Are?* or *Finding Your Roots* you have seen an episode where the guest discovers that their ancestor owned slaves. It is easy to focus on the underground railroad and forget Canada's own slave owning history.

Slavery in Canada existed before European contact. The keeping of slaves was practiced by First Nations peoples who conducted raids as far south as California. Slavery was hereditary, the slaves being prisoners of war and their descendants were slaves.

In 1628 the first recorded slave in Canada was brought by a British Convoy to New France. By the mid-1700s Canada had about 1,000 slaves mainly in Lower Canada, now Quebec. Between 1783-4, some 1232 black slaves were brought by British masters into Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The Loyalist immigration brought about 2000 more slaves to the colonies.

In 1793 in Upper Canada, now Ontario, *an act to prevent the further introduction of slaves and to limit the terms of contracts for servitude with the province* was passed that stipulated that: no more slaves could be brought into Upper Canada; slaves already in Upper Canada would remain slaves; the children of

slaves will be freed upon reaching 25 years of age; and, children born to the children of slaves were free.

Lower Canada was slower to act. A bill to abolish slavery was introduced in 1792 during the first session of the Parliament. However it was not passed into law. It was not until the *British Imperial Act* went into effect August 1, 1834 that slavery was abolished throughout the Empire.

My relation and fellow family historian wondered if any of our ancestors were slave owners and did some searching.

She found *The Journal of Negro History, Volume 5*, published in 1920. Apparently Lieutenant Patrick Langan acted as agent for the Mohawk Indians and sold Nero to John Mittleberger for £60 December 5, 1780. Claiming the Negro as a prisoner of war General Allan Maclean imprisoned him "in the public Provot." [Pg 298] Nero escaped and went to his master Colonel Gordon. Mittleberger sued Langan in 1788 for the price and for damages and in January 1789 he was awarded judgment for the £60 and interest.

John Mittleberger is my 5th great-grandfather.

I knew that it was probable that my ancestors owned slaves. They were of the social elite in Nova Scotia and Upper and Lower

Canada and were there before 1834. However, knowing intellectually that it was likely and finding evidence of the reality are two different things.

LAC Cuts

From the Vancouver Public Library

The announced cuts to Library and Archives Canada include:

- Elimination of 30% of archivists and archival assistants;
- Reduction of digitization and circulation staff by 50%;
- Reduction of preservation and conservation staff;
- Closure of the interlibrary loans unit;
- Elimination of the National Archival Development Program (NADP) that supports programming at provincial, regional and university archives across Canada.

The following libraries will also close or be affected:

- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada;
- Transport Canada;
- Public Service Commission of Canada;
- Public Works and Government Services;
- Natural Resources Canada;
- Parks Canada; Industry Canada;
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada;
- Health Canada Agriculture Canada;
- The National Capital Commission;
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Show your support for everyone affected by these cuts including colleagues in the public service, researchers who rely on librarian and archivist expertise and access to specialized collections, members of the public who benefit from continued access to these services. These cuts affect everyone!

Online Resources

BC Archives

<http://search.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca/sn-455ED32/view/TextualRecords/find%2Bnaturalization%2B%2B%2B%2B/11>

Online index for Naturalization Records from Cranbrook.

Family Search

<https://www.familysearch.org/>

- Victoria Times (British Columbia) Births, Marriage and Deaths, 1901-1939
- BC, Naturalization Records, 1859-1926

Family History Events

Abbotsford Genealogical Society

- **Family Curator and Archivist**, Oct 16, 2012, 6:30 pm. Clearbrook Library.

BCGS

- **General Meeting: Queen Elizabeth's Jubilee celebration and BCGS Family History Book Award Winners**, June 13, 2012, 7:30 pm. 7:30 pm at Edmonds Community Centre, 7282 Kingsway (Kingsway & Edmonds), Burnaby V5E 1G3.

Finding Your Roots

- **Tri-Stake Seminar**, Saturday October 13, 2012, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, 6270-126 Street, Surrey, BC

Check their website

<http://www.findingyourroots.ca/> in September to register and view a list of seminars to attend.

Langley Centennial Museum

- **First Steps on the Ancestral Trail** with Brenda L. Smith, Saturday, September 29, 2012, 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm.
- **Can You Prove That? Standards of Proof For the Family Historian** with Brenda L. Smith, Saturday, October 24, 2012, 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm. For information call 604-532-3536

Surrey Libraries

5642-176A Street, Surrey offers free orientations the 1st Saturday of every month 10:00 – 10:50am.

- **Introduction to Genealogy Resources** with Jamie Brown, Saturday, Sept. 9, 2012. Fee: \$10.
- **Military Records** with Colin Stevens, Saturday, Sept. 29, 2012. Fee: \$10.
- **Start Searching Your Family History: A Beginners Workshop in Five Lessons** with Brenda L. Smith, Mondays 5:30 to 8:30 pm Oct. 1, 15, 29 and Nov. 19 and 26, 2012. Fee: \$100.

Pre-registration is required – please check the Family History section of the Surrey Libraries website www.spl.surrey.bc.ca or call us at 604-598-7328.