

GENERATIONS

ISSUE 1 | VOL 51 | MARCH 2026



CAROLINE ELIZABETH, MARQUISE D'ASSERETO DI SERRAVALLE

Shaun Hobson shares the history and life of an interesting woman buried in a Winnipeg cemetery.

HOW REDDIT CAN SUPPORT YOUR ONLINE FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH

Sheena Peckham shares how you can utilise Reddit to help expand and support your family history research.



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HOURS OF OPERATION

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.



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**Caroline Elizabeth,
Marquise d'Assereto
di Serravalle**

**SOUTH WEST BRANCH MANITOBA
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**



Heritage Dinner 2026

APRIL 9, 2026

Knox United Church, Brandon, MB

18th Street & Victoria Avenue (use 17th Street entrance)

Guest Speaker



**STELLA
FEDENIUK**

**TOPIC: THE UKRAINIAN
EXPERIENCE: "FROM UKRAINE TO
THE PEROGY BELT IN CANADA"**

"FROM THE TIME THAT UKRAINIAN IMMIGRANTS FIRST ARRIVED IN CANADA TO THE PRESENT, THEIR RICH HISTORY AND CULTURE HAVE BECOME WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC OF OUR NATION. COME AND HEAR STORIES OF TRAGEDY, SURVIVAL AND RESILIENCE OF UKRAINIAN CANADIANS FROM UKRAINE TO CANADA. LEARN ABOUT OUR CULTURE, CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS, ALL MIXED WITH A SPLASH OF LOCAL HISTORY AS TOLD BY OUR PRESENTER"

Doors Open 5:30pm

Dinner 6:00pm

Price \$35/person

The Ruth Tester

Memorial Award

Presentation

**For Tickets: Email sw-treasurer@mbgenealogy.com
or call 204 724-0968**

Deadline for Tickets: March 25, 2026

Everyone Welcome!

Annual Heritage Dinner 2026

hosted by

South West Branch, Manitoba Genealogical Society

Thursday, April 9, 2026

Doors open: 5:30 PM Dinner: 6:00 PM

Knox United Church 18th & Victoria Avenue (Enter on 17th St side)

Guest Speaker: Stella Fedeniuk

**Topic: The Ukrainian Experience: "From Ukraine to the
Perogy Belt in Canada"**

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INFORMATION REQUIRED TO REGISTER

Register by **Monday, March 25, 2026**

Heritage Dinner Price: **\$35 / person**

Name(s) _____

Number of Tickets: _____ X \$35 = Total _____

Mailing Address _____

City/Town: _____ Province: _____ PC: _____

Email: _____ Phone Number: _____

Dietary needs: _____

Pay by cheque payable to "South West Branch – MGS" via mail or drop off
in person with either cash or cheque at 12 Macleod Drive, Brandon, MB
R7A 6G1 **No e-transfers**

Call George at 204-724-0968 or email sw-treasurer@mbgenealogy.com

New Periodicals at MGS



Kerri James
Library Volunteer
Member no. 520

MGS Library Volunteer, Kerri James, shares the latest periodicals for February 2026 that you can access at the Resource Centre.

We have many digital and hardcopy periodicals available for use in our library. The digital copies are available for viewing on the Resource Centre's computers and the current print copies are available for use within the Resource Centre. The printed copy back-issues are available for members to either review in the Resource Centre or to check out for up to 3 weeks.

During December, January, and February, we have received 48 issues (34 digital, 14 paper) of 35 different periodicals. There are too many to review every one, so here are some highlights:

Featured periodicals

Family Tree Magazine

Family Tree Magazine is published monthly (hardcopy) by the Warner's Group Publications. This is currently the only periodical we pay for. The Feb 2026 edition is packed with articles and information, including:

- **"Poverty, Illegitimacy and Lies"** by David Annal: The author looks at the struggles our Victorian Urban working class ancestors endured, and shows how these challenges could often lead people to be less than honest in their dealings with authority.
- **"Reclaiming my German Roots"**: An interview with Erica Worth about her family's history and her process to obtain German Citizenship - a right of all those whose families had to flee Nazi persecution during the second world war.
- **"Dear Paul"**: This month, Paul Chiddicks finds that all human life is to be found in the census returns, as well as bringing us his usual selection of weird and wonderful snippets from the genealogical records.
- **"Revisiting Research"**: Chris Paton has written countless family history books, lectured worldwide, and has been researching his family tree for decades. Here he invites us to revisit our research - to shine a new light on our findings. Discover the numerous benefits of reviewing your previous family history research.
- **"Queen Catherine Court, Ratcliff an East London Slum"**: Genealogist Patricia Sears presents a fascinating case study of life in an East London court in the 19th century, and details the appalling conditions in which its residents lived.

Chinook Arch

Chinook Arch is published digitally four times a year by the Alberta Family Histories Society. The January issue contains:

- **"Alberta Pioneers: The Forsters of Berry Creek Horse Ranch"** by Shelley Lunney: When Alberta Pioneer Mary Forster died in 1942, the Hanna Herald published some excerpts from her personal diary relating her family's experience at Berry Creek, Alberta. Shelley used that and other newspaper articles about the Forster family to write this article.
- **"Research Roundup: AFHS Settlers Project"** by Ron Gilmore: The Alberta Family Histories Society has collected 265 such books from communities all over Alberta. A significant portion of these books were provided by the Chinook Branch. To date, we have indexed over 70 books and captured more than 55,000 names. You can now search these names on the AFHS Alberta Ancestors website under the Settlers tab.

Here's a list of all periodicals received in the last three months:

Title	Organization	Format
Aberdeen & North East Scotland FHS Journal	Aberdeen & North East Scotland Family History Society	Digital
BC Genealogist	British Columbia Genealogical Society	Digital
BCGS News	British Columbia Genealogical Society	Digital
Berkshire Family Historian	Berkshire Family History Society	Paper
BGOGS Newsletter	Bruce & Grey Branch of OGS	Digital
CADFHS Magazine	Chesterfield & District Family History	Digital
Chinook Arch	Alberta Family Histories Society	Digital
e-Zine	Manitoba Genealogical Society - SE & Winnipeg	Digital
Families	Ontario Genealogical Society	Paper
Family History Handbook	Society of Genealogists	Paper
Family Tree Magazine	Family Tree Magazine UK	Paper
Generations (MB)	Manitoba Genealogical Society	Digital
Generations (NB)	New Brunswick Genealogical Society	Digital
GFO Bulletin	Genealogical Forum of Oregon	Digital
GWSFHS Journal	Glasgow & West of Scotland Family History Society	Digital
Journal	Glamorgan Family History Society	Paper
Journal of Gloucestershire Family History Society	Gloucestershire Family History Society	Paper
Kingston Relations	Kingston Branch OGS	Digital

Title	Organization	Format
KINnections	Halton - Peel Branch, Ontario Ancestors/OGS)	Digital
Lambton Lifeline	Lambton County Branch OGS	Digital
Living Connection	Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia	Digital
London Leaf	London & Middlesex Branch OGS	Digital
Mennonite Historian	Mennonite Heritage Archives	Paper
MGS Monthly News	Minnesota Genealogical Society	Digital
Minnesota Generations	Minnesota Genealogical Society	Digital
MPSGG Newsletter	Muskoka Parry Sound Genealogy Group	Paper
NDFHS Journal	Northumberland & Durham Family History Society	Digital
New Zealand Family Tree	New Zealand Family Tree	Digital
Nova Scotia Genealogist (The)	Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia	Digital
Okanagan Researcher	Kelowna & District Genealogical Society	Digital
PEI Genealogical Society Newsletter	Prince Edward Island Genealogical Society	Paper
Prairie History	Manitoba Historical Society	Paper
SGS Bulletin	Saskatchewan Genealogical Society	Digital
SIB Folk News	Orkney Family History Society (The)	Digital
What's on at MGS	Manitoba Genealogical Society	Digital

Podcasts for Genealogists

Kendra Gaede, PLCGS, BJ
Chair, MGS Research Team

I find most genealogical podcasts too dry and snooze-inducing to hold my attention, but I highly recommend these genealogy-adjacent listens to any MGS members who like a good story with their documentary history.



The Black Hum, Seasons 1 & 2



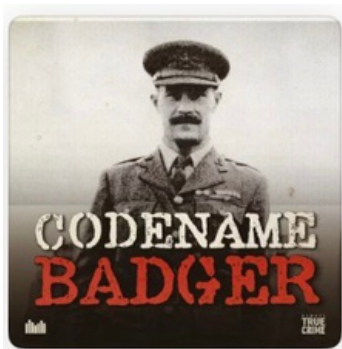
Following Black History Month, why not check out this podcast, where the first season explored the history of Canada's only all-Black No. 2 Construction Battalion in World War I? Learn

about the contributions and untold legacy of the Black men who served their country with resilience, despite the bigotry and rejection they faced from the outset. The second season of The Black Hum explores the Black experience in 20th Century Canada, including the story of Hewburn Greenidge, the first Black medical school graduate west of Ontario, and Charlie Kelly, a barrier-breaking baseball player.

Available on: [Apple](#), [Spotify](#)

Codename Badger

For lovers of military history, Robert Ludlum books and true crime, Codename Badger might be right up your alley. In this podcast, journalists help a woman research the mysterious death of



her father – a young British army major who died in an accident in 1955. Her mother was later visited by a man who told her the death was no accident and her husband was a spy. What really happened over five decades ago? Tune in to find out.

Available on: [Apple](#), [Spotify](#), [Audible](#)

Uncanny

For anyone who enjoys a bit of spooky with their history, check out Uncanny, the BBC series hosted by Danny Robins, creator of the popular podcast, The Battersea Poltergeist.



While the series focuses on real-life ghost sightings, UFO encounters and other strange phenomenon, it often uses local histories, census data and old newspapers to provide historical context and possible explanations. Each story's plausibility is also evaluated by both an expert skeptic, and a paranormal researcher, giving voice to both sides of the argument. Try not to get hooked! The only downside is how short these episodes are and how few there are in a season.

Available on: [Spotify](#), [Apple](#), [BBC Sounds](#) ■



Caroline Elizabeth, Marquise d'Assereto di Serravalle

Shaun Hobson, Volunteer
Member #5336

I found a grave marker in the St. Mary's Cemetery located in the centre of Winnipeg. Its inscription read:

CAROLINE E. MC CANN
NEE MARQUISE D'ASSERETO
ONLY DAUGHTER OF MARQUIS LOUIS
d'ASSERETO
BORN MARCH 14 1847
DIED JAN 24 1936.

This led me to wonder how a marquise ended up buried in Winnipeg. My research led to more questions and the following story.

During my research, I found the 2x great-grandson of Caroline, Kevin McGrath, and reached out to him. He has been most helpful with supplying information and documents; the prize document is a hand-written *History of the d'Assereto Family* which was written by Caroline's youngest son and Kevin's great-grandfather, Andrew Mulligan. I extend deep gratitude for Kevin's assistance.

WARNING: The story contains details of domestic violence and may be disturbing for some readers.

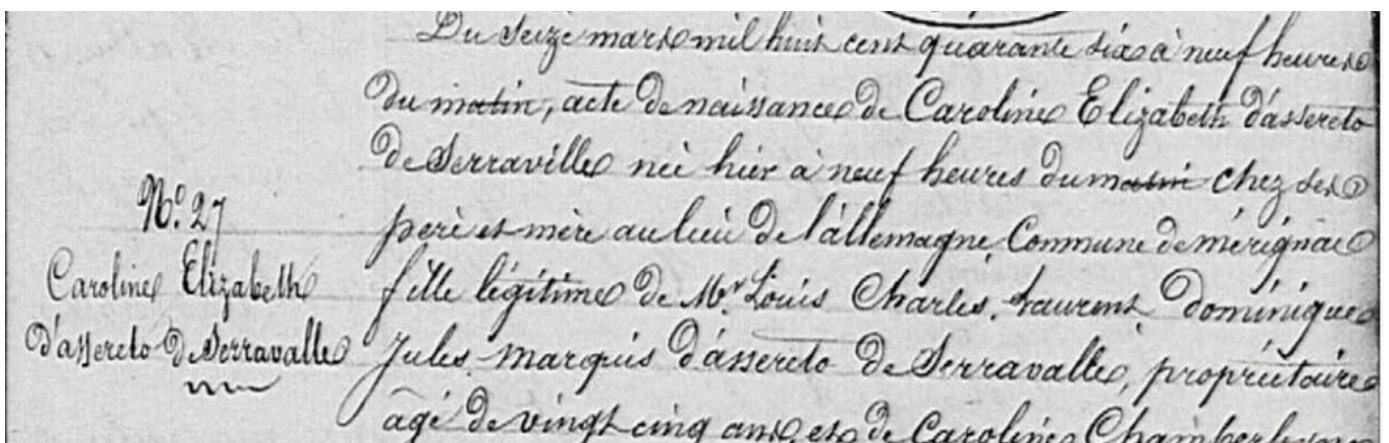
Noble Title



Andrew Mulligan and his mother, Caroline Elizabeth Mc Cann; née d'Assereto (photo courtesy of Kevin McGrath)

Caroline Elizabeth, Marquise d'Assereto di Serravalle, was born on 15 March 1846 in Mérignac, Gironde, Nouvelle-Aquitaine, France. She was the daughter of **Louis Charles Laurent Dominique Jules, Marquis d'Assereto di Serravalle** and **Caroline Chamberlaine Dickson**.

Throughout various documents, Lady Caroline d'Assereto di Serravalle is alternately styled as **Countess d'Assereto** or **Marquise d'Assereto**. Inheritance laws regarding noble titles varied significantly across regions



French, Church Baptisms and Civil Births; Archives de Gironde; Entry for Caroline Elizabeth D'Assereto

and eras, and the right to inherit a marquessate was often restricted to male heirs.

Therefore, where no male heirs existed, a daughter might not inherit the title of marquise, but could instead assume the lower rank of countess, one degree below her father's title. Because no primary document has been located that definitively establishes her formal title, the use of "**Lady Caroline d'Assereto di Serravalle**" remains acceptable and accurate as an informal courtesy style, regardless of whether her legal rank was Countess or Marquise.

Lady Caroline has nobility from both her paternal, **d'ASSERETO**, and maternal, **DICKSON**, lines.

The d'Assereto Heritage

The d'Assereto family originated in Genoa, Italy, and has been counted among the Genoese nobility since the 12th century. The family's known lineage can be traced to its earliest documented figure, Biagio Assereto (1383–1456). Born in Recco as the son of a blacksmith, Biagio's talents quickly set him apart. He came to the attention of Francesco Spinola, lord of the city, who took him into his service as a page.

In 1423, Biagio left for Genoa and began a distinguished military career. As a naval commander of the Republic, he undertook several notable campaigns: he led a Genoese fleet in support of Joan II of Naples in 1425, captured the Florentine commander Ferruccio Verro in 1426, and successfully repelled Attilio Campofregoso and his Florentine allies in September 1427.

His most celebrated achievement came in 1435, when he commanded a small Genoese fleet sent to relieve Francesco Spinola, besieged at Gaeta by Alfonso V of Aragon. Biagio's leadership led to a decisive victory in the famous Battle of Ponza. Although he later declined to press a full invasion of the Neapolitan mainland due to insufficient manpower, his success earned him the fief of Serravalle Scrivia. From that point on, he and his descendants adopted the extended name "d'Assereto di Serravalle." Serravalle Scrivia lies roughly 100 kilometers southeast of Turin.

In the centuries that followed, the d'Assereto family became heavily involved in Mediterranean maritime trade, particularly during the flourishing era of Italian sailing commerce. They owned one of the largest



Noble Coat of Arms of the d'Assereto Family (via Wikipedia)

private fleets operating in the region, and for a time, their vessels were among the most dominant on the Mediterranean, supporting trade routes that reached as far as the East Indies.

A colourful legend surrounds the d'Assereto name: it is said that during a summit between the Kings of Spain, France, and Italy, the family captured all three monarchs and held them hostage in the Alps. In exchange for their safe return, they supposedly demanded—and received—land in each kingdom.

While this tale adds a romantic flourish to the family history, no historical record has ever verified such an extraordinary event. It is far more plausible that Louis' branch of the family acquired land near Villefranche-sur-Saône through the French seigneurial system, which rewarded service to the crown with large land grants. Such estates, or *seigneuries*, were typically bestowed by local governors and intendants upon nobles, merchants, or religious institutions tasked with settling and developing the land.

Giulio Domenico d'Assereto di Serravalle (1755-1824), Lady Caroline's paternal grandfather, was born in Genoa. He served for over thirty years in France and as a General-Major for Austria during the Napoleonic Wars. He was granted French naturalization by Louis XVIII for his services.

Lady Caroline's paternal grandmother, **Marie Adèle**

Charlotte “Caroline” Canalè-Oglou (1791-1873), was born in Eix de Verdun, France and died in Villefrance, France.

The Dickson Heritage

Although Lady Caroline's maternal grandparents are both Dickson, there is no relationship found between them. Both of these lines were involved with the East India Company and earned notable promotions for their service.

Lieutenant Colonel William Dickson (c.1781-1828), her maternal grandfather, was born in Hampshire, England. He commanded the 7th (VII) Regiment Light Cavalry/ 7th Bengal Light Cavalry and participated in the siege of various forts in India. His mother, **Lady Frances Baird**, was from a prominent Scottish family line, a baronetcy line of Saughtonhall in western Edinburgh.

Elizabeth Mary Ann Dickson (c.1791-1846) is Lady Caroline's maternal grandmother. Although her parents are unknown, she was the niece of Lt. General James Dickson, who left her a sizeable bequest of £20,000 to be established in a trust (approximately \$5.2M Canadian dollars in 2025).

Parents and Early Life

Lady Caroline's father, **Louis Charles Laurent Dominique Jules, Marquis d'Assereto di Serravalle** was born on 10 August 1820 in Turin, Piemonte, Italy in the parish of Santissima Annunziata. He was the son of **Giulio Domenico, Marquis d'Assereto** and Marie **Adèle Charlotte “Caroline” Canalè-Oglou**.

From childhood, Louis, Marquis d'Assereto, was steered toward a military life by his mother. In 1833, he entered the naval school in Genoa, and two years later embarked aboard the sailing frigate *Carlo Felice*. In 1836, he was assigned to the *Euridice*, commanded by Captain Count Francesco Serr, and sent on a diplomatic and protective mission to Montevideo. For two years, the ship remained in South American waters, safeguarding thriving Italian trading interests and providing representation, surveillance, and assistance to Italian vessels operating in the region.

Louis was promoted to second-class midshipman in 1838, but in 1842 he left the navy to pursue the infantry—

an ambition cut short when he failed the entrance exams.

In 1843, Louis was summoned to Paris by his mother, the Countess de Koss, who strongly disapproved of his recent marriage on 26 December 1842 in Turin to Clara-Bernardina Gamba, an Italian dancer and the daughter of a veteran officer and a Turin hairdresser. The Countess reminded Louis of his obligations to family and station, and petitioned for the marriage to be annulled on the basis it occurred without due publication of the banns and without her consent. The annulment was granted 23 March 1844.

Not long after, Louis met Caroline Dickson. They were married on 15 March 1845 at the British Embassy in Paris, and spent much of their married life in France and Spain.

Lady Caroline's mother, **Caroline Chamberlaine Dickson**, was born 29 October 1816 in Hajipur, West Bengal, India. She was the daughter of **Lieutenant William Dickson** and **Mary “Anne” Elizabeth Dickson**.

Caroline Dickson died on 6 June 1873 in Madrid; her estate was valued at £481 13s. 3d. — equivalent to roughly \$135, 200 Canadian dollars in 2025. Soon after, Louis returned to Villefranche-sur-Saône, where he became a member of the prestigious *Société des Agriculteurs de France*.

Louis and Caroline's marriage settlement required Caroline to place 100,000 francs in the Bank of France. Her handwritten will — tragically lost in the 1950 Winnipeg flood — left the French estate to “the children that might follow her.” With no surviving document and no claimant, the French authorities eventually divided and sold the estate.

Lady Caroline had three known siblings who died in infancy. One of them was Caroline Blanche born 6 March 1849 in Bordeaux, Gironde; her date of death is unknown.

Lady Caroline herself had a remarkable beginning. Due to her mother's poor health, she entered a Spanish convent at ten years of age. There she received an exceptional education, becoming fluent in seven languages and mastering both the harp and piano. Around age twenty-one, her mother's twin, Helen Hamilton (née Dickson), traveled to Spain to bring

Get featured in the next *Generations*

Share your family tree, anecdotes from your past, crafty how-tos passed down through the generations, and more.

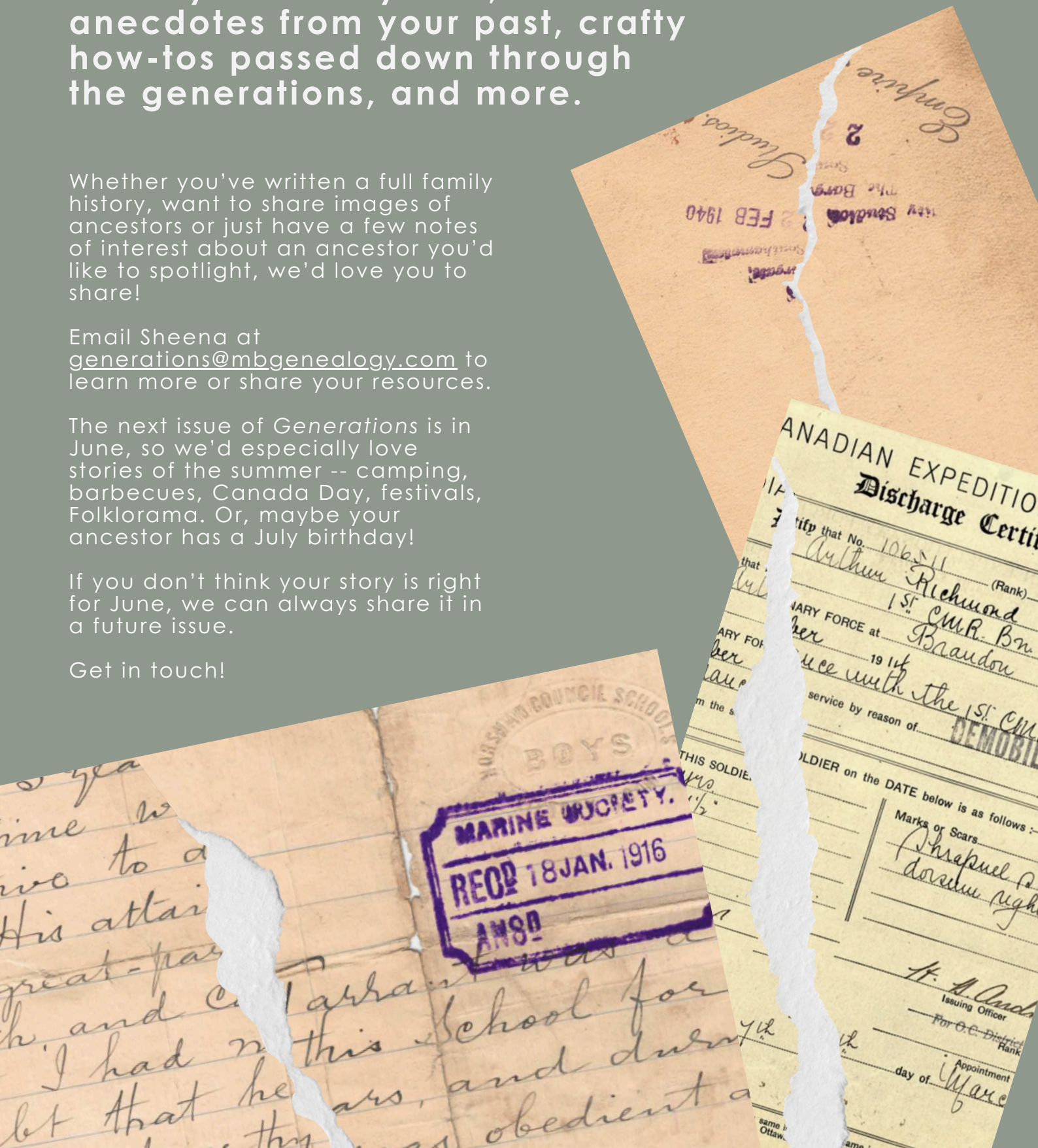
Whether you've written a full family history, want to share images of ancestors or just have a few notes of interest about an ancestor you'd like to spotlight, we'd love you to share!

Email Sheena at generations@mbgenealogy.com to learn more or share your resources.

The next issue of *Generations* is in June, so we'd especially love stories of the summer -- camping, barbecues, Canada Day, festivals, Folklorama. Or, maybe your ancestor has a July birthday!

If you don't think your story is right for June, we can always share it in a future issue.

Get in touch!



Caroline back to Dublin, where she would live with the Hamilton family.

First Marriage

Helen Hamilton played a pivotal role in shaping her niece's future. After bringing Caroline home from the Spanish convent where she had been educated, Helen introduced her to James Lorenzo Verschoyle (1832–1875), a Captain in the 66th (Berkshire) Regiment and a member of a respected Irish family of Dutch descent. James had recently returned from service with the Bengal Army. Their marriage took place at St. Peter's Church in Dublin on 24 February 1868.

Whether Caroline and James married for love or family strategy is impossible to say with certainty, but the evidence suggests a blend of both. Caroline was the only child of a marquis, a position that implied wealth, status, and expectations regarding alliances. Families of her standing often arranged marriages that strengthened social ties or expanded influence, especially across borders.



James came from a family of good standing, and the match would have been socially appropriate. A formal marriage settlement, common among upper-class unions in the 1860s, further indicates that the families were involved in structuring the marriage and protecting property interests.

Arranged marriages of this period often allowed the couple to meet, approve, and even develop affection before vows were exchanged. Their union was likely neither a purely romantic attachment nor an entirely strategic transaction, but rather a careful balance of duty, compatibility, and personal consent.

In 1874, Caroline and James settled at Roebuck Hall (pictured below) in Dublin, a grand residence requiring ten maids and additional staff.

At only 43 years of age, James Lorenzo Verschoyle died at Roebuck Hall on 26 September 1875 from Bright's Disease. His estate was valued at £4,000—equivalent to roughly \$1.125 million Canadian dollars in 2025.

Before their marriage, a detailed settlement was signed on 22 February 1868 between James, Louis Charles Laurent Dominique Jules, Marquis d'Assereto di Serravalle, and Caroline Elizabeth, Countess d'Assereto di Serravalle. It outlined how each spouse's property, inheritance, and financial rights were to be handled.

Both brought significant assets into the marriage.

- James owned an estate in Queen's County that generated £3,000 annually (approximately \$433,500 Canadian dollars in 2025).
- Caroline had a £5,000 trust fund left to her by her aunt Helen (approximately \$1.34M Canadian dollars in 2025).

The marriage settlement allowed James to use the income from Caroline's property during his lifetime. After his death, the funds were intended for their children, with the exception of the eldest son, who would receive his own inheritance. The key clause stated that if the marriage produced "not more than three children," Caroline could direct half the trust property to anyone she chose after James' death.

This wording later became the center of a legal dispute. Caroline argued that

since only three children were alive at the time of James' death, she could grant half the trust to a man named **Bennett Thompson** — whose identity and relationship to Caroline remain unclear. She maintained the phrase referred to surviving children, not the total number born.

The court disagreed. After examining the grammar and legal precedent, it ruled that "not more than three children" meant the total number of children born to the marriage. Therefore, Caroline was not permitted to redirect half the property, and the children retained their original rights under the settlement.

The couple had five children:

1. **Louis Charles Hamilton Massey** was born 29 December 1868 in Edinburgh, Scotland. He died in Málaga, Spain on 29 November 1870 at just 1 year and 11 months old.
2. **Robert** was born in Málaga on 30 June 1870; he died there two days later on July 2nd.
3. **Theodore Stuart Robert** was born 16 December 1871 in Málaga. Theodore joined the Royal Dublin Fusiliers (3rd Battalion). He married **Emily Margaret Pierce McClellan** on 27 June 1895 in Cirencester, Bristol, England. They had one son, **Brian Stuart (1898–1983)**. Theodore lived in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England before returning to Queen's County, Ireland, where records suggest he was bankrupt by 1909. His date of death is uncertain, though some sources claim **June 1953**.
4. **James Joseph** was born 22 May 1873 at Randallstown, Antrim, Northern Ireland. James died heroically on 5 January 1894 at Duchess' Pond, Stapleton, Gloucestershire. He drowned while attempting to save a young skater who had fallen through the ice. His estate was valued at **£168 15s. 6d—about \$53,500 Canadian dollars in 2025**.
5. **George Moutray** was born 15 March 1875 in Dundrum, Dublin. George died on 21 September 1907 at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Bournemouth, England following a vehicle crash. His estate was valued at **£3,807 3s. 11½d (approximately \$1.15 million Canadian dollars in 2025)**. He named his half-brothers, Louis and Andrew, as beneficiaries of his life insurance, and they received the payout upon his death

Second Marriage

After James' death, Caroline discovered the true state of their finances: they had been living beyond their means. James had taken out loans, leaving her with debts she was now responsible for. Facing these difficulties, Caroline left Roebuck Hall and moved with her children into a hotel in Dublin. It was there that she met **Andrew Mulligan (1845–1900)**, a Post Office employee with political aspirations. Andrew was tall, slender, eloquent, and possessed a fondness for 'the last drop in the bottle of whiskey'. He dreamed of contributing to Ireland's push for freedom.

Caroline and Andrew married at the Registry Office in Dublin on 15 January 1877. Only weeks later, in March,

their new union faced public scrutiny when Thomas Knowles, a butcher and cattle dealer, sued them for breach of promise, claiming Caroline had promised to marry him. The court ruled in his favour, awarding him £200 in damages (about \$57,500 CAD in 2025).

Despite the scandal (or because of it), Caroline and Andrew embarked on an adventurous and unusually grand honeymoon. They cruised to Rome on their own yacht, then traveled by horse-drawn carriage through the Alps — so steep in places that a second team of horses had to be hitched on. During their travels, they were robbed by masked bandits who took their money and jewelry but left them unharmed. Their journey wound through Italy, France, and Spain, before returning to their yacht at a port near Madrid.

Caroline and Andrew had two children:

1. **Louis Timothy** (1877-1950)
2. **Andrew** (1880-1965)

Caroline and Andrew's life together was nomadic. They lived first in Ireland, then France (where Louis was born), then Switzerland (where Andrew was born), followed by Spain, where the boys attended school. By 1881, the Mulligans were found living at 22 Cooper's Road, Camberwell, London, but the marriage unraveled quickly. Caroline petitioned the High Court for a divorce on 24 July 1883. The petition includes Caroline's affidavit in which she describes a marriage marked by "great unkindness" and systemic violence that began almost immediately after their 1877 wedding. Despite her status as a wealthy widow with a separate estate, she was subjected to frequent financial extortion and public humiliations, including being flogged with a horsewhip in Dublin and struck with a glass tumbler that left a permanent scar.

The domestic instability was so severe that the Court of Chancery removed Caroline's children from her previous marriage, citing Andrew's gross intemperance and unfitness. Throughout their travels across Europe, Caroline frequently fled to her father in France to escape Andrew's life-threatening assaults with knives and blunt instruments.

The final years in London saw Andrew bring a mistress into their home and brutally assault Caroline with a hot gridiron in front of their children. By the time of her petition, Andrew was imprisoned in Wandsworth Gaol

for his inability to keep the peace, prompting Caroline to seek a formal end to the union.

[Click here to read Caroline's affidavit in her own words.](#)

Immigration

In 1887, Caroline and her children emigrated to Manitoba, encouraged by letters from the Whites, early pioneers she had met in London. The Whites had written glowingly of Canada, calling it "a grand country," and Caroline, enticed by the expansion of the Canadian West and the need to put miles and an ocean between Andrew and herself, packed up and left for Canada with her two sons.

They settled first in Cypress River, a frontier community that had recently relocated after the CPR bypassed the original townsite of Littleton. Early housing was scarce; Caroline and her sons initially lived in a sod shack before spending the winter with the Langevin family.

In the spring, Caroline purchased a homestead and pre-emption; three-quarters of a section of 'good rolling prairie land'. She shipped in lumber from Winnipeg to build an impressive four-gabled house with bay windows, and even installed a hot-air furnace — an unusual luxury. After three years on this farm, they moved into the village so the boys could attend school.

Around 1897, Caroline traveled to London, leaving her sons in Cypress River with instructions to take their meals at the local hotel. Six months later, she requested that her son Andrew join her; his journey from Montreal to Liverpool took six weeks. She soon summoned Louis as well, enrolling both boys in Skerry's Business College. Louis disliked London's congested city life and soon he and Caroline returned to Canada, while Andrew chose to stay and visit family.

After their return to Canada, Caroline, Louis, and Andrew settled in Fork River. It is located along Hwy 20 between Dauphin and Winnipegosis, in the Municipality of Mossey River. Fork River was established in 1897 with the arrival of the Canadian Northern Railway and quickly drew settlers and businesses. They remained only a few years in Fork River before relocating to Winnipeg, where opportunities were growing.

Around 1900, Caroline received a letter from her father,

urging her to visit him because he was close to ninety years of age and bedridden. She collected Andrew from Detroit, and together they sailed from New York to Southampton, then traveled to Paris and onward to Nice.

They visited the ailing Marquis for six months. On 27 July 1901, after their departure, he married his housekeeper, Philomène Anaïs Teyssier (née Jalifier), making it his fourth marriage. Although he was bedridden for his marriage, he regained his health and outlived Philomène.

Caroline's Subsequent Marriages

Caroline married **Thomas Henry Knight** in Winnipeg on 26 July 1904. They owned homes on Magnus Avenue and later Home Street which provided them with rental income. Thomas died by suicide on 29 May 1909 in Winnipeg, while she was visiting Andrew in Saskatchewan. Later that year, Caroline moved in with her son Andrew and his family.

On 2 September 1916, she married **Patrick James McCann**. Though nothing in surviving records explains the fate of this union, the family rumour is that Patrick ran off with some of her money shortly after the marriage. The 1921 census lists her as married but living with Andrew, and by 1926 she was listed as a widow.

Caroline spent her final years at 485 McDermot Avenue in Winnipeg, the home of her son, Andrew. She died there on 24 January 1936, in her 90th year, and was buried in St. Mary's Cemetery in Winnipeg.

Caroline lived a life of juxtapositions, which led her to Winnipeg. Her title and the advantages that came with it protected her, but also made her vulnerable. Her early life was spent in gentle surroundings shaped by privilege and refinement, yet her later years were marked by reinvention, hardship and frontier resilience. She showed an extraordinary capacity to adapt and appears to have been a formidable character to have tackled the hurdles of her life. It was a long life and she lived it with the honour that was bestowed on her by her title and obligations. She was a proud woman and should be celebrated for the strength she found to live her life. ■

Books at the Society

Janet Smith
Library Volunteer
Member no. 5837

Here are some of the books that have been recently added to the MGS Library.

Oak Lake History Book: Our Journey Continues

Oak Lake History Book II Committee, 2025

Location: MAN 971.27 SIFT OXT2 (25040)

This is a sequel to the original history book *Ox Trails to Blacktop* (1982). This history of the area since 1982 includes businesses, industries, agriculture, schools, churches, cemeteries, community organizations, recreation, celebrations, and individual family histories. There are lots of timelines, area photos and family pictures.

MGS Volunteer Obituaries

Transcribed by MGS volunteer Lesley Curtis, 2025 (ongoing updates)

Location: REF 929.5 MGS

Guidance and examples of citations from every type of record from every source type and media. This is a highly recognized resource for genealogists, historians and other researchers.

The following two publications are among those donated from the collection of Jean Tucker, long-time MGS member, who passed away recently. Jean was one of the Founding Members of the Dauphin Branch.

Seventieth Anniversary Souvenir Booklet, Gilbert Plains S.D. No. 630 1892 – 1962, Gilbert Plains, MB

Location: MAN 971.27 GILB GIL

This publication begins with a message from Stewart E. McLean, the Minister of Education at the time. There are school photos, class lists, teachers over the years, a municipality map showing land holdings in 1892 and 1962. It concludes with labeled photos of the 1923 class and the “present-day” (1962) class.

Fiftieth Anniversary 1895 – 1945, Tamarisk School District No. 847, Grandview, MB

Location: MAN 971.27 GRAN TAM

This little booklet begins with a photo of the Tamarisk School Board and Teacher 1945, and is packed with pictures of school buildings, baseball teams, teacher and class lists, and the honour roll.

Location	Author	Title
ECAN 971.3	FRON WAL v.1/2, 3/4	Immigrants from England, 1800-1900, v. 1-2: Frontenac, Lennox & Addington County, v. 3-4: Hastings County and Prince Edward County, Ontario
CAN 971.2	ENG	The English River book : a North West Company journal ... 1786
GEN 929.11	FAM 2004	Family Chronicle's dating old photographs, 1840-1929. Corrected ed., 2004.
GBI 941.3	FIF CRA v.1, 2	Crail deaths 1794-1854, from The Sexton books
GBI 942.5	DER ASH	Monumental inscriptions, St. Oswalds, Ashbourne [Derbyshire]
CDR 796.9	LED	The Heather Curling Club, 1916-2016 / Ed Ledohowski [computer file]
MAN 378	UofMan 1957	Brown and Gold--Official annual of the University of Manitoba Students' Union. Vol. 38, 1957
MAN 355.3	FIE	A field ambulance in France & Belgium : history of No. 10 Canadian Field Ambulance
GBI 941.6	MEN	Men and arms : the Ulster settlers, c. 1630
GBI 941.5	FIN2	Through her eyes : a new history of Ireland in 21 women
MAN 971.27	MACD MEM	Memories & melodies : the history of Brunkild, 1871-1980 [and Pt.2, 1980-2003]



Volunteers are key to your family history research at MGS, but we need your help for a range of tasks -- both in person and virtual.

If you have a few free hours per week and would like to help, please contact
volunteer@mbgenealogy.com

How Reddit can support your online family history research

Sheena Peckham

Member no. 6699

Reddit is a social media platform styled as a forum. Just like other social media sites, its content consists of images, articles, videos and stories submitted by other users.

I've used Reddit for various purposes, including genealogy, and have found brilliant support within the different communities there. These communities are called 'subreddits' and are themed around different topics and interests, including genealogy. Each subreddit has its own moderation team and people running the show behind the scenes.

Reddit can be used in endless ways, but it is particularly useful for genealogists because:

- There are a wide range of subreddits, including those which speak to really niche interests or needs.
- Several subreddits exist solely to help each other out, meaning you can find really interesting and helpful people.
- Discussions on Reddit are indexed in search results, including for AI chatbots. This means that if someone is searching for the same thing, they can find you (or you, them) which can help break down brick walls.

A range of subreddits

You can find so many helpful communities on Reddit to support in your family history research. Just like other social platforms though, you might run into the odd person who comments before thinking!

Some notable subreddits for family historians include:

- r/Genealogy (186k members): You can share tips and tricks, ask questions or discuss anything related to genealogy.

- r/AncestryDNA (145K members): A place to discuss DNA results via Ancestry and get support. There may also be subreddits for other platforms. Alternatively, there's the more generic r/DNAAncestry (8.7k members).
- r/AskHistorians (2.6m members): A great place to ask very knowledgeable people about questions related to the context of your ancestor's life.

If you're researching ancestors from a specific area, most places also have a subreddit with people who may be willing to help. In Manitoba, for example, we have r/Manitoba, r/Winnipeg, r/BrandonMB, and potentially other local subreddits.

You can usually search the name of a place in the Reddit search bar and be served a range of results. Sometimes going to people who live in the city your ancestor did can help put you on the right path. Just make sure you read the subreddit description, particularly if there may be several places with the same name.



Use the Reddit search function to find the topic you want help with to see if there's a community that can offer support. Take note of the number of members as the fewer members there are, the less likely you are to get a quick response, so just manage expectations.

Some subreddits you might be interested in from a hobby standpoint (rather than something to help your research) include:

- [r/GenealogyMemes](#): See and share funny posts about genealogy. This isn't too active a subreddit, but you can make it more active!
- [r/OldSchoolCool](#): Users share older pictures ranging from 100+ years old to within the last thirty years or so.
- [r/HistoryPorn](#): Despite its name, the content is not vulgar. Images of historical events are shared and discussed.
- [r/TheWayWeWere](#): Users share images related to everyday life, which can lead to some interesting discussions.

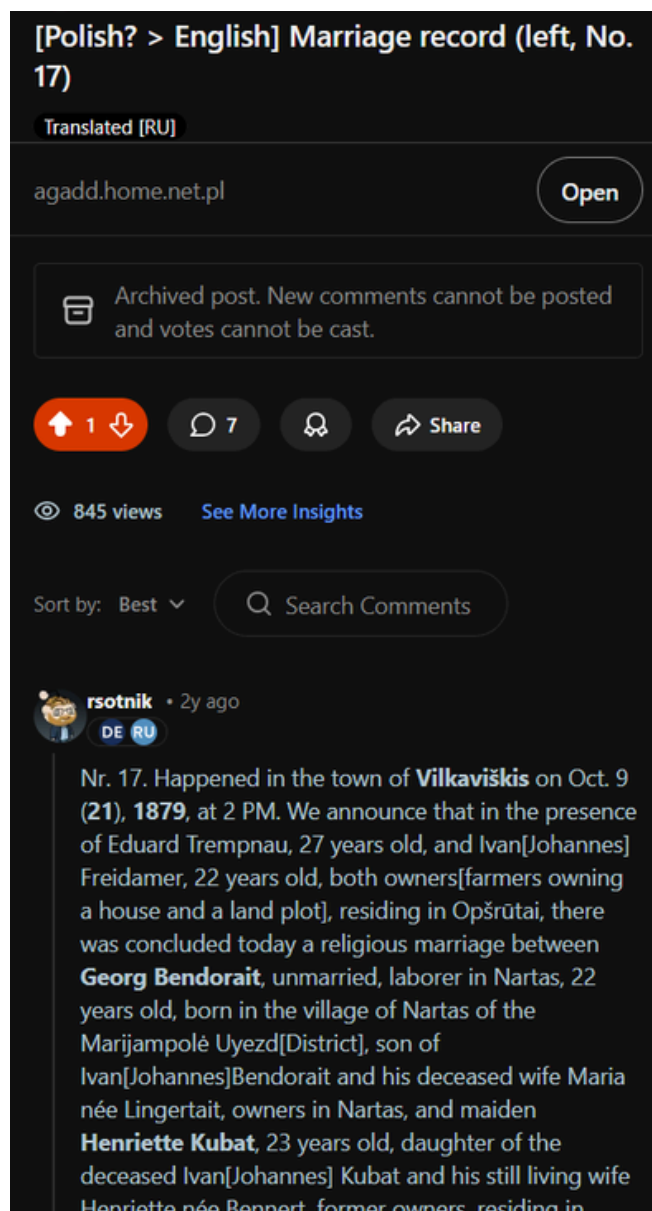
When you join a subreddit, you start to build a feed that is completely relevant to you. So, if you're searching a specific area or topic, you can make it so anything that comes up on your home page only relates to that.

When posting to a subreddit, remember:

- Search within the subreddit first. Avoid creating a duplicate post of something that's been asked a million times. See if it's been answered already. However, if it relates to a particular ancestor, you're probably safe!
- Read the rules of the subreddit. Some will require you to add certain information in your title. You may also only be able to post if you've joined the community or have an account that has reached a certain age or level of points (called karma).
- Look out for automatic messages. Sometimes a post will only be approved once you respond to the automatic message.
- You can't change your title once submitted, so check for typos!
- Try to be concise and straight to the point. Really long walls of text are less likely to be read.
- Check for clarity before submitting. Spelling, punctuation and paragraph breaks all matter – this is still the internet and you don't want people pointing out an error hundreds of times instead of answering your question!
- Do not share information of living people or that could lead to living people, especially if you don't have permission from the person to do so.

Helpful communities

My particular favourite subreddit when it comes to research is [r/Translator](#). I have plenty of German ancestors from Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Ukraine and who knows where else. I can only read and speak English. [r/Translator](#) though is filled with people who speak all sorts of languages and will happily translate pieces for you for free.



This helped me correct a mistake I was seeing in public trees on Ancestry where a Henriette Kubat had died. This death was misattributed to the mother, when it was her daughter who had died. The transcription got it wrong but the translation helped sort that one out.

It can also help you identify a language that you might be mistaking for something else, which can direct you towards your next area of research.

If you use this subreddit, make sure you include in the title what type of document it is and which language – give your best guess if you're not sure. You'll also need to either upload a large, high quality image of the excerpt or share a direct link. This is best done on your desktop rather than your phone.

Once you have the translation, it's a good idea to:

- Copy and save the transcription that translators usually give as well as the translation. Save it within your ancestor's tree for reference later.
- Save the link to the Reddit post for future reference. You can find this in your profile later, but attaching it to your ancestor will make referring back easier.
- Thank the person who has translated for you, and mark your post as complete. This keeps the subreddit organised and also acknowledges the hard work these translators do just because they want to!

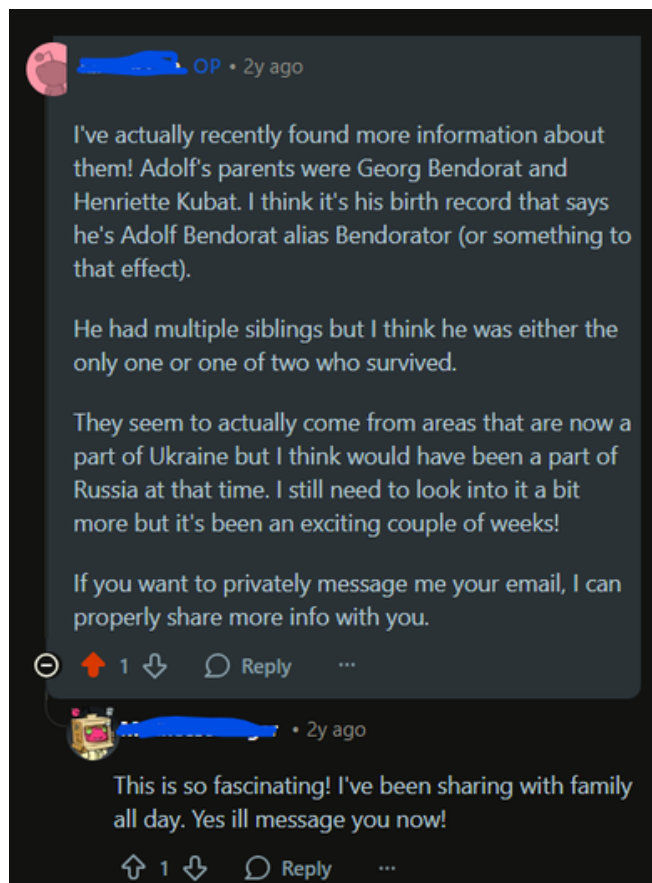
Indexed discussions

A search index is how we get results in Google and other search engines. [Research from Semrush](#) also shows that AI chatbots like ChatGPT cite Reddit most frequently when providing responses. This is the major reason why you should not share any personal information on Reddit of yourself or other living persons, and it is also a really great reason to use Reddit for genealogical research.

When a discussion on Reddit is indexed, that means someone can search for a term and be brought directly to that discussion. If you're looking for information on a certain family and someone using Google is doing the same, they can contact you on Reddit and share what they have hopefully found.

This happened for me. On the r/Genealogy subreddit, I posted asking about a unique surname that shows up nowhere other than a few select ancestors. I got a lot of guidance on how I could investigate, such as where the name might have originated from and resources to utilise. Then, a few years later, someone messaged me. She had searched the surname on Google and found the discussion featuring familiar names and reached out to me. It turned out she was a distant cousin from a few provinces over, also trying to get to the bottom of the surname. She was able to share information that she had been told, which helped develop the picture I had in my mind.

Clearly, it's not a quick process, but it's something that



requires zero effort, so might work for you too!

I'd also recommend that if you're looking for specific advice where others might have had the same experience, you enter the query in your chosen search engine and add 'Reddit' on the end.

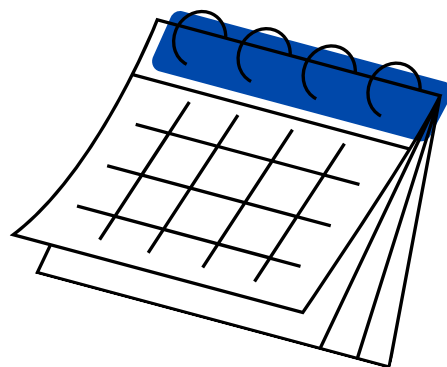
This has helped me numerous times to work through problems or get clarity on issues. And it's great for seeing that you're truly never the only one to experience something. This is true for both genealogy and any number of other issues!

So, if you haven't used Reddit before, I suggest giving it a try. You can start by just browsing Reddit without logging in, and then if you want to comment or post, you can create a free account and get started.

If you already use Reddit, have you found any success? Or are there subreddits you follow that are particularly useful for you? Please let us know any tips and tricks you've found! ■

Spring Events at MGS

See what's coming up during the March to May period across our branches and see how you can get involved.



March 2026

Mon, 16 Mar (7 - 9 PM)

How to search using FamilySearch

Where: Zoom

Info: Presented by Tara Shymanski for the Southeast and Winnipeg Branch. [Learn more.](#)

Tues, 17 Mar (10 AM - 12 PM)

MGS Writing Club SIG

Where: Zoom

Info: This year, we are focusing on writing with a short presentation each month that covers Genealogical Transcription & Notation Conventions. [Learn more.](#)

April 2026

Thurs, 9 Apr (5:30 - 10 PM)

Annual Heritage Dinner

Where: Knox United Church - Brandon, MB

Info: Featuring a presentation by Stella Fedeniuk on "The Ukrainian Experience: From Ukrain to the Perogy Belt in Canada." [Learn more.](#)

Tues, 21 Apr (10 AM - 12 PM)

MGS Writing Club SIG

Where: Zoom

Info: This year, we are focusing on writing with a short presentation each month that covers Genealogical Transcription & Notation Conventions. [Learn more.](#)

Mon, 20 Apr (7 - 9 PM)

Conflict: The Secret to Better Family Stories

Where: Zoom

Info: Presented by Janice Nickerson for the Southeast and Winnipeg Branch. [Learn more.](#)

May 2026

Tues, 19 May (10 AM - 12 PM)

MGS Writing Club SIG

Where: Zoom

Info: This year, we are focusing on writing with a short presentation each month that covers Genealogical Transcription & Notation Conventions. [Learn more.](#)

Mon, 25 May (7 - 9 PM)

My Top 10 Tips for Being a Better Researcher

Where: Zoom

Info: Ken McKinlay presents during the AGM for SE & Winnipeg and Southwest branches of MGS. [Learn more.](#) ■



*Visit the MGS calendar to
see when new events are added.*

More to come in 2026!

MGS

Writing Club

Special Interest Group

The MGS Writing Club SIG is a group open to any member who wants to develop the way they save and share their family history research.

Led by Angela Fiebelkorn, you'll learn how to write your own family history along with other formats.

Writing Club members regularly submit content to the MGS website and *Generations* journal.

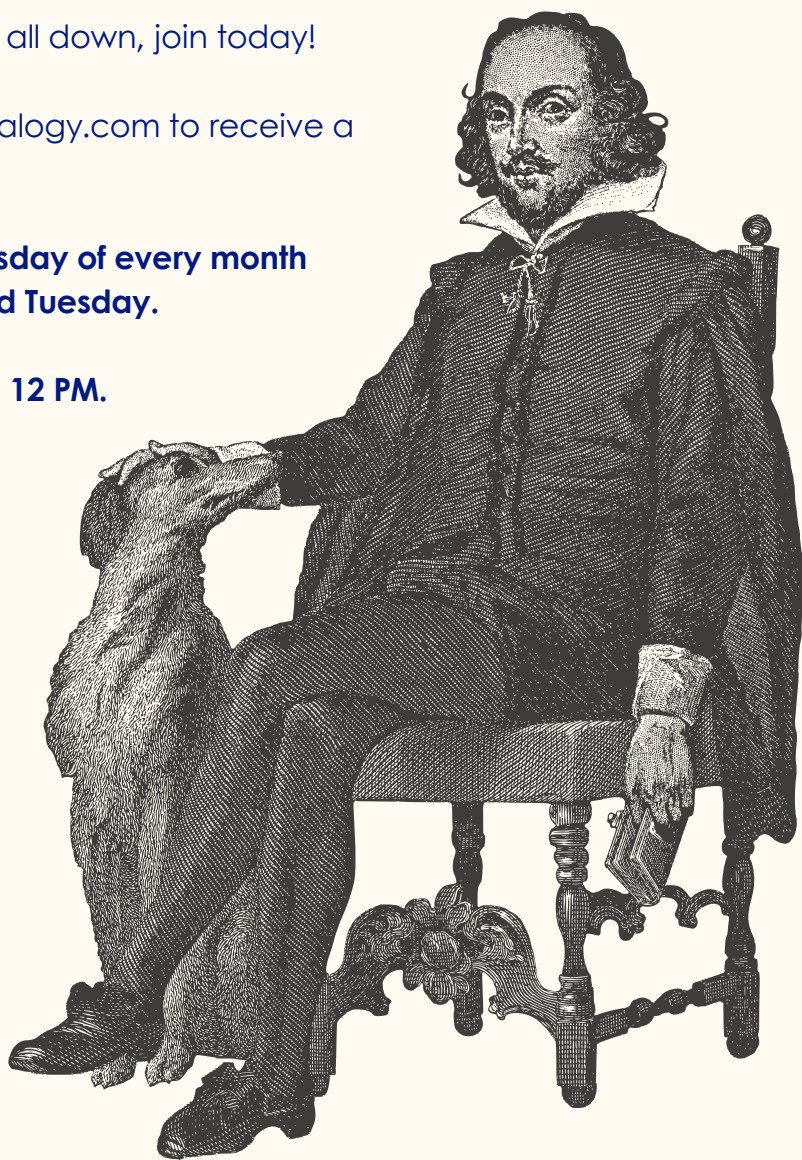
So, if you've ever thought about writing it all down, join today!

Email Angela at volunteer5795@mbgenealogy.com to receive a Zoom link for our next meeting.

MGS Writing Club SIG meets the third Tuesday of every month except for December, which is the second Tuesday.

Meetings take place between 10 AM and 12 PM.

Learn more



“Duff’s Ditch” Opens

The Red River Floodway and Winnipeg’s Long Fight with Flooding

Angela Fiebelkorn

Member No. 5795

For as long as people have lived and farmed along the Red River, flooding has been part of the settlement story. The Red flows north, which means spring melt from the south can meet lingering ice and snow in the north, creating natural bottlenecks. Long before modern flood control, communities adapted the best they could—moving belongings to higher ground, building temporary dikes, and relying on neighbours when the water rose.

By the mid-twentieth century, Manitoba’s pattern was clear: floods were not rare events, but recurring realities. Major floods along the Red River basin appear again and again in Manitoba’s history, shaping settlement, land use, and local economies.

Flooding Through the Settlement Period

To genealogists, this matters because floods quietly explain so many record clues:

- sudden moves (a family disappears from a location for a year or two)
- emergency repairs, debts, or property losses
- changing farm output and livestock patterns
- community fundraising, church relief, and mutual aid

In early communities, floods weren’t just “weather.” They affected who stayed, who left, who rebuilt, and who couldn’t—the kind of forces that shape family history even when no record states it directly.

The 1950 Flood: A Turning Point

Then came 1950—the flood that changed Manitoba’s approach forever.

It also left a deep mark on community memory. The flood demonstrated that sandbags and temporary dikes were not enough for a growing city. Winnipeg needed protection on a scale as large as the threat itself.

The solution was bold: create a channel that could divert floodwater around Winnipeg and return it to the Red River downstream—reducing the river level through the city when it mattered most.

That vision became the Red River Floodway, sometimes called “Duff’s Ditch” during construction—originally a skeptical nickname tied to Premier Duff Roblin, who championed the project despite fierce public debate.

Construction began in 1962 and the original floodway was completed in 1968 at a cost of \$63 million. At the time, it was among the most significant earth-moving projects on the planet and was described by Manitoba as the second largest earth-moving project in the world (after the Panama Canal), and the largest excavation project undertaken in Canada to that date.

By 1969, Manitoba could publicly celebrate what it had built. The film “Red River Floodway” (1969)—a 17-minute record of construction and opening—captures that moment when an engineering gamble became a provincial landmark.

[Watch: Red River Floodway \(1969\)](#)

Why a Floodway is a Genealogy Story

From a family-history perspective, the floodway isn't just infrastructure. It marks a shift in how people could live in Winnipeg and the Red River Valley:

- neighbourhoods became safer long-term investments
- insurance and rebuilding decisions changed
- businesses could plan without "spring flood panic" as a constant threat
- records after 1968 increasingly reflect a city less periodically disrupted by disaster

If you have Winnipeg ancestors who bought property, expanded a business, or settled more permanently after the late 1960s, the floodway is part of the reason those choices felt safer.

The Floodway Put to the Test: 1979

The floodway's first truly major test came in 1979. Manitoba describes 1979 as the first major test of the Floodway system. In that event, the floodway was operated in coordination with other major flood control structures, and Manitoba reports that the Red River level at James Avenue was limited to 5.8 metres (19.1 feet)—whereas without the major flood control structures, the natural level would have been approximately 9.2 metres (30.3 feet).

That difference is the story. The floodway didn't eliminate flooding in the valley—but it dramatically reduced what Winnipeg would otherwise have faced.

1997: Winnipeg Protected; the Valley Still Hit Hard

In 1997, the Red River Valley experienced what Manitoba calls the most severe flood in the valley since 1852. Communities throughout the basin were affected—particularly south of Winnipeg—underscoring a hard truth of flood control: protecting a major city does not automatically prevent regional flooding.

In other words: Winnipeg's outcome improved, but the broader Red River Valley still endured major disruption. This is an important genealogical insight. A family in Winnipeg may have experienced 1997 as a tense but controlled event; a family in a smaller valley community may remember it as a defining catastrophe.

A Legacy That Keeps Proving Itself

The Red River Floodway is widely credited with preventing enormous damage to Winnipeg over the decades since it opened. Manitoba notes that since 1968 it has prevented tens of billions of dollars in flood damage in Winnipeg.

Parks Canada recognizes the floodway as a national historic engineering achievement, noting its scale and the collaborative design and construction effort involved.

Flooding shaped Manitoba settlement. It influenced where people built, what they could afford to lose, and which communities grew or stalled. The 1950 flood forced a reckoning—one that led to an engineering project so controversial it earned a nickname, and so successful that the nickname eventually became almost affectionate.

For genealogists, the floodway is a reminder to ask a powerful question when reading records from river communities:

What did the water do that year—and what did people do because of it?

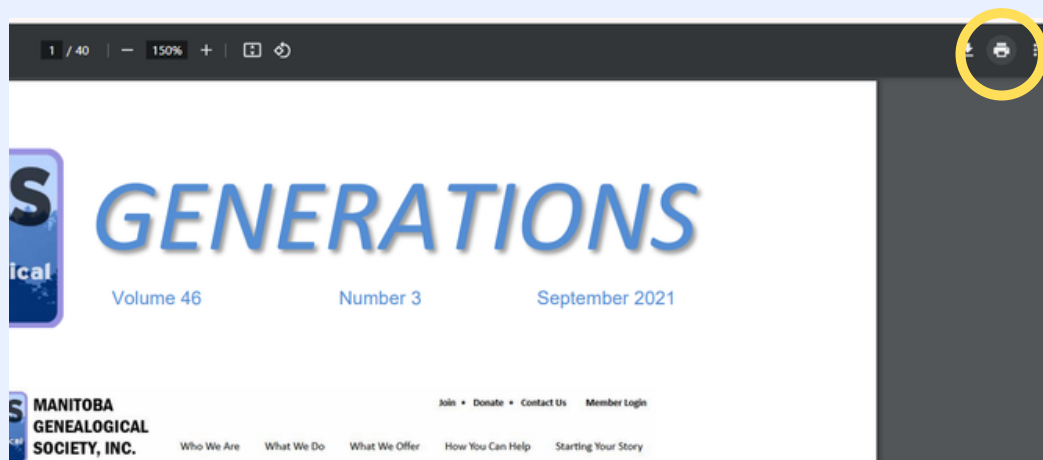
That's where the real story often begins.

Resources

- [History of Flooding in Manitoba. Manitoba Flood Facts](#)
- [Historic Flood – 1950](#)
- [Red River Floodway](#)
- [Historic Flood – 1979](#)
- [Red River Floodway National Historic Site of Canada. Winnipeg, MB](#) ■

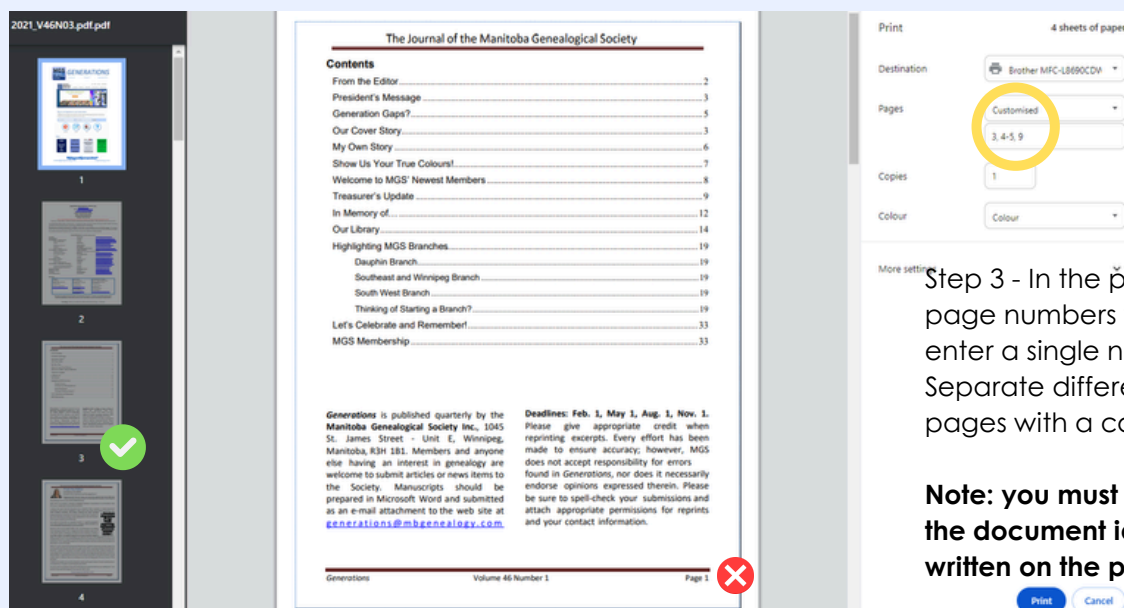
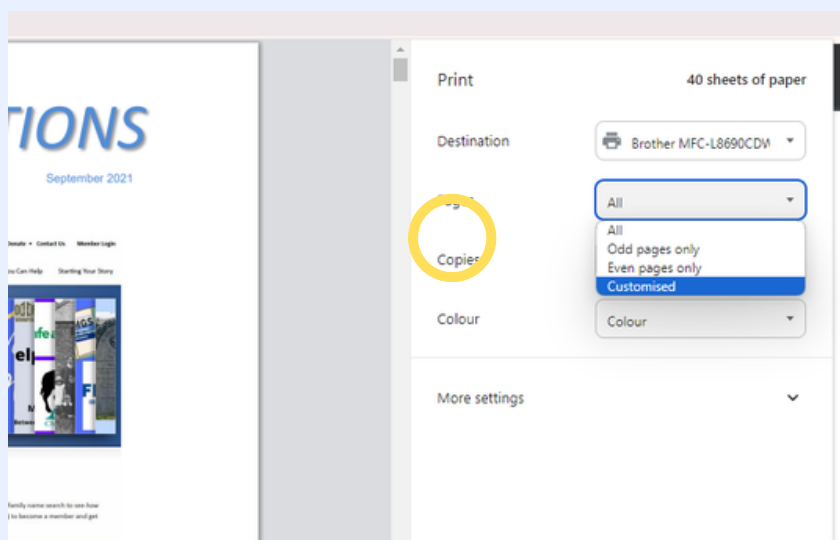
Technical How-to

If you'd like to print one of the articles, the crossword or anything else without printing the whole journal, here's how.



Step 1 - Find the print option as normal. In Google Chrome, it will look like this.

Step 2 - Find the option that lets you choose the Pages. Select 'custom' or similar. In some cases, you can simply go to step 3. This is what it looks like in Google Chrome.



Step 3 - In the pages space, enter the page numbers you'd like to print. You can enter a single number and/or a range. Separate different page ranges or single pages with a comma. Then, print.

Note: you must use the page number that the document identifies, not the number written on the page (see example).

The page shown here has Page 1 written on the page. However, the document identifies this as Page 3. Make note of the page number that the document identifies before printing.

MGS Council Information

MGS President

VACANT

Governance Officer (advisory) Chair, Constiution & By-laws

VACANT
Bob Allebone

constitution@mbgenealogy.com

● **Senior Advisor (advisory)**

Daryl Dumanski

Temporarily unavailable

Secretary

Martha McLeod

secretary@mbgenealogy.com

● **Treasurer**

Gloria McNabb

treasurer@mbgenealogy.com

Director, Finance & Administration Division

Chair, Financial Review
Chair, Fundraising
Chair, Grants & Applications
Chair, Honours & Awards
Chair, Membership & Volunteer Administration
Chair, Nominations & Elections
Chair, Office & Building Administration
Chair, Volunteer Recruitment

Kathryn Blair-Colbert

dir-finance-admin@mbgenealogy.com

VACANT
VANACT
Kathryn Blair-Colbert
Jessica Burleson
Martha McLeod

grants@mbgenealogy.com
mal1@mbgenealogy.com
membership@mbgenealogy.com

Bob Allebone
VACANT

constitution@mbgenealogy.com

VACANT

Director, Technology

Chair, Manitoba Name Index Management & Operations
Chair, Computer & Network Operations

Aleta Foreman
Bo Oberg

dir-technology@mbgenealogy.com
mani@mbgenealogy.com

Adetoun Bankole

computer@mbgenealogy.com

Director, Communications Division

Chair, Communications
Editor, *Generations* Journal

Jessica Burleson
VACANT
Sheena Peckham

mal1@mbgenealogy.com
generations@mbgenealogy.com

Director, Education & Research Division

Chair, Cemeteries
Chair, Community Education & Outreach
Chair, Library
Chair, Programming
Chair, Projects
Chair, Research

VACANT

VACANT
Bill Curtis

outreach@mbgenealogy.com

Mavis Gray
VACANT
Rick Brown
Kendra Gaede

library@mbgenealogy.com
projects@mbgenealogy.com
research@mbgenealogy.com

South West Branch Rep

George MacKay

sw-treasurer@mbgenealogy.com

SE & Winnipeg Branch Rep

Bob Allebone

winnipeg-president@mbgenealogy.com

Director at Large 1

VACANT

Director at Large 2

VACANT

Director at Large 3

VACANT

Positions in **bold** are MGS Executive positions

● = position is appointed rather than elected

Official Land Acknowledgement adopted by the Manitoba Genealogical Society

"The Manitoba Genealogical Society would like to honour the ancestral people of Manitoba. The land we recognize as the Province of Manitoba has been home to Indigenous Peoples for countless generations: Anishinaabeg, Cree, Anisininew, Dakota, Dene, and Inuit. Our Resource Centre is located on Treaty 1 Territory as well as the birthplace and homeland of the Metis Nation. As an organization situated in Manitoba, our services extend through Treaties, 2, 3, 4, and 5 Territories.

Many of us are descended from settlers. Those people came from elsewhere and settled here in Manitoba, perhaps generations ago. For our people to settle here, others were unsettled, and during that process, harm did occur to Indigenous Peoples.

As Manitoba genealogists, it is important to be aware of the lives, traditions, and cultures of the various Indigenous Peoples of Manitoba and to recognize and appreciate their contribution to the land. We pay our respects to all First Nations, Metis, and Inuit ancestors of this land."

NOTE: Oji-Cree was updated to Anisininew. 2024-03-18