



Anglo-Celtic Roots

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Cover Illustration: Virginia Solway Brown (Mary-Lou Simac's paternal grandmother), circa 1912.

Source: Collection of Mary-Lou Simac

From the Editor:



Our first story, by Mary-Lou Simac, updates a 2016 article about her great-grandfather Edwyn

Salway, born in Somerset, England. Ten years of research, including a visit to Somerset, uncovered how and when he arrived in Canada in the 1880s and filled gaps in his family history.

Carolyn Brown's article explores the origins of her 4x great-grandfather, William Wallace. Family tradition claims descent from the medieval Scottish hero. However, Carolyn's determined research identified William's true origins despite missing records and the challenges of tracing Loyalists who relocated to eastern Canada after the American Revolution.

Our third story concerns Sergeant William John Jones, from a Welsh coal-mining community. He served in France with a Royal Engineers tunnelling company, working beneath enemy lines and detonating explosives. Wounded in 1916, William was admitted to No. 1 CCCS on 26 July 1917 with further gunshot wounds.



Paul Cripwell

From the President



Welcome to Summer! The past year has been one of celebration—of our more than 30 years as a society—and of adaptation.

This year, BIFHSGO featured members' contributions in several ways: previously well-received talks, delivered before recordings, were presented again and this time recorded; special presentations highlighted the work done by dedicated volunteers over the years; and many entries from the 30th anniversary writing contest were published in *Anglo-Celtic Roots*.

Recently one of our stellar volunteers, Sheila Dohoo Faure, resigned from her *four* positions. After more than six years as Web Manager and handling other tasks, it was time for a break. We extend our gratitude for her time and talents. Thank you Kim Carson for taking on the Web Manager role.

At our June AGM, the Board shares the past year's activities and financial status with members. We present annual awards, recognize our volunteers and name the latest inductees to the BIFHSGO Hall of Fame. We also elect the Board members to guide us through the coming year—and that remains a challenge. I speak as President for five of the last eight years. Last year we could not fill the Program Director position. Reshuffling of the Board was necessary and I returned as President. We face the same issue again this year.

Directors are needed for Program, Membership, Communications, Outreach and Vice-President. Support is available to help ease volunteers into these positions. Please contact Dianne Brydon (Past President) if you are willing to help ensure the future health of BIFHSGO—the Society **cannot** continue successfully without these directors.

After a ten-year involvement with BIFHSGO, I am retiring from the positions I have held. I'm grateful for the support I have received from colleagues over the years and wish the incoming Board every success.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Duncan Monkhouse". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Duncan Monkhouse

Family History Research

Edwin Salway: An Update and a Meet-up[©]

by MARY-LOU SIMAC



Mary-Lou has been researching her family history for about 15 years. On retiring from the federal public service, she became obsessed with genealogy. She has completed several online family history courses from the University of Strathclyde and is a graduate of Boston University's online Genealogical Research Certificate Program. These days she always seems to be working on at least one course from the International Institute of Genealogical Studies.

In the Fall 2016 issue of *Anglo-Celtic Roots*, I told the story of Edwin Salway, my great-grandfather, who came to Stayner, Ontario, in the early 1880s from Somerset, England, with his wife Virginia and four young children. He was widowed one year after arriving in Ontario, when Virginia died at age 28. At that point the family broke up, their three sons being placed in different local farm families. In 1888, Edwin remarried, to my Scottish great-grandmother Margaret McEachern and had a second family with her, but tragically he died at age 46, leaving her to raise their six children aged 9 and under. In spite of gaps in my research and some unanswered questions, there was enough material to make a compelling story, so the article was published.¹

Over the past 10 years, some of the blanks have been filled in. In 2019, I travelled to Somerset, England, in conjunction with attending *RootsTech London* that October. At the Somerset Heritage Centre in Taunton, I was able to glean more information about the early ancestors of the Salway family and gain an understanding of the circumstances that might have contributed to Edwin and Virginia's decision to leave England. The driver I had hired for a day took me around to the places that were significant to the Salways, as well as showing me some of the sights in the area.

When I wrote the 2016 article, I did not know exactly when and by what means the Edwin Salway family had arrived in Canada. In 2021, I learned that the family had arrived in October 1880 at Quebec City on

board the SS *Moravian* and that they took the train to Stayner.² They had benefitted from an assisted emigration scheme whose goal was to attract workers to Canada. (This discovery and how it came about was the subject of a *Great Moments in Genealogy* talk entitled “Finding a Great-Grandfather: a Story of Mistakes and Omissions.” The December 2021 recording is available to members.)

Another missing piece was Edwin’s whereabouts in 1891. It appeared that Edwin, his second wife Margaret and their children had not been enumerated in the 1891 Canadian Census, but that was not actually the case. With more research experience, I realized that sometimes one must do things the long way. It took a page-by-page search through the returns for Stayner, Ontario, to find that the enumerator had recorded Edwin Salway as “Edward Selwyn,” which had been indexed by Library and Archives Canada and *Ancestry* as “Selwgn.”³ Selwyn was a surname variant that I had not thought to account for. A wildcard search using “sel*” might have picked it up. And “Selwgn”? No wonder the record had eluded me first time around.

I also now know that the Ontario death record was wildly inaccurate as to Edwin Salway’s age when he died. I recently ordered a digital image of his original birth registration from the UK General Register Office⁴ and learned that he was born in October 1849, which made him 47 years old at the time of his death from pneumonia in December 1896, not 54 as the Ontario record stated. He must have looked older than his years to the informant, the local doctor. My great-grandfather’s passing in young middle age with so many dependants must have been a terrible loss for the family.

Another error in my earlier article was of my own making. In 2012, I visited Virginia Salway’s grave in Stayner. The difficult-to-read phrase at the base of her gravestone appeared to be a brief epitaph for Edwin. However, I made another visit to the cemetery six years later and this time used the opportunity to look at the neighbouring gravestones of other unrelated people. On some of those gravestones I saw the same phrase, but it was much more distinguishable. I realized that the barely legible inscription at the base of Virginia’s gravestone was actually the monument maker’s name and place of business. A call to the cemetery office confirmed that they had no record of Edwin’s burial. Sometimes, we see what we want to see.

The real research breakthrough came in January 2022, when I received a New Year’s Day phone call from a descendant of Edwin Salway’s first

family. With the cold weather and another wave of Covid-19 in full swing, a half-second cousin had been doing some online searches. My 2016 ACR article was one of the top hits, leading Janet to contact me. This was very welcome, as I had never actually spoken with anyone from Edwin's first family.

As our conversation progressed, it appeared that Janet had photographs and information that she was willing to share. We exchanged email addresses and agreed to keep in touch. I was delighted that she had reached out to me and looked forward to having a collaborator on Salway research. Over the next couple of years, we exchanged photos and information. We finally met in person in June 2024 in the Toronto area. We met again later that year in October in Collingwood, Ontario (Figure 1), to visit places of mutual interest and do some research in the genealogy and local history collection at the excellent Collingwood Public Library. I could now fill in some of the gaps and unanswered questions in my earlier article.

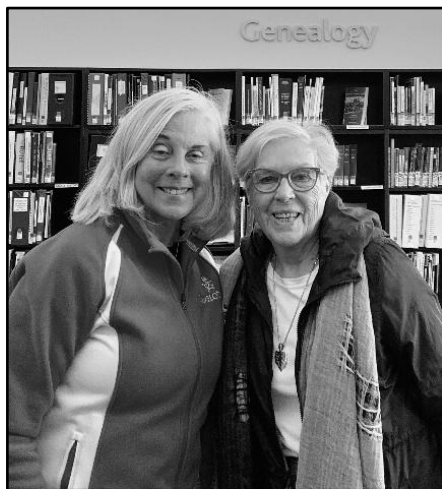


Figure 1: Mary-Lou and Janet at the Collingwood Public Library.

Source: Author's collection

In 2016, I was uncertain about how many children Edwin and Virginia had. Janet confirmed that Edwin and Virginia had five children and that they did not bring their eldest child, Florence Bessie Augusta Salway (age 7), with them to Canada. She remained in England with her paternal grandparents, who lived in Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, about 50 kilometres from her family home. I was puzzled by this decision and wondered why, as well as what sort of life she had and whether she ever reunited with her father or siblings. At a consultation during a virtual genealogy conference,⁵ I learned that, in those days it wouldn't have been unusual to leave a child with relatives—"families did what they had to do." The parents' intention may have been to bring Florence over later, or perhaps she was needed to help her grandparents. The family story is that the grandparents were unhappy

with the prospect of never seeing their five grandchildren again and that they had prevailed upon Edwin and Virginia not to take them all to Canada.⁶



Figure 2: Florence Bessie Augusta Salway Fulton with her daughter Hilda, 1900.

Photo courtesy of Janet Colbran

Whatever the case may be, Florence grew up in England, went to school there,⁷ married in 1897 in Wiltshire⁸ and had a daughter⁹ (Figure 2). Did she ever see her siblings again? After a search of passenger lists, I was heartened to find that many years later she did indeed visit Canada—in 1934 at the age of 61, accompanied by her husband Robert Fulton.¹⁰ She was able to visit her two siblings who had remained in Ontario—Ernest and Agnes. (One brother had died¹¹ and the other had relocated to Michigan.¹²) Florence would have last seen her sister Agnes as an infant and her brother Ernest as a 6-year-old. Would Ernest have retained a memory of his older sister? What would the reunion have been like? Was Florence and Robert's visit spoken of fondly for years afterward? Happily, it was.¹³

(Figure 3) The overseas visit tradition continued when Florence and Robert's daughter Hilda and her husband came to Canada about 20 years later, arriving in the summer of 1953 for a family reunion.¹⁴ Janet and her mother stayed in touch with Hilda's daughters and visited them in England.



Figure 3: Sisters reunited: Agnes (Salway) Doughty and Florence B.A. (Salway) Fulton (seated) with their husbands at the cottage, Wendigo Lake, Ontario, 1934.

Photo courtesy of Janet Colbran

I wondered too how the three boys in Edwin's first family had felt about being placed with three different farm families in Simcoe County after their mother's death. Janet's grandfather, Ernest, was one of those boys and she has told me that, although he was well treated by his host family, he resented his father for many years. Ernest was not close to his stepmother or half-siblings and Janet tells me that he never spoke of them to his own family. Interestingly, in 1898, Ernest had married a British home child, Eliza Clayson.^{15,16} The upheaval that both had faced in their childhoods was probably something they shared. Evidence of the disruption in their lives shows up in their marriage registration: "unknown mother" is recorded for each—sadly, both bride and groom could only provide their fathers' names (Figure 4). Note that some members of the Salway family used "Solway."

An important item that neither Janet nor I possess is a photograph of Edwin and his first wife, Virginia. I had hoped that the Salway family in England would be able to supply such a photo, but so far they have not responded to my request. Hopefully one will turn up.

The cause of death in 1881 of Edwin Salway's first wife is still a mystery, as her passing was never registered with the province, even though registration of deaths was compulsory at the time. Perhaps that detail was simply overlooked by a grief-stricken Edwin. Her death must have been devastating for the young family, leaving confusion and chaos in its wake. My grandmother is also named Virginia (cover illustration), which tells me that her father, Edwin, mourned the loss of his first wife and wanted to preserve her memory.

As family historians, we are encouraged to write and to get the stories out

there. Allowing articles from older issues of ACR to be publicly available online and not hidden behind a paywall was a good move by BIFHSGO. In my case, it has led to a very enjoyable connection with a hitherto unknown cousin and a wealth of new information. When preparing this article, I exchanged emails with two more half-second cousins from Edwin's first family, one through Janet; both are autosomal DNA matches. Knowing them has allowed me to confirm my relationships with several other previously mystifying DNA matches.

I still have work to do, particularly locating photographs and establishing a cause of death for Virginia. Janet and I will also keep trying to reconnect with the English branch of the family. Here's hoping that I'll be able to provide another update at some point in the future!



Figure 4: Eliza Clayson and Ernest Solway, circa 1898.

Photo courtesy of Janet Colbran

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- ¹³ Personal communication, Janet C.
- ¹⁴ Personal communication, *ibid*.

¹⁵ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826–1943," *Ancestry*. Entry for Ernest Solway and Elizabeth Clesson [Clayson], married 30 November 1898, Stayner, Simcoe County, Ontario, p. 382, registration no. 013700 (stamped) (<https://ancestry.com>: accessed 24 February 2026). Note that some members of the Salway family used "Solway."

¹⁶ Entry for Eliza Clayson, BHC Registry ID 15128 (<https://homechildrencanada.com>: accessed 24 February 2026) & Library and Archives Canada, Home Children Records, RG 76-C-1, microfilm reel C-4536, item 800295 (<https://www.lac-bac.gc.ca>: accessed 13 March 2026).



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William Wallace: Family Myth, Brick Wall, Loyalist

by CAROLYN BROWN



Carolyn Brown is a member of BIFHSGO's British Colonial America Special Interest Group (SIG), which has supported her in this research. She would like to thank some members of this SIG and also the Writing SIG for their feedback on her corresponding Great Moments presentation in June 2026.

The origins of the Loyalists who fought for Britain in the American Revolutionary War and fled to northern colonies that became Canada are often shrouded in mystery, posing a challenge for genealogists. This was the case for my 4x great-grandfather William Wallace.

His past before he settled in Nova Scotia was murky. The identity of his parents was unknown and his homeland was the subject of a family myth, as I learned when I set out to break down this brick wall. My “great moment” was finding and confirming his family of origin.

In so doing, I discovered the story of a young man who witnessed a key moment in U.S. history, whose family was divided by war, and who made two long journeys before he could find a home.

Family legend, family myth

My mother's mother, Marion Thelma Wallace, came from a hard-working farm family in Hants County, Nova Scotia. From a young age, I heard stories about William Wallace, the founder of this large family; he had come to Nova Scotia from South Carolina after the American Revolution.

Many aspects of William's life are already well-known. He married in South Carolina before coming to Nova Scotia. His wife's name is sometimes given as Mary McDonald and sometimes as Elizabeth, but both appear to refer to the same woman. This discrepancy has been noted by many sources.^{1,2} Her name was probably Mary Elizabeth McDonald. Some family trees provide names for her parents, but I have found no documentation; she remains one of my brick walls.

They had one child, James B. Wallace, during the Revolutionary War, and another infant who died. They left James with relatives when they set off from South Carolina, and he did not rejoin his parents for 20 years.^{3,4}



Figure 1: China cabinet or hutch that William and Mary Elizabeth Wallace brought with them from South Carolina on board ship to Nova Scotia. Pine with traces of original oxblood finish.

Photo: Carolyn Brown.

William Wallace served with British militia forces in South Carolina. He left for Nova Scotia in October 1782, at the beginning of the evacuation of Charlestown (later called Charleston), which culminated in December 1782.⁵ Of an estimated 130 to 150 British vessels involved in the evacuation, two ships took Loyalists to Nova Scotia (Figure 1).⁶ William and his wife were among the first settlers of Rawdon, Hants County, a settlement established for the newly arrived Loyalists.^{7,8} Rawdon is named for British commander Lord Rawdon, who had rescued many Loyalists in South Carolina.

William and his wife had, in all, 12 children who survived to adulthood.^{9,10}

Like most landowners in the American South, Wallace had owned slaves in South Carolina. However, he may have redeemed

himself somewhat, as two black people, Lloyd and Dinah, who accompanied Wallace and his wife to Nova Scotia, are referred to as “former” slaves.¹¹ They continued to live with the Wallace family; William presumably freed them. I am trying to learn more about them, but records are lacking.

I was told that William Wallace was originally from Scotland and that he was named after the medieval Scottish hero of the same name. Members of the family today wear the Wallace tartan.

I had made some initial attempts to find information about his parents and origins through easily accessible websites, but without success.

It is often difficult to research Loyalists. When they crossed the border into what is now Canada, it often meant permanent exile from the

southern colonies and from any family who stayed there. It was dangerous for Loyalists to try to return to the U.S. for at least the decade following the war. They were vilified, their lands were confiscated in absentia and some were even charged with treason. The chain of records for the family was thus broken. There were no censuses or civil vital statistics in America's Thirteen Colonies before the war, so pre-war records consist of migration, land and church records, as well as wills and probate, legal and court proceedings, and municipal records and histories.

I searched for and found the first record for William Wallace in Nova Scotia digitized and available through *Ancestry*; it was his Loyalist claim.¹² When the Loyalists came to Canada, they could apply for compensation for their losses in what became the U.S. Not all Loyalists made a claim, but, for those who did, the claims are a rich source of information. The claimant provided information in person before an official, while a scribe wrote down the details. The claims detailed the claimant's service to the British, what they owned in the U.S., and sometimes their background and family.

(Loyalist claims are currently only partially indexed on *Ancestry* and may be incomplete. If you cannot find a claim on *Ancestry*, search a separate index, such as those compiled by Coldham,¹³ Dwyer¹⁴ and Antliff.¹⁵ Library and Archives Canada may also have a more complete collection of the claims.)

To my surprise, Wallace's Loyalist claim (Figure 2), filed in 1786 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, states that he was indeed from Ninety-Six District in South Carolina but that he was "a native of Ireland."¹⁶

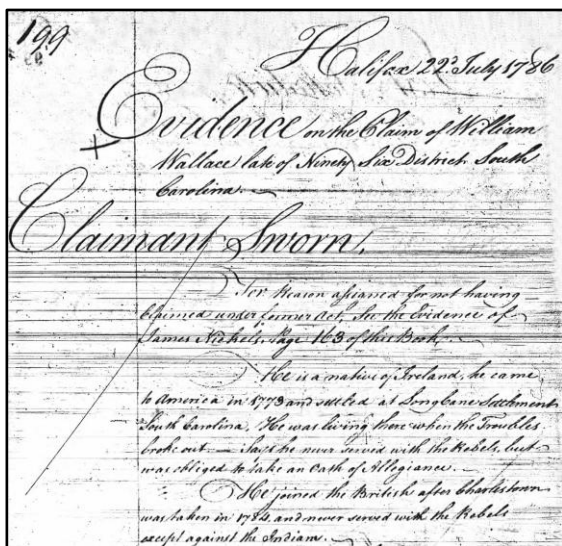


Figure 2: Screen capture of Wallace's Loyalist claim. United Kingdom.

Source: Audit Office 12 /49, 199–200.

I do not know the origin of the story that he was from Scotland. Secondary sources I consulted were aware that he had come from Ireland, but some repeated “a family tradition” that he was born in Scotland.^{17,18} I will explain more about his place of birth later.

Learning that Wallace was from Ireland, where he lived and served in South Carolina, his land holdings and other details, all helped me break down the brick wall surrounding his family and origins.

Records, friends and genes

The path to identifying Wallace’s family was not a straightforward one. I had to employ many tools in the genealogical toolkit: documentary evidence; the friends, associates and neighbours approach; and, ultimately, DNA.

South Carolina actively recruited Protestant settlers from many European countries from 1763 to 1773. Under the *Bounty Act*, passed by the South Carolina General Assembly in 1761, immigrants received free land and a stipend to get them started. It is no wonder that about 4,000 settlers arrived from Ulster (now Northern Ireland), Scotland, France and Germany.

Records were kept of all immigrants claiming land and stipends, and the original handwritten records were transcribed in 1939.¹⁹ In these records, I found only one William Wallace, aged 18, who arrived in South Carolina in 1768 with his parents, James and Eleanor Wallace, as well as five siblings. The record having said they arrived on the Brig *Lord Dungannon*, I then found an advertisement for the crossing (Figure 3).

This William Wallace was the right age, but there was a problem with this candidate family. In his Loyalist claim, Wallace said he came to America in 1773, whereas this family arrived in 1768. I kept in mind that the original immigrant records in South Carolina are known to have errors and omissions, as are the Loyalist claims, which were given orally.



For CHARLESTOWN in SOUTH-CAROLINA,

THE Brig LORD DUNCANNON, Robert Montgomery, Master, two hundred Tuns Burthen, will be clear to sail from this Port against the 10th of October next. Such as incline to embrace this favourable Opportunity of being agreeably conveyed to a fine Country, are requested immediately to apply to Campbell and Donaldson, James Henderson, James Park, and John Gregg, either of whom will agree with them. She is a fine Vessel, and not ten Months old, the Captain well acquainted in the Passenger Trade, as he served his Time under his Cousin Captain John Montgomery of Larne, who is well known to have made as many good Passages as any Master from Ireland; besides, the Owners are determined not to engage more Passengers than she with Ease can accommodate, and to spare no Expence in laying in Plenty of the best of Provisions of every Kind. Should any choose to pay their Passage here, and claim the Bounty in the other Side, they will be agreed with on easy Terms. Belfast, 19th August, 1767.

N. B. The above Vessel is just arrived from Antigua.

Figure 3: Advertisement for crossing of the Brig Lord Duncannon in the *Belfast Newsletter*, 1767.

A well-respected historian/genealogist of Hants County, Nova Scotia, John Victor Duncanson, working before the Internet age, had found the same information and discrepancy. He noted, "In view of the statement of William Wallace in his Loyalist claim that he arrived in America in 1773, additional research will be required to identify the Wallace family that was granted land in Craven Co., SC, in 1768."²⁰

I took Duncanson's call for more research as a challenge.

My next stop was land records. According to his Loyalist claim, Wallace owned 100 acres that he had bought from John Brownlee, as well as 150 "nearby adjoining" that he bought from James Anderson in Long Cane Settlement, Ninety-Six District (Figure 4). The settlement was named for the native bamboo or rivercane that grows along rivers, and the district was named for its main town, which was 96 miles from the main Cherokee settlement. The coastal areas of South Carolina are called the "lowcountry," while interior areas are called the "backcountry." Long Cane Settlement was in the "backcountry," close to the territory occupied by the Indigenous Cherokee people.

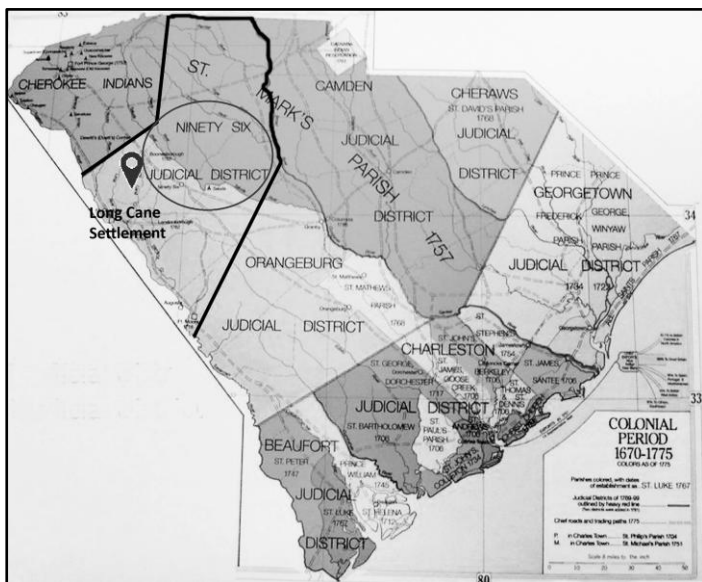


Figure 4: Map of South Carolina during the colonial period, showing location of Wallace's land in Long Cane Settlement, Ninety-Six District.

Source: South Carolina History Series, Denoyer-Geppert Co., Chicago.

Most of the settlers in Ninety-Six District were Scots-Irish or "Ulster Scots," descendants of the Scots who were encouraged to settle in Ulster beginning in 1609. Ninety-Six District became the epicentre of Loyalism in the American South during the American Revolution.

My Internet searches for John Brownlee and James Anderson found a genealogical website maintained by descendants of the Brownlee family.²¹ They had posted an image of the original plot and a description of 100 acres granted to John Brownlee, adjacent to a lot granted to James Anderson, just as Wallace described (Figure 5).

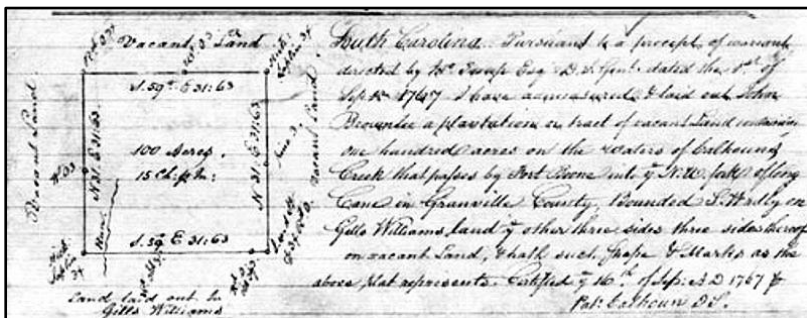


Figure 2: Original plot of land granted to John Brownlee in Long Cane Settlement, Ninety-Six District, South Carolina.

Reproduced from a genealogical website maintained by descendants of the Brownlee family.

I corresponded with the Brownlee descendants, who confirmed that the plot of land was in Long Cane Settlement. Records showed that their family came to South Carolina on the same voyage that brought the Wallace family. The two families settled in the same place and had many dealings with each other over the years. In fact, George Brownlee was the executor of the will of James Wallace, probably William's

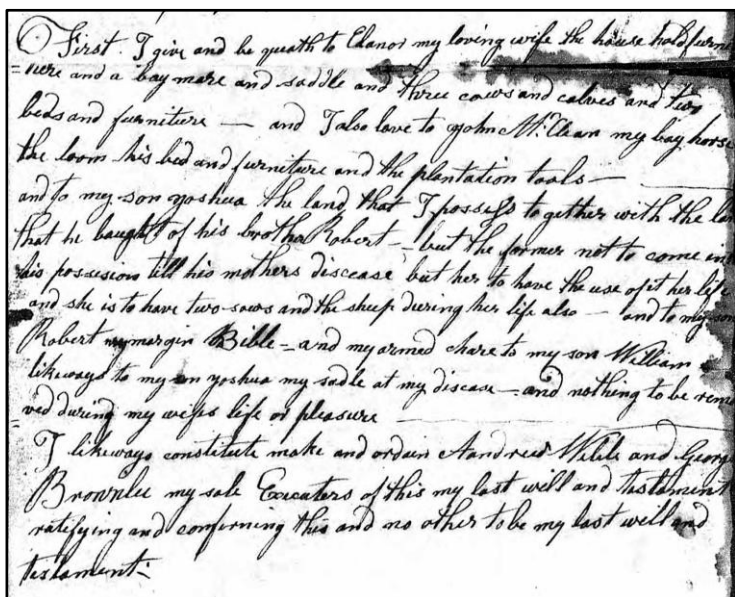


Figure 1: Screen capture of will of James Wallace. Abbeville, Ninety-Six District, South Carolina, 1795.

Source: See Reference 22

father, in 1795 (Figure 6).²² I confirmed with the Brownlee descendants that George was another member of the same Brownlee family.

James Wallace's will listed his wife Eleanor and sons Robert and William, who had appeared in the migrant list in 1768. But the will also listed a son Joshua who was not on that original list. The will bequeathed an armchair to William, but William had been in Nova Scotia for almost 13 years before the will was made.

On the one hand, I had circumstantial evidence connecting the Wallace family, the Brownlee family and my ancestor. On the other hand, I still had doubts, because of the date discrepancy and the armchair inherited by a Loyalist who was no longer in South Carolina.

I turned to DNA. In *Ancestry*, I searched among my DNA matches for those with the family name Wallace in their trees. I found two who were descended from Joshua Wallace, son of James Wallace and Eleanor Wallace née McCullough.²³ The families of these DNA matches had lived in the U.S. continuously since the Revolution. Joshua is therefore a younger brother of William. Joshua would have been about 7 years of age when the family immigrated to America. And I could conclude that their parents were in fact James and Eleanor Wallace.

From the Emerald Isle

Joshua's application for a Revolutionary War pension and a history of his adopted town of Henry, Kentucky, stated that Joshua was born in County Tyrone in Ulster.^{24,25} The family was from Drumglass Parish, in the present-day town of Dungannon. Joshua's descendants indicate that his parents, James and Eleanor, were also born there, although this remains unverified.

As yet, I have been unable to find any birth record for William, so this remains on my research agenda. Some secondary sources repeated the family myth that he was Scottish and mentioned Inverness.^{26,27}

However, a search of *Scotland's People* for Inverness County in the 20 years before and after William's birthdate showed no William Wallace and, in fact, only one child named Wallace born during that period.

A genealogist who researched the descendants of William Wallace in Nova Scotia noted that Wallace's children and grandchildren claimed to be Irish. She concluded that Wallace was probably born in Ireland and that the family had been there for generations.²⁸

Brother against brother

The descendants of William's brother Joshua posted original pension documents²⁹ and a list of South Carolina men who served in the American forces during the Revolutionary War,³⁰ showing that Joshua served with the Americans. Thus, the brothers fought on opposing sides of the conflict.

The American Revolutionary War is often called the "first civil war" because neighbours and brothers found themselves on opposite sides. I am aware of many stories of brothers divided by their allegiance during the war, but this is the first evidence I found of such division in my own family, which includes 18 Loyalist families.

According to records and family trees, the rest of the Wallace family stayed in the U.S., meaning that, when William came to Nova Scotia, he was parted from his family for the rest of his life. This sad but common story affected many of the estimated 40,000 to 50,000 Loyalists who came to the colonies that subsequently became Canada, and to whom roughly one in five Canadians can trace their heritage.

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We Shall Remember Them[©]

BY SHEILA DOHOO FAURE

Sheila coordinates the team of volunteers writing biographies of World War I soldiers who died at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station and are listed in the BIFHSGO database and now on the website of The Long, Long Trail. She is the former BIFHSGO webmanager.

Sergeant William John Laban Jones M.M.[©]

Regimental number: 139041

256th Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers

born: 1892–died: 28 July 1917

HE ANSWERED
HIS COUNTRY'S CALL

Sergeant William John Laban Jones' family remembered the sacrifice he made with this inscription on his gravestone.¹

William was the only son of John and Mary Ann (née Laban) Jones. His parents had married in Neath, Glamorganshire, Wales, in 1891.² William was born the following year and baptized as William John Laban on 29 May 1892 in Briton Ferry, Glamorganshire.³ Two years later, William's sister, Annie Elizabeth, was born on 2 June 1894⁴ in Pontardawe, near Glamorgan,⁵ but was not baptized until 7 February 1901 at the age of 6.⁶ Their third child, Elsie May, was probably born in early 1904 and died soon after birth.⁷

In 1901, the family was living in Pontardawe, where John was a colliery mechanic.⁸ Ten years later, he had become a licensed victualler and the manager of the Castle Hotel (Figure 1) in Abercrave, Ystradgynlais, less than 10 miles from Pontardawe.⁹ The hotel



Figure 1: Castle Hotel, Abercrave

Source: Ystradgynlais & District

had been operating in River Tawe valley since about the mid-19th century.¹⁰

William enlisted to serve in the British Expeditionary Force early in the war¹¹ and on 18 May 1915 went overseas to France,¹² probably with the South Wales Borderers (regimental number 12252).¹³ He later joined the 256th Tunnelling Company of the Royal Engineers, established in July 1916, as the last of the tunnelling companies to be created.¹⁴

The tunnelling units were occupied in offensive and defensive mining involving the placing and maintaining of mines under enemy lines, as well as other underground work such as the construction of deep dugouts for troop accommodation, the digging of subways, saps (a narrow trench dug to approach enemy trenches), cable trenches and underground chambers for signals and medical services.¹⁵

In June 1916, *The London Gazette* (Figure 2) announced that William had been awarded the Military Medal, which was given to non-officers for gallantry and devotion to duty when under fire in battle on land.^{16, 17}

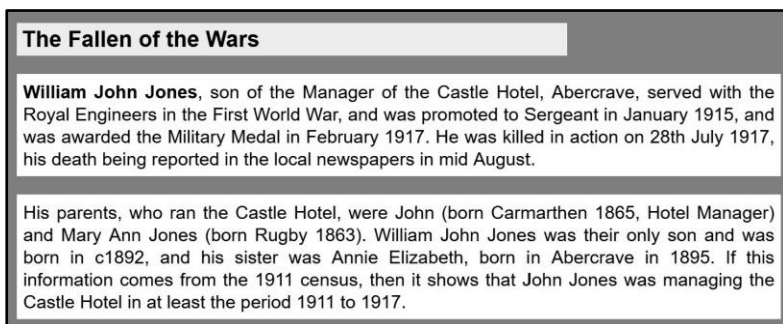


Figure 2: Sjt. W. J. Jones Military Medal announcement

Source: The London Gazette

Sadly, William was injured and died of his wounds just over a year later. At the end of July 1917, the tunnelling company was stationed in Bois d'Havrincourt, 17 km southeast of Cambrai in northern France.¹⁸ The company's war diary records little of the soldiers' movements but, unlike most war diaries, includes news of both officers and non-officers in its accounts (Figure 3).

20	N ^o 265500 P ^{te} RADERICK, J., 2 nd Nonmouths Regt.,	wounded in action by Shell fire
20	ILieut. J. Y. HOOPER, R.E., joined the Company for duty.	
21	N ^o 267357 P ^{te} DAVIES, A.J., 2 nd Nonmouths Regt.,	" " " " " "
24	N ^o 158450 Spr. BURTON, A.L., R.E.,	" " " " " "
27	N ^o 139041 Sgt. JONES, W.J., R.E.,	" " " " " "
27	N ^o 13410 P ^{te} NAYLOR, W., 7 th K.O.Y.L.I.,	" " " " " "

Figure 3: Extract from war diaries of 256th Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers

Source: The National Archives

William was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 26 July 1917 with gunshot wounds to his back and buttocks. He died the following day and was buried in Oosthoek Military Cemetery (Figure 4) on 29 July.¹⁹

The family was notified by the War Office:

Mr. and Mrs. Jones of the Castle Hotel Abercrave have received intimation from the War Office that their only son, Sergeant William Jones of the South Wales Borderers has been killed in action. Twelve months ago the deceased soldier was awarded the Military Medal for conspicuous bravery in the field. Prior to enlistment Sergeant Jones was employed at the International Colliery Abercrave but joined the colours soon after the outbreak of war and gained rapid promotion.²⁰

In addition, the family received a letter of sympathy from 2nd Lieutenant H. J. Jeffreys of the Royal Engineers:

Please accept my heartfelt sympathy and also the sympathy of the Company as a whole, both officers and men, on the death of your son on active service.

I would have written before but as Sergeant Jones was taken to hospital, it is only lately that I have been informed of his death.

In your great trouble it is impossible for me to sympathise with you as I would like to; we have lost a gallant comrade and one of the most trustworthy Sergeants in the Company, but you have lost a son in which all



Figure 4: Original grave marker

Source: Ystradgynlais History

your hopes and affections were centred and the only consolation you have is that he died doing his duty, that he faced death like a man, and like, the brave soldier he was.²¹



Figure 5: Final grave marker with sister Annie Elizabeth Morgan and her daughter

Source: Ystradgynlais History

in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).²⁴

A website dedicated to the history of Ystradgynlais and district memorializes William's service (Figure 6).²⁵

After the end of the war, William's remains and those of 24 other soldiers were removed from this cemetery and reinterred in Coxyde Military Cemetery (Figure 5, Plot II, Row L, Grave 11).²² The cemetery is near Coxyde (now known as Koksijde) on the Belgian coast of the North Sea and was established by French troops. When Commonwealth forces relieved the French in June 1917, it became the most important Commonwealth cemetery on the Belgian coast.²³

In addition to his Military Medal, William was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918), the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the 1914–15 Star (for service

Awarded the Military Medal.

**139041 Sjt. W. J. Jones, 180th Tunnelling
Coy., R.E.**

Figure 6: William's Online Memorial

Source: Ystradgynlais & District

William's sister Anne married during the war, wedding Morgan Henry Morgan near Swansea, Glamorganshire, in the first half of the year. After the war, she and Morgan Henry were living with John and Mary Ann at the Castle Hotel, where John was still the licensed victualler. Morgan Henry Morgan was a colliery storekeeper.²⁶

William's parents probably died in Ystradgynlais—Mary Ann in 1923²⁷ and John in 1926.²⁸ In 1939, Annie and her husband Morgan Henry were still living in Ystradgynlais.²⁹

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Many Trees Versus One-World Tree

BY PAUL CRIPWELL



This is one of a series of articles designed to address the Education goal of BIFHSGO, namely, to take advantage of technology in our family history research. Future articles may be written to cover this wide-ranging topic. Suggestions are welcome and volunteers to write articles on a topic of their choice would be greatly appreciated.

There are two very different approaches to developing one's family trees amongst the Big Four genealogy sites¹: *Ancestry*,² *MyHeritage*,³ *FamilySearch*⁴ and *Findmypast*.⁵ While three of these allow individuals to build their own tree or trees, *FamilySearch* adopts a different approach—that of one tree to which all interested researchers can contribute.

In this article I will outline these two concepts and the pros and cons of each. As usual there is no clear “best” approach and it is up to you to decide which suits your research and your needs. You might even use both.

Many Trees

With this approach you, the user, create your own tree or trees. Each of these trees is a separate entity and is independent from anyone else's trees.

Each person's profile in each tree is also a separate entity. If your own trees overlap in some way, the profile of John Doe in Tree 1 is independent of the profile of the same John Doe in Tree 2. Since you know that they are the same person and there is no linkage between the two profiles in the separate trees, it is up to the user (you) to maintain these profiles and keep them in sync.

A change made to John Doe in Tree 1 will not automatically be reflected in Tree 2 and you must edit each profile to keep them both up-to-date so that they contain the same information and records (including citations—remember your citations!). This can be an

onerous task and only compounded if you have multiple people in multiple trees.

As an example, I maintain two major trees on *Ancestry*. One is called “Cripwell May Family Tree” and the other is called “Descendants of Thomas Creple of Barton in Fabis.” Each of these trees has their own purpose: the first tree was created for all my known direct ancestors with branches for my parents going as far back in time as possible; the second tree, which contains all known Cripwells, is my attempt to answer the question “Are all the Cripwells in the world related?”

There is a significant overlap between these two trees, which include all my direct ancestors back to Thomas Creple. I have never counted how many duplicates there are, but over nine generations there will be quite a few. It is not realistic to maintain the same up-to-date profiles for all these ancestors.

In this situation I have taken the approach that the profiles for my direct Cripwell ancestors in the “Cripwell May Family Tree” are as complete as possible, while their corresponding profiles in the other tree represent significant facts only. Regardless of this, any major event for any of these people will require an update in both trees. There are notes in the “Descendants” tree indicating that a more complete profile is available in the other tree.

The main advantage of the “many-tree” approach is that any tree you create is YOUR tree. You have complete control over every aspect. This control includes who can see your tree and whether living people are visible. If you make your tree public and searchable, then anyone can see the people and profiles on your tree. All sites have a universal rule that only you as the owner of the tree—or people you designate—can see living people. This includes your great-aunt Martha, born in 1852 with no known date of death, whose box you forgot to tick indicating she is dead!

You—or someone you designate—are also the only people who can modify a person’s profile. No one else can change anything.

On a “many-tree” site, many profiles for the same person will likely exist, created by different people; these will probably not all be the same. The site provides the opportunity for you to receive hints about these other profiles. A link will be provided, so that you will be able to compare the information you have with that on a tree created by

someone else. What you do with this information and whether or not you use it is entirely up to you!

However, this also provides you with the opportunity to contact the owner of that other profile and potentially exchange information or questions about it. Typically, these conversations go one of two ways: either nothing is returned; or you find a fellow genealogist with an interest in a common set of ancestors. The former happens frequently but the latter can be very rewarding.

Remember that everyone else is doing the same thing. When you have people in common, this will include someone taking information from your or another tree and including it in their profile. Some of this information may not be correct! Now all these different profiles, in different trees, will contain an assortment of correct and incorrect information, and all will potentially be different from each other. Untangling this is not possible, so all you can do is be as thorough as you can when you are viewing each profile you find.

Let's have a look at an example of what could happen. We begin with three trees: Adam's, Betty's and Charlie's. Each of these trees has the same person in common—Debbie—and we will begin this example with the basic information for Debbie being identical in all three profiles—she was born in 1862, was unmarried and died in 1929.

Imagine that Adam found a birth certificate saying Debbie was born on 26 December 1861, and Betty found the birth index record that showed Debbie's birth was registered in the first quarter of 1862. Both records agree on the location of the birth and the parents' names, so Adam and Betty each adds Debbie to their own tree. Betty also finds a marriage record for Debbie and a Frank Gregory in the same county in 1885. Charlie finds Adam's tree and adds the birth information to his tree and then finds a marriage record. It may have been late or night or Charlie was just not thinking but he adds a marriage record for Debbie and a Henry Ipswich from a completely different part of the country and for 1871 (Debbie would have been only 9 years old!).

Confusing?—yes! Then you discover that Debbie also belongs in your tree, so, on seeing the hints in these other three trees, you have some serious checking to do before you figure out which information is probably correct.

This is just one small example of what might happen if you publicly post any of your family trees. Multiply this across many lifetime events

for any individual, parents, brothers, sisters and then for all the individuals in trees.

One Tree

The “one tree” approach, on the other hand, involves only one profile for each person. Each person becomes part of a single worldwide tree with linkages to every other person in the tree. One advantage, genealogically, is that everyone in the world-tree can be connected to everyone else in the world-tree.

The main advantage is that, with only one profile per person, there is only one profile to keep up-to-date.

I pause here to say, “However!”

There are disadvantages to this approach. One is that, since there is only one profile per person, it must be open to modification by any user on the site. This can be problematic.

Let’s look again at the example given above, but under the one “world-tree” approach.

Adam finds the birth certificate and adds it to the profile. Then Betty adds the birth registration record and the marriage record to Frank Gregory. Now, when Charlie finds the other marriage record, he has a problem—Debbie is already married. Maybe now he checks his record again and realizes it is probably wrong.

All is good.

But what if Charlie added his marriage record first? When Betty finds her marriage record, she now finds that Debbie is already married. When she investigates further, she uncovers the inconsistency in the record that Charlie added. The expected process would be that Betty sends a message to Charlie pointing out the discrepancy and they discuss the situation and agree that Betty is right. Charlie’s marriage record and spouse is removed, and Frank Gregory is added as the correct spouse.

Does it always happen this way? Probably not, but one can hope that it does more times than not.

Since anyone on the site can make modifications, there is little or no control over or verification of these changes. While you may be very careful and follow Genealogical Proof Standards, not everyone does. It is possible that one day you might find changes made to a profile that

are not correct. Then your only recourse is to undo those modifications. Unfortunately, there are many beginners around and others who are not as careful as you are.

FamilySearch posts a statement that only you can see the profiles of living people that you have entered into the tree.

Conclusion

There is no obvious conclusion as to which approach is the *best*. You will probably find advantages in both approaches, so it is up to you to pursue whichever method is best for you.

If you prefer the stand-alone application approach and keep all your tree information local on your computer, then you will not get any hints from other trees. If you want to add that feature, then you will need to upload or synchronize your tree with a website that offers it.

To end this article, here are some statistics on family trees from the major sites:

“Many tree” sites⁶

- *Ancestry* has over 100 million trees
- *MyHeritage* has over 59 million trees
- *Findmypast* has over 5 million trees

“One-world tree” site

- The *FamilySearch* world tree contains 1.7 billion profiles

While the above sites are frequently referred to as the “Big Four,” there are many other sites available for hosting your tree (or trees) and others that use the one-world tree concept.

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BIFHSGO News

Comings and Goings

The Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Bruce Beanlands to the position of First Director-at-Large. Welcome Bruce!

BIFHSGO has SIGs!

Special Interest Groups, or SIGs, are a way for researchers working in a particular area to exchange ideas. There are currently four SIGs within BIFHSGO, and each will be highlighted in this section.

British Colonial America – BCA



Source: Facebook Group Photo

This special interest group (SIG) is for *all* genealogists, from beginners to experienced, who are interested in researching their ancestors from before the American Revolution in the Thirteen Colonies, which later formed the United States of America.

The group began meeting in response to interest expressed by BIFHSGO members following a feature presentation about the Salem witch

trials. The SIG officially began in the fall of 2018, first meeting in-person with just six to 10 members sharing their research resources and findings. The pandemic meant a move to online meetings, which greatly expanded the membership. The group now has members from across Canada and the United States; 90 people are on the email list, and about 20 come to each meeting.

Meetings are organized around a topic or theme, although some time in each meeting is spent chatting about members' discoveries or quandaries. Topics have included sources of genealogical information, especially land records, church records and wills, for the Thirteen Colonies. Sharing sources and trying genealogy websites such as *WikiTree* and full-text search in *FamilySearch* have helped members unearth new information about their family. Other meetings have focused on historical events, religion in the colonies, or ancestors who

had interesting lives or occupations. And tough subjects, such as slavery and the Colonists' relationship with the Indigenous peoples, have been explored.

Additionally, many of us have discovered that we are, in fact, related. Members have uncovered ancestors living in the same area at the same time, or fighting in the same battle during the Revolution.

Members' ancestors came to Canada at various points during the colonial period and as late as the 1800s. But most came after the American Revolution, often as Loyalists who had fought for or supported the British Crown during the war. Many members have told stories of the dangers and difficult decisions their ancestors faced during the Revolution.

Group members are working together to add their family names to a map of the Colonies and to build a timeline from the beginning of European settlement to the exodus of the Loyalists. Members of the group share information regularly on a closed Facebook group.

Anyone with an interest in this Colonial period is welcome to attend.

Meetings are held every six weeks on Wednesday evenings, 7 p.m. See the website for upcoming meetings in the fall.

Coordinator: Marianne Rasmus

Email: bca_sig@bifhsgo.ca

BIFHSGO membership: Not required

Writing Group

Since 2003, BIFHSGO has had a special interest group for writers. When it was first formed, the group met in person. During the pandemic, we switched to virtual meetings, which allows members outside the Ottawa area to join.

The group provides a supportive setting in which members can share their work and receive constructive feedback from fellow writers. Our small size (15–20 people) means that each person can actively participate as a presenter or a reviewer. Members choose their own writing topics. They may be working on family history stories or memoirs for their own family, writing articles for publication or preparing presentations.

We meet over Zoom on the third Friday of the month between September and June from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. If you are a member of BIFHSGO actively engaged in writing and would like to join us, please get in touch.

Coordinator: Carol Annett

Email: writing_sig@bifhsgo.ca

BIFHSGO membership: Required

BIFHSGO Monthly Meeting Talks

The Program Committee is always looking for speakers for our monthly program.

Story Talks (40 or 60 minutes, each month) tell a story, including how you researched it and especially how you overcame brick walls.

Tips and Techniques Talks (40 or 60 minutes, each month) explain a particular strategy used in genealogical research.

Great Moments in Genealogy (15 minutes, December and June) focus on a eureka moment that led to a family story.

Small Moment Talks (5 minutes, September) focus on a story around an incident, a letter, or an artifact.

Mentors are available to help flesh out the story and present it. You don't have to do a PowerPoint, and you don't have to do your presentation live.

Contact the Program Director: programs@bifhsgo.ca

BIFHSGO Board of Directors 2025–2026

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The Society

The British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa (BIFHSGO) is an independent, federally incorporated society and a registered charity (Reg. No. 89227 4044 RR0001). Our mission is to encourage family history research, and its dissemination, by people interested in ancestry in the British Isles. We do this by:

- connecting BIFHSGO members with each other and other like-minded persons,
- educating both beginning and more experienced family historians by promoting and demonstrating trusted research methods and best practices,
- sharing members' knowledge readily with other researchers, and
- inspiring others through educational presentations and members' published stories.

We publish genealogical research findings and information on research resources and techniques, hold public meetings on family history, and participate in the activities of related organizations.

Each year members enjoy four issues of *Anglo-Celtic Roots* (ACR) and ten family history meetings, plus members-only information on bifhsgo.ca, friendly advice from other members, and participation in special interest groups. Membership dues for 2025–2026 (individuals or institutions) are \$50 (with electronic ACR) or \$60 (with printed ACR).

BIFHSGO Calendar of Events

Saturday Morning Meetings

In-person—Geneva Hall, Knox Presbyterian Church,
120 Lisgar St., Ottawa

Online—on Zoom, **registration required**

12 September 2026	Tips and Techniques Talk: Paper, Photos, and the Unexpected: What do Museums and Archives Want from Family Historians? Panel: Ottawa City Archives, War Museum, plus Story Talk: Small Moments Speakers to be determined
3 October 2026*	Tips and Techniques Talk: Preserving Family Heirlooms from the “Old Country” Kyla Ubbink Story Talk: Researching for Dramatic Presentations Pierre Brault
14 November 2026	Tips and Techniques Talk: To be determined Story Talk: Lilian: SOE Secret Radio Operator in WW 2 France Paul McCue

Typical Meeting Schedule

09:00 – Tips and Techniques Talk ≈ 45 minutes

10:00 – Story Talk ≈ 1 hour

All the above meetings are hybrid.

***Note:** October meeting moved due to conflict with Thanksgiving.

Check our website at www.bifhsgo.ca for up-to-date information on our monthly meetings, registration for online attendance, details of special interest group meetings and online resources.

Articles for *Anglo-Celtic Roots*

Articles and illustrations for publication are welcome. For advice on preparing manuscripts, please email acreditor@bifhsgo.ca. The deadline for submissions to the Fall issue is 22 July 2026.