Please visit our Bruce County Genealogical Society Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/Bruce-County-Genealogical-Society-2009809595970720

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy Belated New Year!

I think we had all prayed that by now life would be more normal than it is. Here's to an early spring and news that we have made it through Omicron so we can plan for a good old summer full of gatherings and travel.

The Bruce County Genealogical Society has decided to take a break, until April, from our online webinars. As of writing the Museum remains closed to the public. We have no idea when it will open so the Executive will take this time to discuss what topics you might most enjoy hearing about.

In the meantime, as a genealogist, you have more time now to catch up on your to-dos like sorting and scanning photos, correcting errors in your Family Tree and reaching out to cousins for stories about your mutual ancestors.

If you have ideas for future presentations or wish to present yourself, don't hesitate to reach out. We would love to hear from you.

Glenys

A HUGE THANK YOU TO GLENYS, DAVE, LIZ, MARY, AND SYLVIA!

A Lake Huron Tragedy

Part 11 - The Men of the Erie Belle

Captain **John Edward Tobin** was born on May 7th, 1849, at sea in the East Indies to parents **Edward** and Mary **(Malone) Tobin**. Mary was born in 1822. It is known that his father was born in 1807 in Gowran, County Kilkenny, Ireland. John's older brother Richard was born in Bombay in 1847. The family immigrated to Amherstburg, Ontario in 1850 where brother James was born in 1851. The remaining three siblings were born in Windsor, Ontario: Mary Ann in 1855, William in 1858 and Joseph in 1860.

John remained at home in Amherstburg with his family until sometime before 1871 where on the Canada Census he is listed as a Mariner living with his widowed father and siblings. His mother Mary passed away on Dec. 29, 1869. Mary is buried at St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Cemetery in Amherstburg alongside Edward who passed away on Aug. 14, 1886.

On July 18, 1878 **John Tobin** married **Margaret "Maggie" or Marguerite O'Hara** who was born on March 4, 1854 in Newmarket, Ontario. Both were living in Amherstburg at the time, but the ceremony took place in front of a Justice of the Peace in Detroit, Michigan. John's brother William, his first mate aboard the **Erie Belle**, witnessed the vows.

John and Margaret and children Edward John and Laura M. lived as a family in Amherstburg in 1881. By 1883 they had moved to Windsor. He notes himself as a Tug Captain there in 1891. In 1901 he had become a Sailor's Agent, no doubt a less strenuous job for him as he was now 52 years old.

John and Margaret had a family of six children. Eddy was the first to arrive in 1878, followed by Laura M. in 1879, John Jr., in 1883, Thomas "Roy" on Feb. 19, 1891 in Windsor, Russel in 1893 and daughter Alta in 1896. Unfortunately, son Eddy passed away on Nov. 7, 1882.
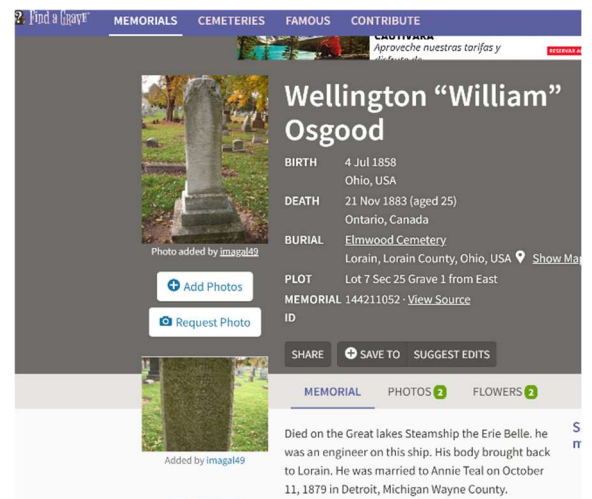

Margaret Tobin passed away on March 5th, 1911, at the age of 57. A retired John then resided with his married daughter Laura and her husband Claus Mitenesger and his unmarried daughter Alta. Captain John Edward Tobin died in 1927 and is buried with Margaret at St. Alphonsus Roman Catholic Cemetery in Windsor, Essex Co., Ontario.

William Osgood was a member of one of two families of Osgoods who lived in Lorrain, Ohio. Both were descended from John Osgood who immigrated to Ipswich, Massachusetts aboard the ship Confidence in June of 1638 from Wherwell, England. Records tell us that he was **Wellington Osgood** not **William**. His grand-niece, Maureen Griffith Krajcovic, told me he was the youngest child, born on July 14th 1858, to Roland and Laura (Ketchum) Osgood. His father was a farmer, owner of sawmills in Avon and Sheffield, Ohio and a carpenter. Roland was a deacon in the local Congregational Church. He and Laura married on July 30, 1838 in Avon, Ohio after the death of his first wife, Zeriah Mariah Buck in 1836. Laura had Canadian connections as her father was from New Brunswick.

Then Wellington married **Annie Teal** on October 11th, 1879 in Detroit. They were lodgers in Alpena in 1880 where Wellington is listed as an engineer. Annie was ill with Bilious Fever.

Wellington's father Roland passed away a few months before Annie received the news that her husband was dead. His body washed up on the beach on November 25th two days after the tug's explosion. Annie was notified of the tragedy by wire. Wellington's body was subsequently sent to Windsor where one of his brothers picked it up for return to Lorain, Ohio for burial. He had three brothers, Leonard, Vriling and Herbert. Which one saw to his return home I don't know. I do know however that he is buried with his father and mother in the Elmwood Cemetery, Lorain, Ohio in Lot 7 Section 25.

Frank Eikenhurst washed up near Station Beach after a strong south-westerly gale that also washed the ship's wreckage ashore on November 22nd. His relatives could not be reached by wire and no address existed for them so he was given a Christian burial in Kincardine Cemetery. He is the only sailor buried in the cemetery and rests in an unmarked grave in **Lot B1. G.** His funeral expenses were paid for by earnings owed to him by Odette & Wherry.

William Sayles and the unnamed cook were also retrieved from the lake on November 26th and 27th. Both men were African American. It was reported in the Kincardine Reporter on Thursday November 29, 1883 that: "The coloured men had only been engaged the day preceding the accident, and as the bodies were found within the corporation of Huron, that municipality will no doubt be called upon to bear the expense." It is likely then that the men are buried somewhere in Huron Township.

A special report was forwarded to Windsor and telephoned to Odette & Wherry saying that besides the two engineers and fireman previously mentioned, the second fireman **William M**

Johnson of Amherstburg, Essex Co., Ontario, was also killed. And yet a report in The Kincardine News on December 18, 1941 says he died in a mental institute in 1885, two years after the accident. I believe William was the son of Thomas L and Mary Johnson. William married Sarah Elizabeth Weley on October 5th. 1875. The Johnsons were an African American family from the United States where William was born. His brother Gilbert Wesley Johnson was born in Ontario about 1859 and died of consumption at the age of 28 on January 30, 1887. I have found no evidence that Thomas and Mary had any other children, so it is sad to think that both of their sons died at such young ages. If indeed William died as the result of injuries onboard the Erie Belle, he would only have been about 30.

The family was Methodists who might have attended church at the Nazery African Methodist Episcopal Church in Amherstburg.

It is possible that the Johnsons were part of the movement of African American Slaves into the Amherstburg area in the mid 1800's. A quote from "The Black Museum" says that:
"Amherstburg meant freedom, as the Canadian destination for many Black people escaping slavery in the United States". Amherstburg was the chief crossing point for the Underground Railroad that we know went as far as Owen Sound.

Item ID# A992.022.1352; a Negative Glass Plate, ROYAL HOTEL, Kincardine by Photographer Scougall, John H. Date between 1874 and 1922
https://brucemuseum.pastperfectonline.com/photo/

Watchman **Daniel Finlayson** had retired to his bunk shortly before the explosion. He was found some 150 ft. from the remains of the tugboat and it was supposed that he was thrown that far. He was alive but blinded and badly injured. He was taken to the Royal Hotel where he remained in grave condition at the time of reporting by the Bruce Reporter on November 23, 1883. Daniel was taken home to his parents Donald and Isabella Finlayson but sadly he died from his injuries on November 27, 1883 in Detroit.

Wheelman **Henry Albert Pocock,** the son of William Pocock, was born in Canada in 1864 and immigrated to the US in 1876. He was a hero to his fellow sailors because he aided their rescue by swimming in the frigid Lake Huron waters to get them to the safety of the Lifeboats. Henry married Maggie Ardes in Detroit on December 18, 1889. They had a family of six children, Walter, Julia, Rose, Violet, Lily and Jimmy. Henry passed away in Detroit in 1941 and is buried at

Woodmere Cemetery in Detroit, Wayne Co., Michigan. His entire working career was spent on the Great Lakes becoming a Captain commanding a Passenger Ferry Boat. Henry sailed ferries from Sault Ste Marie, Michigan to Sault Ste, Marie Ontario 12 months of the year for 15 years. In the winter the ferries ran every 20 minutes in order to keep the waters open. From 1928 to

Boat Henry was on blew up killed 7. 1884

1932 Henry worked for the Windsor to Detroit Ferry Co. The 1940 US Census still notes him as Captain and that was only one year before his death. Henry's great grandson Bill Ferguson spoke to me with great pride about his great grandfather. He told me about the house Henry owned in Sault Ste Marie, Michigan and how when Henry moved to Detroit, he had it dismantled and shipped there. The house remained in pieces for years before Henry's family got together to build it for his Henry's daughter Rose. Henry lived in a converted Lifeboat that he purchased from his employer in Sault Ste Marie. It was sailed to Detroit. His daughter Lily and son Jimmy died in Sault Ste Marie and were buried there. Henry had their bodies exhumed and removed to Woodmere Cemetery in Detroit but not before having the caskets opened just to make sure that Lily and Jimmy were inside.

In 1927, eight years after the 50th Anniversary of the sinking of the Erie Belle, Henry returned to Kincardine and the site of the disaster. I can only imagine his thoughts and feelings as he stood by the old boiler.

While in Bruce County, Henry Pocock took the time to visit his old friend **James Gardiner,** from Bruce Township who went out on the Erie Belle not as a crew member but to watch the men at work. James received such injuries from the explosion that he was left mentally deranged. He lived 12 years beyond Henry Pocock's visit, dying in 1939.

The unnamed Cook was a steward aboard the propeller steam tug the **Bob Hackett.** The cook couldn't have known that the ship he would leave for the Erie Belle would sink on the Great Lakes. The wooden vessel was built in Amherstburg, Ontario in 1868 and was lost in 1885 near Bob-Lo Island after colliding with the **St. Magnus**. Her boiler was removed in May of 1886 and the hull was blown up. The **Hackett** had several mishaps & fires, including three other sinkings

within the five years previous. Life as a mariner on the Great Lakes was indeed a dangerous occupation.

Deckhand **Isaac Drenshaw** was the son of **Edward Drenshaw** and **Sarah Jane Stevens**. He was of African American descent. He did not return to the lakes after the horrific explosion of the Erie Belle. Born in Michigan on January 17, 1861 Isaac took to a life of labour on land and can we blame him. Isaac worked at various jobs. He was a waiter, a day labourer, a plasterer, a farmer and a teamster.
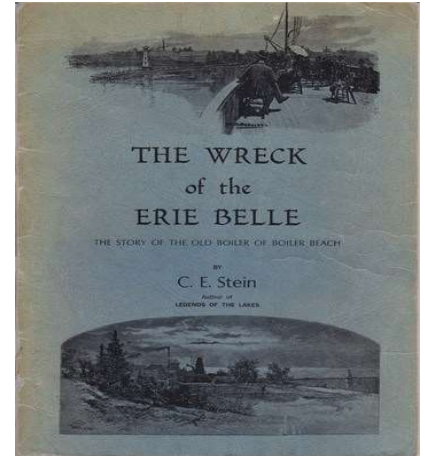
He married widow **Marinda F. Stewart** on February 26th. 1899 in Cassopolis, Cass Co., Michigan. Marinda was the daughter of Jefferson B. Anderson and Amanda Cousins.

Marinda had a son, William from her first marriage. I have been unable to establish whether there were children from the union of Isaac and Marinda but I have found very young children, Katherine and Odis Lyons living with them in their owned home in La Grange Twp., Cass Co., 1920. They are still there in 1930 in Cassopolis when Isaac was retired and Katherine is noted as a granddaughter. Marinda passed away on February 19, 1936 and is buried in Prospect Hill Cemetery, in Cass Co., Michigan.

Isaac died on January 20th, 1952 in Jefferson, Cass Co., Michigan.

Deckhand **George Brown**, another crew member of African American descent, survived the explosion only to drown in 1910.

Wheelman **Frank Convoy**, from Amherstburg was credited with dragging the paralyzed Captain Tobin from the icy Lake Huron waters, saving his life.

Written in memory of the Men of the Erie Belle

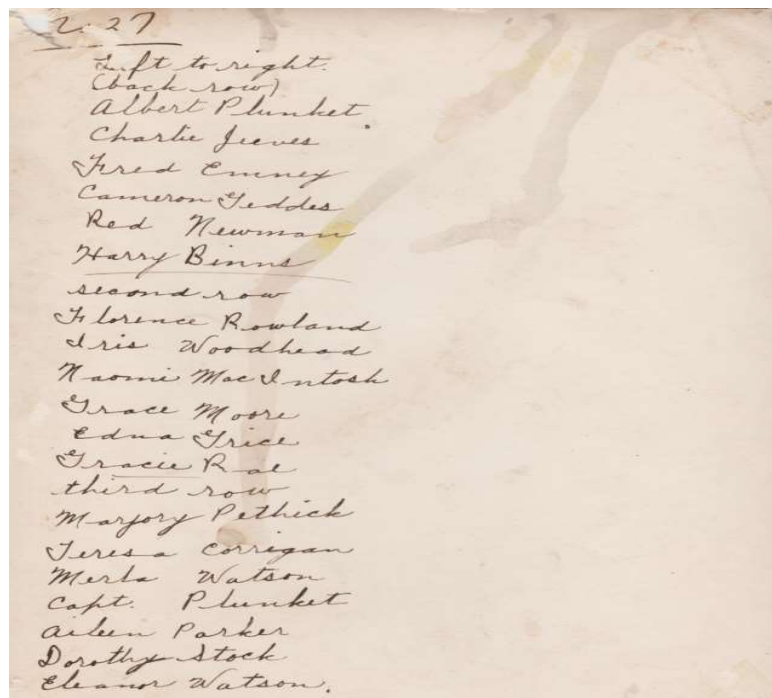*Researched and submitted by: Glenys Johnson*

The Dumbells

Do you have an ancestor that was part of the Dumbells troupe? This Canadian troupe travelled to France in World War One to entertain the troops.

This photograph shows a dozen women in what appears to be female military uniforms of World War I. The names of the entire troupe appear on the reverse. They include, Merle and Eleanor, two of the Watson sisters, part of a song and dance quartet.
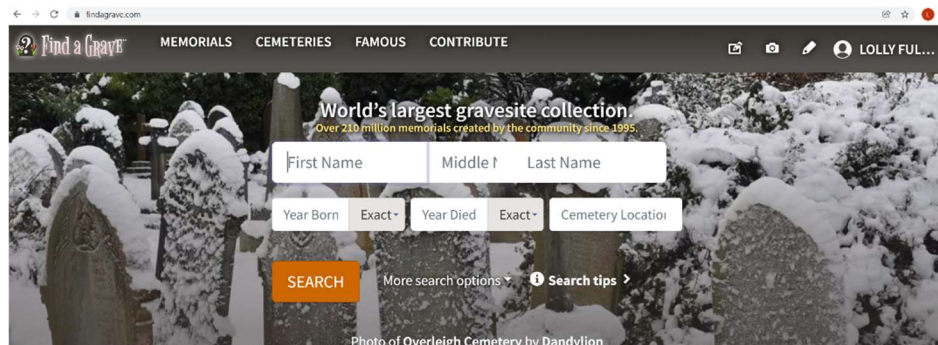
Dave MacDougall sent us this story.

Find a Grave: How to use it

By Liz Gowanlock

Find a Grave is a phenomenal free website for people either wanting to find loved ones or wishing to create a memorial for people who have passed away. It is a large, constantly growing database of cemetery records. In my experience, it is the best vehicle available at this time for storing information about deceased loved ones. It does not cost anything to search for records, but you do have to be a member (also free to join) to either add or suggest changes to a memorial.

There are many facets I find advantageous about this site.

- One is that after creating the memorial, you can add a lot of personal information in the bio section (like obituaries or life stories).
- Equally important to me, is that you can link family members (parents, spouses and children).
- You can record the inscription on the grave marker (which often includes important clues as to relations with other family members).
- You can include the plot number or section of the cemetery making it easier for others to locate the person. (After creating the memorial, if you are at the cemetery, it is also possible to add the actual GPS coordinates for the headstone using the Findagrave app on your phone.)
- I like to crop and edit my photos before uploading them to get the best possible view of the headstone, and other sites do not allow for this. You can also add a portrait of the person or other documents in digital photo format. Each member is allowed to add up to 5 photos, for a total of 20 photos on the memorial. If you want to sponsor a memorial, you can add an additional 10 photos.
- Some sites want only the dates and names as they are recorded on the headstone. Unfortunately, many birth years recorded on headstones are incorrect or left off altogether when just an age is shown at time of death. (Even some death years are incorrect, although this is more rare.) Some names are spelled incorrectly and often a middle name is omitted, or a maiden name is left out, or a person is known by their middle name or nickname. Find a Grave allows you to record accurate information. (I always include a note in the bio section if the dates or names are different.)
- You can create memorials for people who are not actually buried in a cemetery. Some people are cremated with their ashes either spread, or in an urn somewhere, or they

were lost at sea, or whatever. (I have an uncle who was cremated and will never be buried in a cemetery. I created a memorial for him and linked him to my parents and grandparents.)

- Some people are buried in a cemetery but do not have a headstone or marker. These are equally important people and need to be remembered.

There are some drawbacks to this site.

- Find a Grave was founded in 1996 and was bought by Ancestry in 2013. Some people are concerned that while the site is free right now, at some point in the future, it might not be. It is disconcerting to have spent a lot of time and energy taking photos and creating memorials, and then have to pay to use the site you helped create.
- Some people are concerned about others possibly making money off of their photos, so they are including a copyright on the photos. If the site was not free, then Ancestry would be making money off your photos. Some worry that other people will copy and paste their photos onto a different site that has a fee to join. (Personally, I am not concerned with this. I take my photos and create memorials strictly so others can find their ancestors. It is a passion of mine, provides a sense of purpose, and is cathartic.)
- Only the owner of the memorial can arrange the order the photos on the memorial.
- Only the person who added the photo can delete it, so if someone adds a photo to a memorial you created, and you don't want the photo, you cannot delete it yourself.
- When recording the birth or death place, you can only add what the place would be called now. (I was born in Hamilton, Wentworth County. Since Wentworth is a historic county, I would have to use Hamilton, Hamilton Municipality. Similarly, Toronto used to be in York County, a county which still exists, but it is now Toronto, Toronto Municipality. I have relatives that were born in Reach Township, Ontario County, both of which no longer exist. Reach Township became Scugog Township in the Durham Regional Municipality.)
- The site is large and takes a while to learn a few tricks to find or create memorials.
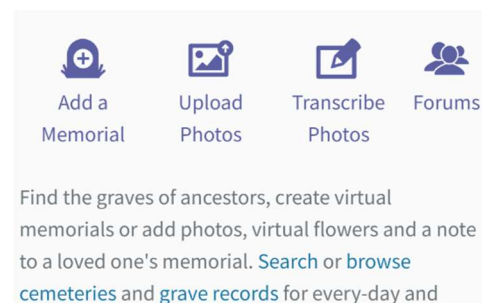
    Patience is the key.

How it Works

Find a Grave has many different avenues to accomplish the same result, so I will share with you a couple of methods I use.

Creating Memorials

1. **Method 1, Uploading Photos, then Transcribing the Images:**

Find the graves of ancestors, create virtual memorials or add photos, virtual flowers and a note to a loved one's memorial. Search or browse cemeteries and grave records for every-day and

If you have a photo you took of the headstone, you can upload it to the cemetery in digital format, and then you have about a week to transcribe the image yourself before other volunteers transcribe it for you. (I like to go to a cemetery and take photos of all the headstones. I crop and edit the photos before uploading them since you cannot do this afterwards. When I transcribe them, if my photo is

unclear, I often use transcripts from a genealogical society and sometimes photos from the Canada GenWeb project, since both of these were recorded/taken in earlier years when there might not have been as much deterioration of the headstone. One of the easiest ways of getting to the page that allows you to add photos is this:

- Open Find a Grave, choose Contribute, and choose Upload Photos. This takes you to page where you can type in the cemetery name and/or location. (I generally type in the cemetery name and the county it is located in.)
- After you hit Continue, a list of cemeteries will appear. Select the one you want to add photos to, then simply drag your images into the box that reads Drag images here. If your images are not already open on your computer ready to drag into place, there is an alternative that reads Select Images, which will prompt you to find your images in one of your files.
- After the photos are uploaded, you can add a caption. (I always add the date I took the photo.)

Now it is time to transcribe your photos.

- After choosing Transcribe Photos, a divided screen appears that has information to be filled in on left side, and a photo on the right side. You can zoom in on the photo to see clearer details.
- The left side asks for first name, middle name(s), last name(s), date and place of birth, date and place of death, and inscription.
- If you choose the More Options button beneath the Inscription, you do have the option of including a prefix or suffix, nickname and maiden name.
- If you do not know some of the information, you leave that section blank, but if you do not know the last name, type in "unknown", since a last name is required. If there is already a memorial for the person at that cemetery, it will pop up and you can "Select" it to add the photo. (A word of caution, similar memorials also appear, so I keep multiple pages open on my computer. That way I can check out similar memorials before choosing Select so I do not add a photo to the wrong memorial.)
- If there are multiple people listed on the headstone, you check "Add Another Person" and fill in the above information before submitting it.
- Continue creating memorials until you have gone through all your photos or proceed to Searching Memorials to find what you have created.

2. Method 2, Creating a Memorial, then Adding a Photo

Alternatively, you can create a memorial first, and if you have a photo, you can add it after your memorial is created. (This method is my second choice because every memorial created is given a Memorial ID number. When you add multiple people from a photograph in the above method, the numbers are consecutive, so I find it a lot easier to link spouses. If multiple people

are shown on a headstone, it is much quicker to add multiple names to one photo, than it is to add photos to multiple memorials.)

- Open Find a Grave, choose Contribute, and choose Add Memorials.
- Type in Cemetery name and location and choose Continue.
- Select the Cemetery from one of the options by clicking on it.
- A page appears with the following information to be filled in: first name, middle name(s), last name(s), nickname, maiden name, male/female, date and place of birth, date and place of death, bio information, cemetery plot number, inscription, etc.
- Choose Add Memorial when finished. This will take you directly to the memorial you created.
- If you want to add a photo, there is a button to Add Photos, which gives you the same options as stated above. Either click and drag your photo, or use the Select Photo(s) option to find your photo. Remember to add a caption.

3. **Viewing a Memorial you created.** (After you have created a memorial, you will want to see it.)

I find it easier to search for a memorial I created via the Cemeteries route.

- Choose Cemeteries, type in the cemetery name and location and hit Search.
- Select the Cemetery from one of the options by clicking on it.
- This brings you to a page that reads Search Memorials in (named Cemetery). I simply type in the last name, and sometimes the first initial of the first name, and hit Search.
- Scroll through the list until you find the one you are looking for and click on it.
- Since I want to link family members, I choose Edit. I then check off male or female, add a bio if I want, include the section of the cemetery the grave is located in if known, and type in the memorial ID numbers of the spouse and parents if known. (This is where it pays to have multiple pages open on the computer, because it easier to copy and paste the ID numbers, than it is to write the numbers down and then transcribe them.)
- Note: you cannot link children to your memorial via this page. To do that you would have to open the child's memorial page and depending on whether you created that memorial or not, you would either edit it or Suggest Changes.

Searching the Database:

If you are looking for someone on Find a Grave, it pays to not narrow your search too much.

- You might have to try multiple spellings of the last name, or just put in a partial spelling. (This is particularly true for last names that begin with Mc or Mac.)
- First and middle names are often reversed, so if you looking for Mary Isabelle Brown and type in (first name) Mary, (middle name) Isabelle, and (last name) Brown, but the memorial is in the name of Isabel Mary Brown, you will not find her. If you type in (first name) Isabelle, (middle name) Mary, (last name) Brown, you would still not find her, since the first name on the memorial is listed as Isabel, not Isabelle. It would be safest to type in just Isabel Brown or I Brown.
- Unless you know for sure which cemetery a person is buried in, start with the town or just the county as a beginning search under Cemetery Location.
- Often memorials have incorrect or missing dates or birth or death. I normally leave date of birth blank in my search unless I know for sure the headstone shows the date. That

said, there are now options for including dates such as exact, before, after, +/- 1 year, +/- 3 years, +/- 5 years, +/- 10 years, +/- 25 years, or unknown.

Suggesting Changes to Memorials

Once you have found the memorial you are looking for, if any of the information is incorrect or missing you can either Edit it (if you are the manager of the memorial), or Suggest Edits (if someone else manages the memorial). You can edit a memorial you created and manage at any time and changes appear instantaneously. Suggesting Edits takes longer. The manager of the memorial can either accept or decline your suggestions. Sometimes they contact you to request additional information to back up your suggestion. They have the final say. (I once suggested a first name be changed from Wm to William, as it was shown on the headstone, and was refused because the manager felt everyone knows that Wm meant William. Unfortunately, anyone searching for his memorial would have a hard time finding him if they typed in William.) It can take up to a month for suggested edits to change. It all depends on how soon the manager looks at your request. If they have not reviewed it within a month, Find a Grave will automatically approve the request. If you want to suggest a bio or other information, you would have to go to Suggest Edits, and scroll down to the bottom for Suggest other corrections. Not everyone includes these suggestions on the memorial.

Genealogy is a passion for me. I find it very addicting. I really enjoy the Find a Grave program, and as you become more and more comfortable with it, you will find other shortcuts. On my profile page I have 3 cemeteries that I work on all the time updating information. So for me to find one of those cemeteries, I simply go to my profile page and click on the appropriate cemetery. You can add photos from Find a Grave directly onto Ancestry if you are

on that program, although I do not tend to use that avenue since the photos are in a smaller format and not as clear when you click on them, and they do not credit the photographer which I feel is a must. I use both Find a Grave and Ancestry in tandem. When working on Ancestry, and I find a photo of a headstone on Find a Grave, I can normally tell if I have the correct person and their final resting place, so I can stop searching records for them. When I am on Find a Grave, I use Ancestry to look for birth, marriage and death registrations, not to mention Census records, to further fill in information on memorials. I find it very satisfying to help people find the final resting place of their ancestors. Without the dedicated efforts of a lot of other people on Find a Grave, I would never have found as many of my husband's relatives as I did. I am very appreciative of all their hard work. I like to pay it forward by photographing local cemeteries and adding the memorials to Find a Grave.

Liz Gowanlock is not a member of our Bruce County Genealogical Society nor any other, but I asked her if she would write up this information. She has written so many memorials for some Cemeteries in Bruce County. Take a look at her work!

Early Settlers on the Elora Road (Bruce Road 3)

by Mary MacKay

Alexander McLean (July 4, 1823 –Feb.21,1910) and his wife Nancy Gregg (May 26th1829-Sept. 7, 1900) were the first settlers in the wooded wilderness between the Eden Grove corner and Mr. William's lot at the Ellengowan corner. At the time of their death many years later, they were the oldest pioneers still residing on their original homestead between Southampton and Walkerton.
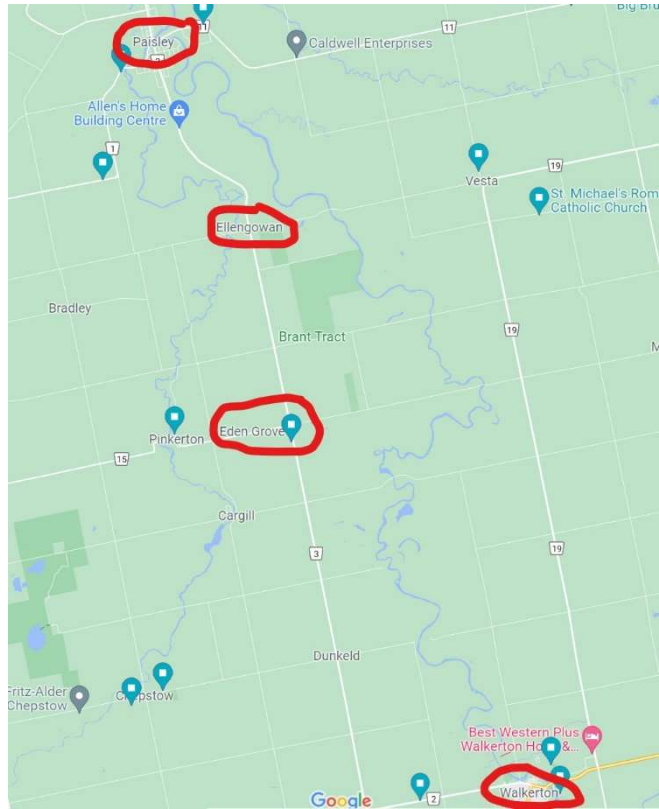
Alexander McLean was born in Scotland and was only five years old when his parents immigrated to Ontario and settled in Oxford County. As a young man he drifted eastward to Grenville County where he married Nancy Gregg, daughter of James Gregg and Hellen Weir. For three years he worked at Prescott as foreman on railway construction. They then moved to Blenheim Township, Oxford County.

In the fall of 1854, Alexander left Nancy and three little children while he and his brother-in-law came to the Queens Bush to claim a homestead. Each chose a 100-acre farm that had a stream of water across the trail.   They walked to Durham to register their claims for lots 27 and 28, concession B, Brant Township and returned to build a small log house on lot 28. Christmas morning 1854 they started back to Blenheim Township, walking nearly all the way.

In February Alexander returned with his wife, Nancy, age 26, and three little girls, Ellen (7), Margaret (4) and Sarah Jane (1). They brought their household items by horse team as far as Walkerton. The rest of the trip took two days because the snow was very deep, and the Elora Road was an unbroken blaze. With the help of two oxen, they reached the site of their new but primitive home in the thick of the woods. Their first home was on lot 28 but two years later they built a bigger home on the next lot south and relinquished their claim on lot 28. Later a brick house was built, and this was their home for the rest of their lives.

Like Aquila and Priscilla of Apostolic days, Alexander and Nancy had "church in their house" until a small log church was built in 1863.

Alexander and Nancy worked hard to clear their land. Their first field of wheat "was frozen in the milk" resulting in great loss and disappointment. Later, when grain was grown more successfully, a log barn

was built followed by a granary in a few years. The granary was built of lumber and spacious enough to accommodate the loom on which were woven webs of woollen goods.

Alexander McLean and Nancy Gregg McLean.

In 1861 the McLeans had 22 acres under cultivation and one acre for pasture, leaving 78 acres of bush. The farm was valued at $1600. They owned two oxen, two milk cows, two colts, four sheep, two pigs, and six steers and heifers under three years of age. During the previous year, they had produced three tons of hay, fourteen lbs. wool, 70 lbs. maple syrup, 29 yards flannel and 200 lbs. butter. From 8 acres of spring wheat, they produced 250 bushels of wheat. From two acres of peas, they produced 50 bushels. From four acres of oats, they had 200 bushels. On one acre they grew 200 bushels of potatoes, and on two acres, they grew 300 bushels of turnips. They also had two pork in a barrel ready for winter food.

Eleven years after Nancy and Alexander arrived on the Elora Road, they had met the requirements to receive the crown deed for their farm. In 1872, the year the railroad came through, Alexander built a roomy red brick house. Alexander and Nancy had 11 children -6 girls and 5 boys. All but one boy lived to be adults.

Nancy died in 1900 age 71 years 3 months 11 days. Alexander continued to live on the pioneer homestead for nine years. In 1910 he died due to neuritis, dropsy and heart trouble. He was 87.

Our April Webinar

And our Military and DNA interest groups

You will be sent dates via email and the information will be posted

on our Bruce County Genealogical Society webpage later:

https://brucecountygenealogicalsociety.ca/

"A WEE BIT OF HISTORY"
by Sylvia Hasbury

DOMINION LAND ACT 1872

This legislation received royal assent in our Canadian Federal Parliament on April 14, 1872 by Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier's Liberal government.

The size of this Western Settlement project was so expansive the Federal Government created the Department of the Interior in 1873. It managed five government branches: Dominion Lands, Indian Affairs, the Geological Survey of Canada, Ordnance and Admiralty Lands and the Northwest Territories.

Hoping to avoid some of the land ownership complications vexing the government in eastern Canada, the Liberals penned an act to co-ordinate a multitude of participants. Probably their first omnibus bill. It concerned the lands in what would become western Canada. A survey included about 80 million hectares! For you pub quiz fans, the survey of this land is THE LARGEST SURVEY GRID IN THE WORLD!!! (According to Dominion Land Survey - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominion_Land_Survey)

Land within this survey was to be granted to individuals, colonization companies, the Hudson's Bay Company, railway construction, municipalities, and religious groups. Participant eligibility as well as settler responsibilities and land lay-out requirements for surveying and subdividing land were included under this Act as well, The Dominion Land Act was modelled on homestead legislation passed in the United States in 1862. Because the U.S.A. had a policy called Manifest Destiny, the Canadian government officials feared western land would be claimed by the United States. The land covered by the Dominion Land Act would eventually evolve into today's provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.
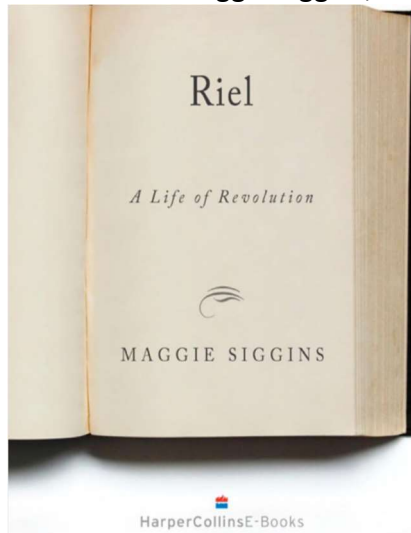
While land was set aside for first nations reserves, Metis lands were not included in this Act but instead Metis lands were organized under the Federal Government using the Scrip System until after 1885. Around about this time Metis peoples were offered "Scrips in exchange for their land title." In an article appearing on the Canadian Encyclopedia Website, Amanda Robinson and Michelle Filice explain "**Scrip is any document used in place of legal tender, for example a certificate, where the bearer is entitled to certain rights.**" Money scrips valued at $160 or $240 were also issued.

https://es.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Metis_scrip_value_160_acresE11-p09.jpg

As western lands were being developed and improved, the value or buying power of Metis Scrips deceased. Some government appointed agents forged Metis signatures on scrips. Unscrupulous land developers bullied and/or coerced Metis into selling their land scrips below market value. The flaws in the Scrip system were not fully resolved until March 2013 by the Supreme Court of Canada. It ruled the federal government failed to provide the Metis with their land grant promised in the Manitoba Act of 1870.

I expect to bring you more info on these scrips in a later column. In the meantime, I recommend the books of Maggie Siggins, a Canadian journalist, who is the author of a controversial

biography called *Riel: A Life of a Revolutionary*. In her book she details the step-by-step way Metis rights were ignored and how the government solved this problem by sending soldiers from Ontario and hanging Louis Riel!

From 1870 to 1930 approximately 625,000 land patents were issued to homesteaders. As a result, hundreds of thousand of settlers poured into the region. Many of these settlers had been Bruce County residents. Young families were sometimes accompanied by their parents. Fathers helped with farm work, care of horses, etc. and Mothers helped with cooking, childcare, etc.

At first this 1872 Act laid out specific homestead policies covering eligibility and responsibilities. Homesteaders were required to live on their lot six months out of every three years. During these three years they were required to build a habitable residence, clear the land for farming and cultivate a certain area annually. Land plots containing 65 hectares ("Quarter Section" under the Imperial System) were the standard at first. These sections of land were available to people 21 years and older.   There was not a charge for the land, just $10 administration fee to be paid by the purchaser. When farmers had completed their homesteading requirements according to local authorities, they would qualify for another section of land. Horses were the main source of power for plowing in this time period.

In 1873 the eligibility age was dropped to 18 years to attract young families. Women, over 18 years of age and who were the sole head of family in 1876, as well as in 1919 widows of war veterans were allowed to hold land patents.

Another great book covering the social and political history of the Dominion Land Act is Pierre Burton's book *The National Dream*.