

BRUCE BULLETIN

THE BRUCE COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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Please visit our Bruce County Genealogical Society Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/brucecountygenealogicalsociety>

and our Bruce County Genealogical Society page:

<https://brucecountygenealogicalsociety.ca/>

Thoughts from the President

"I'm not always researching genealogy...sometimes I am sleeping."

I think most of us can admit that, at some point in our research journey, we sat so long at our computers, we almost forgot to go to bed. Much like a binge watch on Netflix. But if there is a dead relative to be unearthed or a story to be told, then there is no better time than the present. You can always sleep later.

We would love to hear about your nighttime finds for an upcoming edition of our newsletter. Jot down your discoveries and send them our way. Who knows, maybe given that, if your roots are in Bruce County, what you dig up might pertain to another member's family.

Glenys

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Time to Celebrate 35 years of the Bruce County Genealogical Society!

Looking Back - Genealogy Beginnings 1989 by Anne Duke Judd

My membership number in the Bruce County Genealogy Society is 20, near enough to the beginning to believe I joined the group in its first year, 1989. Recently, BCGS newsletter editor Lolly Fullerton asked for some memories for the Fall 2024 issue. Reading old calendars and notebooks has been an interesting way to relax after a weekend of garden cleanup, and could go on and on...



Anne Duke Judd

An Ontario Genealogy Society seminar in Paisley and a cemetery tour in Tara in April 1989 appear to be the only BCGS events I attended during that year. My first calendar dates marked for BCGS meetings begin in 1990. That could likely result from too many other commitments. I may also have taken part in an Owen Sound Genealogy Group instructional session explaining use of LDS archival material. But mostly, 1989 pages are filled with appointments relating to my book store, which moved to a new location in Port Elgin that year, or to family visits while my parents were ageing in deteriorating health, or to keeping up with two children in university and a new man in my life!

However...names of BCGS mentors show up often: Sharon (Marshman), Audrey (Underwood), Betty (Watson), Judy (MacKinnon), George (Walker), John (Reynolds). Typing their names brings a smile...some, like Judy, are still people who I enjoy chatting and comparing notes with.

And the places...In 1990, taking genealogy forms to my mother in Muskoka, to guide my research in Huron County, meetings at Sharon's office, Faith Lutheran Church, Bruce County Museum, Kincardine Township -

Tiverton Public School, conferring with Dale Wilson in Walkerton, by bus to the Archives of Ontario in downtown Toronto, finding ancestor data in Clinton Public Library, and cemeteries in Clinton and Wawanosh Township.

Some notes refer to BCGS executive meetings, or mention query forms. It seems I did take some responsibility with the group, as a newsletter from 1990 reminds me we sought volunteers to answer queries in some Bruce County towns, villages, and townships. Like other relative newcomers, I had a learning experience exploring if only on paper. From my newspaper writing, I knew that the Womens Institute Tweedsmuir curators were great resources. As part of helping BCGS grow, I apparently passed on meeting information to members of other groups, e.g. Township of Bruce Historical Society or the helpful folks in Huron County.

Whatever small part I may have played in its early days, it's wonderful to me to see BCGS has grown, evolved in the electronic realm, and flourishes in 2024 as a friendly, encouraging resource for family history seekers.

1990 Executive:

Chairperson	- Sharon Marshman
First-Vice	- Audrey Underwood
Second-Vice	- John Reynolds
Secretary	- Jo-Anne Moriarty
Treasurer	- Isobel Munro

Committees :

Library	- Bill Forgrave;	Assistant	- Bessie Robinson
Membership	- Judy MacKinnon		
Publicity	- Wayne Willson		
Social	- Helen Wuerth		
Newsletter	- Editorial Committee - Mike Conway,		
	Bill Forgrave, Audrey Underwood,		
	Betty Watson, Wayne Willson.		
Publications	- Jim & Kay Gregg		
Research			
Co-ordinator	- Anne Judd		

More about the Bruce County Genealogical Society

Audrey Underwood played a pivotal role in shaping the Bruce County Genealogical Society by inspiring members like Anne Goeden, who has held multiple positions, including Membership Secretary, Treasurer (a role she continues to serve), President, and Past President. Glenys Johnson, another key member, has served as Vice President and is currently the Society's President. Audrey's leadership also encouraged many others to actively participate in the Society's growth.

The Origins of Our Society

The roots of the Bruce County Genealogical Society date back to our early affiliation with the Ontario Genealogical Society (OGS). An excerpt from *Branches of Bruce*, published in 1971, captures our humble beginnings:



Audrey Underwood

"Beginnings in the Bruce Branch... The Bruce Branch is unique in that it emerged not in a large city, but in the rural and small-town areas of Bruce County, with just three OGS members less than a year ago. Our President, Mrs. Basil Underwood (Audrey), attended her first seminar in 1969 and became concerned when she saw the limited records available in Bruce County compared to other regions. Could we locate and preserve these local records before they were lost or destroyed? Would anyone even come to a genealogical meeting?"

The first meeting was held on March 20, 1970, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Basil Underwood, R.R. 2, Port Elgin, with 12 people in attendance. The books, documents, and family research papers displayed that evening made it clear that monthly meetings were essential. Soon, several projects were launched..."

By 1977, the publication was renamed *Branches of Bruce and Grey*, though no official explanation for the name change was provided.

The Formation of the Bruce County Genealogical Society

In 1989, Ken Young, reflecting on the Society's growth in *From the Chairperson's Desk*, wrote:

"During the three months since the last annual meeting, all has not been quiet on the western front. Members from Southampton to Kincardine expressed their dissatisfaction with the Bruce and Grey Branch of OGS by submitting a petition to the parent body to form a separate Bruce Branch of OGS."

It appears OGS declined the request to establish both a Grey and a Bruce Branch, leading to the eventual creation of the Bruce County Genealogical Society. Many of our members today continue their involvement with both the Bruce County Genealogical Society and the Bruce Grey Ontario Ancestors.

November Events



Bruce County Genealogical Society AGM
November 4, 2024 at 2pm via Zoom
Please plan to join us!
Register HERE:
<https://bit.ly/3UkbuR6>
or scan the QR code!

BCGS November Member-only Zoom Coffee Chat about all things Military

DATE: Wed, Nov 6, 2024 at 10am Bruce County Time

Join Jan Briggs-McGowan, a few friends and new acquaintances for this Remembrance time. No agenda, so don't be shy! You can talk about your military ancestor or the latest project, ask a question, or share news about an exciting military find.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAsf-CprT0rGtOo2qqOj-NGQuBA4A54TDTa>

OUR BCGS NOVEMBER WEBINAR

A poster for a webinar by Ken McKinlay. It features a tree logo and a photo of Ken McKinlay. The text includes: "THE BRUCE COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY", "WITH GUEST SPEAKER: KEN MCKINLAY", "RESEARCHING A CANADIAN SOLDIER OF THE GREAT WAR", "Ken McKinlay has graciously offered to present to us once again. Taking us through the process of researching an ancestor that served in the First World War on behalf of Canada. Real life case studies are used to highlight the various resources available to you when researching a Canadian that has served in the First World War.", "NOVEMBER 11, 2024, 7:00 PM", "Register at the link below", "https://bit.ly/2024-11-11-KenMcKinlayWebinar", "Guest Speaker Ken McKinlay", "FB: https://www.facebook.com/groups/brucecountygenealogicalsociety", and "https://brucecountygenealogicalsociety.ca/".

To register for our Webinar, please click on the photo or click on this link:

<https://bit.ly/2024-11-11-KenMcKinlayWebinar>

Hope you'll join us.

Good News – We have been invited:

Ken McKinlay is going to talk to the Sudbury Ontario Ancestors group on November 18 at 7pm – 9pm. He will be talking about researching a Canadian Soldier of the Second World War. Their link is on this page:

<https://sudbury.ogs.on.ca/events/world-war-ii/>

We have been invited:

THE TREASURE CHEST MUSEUM in Paisley is having a **Remembrance Day** program on **Friday, Nov. 8 at 7 pm**. **Doug Milne** is speaking on the **“Relics of the Reich-then and now of Nazi Germany.”**

Admission is by Donation. Doug did a tour this past summer and has put together a power point presentation. His Dad, Dr. Don Milne was the Doctor here in Paisley for many years until he retired.

January 2025 Webinar - "It All Started with Some Buttons... Looking for a Stewart Piper"

Presenter: Susan Reany Iskra

Monday Jan 13, 2025 via Zoom

While visiting family in England some years ago, Susan Reany Iskra was shown a set of buttons and told of a connection to a Stewart piper at Drummond Castle. These buttons were the starting point for a research journey that Susan will be sharing in her presentation as she speaks about her search, the processes and some of the resources she used, and what she was able to learn about this piper in 19th century Scotland.



Susan Reany Iskra lives in Dryden, Ontario, and has pursued her genealogical interests for over 20 years. She is a member of the Dryden Genealogical Society and regularly makes presentations to the group as well as participating in 'Ask A Genealogist' sessions at the local library. She's a member of OGS, Simcoe Branch and the Scottish SIG, and also belongs to BIFGHSO (British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa). Her roots are in the United Kingdom and her research has been mostly focused on Scotland, having travelled to Edinburgh to do research there.

Register by clicking [HERE](#) or clicking on this link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_KgSudjEyTFiT2Waov61x2A

February 2025 Webinar - 'People Lie! How to unravel the truth when you are tracing your family history'

Presenter: Emma Maxwell from Scottish Indexes

Monday Feb 10, 2025, at 7pm via Zoom

How fortunate are we to have the wonderful Emma Maxwell from Scottish indexes to be our presenter! When you are tracing your family history, conflicting evidence can be very confusing. Perhaps an ancestor's age fluctuates, or a person's parents just don't seem to exist. Perhaps an ancestor says she's a widow, but you can't find a death certificate for her husband. It's not unusual for facts to vary from one source to the next. Our ancestors may have been wilfully deceitful to cover something up or they may just have been confused. Whatever the motive, the challenge for us is to unravel the truth and trace our family history accurately.



In this presentation, genealogist Emma Maxwell will use case studies to demonstrate how to untangle truth from fiction.

Register by clicking [HERE](#) or on this link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_oIU7gv1KRrG_PU3qQxpUhQ

For the Love of Sports

Written by Heather Callaghan, Archival Assistant, Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre.

A new exhibit this fall at the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre is titled “Play Hard Fight Hard: Sport and the Canadian Military”. It will highlight the relationship between sport and military service dating back to the First World War and celebrate Canadian veterans who have made outstanding contributions to our country and sports. This new exhibit brought up some interesting thoughts as to the connections between sports and genealogy. A true or seasoned genealogist would likely say, “you can find a connection between family history and anything if you look hard enough”.

Sports represent passion, interest, and maybe a thing or two about what someone was like. Taking it one step further asks the question; is there a gene that can be passed down for a true passion or love? It is also worth mentioning that the ability to engage in sports reveals something about a person’s quality of life (this is still true today, but especially so many years ago). Did our great, great-grandparents have the time (or finances) for such leisure? Or were they too preoccupied with work and making a living to support their family to be able to fall in love with baseball?



Tiverton Macs ladies baseball team 1945
Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre, A2022.014.074.

What genealogist doesn’t love finding new family branches? Participation in sports may tell us about who someone knew; if you’ve been lucky enough to locate a team photograph, were siblings there too? Cousins? Maybe neighbours who were more like friends or family? This can be worth digging into.

One favourite thought of mine about the connection between sports and genealogy is that beloved nicknames can derive from participation in sports. The use of nicknames can range from being occasionally used to address someone, to becoming someone's only known moniker. If an ancestor is not appearing in records as the birth name you know, is it possible that they should have changed their legal name instead to something like "Babe" or "Air" or "Tiger"?

I had to check my research ideas with my aunt, the Callaghan family historian, and I was not disappointed. She sent me an article my grandfather wrote (and had published in a paper), just dripping with his love of hockey. He passed away when I was very young, and it was so neat to read something he had written. She also sent me an article about Brian Lewis and his claim to fame in the baseball world. When Brian first discovered sports, it started with skating at age 11, when "he and chum Rusty Callaghan walked across the street to a frozen brook." That Rusty Callaghan was my grandpa, Claude Callaghan.

If you haven't yet explored your family history with a sports lens, this is your call to action. Some common archival resources for the interested researcher that may allude to sports include yearbooks, newspaper clippings, obituaries, photographs, letters, event programs, awards, and more. Sports may not be in your ancestral wheelhouse but use your imagination to give your family tree some colour. The options are truly limitless.



Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre, A2011.007.122.

Source:

PEI Sports Hall of Fame. "Brian Lewis – Baseball", updated July, 2018. Retrieved from <https://peisportshalloffame.ca/lewis-brian-baseball>.

Buried at Rusk – McNeill by Glenys Johnson

For someone who never grew up in this part of Bruce County, I am forever amazed at how closely connected I am to the early pioneers of Elderslie Township.

Some time ago Lolly Fullerton asked me if I was related to one of our members, Kim MacMillan Pedersen. Lolly knows that I have ancestors from Colonsay, as does she and Kim. In fact, Lolly and Kim are a DNA match. She wondered, given the small size of the island of Colonsay, if perhaps I had a match with Kim as well. I didn't, so end of pursuit. At least until recently when I discovered Kim's ancestors on my tree! If my research is correct, Kim and I are related.

In respect of that find, let me tell you about John Hugh and Catherine (Currie) McNeill with input from Kim. John and Catherine were her 2x great grandparents. Catherine, as it turns out, was my second cousin 3x removed. Yes...another Currie.

I couldn't find obituaries of great interest for either John or Catherine in the Paisley Advocate, but Kim provided the following from an unknown newspaper from June of 1899

"On June 15 there laid to rest another of the old settlers on Elora Road North, when the remains of the late J.H. McNeill were interred in the Paisley Cemetery." *(The article should have read that he is buried here, in Rusk).*

"Deceased was born in Colonsay, Argyllshire, and emigrated with his parents to Prince Edward Island. In 1853 he came to Goderich, and subsequently was there married to Miss Catherine Currie. They moved to Elderslie in 1858, and ever since resided upon the same farm. His wife and seven of a family survive him. The daughters are Maggie and Florence at home; Mrs. H. McMillan of the Soo; of the sons, John is in Dakota; Archie in Nanaimo, B.C., while Roger and Angus are at home. Deceased was for many years a consistent member of the Baptist church congregation in Paisley."



John Hugh McNeill

Son Hugh passed away on December 24, 1877, and daughter Flora on August 18, 1872. They are also buried here.

One adventurous son, Roger Currie McNeill, struck out for the Yukon with goldrush fever in 1898. He stayed on his claim, naming it the Colonsay Mine, until 1902 at which time he moved to Vancouver, British Columbia where he married and raised a family of two sons.

The McNeill homestead was sold to Neil McArthur after John's death and Catherine, in ill health, went north to Sault Saint Marie, to be with her daughter Maggie McMillan in the hopes of getting better. That was not to be, so in August of 1900 she returned to Bruce County. Catherine passed away on September 30, 1900, and is buried here with John.

According to Mary MacKay, John and Catherine's names are not on the present Rusk Cemetery print out because his name was missed on the back of the stone, but both obituaries say they are buried in Rusk.

Kim's notes suggest that John Hugh McNeill immigrated to Nova Scotia, Canada from

Colonsay aboard the Hector. In 1852 he came to Goderich, Ontario with John Currie. In 1853 he claimed his land in Elderslie in preparation for his parents, John and Flora (McPhail) McNeill, to follow him. He then returned to Goderich where he married John and Margaret (MacNeil) Currie's daughter Catherine. Her family also came to Elderslie where the McNeill's and Currie's each farmed 50-acre side by side.

From Lolly - Now my side!

It is always fascinating to discover unexpected family connections, especially when there seem to be no direct ties to a particular region. In my case, I had no known relatives in Bruce County. So, when Kim and I realized we were related, it brought a new sense of excitement to our research.

Our shared lineage may trace back to Duncan Bell, born in 1728 on the Isle of Colonsay, Scotland. At the remarkable age of 78, Duncan emigrated to Prince Edward Island in 1806 aboard the ship *Spencer*. Accompanying him on this journey were his son, Dougald Bell, Dougald's wife Catherine McEachern, and their two young children—Duncan, aged 7, and Flora, aged 9. This family, along with 115 other Gaelic-speaking emigrants from Colonsay, made the long voyage to Canada in pursuit of new opportunities, with promises of land from Lord Selkirk.

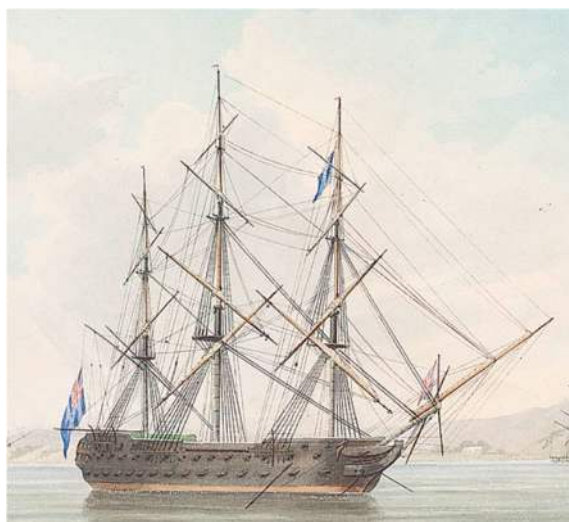
My lineage descends from Catherine McEachern, while Kim's lineage connects through Sarah Marion McEachern, another branch of the McEachern family.

To add another layer, one of Duncan Bell's grandsons, also named Duncan, later married Margaret Currie. In Kim's family, her 3rd great-grandmother, Catherine Currie, married John Hugh MacNeill, further entwining our family histories.

It seems there's always more to uncover—our shared heritage continues to reveal itself through paper trails and genealogical records! We are still trying to figure it all out.

BELL DOUGALD
25. With wife Catherine
McEachan 27, and children
Duncan 7 and Flora 9.
Emigrated from Oban, Argyll
to Prince Edward Island on
the Spencer of Newcastle,
master F.Brown 22 September
1806.
(PAPEI)

BELL DUNCAN
78. Emigrated from Oban,
Argyll to Prince Edward
Island on the Spencer of
Newcastle, master F.Brown
22 September 1806.
(PAPEI)



This is not the Spencer. I choose a ship that was made in the same era.

Ancestors who served in Military – by Jan Briggs-McGowan



There's so much more to genealogy than dates of birth, marriage, and death. There are many sources that can help us 'flesh out' our ancestors' lives, put meat on those dry bones, so to speak. Military records are just one of those sources. The Bruce County Museum will add any Bruce County military person who is missing on BruceRemembers.org. FindAGrave entries can be marked with a V for Veteran or edited to share military info.

You may already know you have a military person in your family tree. If the person is still alive, or you can't prove death, privacy legislation restricts what you can find. Generally speaking, only an immediate relative can apply for records if the veteran was dead less than 20 years. But anyone can access files of those Killed during WWII, or if you can prove the death was over 20 years ago. You submit a request for information ATIP (Access to Information and Privacy), for a nominal fee of \$5, receive response by email. Since priority is given to requests for disability or pension, you'll need to be patient.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/access-information-privacy/access-information/request-information.html>

But what if you didn't know whether a relative served in the military? Well, if you know a birth year, you may be able to find out if they served in the military. About 34,000 Canadians served in Korea, born between 1925-1932. This is the first group you could find on the 1931 census, and on more recent voters' lists.

Born 1900-1929? 1.2 million Canadians and Newfoundlanders served WWII. For birth years 1875-1900, just over 600,000 served WWI. If your relative was born between 1860 and 1885, he may have served during the Boer War. Typical ages 16 to 60 of those who served during the War of 1812 -1815, would mean they were likely born between 1755 and 1796.

And remember to check for female relatives who might have served, particularly during **WWII** where 50,000 served. During **WWI** almost 3,000 women served, and women nurses served in military going back to the **NorthWest Rebellion** of 1885.

What questions could his or her **WWII file** answer about a military ancestor? Enlistment info, next of kin/family, physical description, military units, ships, RCAF or RAF squadrons. You can view their medical records, evaluation & discipline reports, list of medals, the date they were sent overseas. You'll likely find discharge location, any disabilities, cause of death and sometimes even burial details.

Finding a person who **died during military service** is not limited to those who were killed in action; this also included illness and accident during (or as a result of) War, up to 2 years afterwards. Of the 2,845 Canadian nursing sisters who served WWI, at least 58 died as a result of enemy fire, disease, or drowning during the war. You can start with a name search on Virtual War Memorial -

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial>

Your results could show several people with the same or similar names, but clicking on an underlined last name, will show you personal information, a Service number, link to the cemetery. Most have photographs or clippings at the bottom, which you can contribute or save. You can search **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** by name, date of death, cemetery.

Scans of **Canadian WWI records** are online, searchable by name. If you already know his or her service number (Regimental number), that would be quickest way, especially for a common name. Use Advanced search to find everyone who enlisted on that date or from that location, birth location - town or province.

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/search.aspx>

What you can find: Officers, including Nursing Sisters who were enlisted as a Lieutenant, will not have as much detail. Generally, you can find whether they volunteered, or were drafted, birth date and location, address of the Next of Kin, service history (did they serve earlier in the Militia?). You can also see physical description and the religious denomination. Further in the file might be a record of places where they served and, if they went to training in England, the name of the ship and date sent to France. Dates of any medical attention including wounds and hospitalization will be noted. Date of discharge and occasionally a future residence or even a death date.



War diaries will seldom have names of enlisted men but could contain anything from the weather that day to excruciating detail about the battles. Library & Archives Canada also have these diaries, but another useful source is

<https://canadiangreatwarproject.com/diaries>

Maps: Some maps highlight the terrain and other physical features, other maps emphasize equipment, settlements and installations, while still others include information on everything from equipment supply lines to ambulance routes. Explore historical maps from the First World War

<https://library.mcmaster.ca/maps/ww1/ndx5to40.htm>



Military Service Recognition Books (MSRB) are issued every year from Ontario Command. You can search the master list of profiles and pictures plus add your own military person, who can be alive or deceased.

<https://www.on.legion.ca/remembrance/military-service-recognition-book>

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

--- MUKLUKS---

As you faithful readers may have noticed, Isaac and Sadie Stringer wore the clothing of the local indigenous people to protect themselves from the winter's cold and the summer's thousands and thousands of mosquitoes!



The Canadian Encyclopedia defines Mukluks as “soft hide boots designed by Inuit peoples for manoeuvrability and warmth in northern environments. The term mukluk comes from the Yipik word maklak, meaning “bearded seal” - a key animal source for Aboriginal clothing in the North”ⁱ

In the fall of 1909, when Rev. Isaac Stringer and his companion Charles F. Johnson began their return journey to Dawson City, their Indian guides were Enoch Moses and Joseph Vittrekwa travelling in a small canvas canoe. The first night they camped at the mouth of the Husky River in a drizzling rain.

Johnson confided to his diary, “Tracking on the Athabasca River is a picnic compared to this ice cold water over boulders or chopping a way through the tangled underbrush. After dinner (lunch) progress was slower. We made about 2 1/2 miles by 4 pm. when we had a hole punched in our canoe and had to unload it in a hurry...”ⁱⁱ

Enoch became ill. Because Stringer decided the illness seemed serious, he and Joseph Vittrekwa took Enoch back to Fort McPherson. By the time Stringer had returned, a week had passed. Travelling over land at this time of year, losing a week could make travelling very difficult, if not impossible!

Laura Berton recounts the situation in Dawson City, “and at the ball that week there was a gap in the Opening Grand March. The Church, as represented by Bishop Stringer, was missing. He had simply vanished into the snows on the trail that crosses the great divide between Fort McPherson in the Peel River country and the Yukon watershed. A wave of worry swept over the town, for he was long overdue and no word had crept out about him. Mrs. Stringer was “Outside” having her fourth baby.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Luckily the ‘Bish” and C.F. Johnson had a small map and a compass. It was only 100 miles back to Fort McPherson if they went over the mountains. These two men opted for one of three options. They would return to Fort McPherson over the mountains. Isaac confessed to his diary “that he dreaded the mountains at that time of year”^{iv} according to Frank A. Peak D.D.^v He continues “Having made their decision, they cached the canoe and left 30- or 40-pounds weight of non-essential equipment hanging up a willow tree beside the river. With it they left a note:

“C.F. Johnson and Bishop Stringer reached here on Sept. 24th travelling from Peel River to Dawson City via the Rat River route. Caught in ice. Left canoe and effects here and left with pack. Sept 26 hoping to see Indians at La Pierre's House or Driftwood River. Provisions for five days only. Snow falling heavily. Hope to send back for effects if possible. No snowshoes and may find it hard travelling. Start out with firm trust in God's goodness and guidance.

Isaac O. Stringer

P.S. Sund. Sept. 26. Start out for a short day as provisions short and camp miserable. Have discussed the possibilities this morning and think we may start for Peel River if no Indians at LaPierre's house when we reach there. I.O.S.”^{vi}

The real trip to La Pierre's House was almost impossible. Continuous snowfall made walking difficult. To make matters worse the temperature dropped, bringing in a heavy fog. Not all the rivers were

frozen hard, so from time to time they broke through the ice. They were cold, wet, lost and hungry when they decided on third and most risky option: crossing the mountains back to Fort McPherson.

The Mackenzie River flows between several ranges of old glaciated mountains, so Stringer and Johnson had to find the pass, to travel south to Dawson City.

Here I would like to recommend a TV. Ontario documentary on YouTube about the National Park Ivvavik - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sSlddbH64>. This video will show you the country Stringer and Johnson were travelling through.

Also the YouTube video "Life at the End of the Road" Destination, Tuktoyukluk, a peninsula inline with and north of Fort McPherson, that today is ringed in great quantities of drift wood.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71r3oyf9LpY>) As a dyed in wool Southerner, I could not understand how anyone could survive an Arctic winter with driftwood as your main heat source.

vii Frank A. Peak quotes from Isaac's diary to show how he earned the moniker "The Bishop who ate his Boots,"

October 17- Travelled 15 miles, made supper of toasted rawhide sealskin boots. Palatable. Feel Encouraged.

October 18 – Travelled all day. Ate more pieces of my sealskin boots, boiled and toasted. Used sole first. Set rabbit snares.

October 19 – No rabbit in snare. Breakfast and dinner of rawhide boots. Fine. But not enough.

October 20 – Breakfast from top of boots. Not so good as sole. Very Tired Hands sore. Tied up Mr. Johnson's fingers.

October 21 – Breakfast of sealskin boot, soles and tops boiled and toasted.. Soup of small scraps of bacon and spoon full of flour (the scrapings of the flour bag), the last we had; tired; hands sore; took a long time to pack up. Concluded we were in Peel River... Heard children's voices in the distance and the saw houses on the left hand about a mile ahead. We stopped and thanked God for bringing us in sight of human habitation.^{viii}

Their almost fatal journey lasted 51 days. Both men lost 50 pounds of weight during their ordeal. From time to time afterwards, Bishop Stringer experienced flash backs and would wake suddenly repeating the phrase "I must keep going, I must keep going" ^{ix}

On December 8, when the bish reached Circle City, Alaska he was finally able to message his wife. Their six year old son Alex Stringer, recalls the telegraph boy racing up to the veranda of the Alexander home waving the telegram in his hand and crying out, "It's from the Bishop himself."^x

Sadie answered Isaac's telegram and followed it a few days later with a letter saying, "Some of the papers said you and I were drowned in the Yukon. But as I knew I was not drowned, I consoled myself that you were not either."^{xi}

"In 1930, during a Dominion (sic) Anglican Women's Auxiliary (W.A.) board meeting in Kinston, Ontario, I (Sadie) received a wire from my husband saying, "I have been elected Archbishop of Rupert's Land and have accepted."

This promotion was to the second highest position in the Church of England in Western Canada. He was enthroned at Winnipeg on Sept. 1, 1931. On April 15 the Electoral Committee of the Provincial Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land met in Winnipeg in



Bishop Stringer's home, Winnipeg in the Bishop's Court, 1931-1932
With the kind permission of
"The General Synod Archives, Anglican Church of Canada."

the spring of 1931. Bishop Stringer was elected on the fourth ballot to the position called the Metropolitan of Rupert's Land .^{xii}

Sadie tells us "We moved into Bishop's Court that day (sic) Sept 1, 1931. I spent three happy, busy years giving addresses, opening bazaars and pouring tea and entertaining."^{xiii}

In 1905 Isaac accepted the post of Bishop of Selkirk (The Yukon), a position he held until 1931. In his new position in Winnipeg, threw himself into his position with his customary enthusiasm. But in August 1932 he learned \$860,000.00 had been embezzled by the Chancellor of the Diocese.

At a synod meeting of the leaders of the Canadian Anglican church including Stringer it was decided to create a Restoration Fund and ask all the Anglicans across Canada to raise three quarters of a million dollars to replace the stolen money.

He earned his driver's licence on September 4, 1934

About a month later October 30th, 1934, he left Bishop's Court around 2 p.m. for the Synod Office telling his wife that he would be back by six.

As the afternoon wore on, the telephone rang. It was a newspaper reporter wondering if Isaac had been sick. A knock at the door revealed Mr. And Mrs. Carruthers of Holy Trinity Church,^{xiv}

"All of a sudden, I was plunged into grief by my husband's death. He fell on the street near Holy Trinity Church on October 30, 1934."

"Such an end comes as a shock and numbs a person. You can not realize what happened and perhaps it is best so...."^{xv}

"He was buried just out of the south doors of St. John's Cathedral. His tombstone, given by his fellow alumni of Wycliffe College, bears the simple yet impressive record of his undertakings for the cause of Christ and his church:

Archbishop of Rupert's Land
Sometime Bishop of Yukon
First Missionary to the Eskimos of Herschell Island " ^{xvi}

Sarah Ann Stringer died April 10, 1955, in Vancouver, British Columbia and is buried beside Isaac.

ⁱWikipedia,"Mukluk",(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mukluk>).

ⁱⁱPeake D.D., Frank A., "The Bishop Who Ate His Boots" A Biography of Isaac O. Stringer",The Anglican Church of Canada, Copyright 1966 Frank A. Peake, Pages 118, 119

ⁱⁱⁱBerton, Laura, "I Married the Klondike", Copyright 1954 and 1961, Published by McClelland and Stewart, Toronto,Ont.,

^{iv} Ibid Peak,
Pages 118, 119.

^v Ibid Peake Pages 118, 119.

^{vi}Ibid Peak pages 123, 124

^{vii} Ibid, Peake, page, 123

^{viii} Leaders of the Canadian Church, Edited by Canon Bertal Heeney, anglicanhistory.org/canada/bheeney/3/7.html

^{ix} Ibid, Peake, Page 126.

^xIbid, Peake, Page 127

^{xi}Ibid, Peake, Page 127.

^{xii} Idib, Peake, Page157, Nearly Crazy, Artic Diaries and Late Memoires of Sadie Stringer, Edited by Walter Vanast, University of McGill

^{xiii} Ibid, Nearly Crazy,

^{xiv} Peake, Page 165.

^{xv} Nearly Crazy, editor Walter Vanast, Montreal Campus, McGill University

^{xvi} Ibid, Peak, Page

Mary MacKay's Window on the Past



A view of the farm from about 1900. (Mona MacLean)

Mona MacLean told the editor that she was raised in this house and left when she was 20 to be married. The man with the horses was her grandfather and the woman in the buggy was her grandmother.

With thanks to Mary MacKay and the Paisley Advocate March 2014 Page 10

The first settlers on lot 35 Concession 13, Bruce Township were Charles Young Kissack and his bride "Betsy" Carmode from the Isle of Man, an island in the Irish Sea located almost equidistant from Scotland, England and Ireland. In Celtic times it was known as Mona. In faith, hope and pride this young couple named their bush-covered 160-acre farm in Bruce Township Bellamona which meant "Pretty Girl", a favourite place on the Isle of Man and they bravely began a lifetime of toil and hardship. Charles Kissack was an infant in 1835 when his parents and two-year-old brother sailed for America. They arrived in New York City where a sister, Sarah, was born. When Charles was nine years old, his mother died, and his father moved his family to the Fergus area of Ontario where other immigrants from the Isle of Man had settled.

At the age of 12, Charles ran away to sea but by 1848 he and his father were teaming freight on the Garafraxa Road between Fergus and Owen Sound. Here he met and worked for Thomas Orchard of Orchardville and later Paisley. After several years of working for Orchard and other pioneer settlers, Charles was able to purchase his own farm.

On April 3, 1855, at 21 years of age Charles purchased lot 35, Con 13 Bruce Township from Thomas Orchard. It was three miles west of Paisley as the crow flies but much farther on land due to hills, hollows and the bluffs of Willow Creek. Charles built a shanty and began clearing enough land for his first crop. He was saving his money in a sock for a trip back to the Isle of Man to find a bride, but thieves stole his savings and delayed his plans for two years.

However, by June 1857 he was on the island of his birth, wooing a fisherman's daughter who was eager for adventure. After a short courtship he and Elizabeth "Betsy" Carmode were on their way to Canada. The trip in the hold of a dirty, louse-infected sailing ship with no cabins took three months. Fresh water became scarce, and the food turned rancid before they finally arrived in New York City in September 1857.

From New York, Charles and Betsy made their way up the Hudson River to Albany. They stopped for a while at Poughkeepsie where Charles worked with the Poughkeepsie Iron Works to make a bit of money. Their journey continued along the Erie Canal to Buffalo, then on to Dundas in Upper Canada (later Ontario). From

Dundas they followed the Brock Road to Guelph and then Fergus. The Great North Road (Garafraxa) took them to Arthur and north through Orchardville to Durham. From there just a trail went west into the Queen's Bush.



Charles Young Kissack

Charles left Betsy in Orchardville (between Mount Forest and Durham) and went ahead to ready his shanty for their arrival. It was winter by the time he returned. Since they were proceeding from there by ox team and jumper, winter was the best time to travel so the young couple ventured forth. Charles drove the oxen and Betsy guided the cow behind the jumper hauling all their precious belongings. In places the snow was very deep. To rest her weary feet sometimes Betsy rode the cow. Her apparel was not suitable for such an adventure. At times her hoop skirt froze and stuck straight out like a sail. After a short stop in Paisley, they finally arrived at their shanty, happy and optimistic to be home. Like other pioneer settlers, their spirits were buoyed up by the prospect of owning one-hundred-acres of virgin land for little more than the effort of clearing it. In the "old country" only wealthy people owned property. They were going to be wealthy!

The log shanty Charles built was 18'x20'. It had a fireplace for heat, cooking, and light. What scant furniture they had was homemade. A lean-to provided shelter for their cow. Water to drink and wash came from a small stream in the second field back west of the house. In the spring they began clearing more land and piled the logs for burning. Wild game and pigeons were plentiful, and they planted potatoes for winter.

When Charles and Betsy arrived on Concession 12 of Bruce Township some progress had been made since the first settlers floated down the Saugeen. A settlement had grown where the Saugeen and Teeswater River met and the Village of Paisley was surveyed into lots in 1856. There was a gristmill, three sawmills, two stores and a tavern.

The summer of 1858 a great disaster hit. No rain fell from June 23 to August 11. The result was an utter crop failure for all the settlers. The potatoes and wheat that Charles and Betsy planted in the spring never grew. Betsy scoured the bush for cow cabbage to satisfy their hunger. When fall came they had no harvest and therefore no food to get them through the winter. They had to rely on deer, wild geese and pigeons. All over the county the settlers were facing starvation.

However, this famine turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The combined County Council of Huron- Bruce issued debentures for eight thousand five hundred pounds. The money was used to buy food and seed grain which in turn was given to the men as payment for road work. The result was food in the bellies of the people and over forty miles of roads were opened in Bruce Township alone. Charles Kissack walked all the way to Goderich, a distance of over sixty miles, returning with a bag of wheat scrapings on his back to be used for planting the next spring.

The greatest event in Charles and Betsy's life in the Starvation Year was the birth of their first child, Catherine. "Cassie" arrived on September 17, 1858. The following year brought bumper crops and Charles worked on the roads to supplement their income.

A second child, Susan Jane, was born on April 21, 1860, the year the Garafraxa Road which Charles teamed on as a young man, was gravelled.

November 20, 1861, Sarah Elizabeth Kissack was born. The population of Bruce County was 27,000. Industries were growing in Paisley. Their standard of living was improving because Charles could buy products from the looms, foundry and sawmills of the village.

On September 3, 1863, the first baby boy was born at Bellamona Farm. Charles William known as “Will” Kissack arrived. With four children it became necessary to add a lean-to on the house and a proper stairway to the attic to provide more sleeping area.

Frances Isabel Kissack was born December 29, 1865. Earlier that year the combined County Council of Huron/Bruce County began gravelling roads.

Charles and Betsy’s sixth child, Prudence Sophia, was born Nov. 5, 1867, the year of Confederation. It was also the year Bruce County finally agreed where to establish the county town and were allowed to form their own County Council.

Mary Caroline Kissack who was born in 1868, sadly died before she was four years old.

Sadie Elizabeth Kissack, born December 27, 1870, was the eighth child to be born at Bellamona Farm. Already there was talk of land for a railway being surveyed off the back of the farm. By the time Anne Rebecca was born in 1873, the wood-burning Iron Horse was making its daily run through the back of the farm hauling freight and passengers. The advent of the train changed the life of the farmer, bringing markets closer and establishing contact with the outside world.

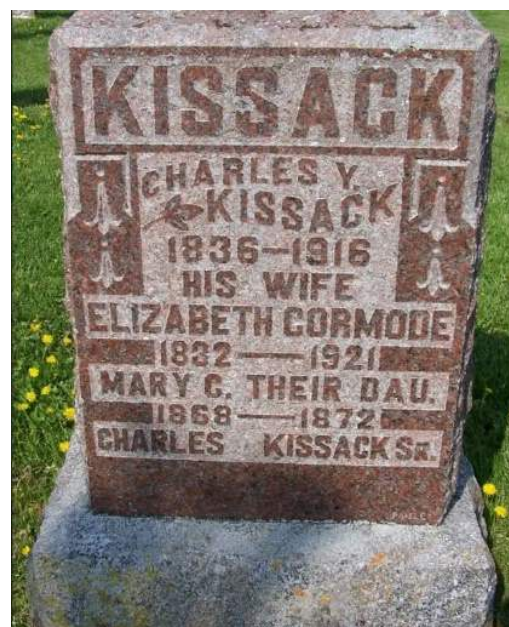
On March 23, 1873, the last baby, John Thomas Mathias “Jack” Kissack, was born. With nine children in the family the house was bursting at the seams, and it was necessary to build a new house.

In 1875 disaster descended on Bellamona Farm! While working on the new house the scaffolding collapsed and Charles fell from the roof and broke both hips, leaving him a cripple for the rest of his long life. Will who was only twelve years of age took over the operation of the farm.

In 1876 it was necessary to place a \$1000 mortgage on Bellamona to pay off arrears before securing the Crown Deed. There was still a mortgage in 1900 when Charles and Betsy moved to Paisley. Their son Will and his wife Edith McClinton took over Bellamona Farm.

Charles Kissack died on April 14, 1916 at 82 years of age. His loving partner, Betsy, died five years later, on June 14, 1921. They were buried in Paisley Cemetery far from the place of their birth on the Isle of Man. Bellamona farm passed from their son to a grandson thus remaining in the Kissack family for over a century.

Information Courtesy of Mona MacLean, a great granddaughter of Charles Kissack and Betsy Cormode. Mona and her husband retired to Port Elgin.



Membership Matters Nov 2024

Our Society exchanges newsletters with 23 other Societies. You'll be able to read them on our Member-only section of the website (except for a few societies which specify their newsletter must not be posted). This is just one benefit of your \$20 BCGS membership fee.

Your 2025 renewal reminder is included elsewhere in this newsletter. We are grateful for your ongoing support of the Bruce County Genealogical Society. If you e-transfer, you won't need to complete the form unless there are any changes. Treasurer Ann Goeden will send me a copy. If you're using cheques, please complete any changes on the form and send with your cheque. Mail Secretary Marilyn Irish will get the information to me.

Membership now stands at 130, including our newest members: **Laurie and Murray Daniel, Casey James, Michael Kehoe, Jenn Koch, Wendy Margree, Fawn Moeller, Kim MacMillan Pedersen and Sharon Fraser Richards**. We are all looking forward to learning about any connections in Bruce County and sharing our passion for family history - maybe even going down a few rabbit holes together!

Did you know you can give a membership as a birthday or Christmas gift or just to say, "Thank you"? You can complete the gift information on the membership form from our website and then email or mail as usual to BCGS.

Big shout-out to Casey James for the work she has done on the website membership application form!

If you have any membership suggestions or if there's a question I can answer, email bcbgs.membership@gmail.com, or call my cellphone 519-881-7304.

Jan Briggs-McGowan



REMINDER – 2025 B.C.G.S. Membership now due

*If you are paying by e-transfer to annegoeden.bcbgs@gmail.com, you do not need to complete this form **unless** there has been a change to your contact information.*

Name Membership #
Address City
Province/State Postal Code
Phone Number
Email
Individual Membership \$20 / Family \$25
Income Tax Receipt provided for any donation
Total cheque enclosed

***If paying by cheque, or for changes,
complete form and mail to:***

Membership Secretary,
Bruce County Genealogical Society
Box 1083, Port Elgin ON N0H 2C0

Not yet a member? If interested in more information or letting our membership secretary know you are joining, please email BCGS.membership@gmail.com

We are now accepting e-transfers so if you would like to send funds this way, please direct your funds to our treasurer's email address at annegoeden.bcbgs@gmail.com. Make sure you include your membership number if known in the description field. Thanks for your continued support.