

# Chinook Arch

November 2024  
Volume 6 Issue 9



ALBERTA FAMILY  
HISTORIES SOCIETY

Supporting worldwide family history research

## NEXT SOCIETY MEETING

### Monday, November 11, 2024

**Topic:** How to Use FamilySearch's New Full-Text Search Feature

**Speaker:** Amber Godfrey

**Location:** Bow Cliff Seniors Centre and via Zoom

**Time:** 7 – 9 pm

## FUTURE MEETINGS

### Monday, November 18, 2024

**Topic:** Chit Chat Session

**Hosts:** Linda Murray and Kelly Southworth

**Location:** Zoom (link on website calendar)

**Time:** 7 – 9 pm

### Monday, December 9, 2024

**Topic:** A Sharing Session On Holiday Traditions

**Speaker:** AFHS Members

**Location:** Bow Cliff Seniors Centre and via Zoom

**Time:** 7 – 9 pm

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

President's Message	2
Frank Purvis, a Self-Made Man	3
Special Interest Groups	4
My Pearce Family Project	5
Book Review: <i>Heavy Burdens on Small Shoulders: The Labour of Pioneer Children on the Canadian Prairies</i>	6
Upcoming Events	7
About Our Society	8

## NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Watch for our newsletter, *Chinook Arch*, distributed monthly by email from September to June.

We are looking for short articles with copyright-free pictures. Favourite relatives, fond family memories, research tips and tricks, new genealogy technology you love, book reviews or any related topics are accepted.

**Editor:** Amber Godfrey

**Email:** [chinookarch@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:chinookarch@afhs.ab.ca)

## President's Message

Gordon Lane

We had a strategy planning session on October 20, which several of the Directors and Committee chairs attended. The idea of the session was to plan out our events and costs for the coming financial year. The plans still include encouraging members and non-members to visit the AFHS Resource Centre. We are also planning to expand the number of public events that we attend. The largest event will be the Lilac Festival, thanks to Jim for suggesting this. We are also looking to see if we can expand into schools and engage with some of the other societies in Calgary with an interest in history.

There has been research done on moving the Resource Centre to another location, more of a due diligence effort, but we are getting one of the better deals in Calgary now. The only cheaper option would be to move out into the industrial area, where there is very little public transit available, and it would be a longer drive for most of the Society members. I approached our landlord about renewing our lease which expires on May 31, 2025, and this will be a topic for discussion at our upcoming Board meeting.

As November 11 approaches, it is a special time to remember our ancestors who served to protect our freedom. I am sure many of us have stories that can be shared. Submitting an article to Amber for the *Chinook Arch* newsletter is one way to memorialize those family members. I know I always put something on my Facebook page each year to remember them. This year I am going to highlight my wife's grandfather, who served in the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve. They served on small ships around England, in the Atlantic, and in the Mediterranean Sea as well.

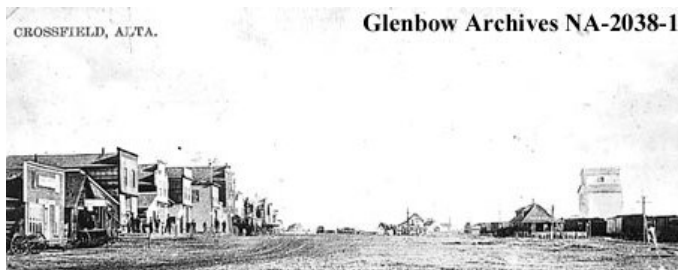
As we enter the winter season, most meetings seem to be going to Zoom. I must admit I was surprised to see how well this worked for our October Society meeting, but I still prefer seeing everyone "live." For anyone planning to travel in the coming months, stay safe out there!



### Frank Purvis, a Self-Made Man

Shelley Lunney

Frank and Christina (Gordon) Purvis and their two young sons, Charlie and Gordon, moved from Sunderland, Ontario, to Alberta in April 1909. The family settled in downtown Calgary at 6th Street and 5th Avenue. Initially working for International Harvester as a carpenter, Frank, later became a foreman at Motter Brothers Ranch in Crossfield. They relocated to the ranch in November 1909.



Frank and Christina became pillars of the community. Frank became a Councillor and a Church Officer. Christina was active in the Ladies Aid and Crossfield Red Cross, hosting fundraising meetings and luncheons at home. The couple had married on February 14, 1900, and several articles in the social column of the *Crossfield Chronicle* detail wedding anniversary parties that included many tables of bridge.

In 1913, they moved to a farm east of the railroad tracks bordering the town and began a mixed farming enterprise consisting of cattle, sheep, horses, pigs, honey, wheat and a milk delivery service. Gordon recounted the hardships the family encountered farming, like a severe summer drought and the Blizzard of 1917 that lasted three days and resulted in the loss of several cattle.

Farm work was done by horse and mule in the early years. Gordon stated that they "farmed all year and curled all winter."

Over the years, Frank made many trips "back east" to visit family in Sunderland and to attend the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto.

Around 1918, Frank acquired property four miles south of Crossfield which was used for a successful hay sale business. The purchase of a threshing machine permitted even more business opportunities.



Example of a threshing machine

Then in 1932, Frank acquired a ranch consisting of two-sections, four miles from Turner Valley. Gordon and a farm hand took six days to drive 90 head of newly purchased cattle south from Crossfield.

Charlie and Gordon went to school in Crossfield. Charlie went to Canada Western College after high school. He worked first for the Bank of Nova Scotia and then a department store in Turner Valley. He married Isobel White and retired to Victoria, British Columbia. Gordon was a championship curler whose rink was known as "the House of Purvis." He competed in bonspiels across Western Canada and was the President of the Crossfield Curling Club. Married to Mabel Lundeen, he became an entrepreneur until his ill health prevented him from working.

Frank passed away in 1945, followed by Christina in 1966. Gordon died in 1976 and Charlie in 1985. They are all buried in Crossfield Cemetery.

From humble beginnings operating a butcher shop in Ontario to becoming a successful rancher in Alberta, Frank Purvis was a self-made man. The family continued to farm following Frank's passing until 1964, when the farm was sold to Don Beddoes.

## Special Interest Groups

**SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs) are the ideal place to expand your knowledge and share your own family history challenges.** The small-group setting gives you an opportunity to ask questions and get help from more experienced researchers.

**SIGs are now being held in three formats: in-person only, Zoom only or a hybrid version of in-person & Zoom.** Check the calendar on our website for up-to-date information or email the SIG leader. The SIG groups do not meet during July and August.

SIGs are an AFHS member benefit. If you would like to attend a SIG meeting to try one out before joining, ask for an invitation from [communications@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:communications@afhs.ab.ca)

SIG GROUP	NEXT MEETING	TIME	CONTACT
BASICS	Saturday, December 7	10 am – Noon	<a href="mailto:basics@afhs.ab.ca">basics@afhs.ab.ca</a>
CELTIC (Irish/Scots)	Saturday, November 23	10 am – Noon	<a href="mailto:celticsig@afhs.ab.ca">celticsig@afhs.ab.ca</a>
DIGITAL GENEALOGY	Saturday, November 14	10 am – Noon	<a href="mailto:familygenes@afhs.ab.ca">familygenes@afhs.ab.ca</a>
DNA	Sunday, December 8	12:30 – 2:30 pm	<a href="mailto:dnasig@afhs.ab.ca">dnasig@afhs.ab.ca</a>
ENGLISH/WELSH	Saturday, November 16	10 am – Noon	<a href="mailto:englishwelshsig@afhs.ab.ca">englishwelshsig@afhs.ab.ca</a>
FAMILY TREE MAKER	Saturday, January 4	10 am – Noon	<a href="mailto:ftmsig@afhs.ab.ca">ftmsig@afhs.ab.ca</a>
LEGACY	Tuesday, November 26	7:00 – 9:00 pm	<a href="mailto:legacysig@afhs.ab.ca">legacysig@afhs.ab.ca</a>
ONTARIO	Monday, November 25	1:30 – 3:30 pm	<a href="mailto:ontariosig@afhs.ab.ca">ontariosig@afhs.ab.ca</a>
WRITING	Friday, December 13	9:30 – 11:30 am	<a href="mailto:writing@afhs.ab.ca">writing@afhs.ab.ca</a>

The AFHS Resource Centre is located at **712-16 Avenue NW, Calgary** and all in-person SIG group meetings are held there. Members are encouraged to stay after meetings, when possible, to browse the collection!

Our collection has over twelve thousand print items and many are available to be borrowed for a one-month loan. Electronic resources include computers, a multi-function printer, scanners (flatbed and overhead) and a microfiche reader. Journals from around the world are available to view in either print or digital formats. As a **FamilySearch Affiliate Library**, visitors can now view additional FamilySearch digital records at the AFHS Resource Centre that they can't see at home.

## SIG NEWS

If you or someone you know would like attend as a guest at a SIG meeting, request an invitation at [communications@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:communications@afhs.ab.ca).

Our members can watch recorded sessions of past Society and SIG meetings and view handouts at the AFHS website.

You must be **signed in** to the website to access them. Go to Resources, then click on Meeting Videos & Handouts.

- Here are a few of the items added in 2024 on Meeting Videos & Handouts:
  - ⇒ Ron Gilmore's presentation on Irish Name Books to the Celtic SIG in March 2024.
  - ⇒ A beginner's video about using Family Genes from the May 2024 Digital Genealogy SIG Meeting.
  - ⇒ A handout on Mind Mapping posted by the Writing SIG from October 2024.

### My Pearce Family Project

Linda Holdaway

When I first started researching my family tree in 2002, I was told that my great-grandmother was born Emma Pearce. She married a Mr. Maxfield, was widowed, and then married Henry Reeves. I found her birth and marriage certificates and knew that Emma was the daughter of John Pearce and Mary Wilkins. Further research indicated that John was the son of William Pearce and Hannah Hill, but that was where I hit my brick wall.

My aim is always to be as accurate as possible in my research. I was told that if one was researching the Pearce name in Buckinghamshire, it was like looking for someone named Smith as it was a very common name there. As a result, I put my Pearce research on the back burner.



In 2018, I tested my DNA through Ancestry. While checking out my matches, I found that I had many matches that connected to a John and Mary (Chaner) Pearce. No matter which family tree I looked at, I couldn't determine how this John was related to my family. I theorized that perhaps this John was a brother of William but could find no proof. To add to the confusion, I discovered that Pearce could be spelt various ways. I found at least three couples that had the same first names and were born in the same time frame and location - the only difference being the maiden surname of the wife. I also found that sometimes both the bride and groom had a surname of Pearce. As my research progressed, I discovered marriages between Pearce cousins which explained the same surnames.

It was pointed out to me that English birth registrations listed the surname of the mother, and this was a big help in organizing family groups. I used the General Record Office website to locate the information.

[www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/Login.asp](http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/Login.asp)

After I received some information from the Buckinghamshire Family History Society, things started to come together. I discovered that I could order baptism, marriage or burial records for all Pearce entries in a one-hundred-year time span, of my choosing. They would include any spelling variations of the Pearce surname too. I found their service very reasonably priced and very timely in their response.

[www.bucksfhs.org.uk](http://www.bucksfhs.org.uk)

I was hoping to find the names of William or John's parents to determine if they were brothers, but their marriage records did not name the parents. It was when I ordered baptism records for both men that it looked like I finally had proof that William and John were brothers. The baptisms of William and Hannah's children named Hannah's parents as well. While not all the events took place in the same parish, the parishes are in close proximity to each other.

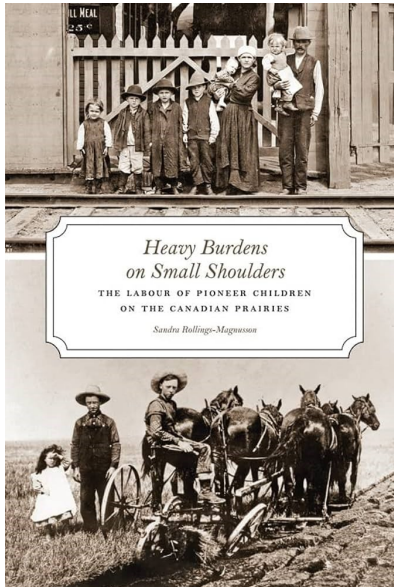
This has been quite an interesting project with lots of twists and turns but now that I am getting close to checking all the names in my database, I plan to double check my DNA Matches so that they can be accurately connected to my tree on Ancestry. Currently ThruLines has John Pearce and Mary (Chaner) Pearce as my 4x great-grandparents, but my research indicates that John is my 5x great-uncle, while his brother William is my 4x great-grandfather. My wish is that this will enable other Pearce relatives to make the connection to my family, as I have witnessed first hand how easy it is to follow the wrong lead.

I am extremely grateful for the help of fellow researchers who have given me guidance in sorting all these family members out. As with many families, it seems that certain names were used repeatedly - some even with the same first name being born in the same registration district in the same quarter. But thanks to knowing to check for the mother's maiden surname, I can feel confident I have included the child with the right family.

While DNA can help connect you to the right family line, you still need to do the record research to make sure you are connected properly to that line. My project has been a challenge, but one I am so glad that I accepted.

**Book Review:** *Heavy Burdens on Small Shoulders: The Labour of Pioneer Children on the Canadian Prairies* by S. Rollings-Magnusson

Kelly Southworth



AFHS Call #: 971.215 ROLL 2009

Was your ancestor a child? You may wonder what kind of question is that – didn't everyone pass through childhood? But how much do you really know about your ancestors' lives in their early, formative years? A book by an Alberta professor may shed some light on what life was like for your ancestor if they grew up on the Canadian prairies.

At first glance, genealogists may not choose this book to read. Published by a university, written by an academic, with a back-cover synopsis that refers to "political economy" and "sociology of the family," it suggests heavy slogging will be necessary to get through it. However, this is not the case!

With only 145 pages of actual text, it is a quick and interesting read. While chapters one and seven (the introduction and conclusion) follow an academic format and language, the five middle chapters do not. They are full of nuggets of information that family historians crave, including first-hand accounts of personal experiences, provided in this case by children. The author examines the types of work young people performed on the family farm.

While we tend to think of "chores" as just a normal part of farm life, the pictures painted by the children are not so benign or idyllic. Even the very young provided labour in dangerous conditions that was vital to the survival of their families.

Much of the information comes from letters, written by prairie youth in 1901 and 1902, to *The Nor'-West Farmer*, an agricultural magazine published in Winnipeg. The letters were sent in response to an invitation from the magazine to children asking them to describe their responsibilities. After analyzing these published letters and other sources, the author has categorized children's duties into five basic types, with a chapter devoted to each:

- **Pre-production labour** (building the first shelter)
- **Productive labour** (producing agricultural foodstuffs to generate money)
- **Entrepreneurial labour** (money-making activities to purchase necessities)
- **Subsistence labour** (tasks necessary for physical survival)
- **Domestic labour** (tasks supporting the comfort, well-being and morale of the family)

In these chapters, we hear the unique experiences of individual children, most identified by name, age and place of residence. Even if your ancestors are not named specifically, this book will provide insight into their day-to-day lives in childhood, a period that is seldom documented.

One final thought about reading sociological studies like this one: academics excel at research. They dig up obscure primary sources, and genealogists can benefit from their work by checking out their reference lists. In this instance, it is the letters in *The Nor'-West Farmer* that are unique.

Copies of *The Nor'-West Farmer* are available on *Internet Archive*:

<https://archive.org>

## Upcoming Events

### CALGARY PUBLIC LIBRARY

#### Family History Coaching

**\*\*Cancelled until further notice\*\***

*Calgary Public Library*

### CONFERENCES/WEBINARS

\*all times listed are in MDT

#### Sons of the Soil: Researching our British Agricultural Labouring Ancestors with Janet Few

Virtual

*Lakeshore Genealogical Society*

November 13, 2024 5:30 pm

[LGSregister@gmail.com](mailto:LGSregister@gmail.com)

#### Finding North American Passenger Lists with Tara Shymanski

Virtual

*Haldimand & Norfolk, Ontario Ancestors*

November 14, 2024 5:00 pm

<https://ogs.on.ca/finding-north-american-passenger-lists-tara-shymanski>

#### Debt, Drunk & Disorderly, Vagrancy, Prostitution, Theft, Assault, Insanity: Are You Sure Your Ancestors Were Never in Jail?

Virtual

*Thunder Bay Branch, Ontario Ancestors*

November 20, 2024 5:00 pm

<https://thunderbay.ogs.on.ca/events/thunder-bay-debt-drunk-disordely-vagrancy-prostitution-theft-assault-insanity-are-you-sure-your-ancestors-were-never-in-jail>

#### Destination Canada by Dave Obee

Virtual

*Qualicum Beach Family History Society*

November 20, 2024 8:00 pm

<https://www.qbfhs.ca/category/speakers>

#### Scottish Indexes Conference XXVI

Virtual

*Scottish Indexes*

November 23, 2024

<https://www.scottishindexes.com/conference.aspx>

#### Finding Your British WWI Soldier – Dead or Alive by Paul Milner

Virtual

*Legacy Family Tree Webinars*

December 3, 2024 6:00 pm

<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/finding-your-british-wwi-soldier-dead-or-alive>

#### RootsTech 2025 Registration Now Open!

Virtual

*FamilySearch*

March 6 – 8, 2025

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

#### Nova Scotia Genealogy Virtual Conference 2025: Explore Your Ancestral Ocean Playground

Virtual

*Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia*

May 3 – 4, 2025

<https://www.nsgenconference.ca>

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## About Our Society

**Alberta Family Histories Society** is a registered non-profit organization that welcomes anyone interested in genealogy and family history! For over 40 years, we've helped people grow their family trees and discover the stories of their roots. We have substantial resources about Calgary and southern Alberta but can help you research your roots worldwide. Our website is <https://afhs.ab.ca>.

We learn from each other in a variety of settings – Society meetings, **Special Interest Group** meetings, workshops and biannual conferences. For up-to-date meeting information, see our website calendar at <https://afhs.ab.ca/calendar>.

Visit one of our most valuable resources - the **AFHS Resource Centre**! While our collection has an emphasis on materials pertaining to Alberta and Canada, we also have basic genealogy books and information from around the world. AFHS is a **FamilySearch Affiliate Library**, which gives you access to FamilySearch records you can't view at home. Our volunteers look forward to showing you what we have to offer for your genealogy research! You can view a catalogue of our holdings at <https://afhs.ab.ca/library>.

Documenting local historical records is part of our mission. **Alberta Ancestors** is a special project to showcase cemetery records at <https://albertaancestors.ca>. With 280 cemeteries and over 230,000 memorials, it is a priceless resource.

Members have a wealth of opportunities to share strategies, struggles, successes and stories with others who appreciate the challenges of this hobby. One option is for members to share family tree projects and to post stories online as part of our **Family Genes** website at <https://www.familygenes.ca>.

We welcome visitors, so please drop in at a meeting and introduce yourself. Come see how our services and programs can fit your needs. We hope you will join us either in-person or virtually! To receive a guest Zoom invitation to one of the **AFHS Society Meetings**, contact Marion at [communications@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:communications@afhs.ab.ca).

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## AFHS RESOURCE CENTRE

**712 - 16 Avenue NW  
Calgary, AB T2M 0J8**

### Fall/Winter Hours

Thursday, 10 am - 2 pm

Saturday, Noon - 4 pm

*Check our website calendar for any time changes or closures.*

<https://afhs.ab.ca/calendar>



ALBERTA FAMILY  
HISTORIES SOCIETY

## CONTACT US

**Email:** [info@afhs.ab.ca](mailto:info@afhs.ab.ca)

**Website:** [www.afhs.ab.ca](http://www.afhs.ab.ca)

**Phone:** 403-214-1447

**Facebook:** Alberta Family Histories Society

**Instagram:** abfamilyhistoriessociety



### Land Acknowledgement

In the spirit of reconciliation, we would like to acknowledge that the land on which we gather and where we work to preserve the records and family history of those who came before us are on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprising of the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani First Nations), the Tsúú'tínà, the Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki, Bearspaw and Goodstoney First Nations), the Métis Nation (Districts 5 & 6) and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.