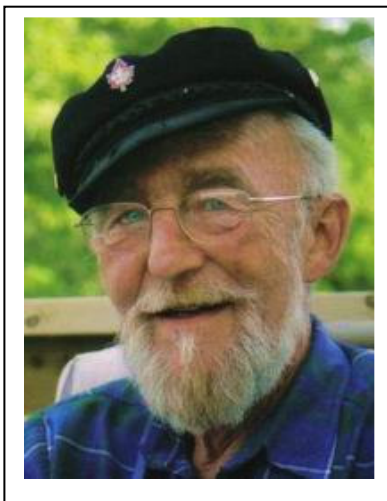


The Family Historian

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Column #57

The Halifax Garrison



I had a very interesting e-mail recently from reader Helene Millard of Carleton Place. She is a very serious Family History Researcher and has traced one of her lines back to 1640 when an ancestor arrived in the fledgling colony of New France to help colonize it.

Her current dilemma was an ancestor who was a Royal Engineer in the Halifax Garrison 1836-1842. He married while there but she had been unable to find documentation of it. She had certainly done her homework. She had checked out the Nova Scotia Archives, had actually found the War Office number of the volume of records that should have the required information and had searched our National Archives for a copy of it.

Many of the colonial records, military and civil, in the British Public Records Office have been microfilmed and Canada has obtained most that pertain to us. This one was, of course, an exception. It looked as though she might have to hire a researcher in Britain to find it.

My first step was to check out the Mormon (LDS) Library in Salt Lake City and I was surprised that they had nothing helpful. Then I checked out the Royal Engineers, themselves. They have a Library and a Museum in Chatham, Kent, but neither of these had anything helpful.

At this point I just sat back to let my mind run free and, sure enough, a memory surfaced from last summer's holiday trip to visit our son and his family near Halifax. He was driving us around Halifax and, slowing down the car, said "Hey, Dad, you'll be interested in this - it's the old Garrison Church".

A quick web search found St. Paul's Anglican Church. It was originally built in 1750 and is the oldest Protestant place of worship in Canada. Happily it also has its own web site at: www.stpaulshalifax.org. It is still a very active parish and it did serve as the garrison church from its foundation until 1844, when a separate garrison chapel was built.

This means that it was the garrison church in the period we were researching. To add icing to the cake, they maintain their own archives and even have a Request for Archival Information form on their website.

Encyclopedia of Genealogy

This is a web site that is an initiative of Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter. It is very simple, unadorned, and easy to use. The contents, which include definitions, explanations, short articles, etc. are written by volunteers and are arranged in alphabetical order.

There is a lot of good material on this site and it is worth a visit to familiarize yourself with the contents so that you will have a better idea of when you might want to use it. There is also a list of topics for which they are seeking authors. You may want to contribute.

There are two search strategies. You can go to <Search> and type in the word you are searching and it's worth trying this first. If that is not satisfactory, go to <Index>, which is an alphabetical listing of topics and scan through it for ones that might be helpful. Don't get too excited if you find the exact topic that you are looking for. You may only find a message that this article is yet to be written. If you are interested, why not research it and write it yourself.

One of the things I really like about this site is that it actually has the information. It is not a list of links to other sites, many of which may have changed their URL's or gone defunct. We have all had plenty of experience following up links, only to find that they are broken.

There are about 400 articles in the Encyclopedia at the moment and it is constantly growing. You can check it out at: www.eogen.com.