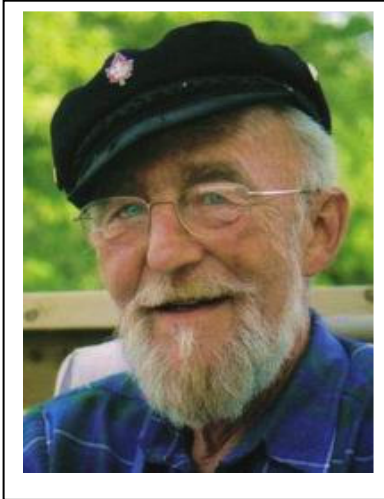


Where Are You?



One of the many problems faced by early immigrants to North America and their families was keeping in touch with each other. For one thing, many of them could not read or write for themselves and were dependent on others for these services. The initial struggles of creating a home in the new land or getting a job were not conducive to voluminous correspondence.

There also seems to be a deeply ingrained antipathy to writing home to Mom and Dad (except for money). I can remember as a small boy going to summer camp. My parents addressed and stamped a number of post cards for me so that I had only to jot a quick note and send it off to them.

Parents, wives, siblings were left at home worrying about the well-being of our adventurous immigrants. Sometimes siblings would also immigrate but be unable to find their brothers or sisters.

In 1831, the *Boston Pilot*, an Irish Catholic newspaper started publishing notices for "missing friends". The *Pilot* had a large circulation throughout and beyond the United States and these notices have considerable archival value for family historians.

The bulk of the notices are about Irish immigrants and they often contained extensive information on the origins of the person sought, including county, townland, parish, what ship they sailed on and when, their occupation, and a host of other identifying characteristics. If you check the dates of some of notices against the dates of departure, you can sometimes begin to sense the worry and anguish that they left behind.

The Library of Boston College holds these newspapers and the College's Irish Studies Program has created an online database of the "missing friends" notices. You can search this database at no cost and it is very intuitive and easy to search. I didn't find any of my family but I enjoyed looking and I am sure you will too.

The database is located at: <http://infowanted.bc.edu> .

The Pontiac Archives

A number of settlers who originally took up land in our area relocated, within a few years, upriver to the Pontiac County area. Fortunately there are some excellent resources for researching them.

My wife, Judy, and I joined a field trip recently to visit the Pontiac Archives in their new quarters. They share a new building with the Library in downtown Shawville, next to the offices of *The Equity*, the very well-known regional newspaper. A good-sized parking lot gets you off Main Street and can accommodate about a dozen vehicles.

Once inside, you will find that they have made excellent use of their space. The Archives is completely volunteer run and it would be difficult to find a more knowledgeable, enthusiastic and helpful group. Elsie, Monique, Venetia and Grant certainly made us feel very welcome and were proud to show us their collections.

Their shelves and filing cabinets are filled with historical and genealogical resource material that give evidence of an incredible amount of work in producing and organizing. Of particular note is the extensive vertical file of clippings from *The Equity*, a major source of information on the area.

Church records have been indexed and are easily available. School records have been collected and they have copies of all the original land grants in the county. Most of us did a bit of research while we were there and we all came away with something we found out to our advantage.

The Archives is open Tuesdays to Thursdays from 9a.m. to 4p.m. and Saturdays from 10a.m. to 2p.m.