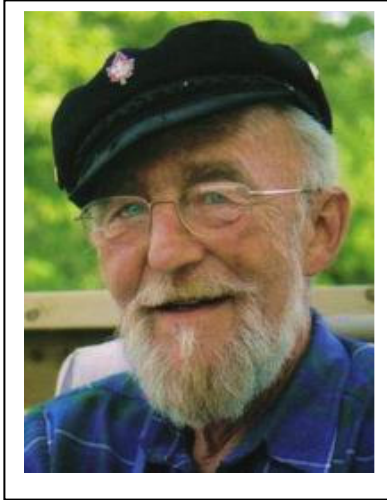


The Family Historian

Patrick Wohler

Column #8

City Directories



I recently responded to a query from a lady in Australia who wanted to find a person in the unindexed 1891 Census of Montreal. That could be a full time job for a couple of months and you might go either blind or mad in the process. This highlighted for me the importance of City (and County and Provincial) Directories.

Publication of these Directories began in the later 1700's and they were commonplace by the late nineteenth century. I think they have often been underestimated as resources for the Family Historian. Usually they supply the name, address, and occupation of the householder. In another section they identify the electoral ward in which that address lies.

The address and occupation are certainly of interest to the Family Historian. The ward identifies the section of the census in which you should find this person. With a map of the city you can now find the neighbourhood church where their vital records might be found. By scanning the Directories for every five years, you can trace the family moves, changes of occupation, etc. You can find which

funeral parlours were in business when a relative died and their records may still be available. I was able to find out in which year my grandfather was promoted from prison guard to sergeant.

Abbreviations are often used in City Directories to save space, so it would be a good idea to make a copy of the legend to help you remember later what all those abbreviations mean. Local libraries can usually be counted on to have some of the Directories for their area and larger repositories like the National Library and some of the university research libraries have extensive collections of them.

Library and Archives Canada has digitized a large number of Directories. You can research in these on the internet at: www.collectionscanada.ca/index-e.html. Click on the "Search" tab and type Directories in the search box. Select "Canadian Directories", then "Search the Data Base". You will be amazed at how much information is available there. We will discuss other sources for City Directories in later columns

The Library in Carp

The Carp Branch of the Ottawa Public Library is well set up to serve the family history researcher. It is equipped with a microfilm reader, a microfiche reader, a photocopier, and four computers with internet access for their patrons.

Most importantly it houses the Research Centre of the Huntley Historical Society with its wealth of Family Histories, Church and School Histories, Indexes to cemeteries, Baptismal Registers, Census Reports, Deaths and Memorials from local papers, The Tweedsmuir History of the Huntley Women's Institute and the Belden Atlas. Some of their material goes beyond Huntley Township to the neighbouring ones and I saw material on Pakenham and Goulbourne. The library also has bound copies of the newspaper, *The Carp Review*.

The newest resource is a twenty-eight album collection of photographs by Erskine Rivington, that was three years in the preparation. It is housed in a beautiful specially designed cabinet that was opened to the public and dedicated in September, 2003. The Historical Society has someone on hand to assist researchers on Thursday afternoons from 1:30 to 4:30 and if you want access to the photos, there must be a representative there. They will try to accommodate researchers who cannot meet their schedule and the person to call is Jane Caldwell at (613) 831-2501.

Genealogical reference material in the main and other branches of the Ottawa Public Library cannot travel between branches and must be seen in its home branch. The Library opens at 10:00 Monday to Saturday and closes on Monday and Wednesday at 6:00; Tuesday and Thursday at 8:00; Friday and Saturday at 4:00. It is closed on Sunday.

The Library is located on the Carp Road just beyond the Fairgrounds and next to the Diefenbunker. It is well worth a visit.
