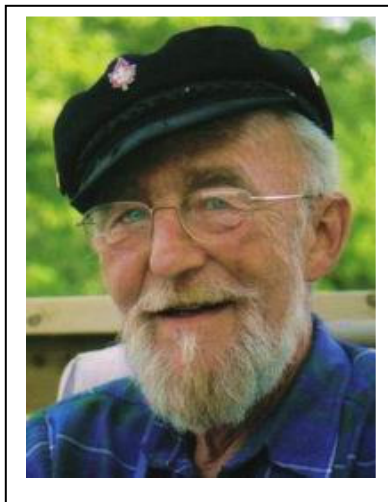


Why Did They Die?



Most of us will sooner or later find groups of ancestors who died around the same time and wonder if there was some kind of epidemic at the time. The Ontario GenWeb site has a list of diseases and epidemics and I have selected those most likely to affect our ancestors in Ontario and organized them by date for easier reference.

1732-1733: Influenza

1759: Measles

1761: Influenza

1772: Measles

1755-1757: Smallpox, especially in the Niagara area

1832: Cholera

1834: Cholera

1847-1849: Typhus and Cholera brought in by recent immigrants

1847-1848: Influenza

1850-1851: Influenza

1857-1859: Influenza

1873-1875: Influenza

1884: Smallpox in Hastings County

1902: Smallpox in Galt

1918: Influenza

Clearly the Influenza was a frequent and deadly visitor. The epidemic in 1918 was the dreaded Spanish Flu that killed more than 25 million people worldwide, the most deadly disease in recorded history.

If you would like to learn more about this disease that killed more people than WW I or the Bubonic Plague, there is a good account of it at: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/virus/uda/>.

Lost Opportunities

A fair number of people have been commiserating with me recently that they did not interview their parents, grandparents, other older relatives and friends of the family in time. It is so easy to put off that chore and most of us are guilty of it to some extent.

It is no surprise to anyone that these wonderful people can be great resources for Family Historians nor that they will not be around forever. People do die, become frail, suffer some memory loss and become unavailable or unreliable informants.

Archival records, church registers, newspaper microfilms and a host of the other resources that we eagerly use will be around long after we have lost our last living ancestors. So please consider interviewing them as a high priority, you will really be glad you did.

Feeling the Pinch

Increased resources for research on the internet has tended to focus researchers' attention on what is available there and a lot of other resources are being ignored. Some genealogical libraries, genealogical departments in libraries, and archives have noted a significant drop in foot traffic.

These local resources are often the only places to find unique local material and family histories. Their indexing and cross-referencing make it easier to find local material that is not and likely never will be online.

The agencies that support these repositories and the volunteers who make them work will wither without the evident interest and support of the research community. If you haven't done so already please visit your local library, genealogical library, or archives and find out how they can help you in a special way.