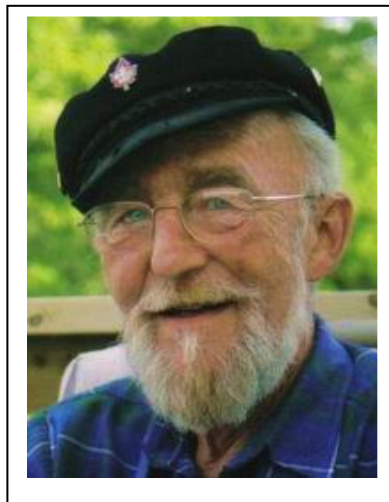


The Family Historian

Patrick Wohler

Column #96

The Tender Trap



Judy and I were recently driving from Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré to Montreal on the north shore of the St. Lawrence river through all the old seigneuries, many of whose names are commemorated in modern place names. I mentioned that I would like to get a better handle on those seigneuries.

I should never have said that. What began as the development of a database of seigneuries and seigneurs started turning up historical data that is really not reflected in most of the published material on the subject. Furthermore, in order to understand the succession of ownership of the seigneuries, I had to get into the genealogy of dozens of the families.

Many of these families ended up becoming related to each other through marriage and many of them inter-married several times. Not satisfied with all the children they were producing, some of the men had illegitimate children whom they recognized and some of the men had Indian wives and children from their fur trading days.

It was a fascinating dive into a sector of the culture that I had never researched before and after hectic weeks of research, I now have a research report and the basis for a respectable database. Hopefully I won't get any more bright ideas for a while so that I can get on with my normal activities.

New Free Research Guide

Library and Archives Canada has recently released a new edition of their very popular booklet, 'Tracing Your Ancestors in Canada'. It has been around for a number of years and I think that this one is the fifteenth edition. It is an excellent summary of the archival resources available and everyone should have a copy. It is also free.

A new feature this year is that you can actually download it from the website of the Canadian Genealogy Centre at www.genealogy.gc.ca/07/070701_ehtml. This online version has a little more detail than the print one but you can call Library and Archives Canada to obtain a print version if that is what you prefer. An excellent example of our tax dollars being well spent.

Tracking Distant Relatives in the U.S.

A number of researchers, looking for distant relatives in the U.S., have used 'Find USA'. This database has been withdrawn by Info USA but help is still out there.

Stephen Morse, who is well known for his creative and innovative internet tools, has created a tool, 'Finding Birthdates and Related Persons'. It mines the database used by both the 'Private Eye' and 'PeopleFinders' websites. There are three search buttons but they all lead to the same data, so they are only important if one of the target sites is down.

To use the tool, go to <http://www.stevemorse.org/birthday/privateeye.html>. Type in as much information as you have on the person and hit one of the search buttons. You will get back a list of names, ages and associated locations for your search target. You will also be given names of his or her potential relatives. Morse cautions that the birth information is notoriously unreliable.

I tried it out, of course, and was amazed at what it came up with. There is a 'View Details' link but ignore that unless you want to pay for a search for more information about that person.

Ancestry.com Comes to Canada

The giant subscription site has launched a Canadian version, with a certain amount of hoopla. The Canadian site, <http://www.ancestry.ca>, includes a variety of databases; the 1911 Canada Census, Ontario Birth Index (1869-1907), Ontario Marriage Index (1858-1899), Ontario Death Index (1869-1932), Ontario Census Index for 1871, Ontario and Nova Scotia Census Records 1800-1842, Canadian Genealogical Index (1600s-1900s), and Canadian Directories (address and phone) for 1995-2002. They claim that it will also soon be available in French.

Some of this material is already available at no cost elsewhere but some of it was harder to obtain. Membership for the Canadian site is \$99.95/yr. It is also available as part of their World Deluxe Membership at \$359.95/yr. A one-month World Membership is \$49.95 and there is a Pay per View Option that gives you 10 record views over 14 days for \$5.95.

Please note that I provide this for your information only and not as a personal recommendation. I should point out that reader Marlene O'Neil took out a trial subscription and was so enthusiastic about the results that she purchased a subscription right away. The Centrepointhe Library in Nepean has a subscription and you can also try it out there.