

Net Notes

CANADIAN HEADSTONE PHOTO PROJECT

<http://www.canadianheadstones.com>

AS MANY OF us know, headstones often become harder to read over time, and sometimes even illegible. Due to development, cemetery neglect and myriad other reasons, some cemeteries and tombstones disappear from the landscape, including the valuable information they contained on who was buried there.

The Canadian Headstone Photo Project is one project whose mission is to capture digital images of the headstones of our ancestors. By archiving the images, it will help save these important records and also assist researchers using this valuable resource.

The records available via this project are organized by province or territory; then county, region, and other geographic divisions which apply to the province or territory; and finally by cemetery. Once you select a province, you can search on or browse what is available. As one might expect, there are more records available for the more populated provinces, such as Ontario and Quebec.

Since this is a volunteer supported project, instructions are provided on how to contribute by taking and uploading tombstone photos. If you want to contribute to this project, there are a few things to keep in mind. Cemetery photos are only accepted for

cemeteries where the individual headstones have already been indexed. You may submit the transcription from a headstone without having a photo of the actual headstone.

Although this is one of the newer projects for capturing tombstone images, there are some older projects, also supported by volunteers. One of these is Find-A-Grave, <http://www.findagrave.com>. This project similarly focuses on documenting those buried in cemeteries around the world, including Canada.

For example, at the Find-A-Grave website, for Camp Hill Cemetery, Halifax, Nova Scotia there are many tombstone photos included. Find-A-Grave is an invaluable tool for the genealogist and the family history buff, and its memorials can contain rich content, including photos, biographies and dates.

And, don't forget to check out other cemetery projects, such as the one for Acadian cemeteries, <http://acadian-cemeteries.acadian-home.org/frames.html>, which focuses on cemeteries in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. A thumbnail image for each tombstone is shown, which, when clicked on, brings up a larger version. — DIANE L. RICHARD

IT RUNS IN MY FAMILY

<http://www.itrunsinmyfamily.com>

BECAUSE FAMILY MEMBERS often share the same genetic and environmental influences, a family health history is an important health indicator. Knowing your family history is a glimpse into your own genome. The website, It Runs in My Family (a free, open-access website funded and developed by SGgenomics, Inc., a privately held corporation), is trying to make it easy for you to build your family pedigree, enter in diseases that run in your family and share your family health history report with your doctor.

You create a family tree, select from a list of identified diseases or select "Other" and enter any disease, condition or trait not listed in the menu. The current disease list includes those diseases that have a strong family history influence, high incidence rates in the population and can be prevented with early intervention. More may be added as the tool develops.

To see how this works, I created an anonymous family. I suggest that you look at the "quick start"

guide — this explains how to create your family pedigree as well as enter the diseases that run in your family and includes two videos to assist you with this.

Additional information is also available under the "How To" guide. In your created pedigree, each symbol and color has significance — the symbol and disease guides will explain these to you.

When you get to the generation of your grandparents, it also asks for information on ethnic background.

Once created, you can save, print or e-mail your family pedigree. The value of this tool is that it gives you

an easy, visual schematic of your family's health history — which your health care provider needs to be aware of. This provides knowledge of health issues that may impact you down the road, based on what your ancestors were afflicted with. Now, a dialogue can be started with an appropriate health care professional. — DIANE L. RICHARD



VALLEY OF THE SHADOW AND THE CIVIL WAR

<http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu/VoS/choosepart.html>

THERE IS SO much material available on the Civil War that it is sometimes challenging to get a more personal glimpse of its impact upon a community. The Valley of the Shadow project is a digital archive of primary sources that document the lives of people in Augusta County, Virginia, and Franklin County, Pennsylvania, during the era of the American Civil War. Here, you may explore thousands of original documents that allow you to see what life was like during the Civil War for the men and women of these communities, one Northern and one Southern, from the time of John Brown's raid through the era of Reconstruction. You are able to explore thousands of original letters and diaries, newspapers and speeches, census and church records.

The material on the website is broken down into three time periods, for which there are seven to eight different record groups identified. Click on any record group of interest and you will be further guided about how best to access the material. Note that there is some overlap, e.g., the Newspapers collection is the same regardless of which time period you click on, as you are taken to an exhaustive list of what newspaper editions are available.



I found the map section extremely interesting. A series of comparison maps were created that encompass Geography, Infrastructure, Agriculture, Politics and Religion. It's fascinating to see how these two counties compare.

Another hidden gem is the timelines, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/VoS/reference/timelines/timelines.html>, which have been compiled from newspapers. These allow you to compare events and developments within each county throughout the Civil War. It also covers developments in Pennsylvania, Virginia and on the national scene, and so useful to anyone researching the

Civil War era.

For those whose ancestors lived in Augusta County, Virginia, and Franklin County, Pennsylvania during the Civil War, this collection of resources will definitely be of interest. And, if you are like me, and have ancestors who weren't even in the country at the time of the Civil War, the detailed perspective that it gives on two "real" communities offers a deeper understanding of the complexity of the Civil War, and the impact it had on everyone, regardless of which side they fought on or where they lived. — DIANE L. RICHARD

NON-CONFORMIST UK RECORDS

<http://www.bmdregisters.co.uk/index.php>

I KNOW ALL too well the hard work that goes into determining that an ancestor was nonconformist, determining what religious group they may have been associated with, then learning whether the records for that particular church still survive and trying to access them.

In England and Wales, nonconformists were those who did not belong to the Church of England (the Anglican church), while for Scotland, nonconformists were those who did not belong to the Church of Scotland (a Presbyterian church). The Episcopal Church in the US is based on the Church of England, and was organized shortly after the American Revolution.

BMDRegisters.co.uk strives to provide access to unpublished non-conformist registries from 1534-1865, covering such non-conformists as Methodists, Wesleyans, Baptists, Independents, Protestant Dissenters, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Unitarians, Quakers (Society of Friends), Dissenters and Russian Orthodox.

You can use a simple search or an advanced

search. Only the simple search is free. There is a one credit charge for an advanced search. Viewing a full record or page image costs five credits. Each credit costs 50p (about 85 cents US).

Though many of the non-conformist records have been microfilmed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, www.familysearch.org, you may find that for a given community there are more than 40 separate listings of church records, more than half of which are for non-conformist churches. That's a lot of microfilm to look through.

With BMDRegisters.co.uk, you can search across a variety of religious denominations at once. London was essentially the center of the world for pre-1837 England, so many of the records pertain to people who lived in or near the city. However, the collection is not limited to residents of London. For the records of the Russian Orthodox Church in London, there is a separate search function and these records are predominantly in Russian. — DIANE L. RICHARD