

## Family History Newsletter

The Family History group supports members in researching their family history research. Members have ancestors from around the globe.

They meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 7pm at the Maple Ridge Library.

Email: [mrfamilyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:mrfamilyhistory@gmail.com)

### An Uneasy Neighbour: Finding Frank Weber

By Brenda L. Smith



Frank Weber's 1940 mug shot, Brenda L. Smith collection.

Last Christmas my friend Marg sent me a bundle of orphaned documents to appreciate, research and share. Soon after, the Maple Ridge Family History Group program whiz, Alberta McNamara challenged us once again to tackle a "small" research problem, and in a couple of months, report to the group our findings. In the bundle of ephemera I found a provoking puzzle. Ha, I thought, here was enough material for Alberta's challenge and a presentation on the method for parsing an historical document.

As I write this, I have found traces of the man at the BC Archives (Fish and Wildlife records), Library and Archives Canada (immigration, census, voters lists, and naturalization files), travelled to the museums in Prince George, Huble Homestead Historic Site, Mackenzie, Hudson's Hope, and Fort St. John, and the world (via online contacts). Weber made his first public appearance at the May MR FHG meeting, followed by the Fort St. John North Peace Museum in July. He has been invited to appear at **Finding Your Roots Seminar** this October.

These notes encapsulize what I discovered as Shorty took over my life for these past eight months. Here is a summary of the flood of information and images triggered by examining Weber's life in North America, based on responses recorded in his 1940 British Columbia Penitentiary newcomers interview form.

Frank "Shorty" (Franz) Weber was born in Oppeln, Silesia, Prussia 09 February 1883. He seems to have departed in December 1902 from Czernowitz, Bukovina (currently in Ukraine), arriving at age 19 at Ellis Island, New York, USA.

Between 1902 and 1907, Frank claimed to have worked and travelled in Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan. He was discovered in the 1910 US Census working as a "chopper of railway ties" in a crew in Cass County, Minnesota. Weber's application for naturalization as a British subject reveals that he entered Canada in 1910 at Emerson, Manitoba. That rich record includes information that he worked on construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway starting at Tête Jaune Cache, British Columbia in 1911, finishing at Fort George in 1913.

Weber was part of the Frank Swannell survey crew of the Finlay River area in 1913. He appears in the Huble Homestead journals at Giscome Portage between 1915

and 1917, taking a pre-emption during the same period, and failing to complete developments on the property.

Weber seems to have been enterprising. He is reported to have constructed cabins on the Ingenika River, and at Hudson's Hope prior to 1923 he may have operated a restaurant. There is also a suggestion that he was known for liberating and repurposing whatever he found lying around the countryside.

Encounters with authority illuminate Weber's life from 1917 when he failed to report his alien status to the British Columbia Provincial Police, and was fined \$50. In 1919, Weber was involved in the discovery of the murders of trapping partners Harry Holtmeyer and Hans Christensen. Weber is listed as a trapper in the Hudson's Hope sub-district in the *1921 Census of Canada*, Cariboo District 60.

In 1924 Weber applied for naturalization. This rich collection of documents spans the period from October to 11 June 1925 when he received his certificate. Later that year he may have been found guilty of grievous bodily harm with a six-month suspended sentence, although the only reference is found on his prison admission information in 1940. In 1926 Weber was among a group of trappers who were involved with William E. Innes prior to his suicide.

Weber exhibited symptoms of the strain of his lonely life in mid-December 1928 when neighbour Gus Trapp shot Weber's pack dog. His reaction was to ransack Trapp's four trapline cabins, spilling the food, tearing blankets, smashing snowshoes, and throwing a rifle in the lake. In the spring of 1929, Weber was fined \$200 for willful damage and damages of \$75 paid to Gus Trapp.

The legendary Bedaux Expedition fascinated the world in 1934. Weber played his part during the October evacuation of the trekkers back to Hudson's Hope when the enterprise stopped short of its goals. He was hired to provide his boat to provide transport.

Weber seems to have been known for collecting whatever was left lying about in the countryside. The Ingenika Mine, just down river from his trapline, was closed in 1932. In 1936, with watchman Joseph Berghammer, Weber stole 120 gallons of gasoline from the mine site. They lost the appeal of their sentence and each served 18 months of two-year sentences for theft at the British Columbia Penitentiary from December 1940 to July 1941.

In 1947 Weber's trapline is recorded as covering the upper half of the Ingenika River valley. The British Columbia Fish and Wildlife Records show Weber renewing his trapline licences almost annually. He doesn't seem to have held a guiding licence, or special firearms licence at any time. He appears in these files reporting average yields for traplines in the area.

As the later fur trade drew to a close, and as he aged, Weber stayed in the region. Travel in and out of the Finlay valley was still by water and bush plane until the mid-1950s. In September 1948, author R. M. Patterson encountered him at the recently closed Fort Graham, liberating materials from the trading post site.

Frank Weber died of heart disease in 15 September 1952 at Prince George BC hospital. He died a single man with no heirs and no will. He was buried on 18 September 1952 in Prince George Municipal Cemetery.

## News Flash

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### Library and Archives Canada

We welcome new Librarian and Archivist of Canada Leslie Weir. For the next four-years, beginning August 30, 2019. Weir is the first woman to assume the role of guiding LAC "to acquire, preserve and encourage access to documents that tell our collective history." For more information about Weir's credentials and appointment see [Librarianship.ca](http://Librarianship.ca)

<https://librarianship.ca/news/leslie-weir-lac/>

### British Home Child Day in Canada. September 28

Take this opportunity to think about our country's role and the contributions of the over 100,000 British children sent to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa from 1869 til the 1970s.

### Cloverdale Library

[www.surreylibraries.ca](http://www.surreylibraries.ca)



The Family History Department will reopen at the Surrey Libraries City Centre Branch, 10350 University Dr, Surrey, BC on July 15, 2019.

## Online Resources

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### Alberta Name Index

<https://edmontongenealogy.ca/library/alberta-name-index-ani/>

Alberta Name Index (ANI) is a union list, created by the members of the Edmonton Branch of Alberta Genealogical Society, of families and individuals named in publications. Sources include: probates, local histories, obituaries, coroner records, land records (but not early homesteads).

### The British Colonist

[www.britishcolonist.ca](http://www.britishcolonist.ca)

Another 20 years has been added to the digitized *British Colonist* newspaper collection; it now goes from 1858 to 1970.

### FamilySearch Webinars

[www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Family\\_History\\_Library\\_Classes\\_and\\_Webinars#Past\\_Webinars\\_.26\\_Handouts](http://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Family_History_Library_Classes_and_Webinars#Past_Webinars_.26_Handouts)

Take advantage of these free webinars using Adobe Connect®

### Holocaust Records

<https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/search/>

[www.ancestry.com/cs/alwaysremember](http://www.ancestry.com/cs/alwaysremember)

The Arolsen Archives are the world's most comprehensive archive on National Socialist persecution. The documents were collected to help clarify the fates of the victims of persecution. They contain information on victims of the Holocaust and concentration camp prisoners, on foreign forced laborers and on the survivors who were trying to rebuild their lives as displaced persons. Searchable with a free Ancestry account and through the archive's website.

### FindMyPast

[www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)

- Essex Baptism Index 1538-1920
- Essex Burial Index 1530-1994
- Essex Marriages and Banns 1537-1935
- Derbyshire Births and Baptisms
- Cincinnati Roman Catholic Parish Records
- Scotland, Glasgow & Lanarkshire Death & Burial Index
- Ontario — Oddfellows Life Insurance Applications (1875-1929)

### Isle of Wight: Cemetery Records

<https://www.iw-bereavementservices.co.uk/>

Almost 100,000 Isle of Wight cemetery records are now available online. The new website holds records for twelve Isle of Wight cemeteries, with around 72,000 burial records and burial ground information for each of the cemeteries.

### Paris Archives - Civil Registrations, 1500 to 1860

<http://archives.paris.fr/s/5/etat-civil-reconstitue/>

Microfilm on FamilySearch: [www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/612182?availability=Family%20History%20Library](http://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/612182?availability=Family%20History%20Library)

City Council of Paris, the Paris Archives and FamilySearch have provided access to the microfilms containing about two million replaced parish and civil registrations for the period 1500 to 1860 of over eight million that were burned in the City Hall archives in May 1871 by the uprising of the Paris Commune. If you are searching for your Parisian family, look on FamilySearch for the index cards and to browse the microfilms of the restored records.

### Saskatchewan Historic Newspapers Online

<http://sabnewspapers.usask.ca/>

The SHNO Collection is made available by the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan History Online. The project will ultimately include Saskatchewan community newspapers from 1878 through to the mid-1960s. The collection will continue to grow for some time, so make return visits to see if your research can be enhanced by the gossip, grain prices and government announcements that informed our prairie ancestors.

## Family History Events

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### Abbotsford Genealogical Society

- **Abby Genealogy Expo**, September 14, 2019, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. A range of organizations will participate. At Studio 2 The Reach.

### BC Genealogical Society

[www.bcgs.ca](http://www.bcgs.ca)

6010 Kincaid Street, Burnaby, BC

- **6th Annual Harvest Supper & Booksellers of BC** talk with Lana Okerlund. Wednesday, September 11, 2019. Fee: \$10.
- **Blood, Sweat, and Fear: The story of Inspector Vance**, Vancouver's first forensic investigator with Eve Lazarus, October 9, 2019, 7:30 pm.
- **Records of Military Service** with Colin MacGregor Stevens, Wednesday, November 13, 2019, 7:30 pm.
- **Christmas Social**, Wednesday, December 11, 2019. 7:30 pm.

## Campbell River Genealogy Society

<http://www.crgenealogysociety.ca/>

- **A Fall Seminar** with Brenda L. Smith, Saturday, October 5, 2019, 9:30 am – 2:45 p.p. Campbell River Maritime Heritage Centre – Rotary Hall. Fee: \$75, includes lunch.

## Maple Ridge Public Library

[www.fvrl.bc.ca](http://www.fvrl.bc.ca)

- **Local Voices**, Mondays: Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2, 2019, 7:00 pm.

## Celebrate Culture Days in Maple Ridge

<http://www.mapleridge.ca/1757/Culture-Days>

- Culture Days is a national celebration and annual movement to raise awareness, accessibility, participation and engagement in culture and the arts. September 22 to 28. Activities are family friendly, accessible to all ages and FREE! Culture Days is an annual celebration that takes place over the last weekend in September.

## Surrey Libraries

[www.surreylibraries.ca](http://www.surreylibraries.ca)

- **The Search for Our Foremothers: A Case Study Seeking Sarah Bowen Smith, Celebrating Women's History Month** with Brenda L. Smith, Thursday, October 3, 7:00 – 8:30 pm. Guildford Library 15105 105 Ave, Surrey, BC

## Surrey Family History Centre

[www.findingyourroots.ca](http://www.findingyourroots.ca)

- **Finding Your Roots Seminar**, Oct 19, 2019 all day. Schedule online. Free.

## Kelowna & District Genealogical Society

[www.kdgs.ca](http://www.kdgs.ca)

- **Find Your Family at the Library**, Sept 28, 2019. 10:00am – 4:00pm. Two free workshops by Stephen Young, mini-talks on Starting your Family History and Treasures in the KDGS Family & Local History Resource Centre, Demonstrations on using FamilySearch, "Ask Me" tables, and more. Downtown Kelowna Library. Free.

## Surrey Family History Centre

[www.findingyourroots.ca](http://www.findingyourroots.ca)

- **Finding Your Roots Seminar**, Oct 13, 2018 all day. Schedule online. Registration open September 1. Free. \$7 lunch available.

## Vancouver Historical Society

[www.vancouver-historical-society.ca](http://www.vancouver-historical-society.ca)

- **Surrey: A City of Stories** with K. Jane Watt, Thursday, September 26, 2019, 7:30 pm A behind-the-scenes glimpse at the creation of *Surrey: A City of Stories*, the first Surrey history book of its kind. It is an inviting visual record of Surrey's early years and its growth into the modern city of today.

## Victoria Genealogical Society Seminar 2019

[www.victoriags.org/seminar.php](http://www.victoriags.org/seminar.php)

- **Family Findings: From the Paper to the Science** with Brenda L. Smith and Diane Rogers, Saturday, October 26, 2019 9:00 am–2:30 pm. St. Leopold Mandic Croatian Church, 4081 Gordon Head Road, Victoria (Saanich), BC
- Fee: Early Bird \$80/after 21 September \$86.

## Writing and Publishing your Family History – A Cloverdale Library Outreach Program

Saturday, November 23, 2019  
10 am – 4 pm. Cloverdale Recreation Centre. Fee: \$15 includes a light lunch/refreshment.

- **Morning Session: Writing Your Family History** with Brenda L. Smith, Start writing your family history! Working with your own materials, learn how to develop the skills necessary for writing non-fiction from a family history point of view. Discover how to move from gathering information to creating a publishable product.
- **Afternoon Session: Publishing Your Family History** with Andrea Lister. Do you want to publish your family history but make it more engaging than a list of when people were born and died? Do you want to turn your research into a book but not sure where to start? Who is your audience? What tools and skills do you need? Are there options beyond the book?

Maple Ridge Family History Group, first Wednesday of the month, 7 pm at the Maple Ridge Library.

September 5, 2019: he September Short Program is a presentation by Annette Fulford—Canadian Passenger Lists: Tips and Tricks.

October 2, 2019

November 6, 2019

Members are encouraged to suggest themes/topics for the Short Program.