

## Questions for Guest Genealogists – Lorine SCHULZE OliveTreeGenealogy

After being raised on a Saskatchewan farm – back when dirt was new [haha] – and having later lived in a few different cities, I currently reside in a small Saskatchewan town ... happily just outside of the city ‘rat race’.

### 1. How and when did you become involved in the field of genealogy?

I think the one thing most of us have in common is waiting too long. Like so many people, I showed no interest in family history until the oldest [and last] living member of my family, who could have answered my questions, had passed away. That was my Mother in 1994 – and this kicked off my interest in genealogy. I inherited her old photo albums. You know the ones that were large, heavy, and had thick, black pages that felt like cardboard? The ones with all the pictures glued in, with no names, dates, or locations? Yup. Those unknown people peeked my curiosity. Over the decades I’m sure Mom had told me the identities of everyone, but I had listened with my ears closed. Too bad.

So I began my first foray into genealogy with a family story of an uncle who was said to have fought overseas in WWII, who married a Queen’s Nurse, was then wounded, received a medal, lived his final days/years in a Veterans hospital in Vancouver BC, Canada, and who was buried in a Soldier’s plot on that same West Coast. This search began before the Internet, so it was all done with paper, pen, stamps, and a lot of impatient waiting. When the first results came back his military papers showed none of the family story was true. Not. One. Single. Detail.

But when I shared this information with my much older brother he was able to show me evidence that the Service Files were incorrect! What the heck?! How could I not trust the War Department to have kept accurate records? How do you know who and what to believe? So I set about serious learning, and eventually I managed to get it all sorted out AND the family story was 100% accurate – as were the SECOND set of military papers I found. But the first file was also correct! I learned many valuable lessons and I was bitten, hard! It was a great personal accomplishment so I believed that if I could solve that tangled mess there was nothing out of my reach. Oh yes and it was so much fun!! HaHaHa

### 2. What is your main genealogical focus?

I guess over the years, and now decades, my focus has changed, a lot. I began with researching my paternal line, and really forgot I had a Mother until almost four years later! Haha My Father was born in Scotland. My Mother was born in the USA. This makes me a 1<sup>st</sup> generation Canadian so it was quite jaw dropping when I discovered I had great grandparents living in Ontario Canada in the 1850s, AND many more generations back, there was an entire ancestral line of great greats living in Quebec Canada in the 1600s! So am I still 1<sup>st</sup> generation? I am a combination of Scottish, Irish, German, Dutch, and maybe some French – and I love them all.

I got involved in instructing in the late 1990's, and then speaking at conferences followed quickly behind. Passion had turned to obsession, so much so I quit my good paying power job and devoted every second to studying and researching my family. I am a founding member of the College of Certified Saskatchewan Genealogists, and have graduated their courses. Of course, with no income I was forced to learn to do all my research as economically as possible! I credit this need with turning me into the thorough, careful researcher I am today. If there is an inexpensive method of finding something I'll find it! Haha AND I'll share the method(s) with my students and conference audiences. I was also invited to join GenClass around 2008. We were slightly ahead of our time as we offered online, inexpensive, classes that even included chats in an online chat room. It was great fun and another learning experience working with professional genealogists around the globe – there were several from the USA including Lisa Alzo, two from Israel, and others from Scotland, Australia, and me representing Canadian research. We stayed together for a number of years until GenClass was folded into a much larger genealogy group.

Teaching and presenting really forces you to become as much of an expert as possible, on whatever subject you are speaking about. No one wants to verbally stutter-step or be shamed in front of one, or a hall full of people! But it does take away from other researching time, so most of my time now is spent on developing new courses and new presentations, but I still use, almost exclusively, my own families as material so I still get to research. It is much more difficult after such a long time researching, to get many familial genealogy 'happy dances', but that only makes each one truly special when they do happen. So my focus has really turned to education, although I still work on my brick wall people, and when a break through happens it usually means another new presentation gets written. I really like helping people learn to do this - the right way. I love seeing them get that 'ah ha' moment!

The other thing that is evolving is my travel focus. I still love the Caribbean for winters, but have been lucky enough to travel to the homelands of many of my favorite ancestors. We are allowed to have 'favorites', aren't we? Haha I've been to Scotland, even managing to get an invite into the home where my Father was born in 1900. I've been to old east Germany & the Czech Republic, managing to get inside the house of my great grandparents who left for America in 1879. Fall 2016 we are headed out on a driving trip to the Maritimes, with 'slight' side trips to where my families lived in eastern USA States. And without a doubt, my favorite ancestral country is Ireland which I've also visited and found the land of my 'old ones'. I also managed to find that Van Morrison was performing in a small town hall, holding only 300 people, ten miles from where my Irish grandfather & families had lived. And I got tickets – in row 4!! Amazing. Being an accomplished researcher can come in handy for all kinds of things!!

### 3. What are your website(s) and blogs?

I taught myself to build a website back in the 90s. Parts of it are still accessible through the Internet Archive and WayBackMachine at <http://ca.geocities.com/pastrerelations>. PastRelations was, and still is, the name of my company. PR being a play on my initials, but I really like the PastRelations title as it says it all. Websites are tons of fun, and building them is addicting, but they are also VERY time consuming so when blogging came about I decided to learn – I’m still learning - and now I run [www.patryangenealogy.blogspot.ca](http://www.patryangenealogy.blogspot.ca). Sadly PastRelations as a URL was unavailable, but you can find my blog by Googling “PastRelations”. My blogging topics are pretty random. I have been all over the place in the past, trying to figure out what it is I wanted to do with my blog. I have settled, for the most part, on sharing genealogy news that I believe will be useful and helpful to my readers, many of whom are present and former students of which there are currently over one thousand!! Of course I am an opinionated person <grin> so it’s pretty common for me to add in my own two cents and perspective concerning what’s happening in, and to, the genealogy world on any given day or topic. I mainly share new or old GREAT websites, offerings, record types or actual records, genealogy people or sites to watch, and methodologies ... and sometimes quirky or funny things. Along with my advice on how to use the site/record etc. or special items of interest I have found within.

#### 4. Do you have a Social Media presence?

I do have accounts with Twitter, Pinterest, Facebook etc., but I only use those to stay in touch with mostly far away friends, although I do follow many, many genealogists to stay up on new and exciting things in the world of genealogy. Things that I can then blog about so my readers can learn too.

#### 5. Do you believe a Social Media presence is important?

I think if we’re not using every tool available we are handicapping ourselves. Why would you not? The trick is keeping yourself from mindlessly wandering and following too many ‘shiny objects’!! Haha But then again as long as you’re learning something it might be worth it. There is an overload of ‘stuff’ to read every second of every day so choose wisely, and try to sort through the good, the bad, and the ugly, and search out those trusted sites and writers.

How much would any of us appreciate finding one letter, or note, from an ancestor? Let’s not forget that [some of us] may not be far from becoming an ancestor! Ha! What a thought!! So what I’m getting at is a suggestion to write our own lives. We too are creating history, just by living it.

#### 6. Are you a member of any genealogical societies or organizations?

Boy that’s a simple enough question, right? Over the past twenty-five years I have belonged to a couple dozen or more [remember I have ancestry in several countries] – each with varying degrees of helpfulness. While trying to remain polite, but still honest, I’ll share a wee bit of my thoughts and experiences.

Some societies I ended my membership with as my research in that particular area was complete [for the time being at least], and my transient families had moved on. Others I ended because they were just not useful to me. I'm afraid this has been the reason I've left numerous societies. Volunteers are hard to come by! Many societies are simply run the way they have been over the past thirty or so years. Volunteers ought to be treated with a great deal of respect. And gratitude. The World is MUCH different than it was 30 years ago – it's much different than it was 10 years ago! Keep up or get left behind. If you offer no useful web presence, with some perks for members, you're hurting yourself and the organization has probably fallen behind. I have also seen societies – usually the ones fallen behind - that have their flow chart upside down. I believe that the members should be at the top, not the bottom. Listen to, and support your members, and your organization will be healthy and growing. No other way will work ... in my opinion. A person who feels appreciated will always do more than what is expected. This goes for volunteers, members, or paid workers.

I have had some wonderful successes using the long standing Message Boards, and Mailing Lists... both of which are totally free and read by millions!  
<http://boards.rootsweb.com/> I have had magazine subscriptions. I have purchased, or borrowed, hundreds of books, maps and atlases. This is probably how I learned best, but back then paper was the 'only way'. But you know what? There still is just so many hours in the day so I now have very few memberships ... although I am beginning some serious in-depth family research in a new specific area and have been checking out their genealogy society online. The Internet has made even choosing what to join so much easier and allows us to make informed choices. It truly is an amazing, amazing time to be a genealogist!!

#### 7. What does genealogy mean to you? Why do you believe it is important?

Genealogy means everything to me. I am fortunate enough to have one grandchild. She's all the 'gchildren' I'll ever have so she's precious – but then whose isn't? haha I want her to know all the people I never did. I want her to have memories of her grandma – Me – memories that I don't have. Both my grandmothers passed when I was a very little girl. Both of my grandfathers died before I was born. My Dad died six weeks after my seventh birthday. Too much death. Too few memories. Not enough family. Almost zero stories. So I talk to my gdau about the 'old ones', and tell her as many stories as I can remember, or find. I have a map of the World in 'her room' in my home. She and I use pins to mark all the places she's been to, and that I've been to, and I use that opportunity to tell her stories of her ancestors who lived in or passed through those areas. And she comes up with the most amazing questions ... questions that sometimes have me reviewing my research to find the answers!! Curiosity comes in all sizes, and all ages, if we just listen.

I also share with my nieces and nephews [and Internet 'cousins'] whenever there is the opportunity. Sometimes it's when one of them gets a new job [did you know that your so-and-so was also in retail/farming/politics/etc], or something special happens on a day that has been a significant date within our ancestral families. I have found a few dates that have been special days shared by family members

throughout several generations. May 1<sup>st</sup> is one of those dates. My Son's born day. My Dad's death day. My Dad's grandmother's birthday. Her Mother's death day. And on it goes for another 300 years in that one family. I find that fascinating!

Genealogy has also opened up the world of history, geography, politics, religion, and sociology to me – all those subjects I detested in school! Hahaha When you can put your own family in an historical event it all becomes much more real, and important, and FUN!! I keep this in mind as I teach classes, and do presentations. We all need to learn, but I think we learn best when we're having fun!!

**8. What do you believe is the most exciting development in genealogy today?**

Oh that's easy! It is the invention of the Internet. The fact that most of the World is now 'connected' is mind boggling. And how much we not only rely on it, but take it for granted is quite frankly shocking. And it all happened soooo fast! "Ask Google" is often the only tool needed to answer a question. Any question! Obviously we need to use trusted sources, but experience/knowledge/wisdom and due diligence will usually help us sort fact from fiction.

Genealogists are some of the first people to understand what the Internet could do for us. If you don't believe that just look at the number of genealogy web sites/blogs/YouTube channels that exist and that are run not just by organizations, but by individuals often with no other motive than to make local records available, or to 'cousin bait', or to just offer assistance. Then there is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who went live with their fabulous familysearch.org website in 1999! And look at the advances they are making over the past two or three years. If it wasn't for them making records available, I could not have walked in the steps of my ancestors with certainty as I travelled through various countries. Of course we can't downplay the role of money making businesses – companies like Ancestry, FindMyPast etc All are using the Internet for various purposes, but all those purposes help genealogists ... who can also participate in adding their own voice by using Google to learn how.

**9. Do you have a prediction or hope for the field of genealogy in the future?**

Oh goodness I'm not near smart enough to predict the future. What I would like to see is a better understanding of how important the past is. How much fun we can have learning about those who came before us. I would especially like to see young families not be nearly so busy, so there was more time to spend with their own children AND with their older family members. How does that go? – youth is so wasted on the young? Haha And I hope that the dreams of DNA projects come to fruition enough to be truly helpful, and assist in answering individuals ancestral questions. Of course I also hope for Peace, and a cure for cancer, and yes that 'does' have an impact on genealogy in the future.

If I could be so bold as to offer any words of advice I would say what I tell all my students ... "read. Read. READ!"

10. Please feel free to add anything you would like to say that hasn't been addressed by the questions above.

The only thing that pops into my brain is that I hope I don't think of something brilliant to say ... right after I hit 'Send'! haha Thanks for this opportunity Lorine. I love the idea of getting to know other Canadian genealogists. I am especially happy to see the OGS put out an extended Call for Papers which is putting them at 80% Canadian speakers!! AND 2017 is this fabulous conference, again by OGS "bringing together genealogists and family historians from all over Canada. We are looking for speakers and talks of interest to genealogists from all provinces." I believe I will make some submissions. Wish me luck!

I sincerely hope to meet YOU, somewhere, sometime!!

Kind Regards,

*Pat Ryan*