



**Wetaskiwin Branch
Alberta Genealogical Society**

Website: www.abgenealogy.ca/wetaskiwin-branch

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Roots & Branches

Vol. 15 No. 3

September 2017

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## **EXECUTIVE**

**President:** Vacant

**Vice President:** Lorraine McKay  
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**Secretary:** Alice Hoyle  
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**Treasurer:** Gary Rode  
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BRANCH MEETINGS

**3rd Tuesday of the month,
7:00 pm at LDS CHURCH
5410 – 36 Ave
except July, Aug & Dec.**

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## **BRANCH NEWS.**

April, 2017 Meeting: Motion passed. Alice Hoyle, our Secretary, will be the Wetaskiwin Branch Representative to the AGS Board of Directors.

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Awards to our Branch were presented at the AGS 2017 Annual Meeting in April *see page 3*

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## **"Genealogy in the Morning"**

It has been many years since we have offered a workshop to the public. On October 14 four of our members will share the benefit of their knowledge and experience at a "Mini Workshop". See the poster in this issue.

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September 19, 7:00 pm Meeting Program

1. Carole Koop: A presentation on the book she is preparing re: her personal history
2. Claudia Malloch: Changes to FamilySearch – "No more Microfilm Rentals...Now What?"

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Alberta Family History Society (Calgary) has asked us for permission to publish Lee's story "Pedigree of a Book" in hopes that some of their members will have a connection to this family.

## COMMITTEES

- **Library** Robin Sheehan  
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- **Historian** Rosella Plaquin

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## WETASKWIN BRANCH: AGS GENEALOGICAL LIBRARY

Located at  
City of Wetaskiwin Archives  
4904 – 51 Street  
Available during Archives Hours:  
Tues. Wed. Thurs.  
9:00 am – 3:00 pm

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## WETASKIWIN FAMILY DISCOVERY CENTER

LDS Church  
5410 – 36 Avenue, Wetaskiwin  
Wednesdays: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm  
And 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

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## ROOTS & BRANCHES

is published three times a year  
by and for the members of  
Wetaskiwin Branch of AGS. It is  
emailed to members and posted  
onto our website.

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## EDITOR'S CORNER

Sharon Aney

Controversy has arisen in recent months as historical persons, their actions, attitudes and events of times they lived in are being re-examined. They may not meet the standards of some people in today's society.

During the past several hundred years our ancestors, who acted according to beliefs and attitudes of their day, built flourishing cities, industries, educational systems, church congregations and our own families. What do we do when we find that our ancestors would be criticized in today's society?

As we delve into our own family do we find such things as: discrimination on the base of language, ethnicity or race, on either side as perpetrator or victim? or missionaries trying to impose new religions on other cultures? or abused women and children? or children being taken out of school so that small bodies were put to work on new homesteads or to earn money to feed an impoverished family?

We live in a culture that is more inclusive, more educated, wealthier, and more connected. Some attitudes and values have changed.

Is it fair to judge those who lived long before us by today's standards? Do we find our ancestors flawed? Or are they justified?

Do we condemn? Or do we learn?

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## CORRECTION:

In the April 2017 issue I wrote that the water tower was erected in 1906 – 07. In fact, it was erected in 1909 – 1910 and put into use in June 1910.

I apologize for the error...I took a shortcut by accepting someone else's research instead of going to original documents myself. You would think a genealogist would know better!

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## **MEETING PROGRAM RECAPS**

### **April 2017 THE BIG 4**

#### **COMPARING ANCESTRY, FAMILY SEARCH, MY HERITAGE AND FIND MY PAST**

This webinar, facilitated by Claudia, provided us with an in-depth look at the above 4 websites, outlining the information that is available on each, and providing us with a comparison in order that we can decide which site works best for us. The information was very helpful, and included the cost (if any), of each site, the pluses of each site, and some helpful tips on how to best access the information each site provides.

### **May 2017, DNA BOOTCAMP**

The Webinar presenter, Mary Eberle, gave us a very detailed breakdown of numerous issues relating to DNA testing. She covered privacy issues, accuracy and how each testing company predicts your matches, the approximate cost of having the testing done, what types of DNA tests are available and how to choose the one that is right for your research needs. She also gave information about each of the companies that currently do DNA testing relating basically to genealogical research. LOTS of information! thankfully, Claudia had provided us with handouts in an email prior to the meeting. Homework for all.....

### **June, 2017, DNA BOOTCAMP, PART 2**

Mary Eberle, presented this webinar as well, and focused on using Autosomal DNA for Genealogy Research. She outlined the companies that do Autosomal testing, and told how each company differs in the way they report. She suggested ways to narrow down our matches and the possibility of discovering close relatives and connecting with them.

Very detailed information came from the presentation and this will be very useful to anyone who is contemplating DNA testing or has already done the testing.

## **AWARDS AT ALBERTA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING, APRIL 2017**



Sharon Aney accepts the  
2016 Kenneth Young Award  
for Best Branch Newsletter  
"Roots & Branches"



Lee Koop accepts the  
2016 Kenneth Young Award  
for Best Original Article  
"The Pedigree of A Book"

# Genealogy! IN THE MORNING!

**Saturday, Oct. 14, 2017**

**8:45 AM - NOON**

**At: Heritage Museum  
5007 – 50 Ave  
Wetaskiwin.**



## FOUR SESSIONS

**By Members of Wetaskiwin Branch of AGS**

**First at 9:00 am, Repeated at 10:30 am**

- **Tips and Trip-ups in Genealogy - Carole Koop**
- **Accessing Mormon Research Resources - Alice Hoyle**
- **Homestead Records - Mavis Nelson**
- **Writing Your Family's Stories - Sharon Aney**

**ADVANCE REGISTRATIONS  
PLEASE!**

*By October 11, please.  
Choose the workshop you want  
at 9:00 am,  
and another choice at 10:30*

**Sharon Aney 780.352.2156  
Or [sharonaney@gmail.com](mailto:sharonaney@gmail.com)**

## **COST:**

**Information sessions  
compliments of Wetaskiwin  
Branch members.**

**We would be happy  
if you supported  
our Heritage Museum  
with a donation....  
\$20.00 or more  
can receive  
a tax receipt.**

## DECONSTRUCTING A FAMILY STORY ... IN SEARCH OF MY GRANDFATHER Captain Charles Frederick Cooke (1889-1929)

By Pamela Cooke

This story, waiting to be uncovered for 100 years, centers around my grandfather, Charles Frederick Cooke. It takes place over ten decades, three continents, and includes two divorces in the early 1920's in England. It has uncovered secrets, solved mysteries and then raised more questions. What's more, it has created a personal journey and adventure for the author beyond the detailing of my grandfather's life. I have expanded my small family, travelled in Canada to meet living descendants, discovered letters, photos, and documents and visited ancestral homes in England.

### My Father, Hugh Frederick Cooke 1920- 2000

The story starts with my father Hugh Cooke who was born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaya and raised in Otford Kent, England, Evanston Illinois, Hollywood and Laguna Beach, California. He was an excellent athlete, a highly ranked tennis player from the Hamilton Tennis Club in the 1950's, who was described by a sports writer as a "crew cut tiger". He also taught tennis lessons in Hollywood around 1940, to stars such as Betty Grable, Gary Fairbanks, Ernest Haller, Robert Lord, and Paul Cavanaugh. His stepfather, F.G. Ibbett was a sound engineer for the BBC in England and a radio producer in America associated with the radio shows "First Light" and "Hollywood Hotel", which was why my father lived in Hollywood. Hugh received a B.A. in English from Sir George Williams in Montreal and settled in the Hamilton/Toronto area. Being born in the Far East, educated in private schools, and teaching tennis to Hollywood stars always made my dad a bit of a glamorous figure, but his life was shadowed by bipolar disease. Dad also always maintained he had no living relatives.

### My Grandfather, Charles Frederick Cooke 1889-1929



Charles Frederick Cooke,  
circa 1915, Malay Straits Volunteer Rifles (MSVR)

However, my most compelling family story was about my paternal grandfather, as detailed in a letter from my father. This story, which gave the impression that my grandfather was a war hero was created by my dad's mom, Elsie (nee) Porter (1893-1959). My father also mentioned he was given a sum of money to keep his father's surname, Cooke.

Charles and Elsie met in France in 1917, when my grandmother, who was driving an ambulance, transported my grandfather who was injured. Correspondence with FANY (First Aid Nursing Yeomanry) confirmed that Elsie did indeed drive an ambulance in France. Many elements of this story changed as I began my research.

(letter from Hugh Cooke to daughter Pam, 1983)

*"Well as you asked, I'll attempt to give you my personal background. My father, who was a captain in the British Army during WW1, was born and brought up in Edinburgh. He was also a very successful architect before he joined up". (see Note) His mother, (my grandmother on my dad's side) lived in **Eastbourne**, England and I met her once while I was small. When I was 3 weeks old my father was killed in action in a native rebellion in Malaysia and much to my regret I never met*



*him. Upon my father's death, my mother took me home to my grandmother's place in **Otford**, Kent, England where I was brought up as a child until I reached 10. Then, I left England for the U.S. where I rejoined my mother and stepfather (1930)."*

Note: \*I have since learned that it was my great grandfather who was the architect and the family all lived in Eastbourne. My great grandmother grew up near Edinburgh.

### **Beginning of my Ancestral Journey 2011**

I had always been curious about my grandfather but Google searches had failed to find anything. One day in late 2011, I signed up for the free trial on Ancestry and discovered my grandparent's wedding certificate from London, England. I ordered the quickest delivery possible at a cost of \$50, and was off on my family journey. I learned my grandfather's name was Charles not William and I discovered the names of my paternal great grandparents and great aunt. Within days, I learned of Charles older brother who had settled in Beamsville, ON (near Niagara Falls) in the early 1900's and who had descendants!! Ironically, my dad who thought he had no living relatives lived within 100 km of an uncle and three cousins. The Lincoln Public Library was very helpful and sent me family obituaries, which helped me to locate second cousin Kathy, and to begin correspondence. I, being an only child with no first cousins was about to discover six second cousins and three third cousins. The following is an excerpt from the letter I sent.

*"I am writing to introduce myself as a possible relative. I have recently researched my family history on ancestry.ca, knowing very little about my father's paternal family. I was surprised to learn that my paternal grandfather had a brother and twin sister and even more surprised to discover that his brother settled in Beamsville, so close to Etobicoke (Toronto) where my family have lived since 1962."*

*(Letter from Pam Cooke to Kathy, Family Historian, Beamsville ON, Dec 2011)*

### **The Genealogical Lottery**

Kathy replied immediately "Well I guess we are related" and began to fill me in on the rich Cooke history. As I uncovered the story of my grandfather, I also discovered a wealth of other family stories from carefully preserved family documents belonging to cousin Kathy in Beamsville and cousin Julia in Edmonton.

My husband and I met Kathy for the first time in March 2012 at her home beside Lake Ontario, and it felt like I had won the genealogical lottery. I saw a picture of my grandfather and great grandparents for the first time and found my father and his parents in the family tree. Kathy had inherited the family archives, including the family tree, bibles, photos, art, letters, documents, diaries, postcards, and artefacts. I learned about:

- Great Uncle Alf Cooke (1863-1915), a crack shot, who wanted to fight in WW1, but was too old to enlist for England, so he joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Foreign Legion of France at the age of 52, dying from typhoid contracted in the trenches. The family still has the original plaque, "Homage from the Nation" and letters sent from the front
- drawings and publications from my great grandfather F.G. Cooke (1857-1938) who was an architect in Eastbourne, England
- three great uncles who served in the Britannia's Majesty's Consul, with postings in Russia and Finland. All three spoke Russian and are associated with translating several books. Frank lived in Russia for 25 years, teaching English to Russian nobility and was jailed for 6 months during the 1917 revolution. All three of his children were born in St. Petersburg. Two of their middle names reflect family connections, **Dimitri** after Grand Duke Dimitri Pavlovich, one of the few Romanovs to survive the revolution and **Zinaida** after Princess Zinaida Yusupova

- The diary of my grandfather's twin sister Berta Cooke (1888-1967), written when she lived in Russia in 1911, detailing her introduction to Princess Zinaida Yusupova and visit to Arkhangelskoye Palace
- Uncle Henry's diary from March 1917 in Petrograd (St. Petersburg), describing the Russian Revolution
- cousin Pamela who combined her love of geography with a love of painting and belonged to the Emma Lake School of Art (Saskatchewan)
- Kathy's brother Bill who grew up among the Niagara vineyards and now owns Fairview Cellars Vineyard in Oliver, BC

I was also pleased that I had retained my family name, and was the sixth (+) generation and likely the only living descendant to still use Cooke as a surname.

### Deconstructing My Father's Narrative

It took just over a year to unravel my father's family story and discover the true story of Charles and Elsie. Stories from genealogical research are backed by documentation and I began to make multiple enquiries to try and piece together what had really happened. I developed a timeline of sources as new information emerged. The following are key pieces of evidence uncovered in my research.

### Grandmother's Delayed Passage Home

First, there was Elsie's passage from Kuala Lumpur to England with infant son Hugh in August 1920. My father was born on January 7, 1920 and my grandfather was supposedly killed when his infant son was three weeks old. Why did she wait so long after he died to return to England?

*August 29 1920, UK Incoming Passenger Lists, National Archives*

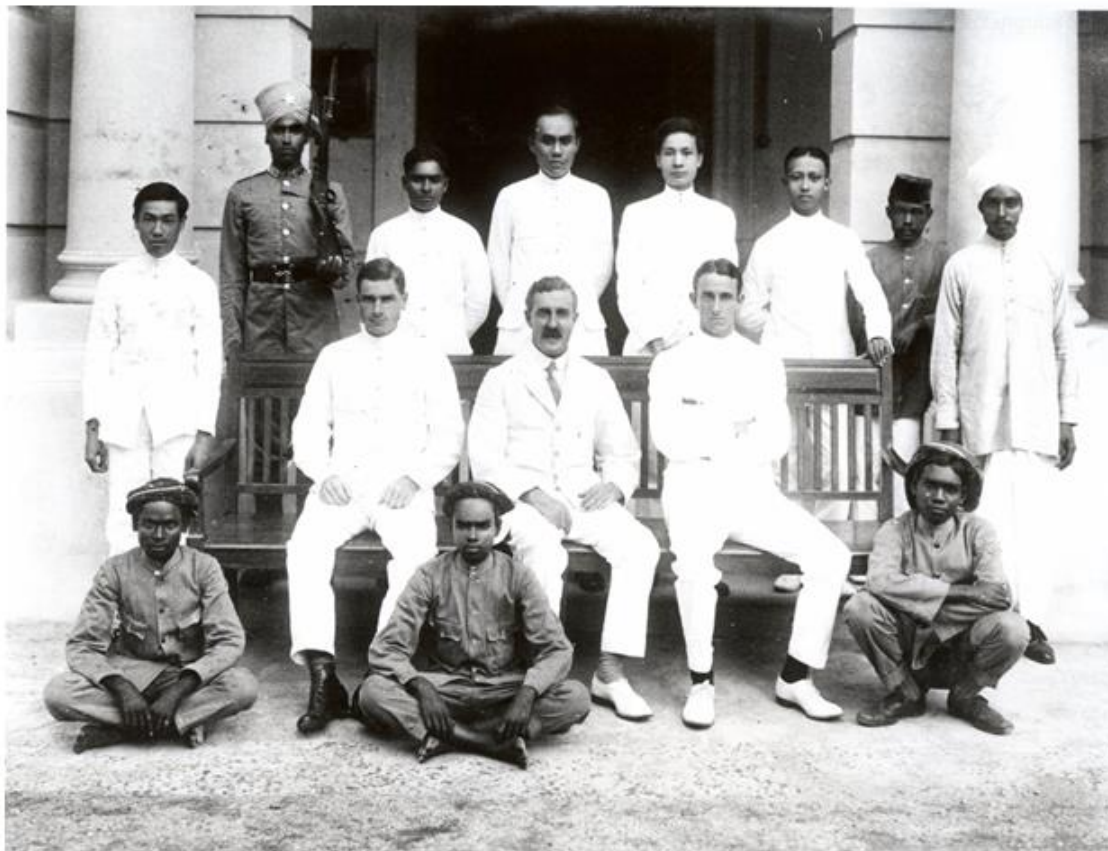
### The Straits Times, 25 April 1923: Hampshire v. Hampshire and Cooke

Google searches for Cooke and Kuala Lumpur kept bringing up a newspaper article from the Malay Straits Times about a divorce in 1923. Could there have been two Charles Frederick Cooke's in Kuala Lumpur in 1920? Charles and Elsie were married in Oct 1918 and yet he was living with another woman in 1919, right after he was married. Who were the Hampshires? The article just did not connect to my family story.

In the Probate and Divorce Division of the High Court of Justice, Mr. Arthur Knowlton Ernest Hampshire, produce merchant, of Buckingham Palace Mansions, petitioned for divorce from his wife, Nora Eliza, on the ground of her adultery with Charles Frederick Cooke. There was no defence. Replying to his counsel, petitioner said he and his wife were married in 1898, and soon afterwards went to live in the Federated Malay States. Here they resided for some years, and made the acquaintance of the co-respondent. In 1919, when they were living in a flat at Victoria Street, Cooke visited Mrs. Hampshire too frequently, and petitioner spoke to her about it. Then he removed to Portland Court, Great Portland-street, where he arrived home one evening to find in the sitting-room a hat and stick, which he thought he recognised. He could see nobody in the living-room, and on going to his wife's bedroom, found the door locked. In response to his knocking, his wife called from within that co-respondent was with her. Respondent, who admitted misconduct with Cooke both abroad and at Victoria-street, subsequently wrote to petitioner from Sydney-street, Chelsea, stating that she was living there with Cooke. She asked that letters addressed to her should be sent to her club. Mr. Justice Horridge granted the husband a decree nisi, with costs.

### Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank (HSBC) Correspondence, Oct 2012

I had discovered that Charles was employed as a bank clerk, by the HSBC in London and Kuala Lumpur. A casual search of the HSBC website revealed that they had an archives and the ensuing correspondence uncovered an incredible staff photo (attached) and company records.



Kuala Lumpur staff 1915 Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank (Charles is sitting on bench on the right)

A very helpful archivist in London contacted the Asia Pacific archivist who sent two entries from the Minute Book of the Board of Directors HSBC:

*25 Mar 1919 - Resigned. Joined Eastern staff in 1912. Sick leave in 1916. Then served with Labour Corps in France. Return to east had been conditional on serving a satisfactory probationary term in London. Had married although permission to do so had been refused and so his resignation had been asked for.*

*20 May 1919 - Gratuity of GBP400 awarded from OGSF (Officers Good Service Fund).*

*With regards to Mr Cooke's resignation: Before the early 1950's members of the Eastern staff were not allowed to marry until they had completed ten years service for the bank (the equivalent of 'two tours' as they were called at the time). The concept behind this rule was to avoid family restraints on staff job mobility, as well as ensuring that staff had sufficient means by the time they married. HSBC was not alone in implementing this regulation."*

*(HSBC Archives, London England; HSBC Asia Pacific Archives, e-mail Nov. 2012)*



### Postcards from Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore Oct/Nov 1919

On another visit to Beamsville, we discovered several postcards from Charles and Elsie detailing their voyage back to Kuala Lumpur, arriving mid November 1919.

2.11.19 Near Hong Kong,

*We're about 6 hours off port & will I suppose have our usual four days stop! Getting a bit hotter now. Both v. fit. CFC*

17.11.19, From Kuala Lumpur F.M.S.

*This postcard to wish you a very happy Xmas round the fire. Imagine us with topees(hats) & reed drinks. We're getting our house in order gradually. I want to buy everything out of these fascinating shops! Peggie (Elsie)*

*(Beamsville Family Archive)*

### British National Archives: Request for Military Records: January 2013

I decided to request the WW1 service records for Captain Charles Cooke from the National Archives for a fee of 50 pounds. My enquiry still states his death as 1920 and included the timeline I had developed for him. I received about 40 pages altogether, including a revealing letter, written in **May 1929** from an insurance agency in Birmingham who had employed my grandfather and requested documentation to verify his service and "his conduct and character." The researcher from the National Archives noted this discrepancy in a very discreet manner.

*"Thank you for your enquiry regarding the First World War Army Service of Captain Charles Frederick Cooke, Essex Regiment. ... While most details match those provided in your summary of his life, I noted that one section of correspondence appears to suggest he was living in Birmingham in 1929 rather than having died in Singapore or Kuala Lumpur circa 1920. **It is not appropriate for me to speculate whether this reflects new information or some form of error made at the time by either the Army or the requester.**"*

*(Ian Strawbridge, The National Archives, Kew, Richmond Surrey, England, January 8, 2013)*

The puzzle kept growing with each new piece of evidence. I knew the family narrative was being deconstructed, but it was still missing key pieces. I was unsure where to search next, how to keep piecing together the past. When had my grandfather died? What had happened to my grandparent's marriage? How did Mrs. Hampshire fit into his life?

I had now confirmed the following. My grandfather, Charles, lived in Kuala Lumpur from 1912 to 1916, when he returned to Britain to enlist. He married Elsie in Oct 1918 in London. He seemed to have had a continuing relationship with a Mrs. Hampshire after he was married. Charles was no longer employed by the HSBC when he returned to the Far East. Charles and Elsie returned to Kuala Lumpur in October 1919, when my grandmother was seven months pregnant and my dad, Hugh, was born there in January 1920. Was this to prevent temptation with Mrs. Hampshire or to look for work among former connections? Was it a shared spirit of adventure, or escape that brought them halfway around the world?

### One Hundred Years Later, March 2013

Fortunately, we travel often to Toronto to visit my elderly mother and were also now visiting cousin Kathy in Beamsville. Each time a search of the family archives would reveal a new fragment of information. In March 2013, we found a letter from my grandfather ironically dated 100 years earlier to the month, March 1913. Finally, there was a connection to the Hampshires, especially Mrs. H. The following quotes are excerpts from two letters he wrote in 1913.

*"Mrs. H. and Miss Tyler and I got breakfast, which consisted of beer gin slings etc. etc. and all sort of eatables.*

*... After golf I got roped into the ladies department of the club and started playing Hoon Can (don't know how to spell it) with Mrs. Hampshire & another lady – everybody who came in seemed to want to join in & I found myself all alone with at least eight females none whom knew how to play -- Hampshires brother told Morriss that he thought I was the bravest man in K.L. that night!  
... Am golfing quite a bit & staff tennis player and will probably play at least three times a week for the next six months. Mrs. H. & I beat Morriss tonight once again – then Morriss & Mrs. H. took me on & also beat me 6. 5. after v. strenuous games.”*

*(Letter from Charles Frederick Cooke, Kuala Lumpur, Malay, to father, FG Cooke, Eastbourne, England, March 1913, collection of Kathy, Beamsville ON)*

*“On Thursday I left the office early & had tea with Mrs. Hampshire at about 4:30 ...We had dinner at 8 & then went off to the Lake Club dance which was great – **I was sort of acting husband** to Mrs. H. as he'd had to go down to Singapore and I was quite busy looking after things & putting on bracelets etc!!*

*... I've duly noted Mrs. Oxley's very sage advice about married ladies in the East --! It rather depends on the said ladies – some are alright & others are to be avoided!! But in this place the females are all married bar about three and the whole thing rather depends upon the reputation & common sense of the man! In any case it's safer to be in with the female dept here otherwise you get horribly picked to pieces.”*

*(Letter from Charles Frederick Cooke, Kuala Lumpur, Malay, to father, FG Cooke, Eastbourne, England, Feb 1913, collection of Julia, Edmonton AB)*

My husband wished there was a picture of Mrs. Hampshire!

During the same visit, we found a small, worn diary that belonged to my great grandfather Frederick George Cooke. Inscribed on the inside cover were four death dates of his beloved wife, brother, son-in-law, and **son**, which took place over a three-year time period from 1929-1932. I now had a verified death date for Charles, as September 25, 1929 and was able to order his death certificate from the General Registry Office (GRO).

It was an emotional moment when the death certificate arrived at our postal box. He had died suddenly in 1929 at the age of 41 years of a sudden, large subdural hemorrhage. He had died at “Hollymoor” Tessall Lane, Northfield, a mental asylum. His occupation was listed as a commercial traveller and his residence was Birmingham, England. He had predeceased his parents, siblings, my grandmother, my father, and Mrs. Hampshire. His request for a reference from the army had been only a few months earlier.

Kathy suggested I send for my grandmother's second marriage certificate. It revealed that she married on October 25, 1929 at the Register Office in Sevenoaks, Kent, a month after my grandfather's death, that she was divorced, still used the name Cooke, and was living with her parents who were not listed as witnesses at the wedding. **One day later** on Oct 26, 1929, she set sail with her new husband for America. My father followed four months later.

### **The Little Brown Suitcase**

I was loaned a “little brown suitcase” from third cousin Julia in Edmonton, whose mother, also a family historian, had preserved many old documents. In it was a copy of a letter, in my grandfather's distinctive script, of his voyage from London to Kuala Lumpur in 1912.

*Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 1912 (Colombo, Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon)*

*Ardron put up a dinner at The Galle Face Hotel (built 1864, oldest hotel east of Suez), a very big place about 50 yards or so from the sea, we went out in three rickshaws - it's about ten minutes ride. The dining place was just like an ordinary big London Hotel except of course for the native waiters.*

*The windows facing the sea were all open & a native band played waltz music – quite the latest London ones. There were about 10 or so “Morea” (ship) people there. After a v. good dinner we sat in a sort of corridor at*

*an open window with coffee & cigars & listened to the band. Went back again in rickshaws to the G.O.H. & then got aboard a launch for the Delta. Barlow came on board for an hour. Am rather glad I'm still going on. I don't think Colombo is much of a spot for office work – too hot & they get no appreciable change all the year round. This is a very good boat & as steady as can be – though smaller than the Morea of course. I've got a cabin to myself again which is good – the boat's v. empty only 30 1<sup>st</sup> c. passengers, 29 men 1 old woman!! Colombo harbour is very fine and full up with shipping of all kinds – three warships arrived and anchored quite near us. I did not think very much of Colombo Town but of course I didn't see the residential part. (Letter from Charles Frederick Cooke, to his parents, collection of Julia, Edmonton AB)*

### **National Archives Request for Divorce Papers Jan 2015**

I had taken a break from the story, but returned to it to continue to fill in the gaps. I requested two sets of divorce papers for the Hampshires and the Cooke's and was told "the cost of copying would be in excess of 500 pounds." Thinking this represented pages of documentation and information about the divorce we decided the money would be better spent on travelling than photocopying. As it turned out the estimate was incorrect, but the positive part was it prompted a trip to England in October 2015. The National Archives is a modern, beautiful building near Kew Gardens. It was fairly user friendly, but did not allow pencils with erasers and required emptying your bags at security checks. Copying was very inexpensive and it was also set up to take overhead digital pictures.

From the divorce papers, I learned that Mr. Hampshire filed for divorce in Oct 1922 and my grandmother filed for divorce in Oct 1923, both on the grounds of adultery. Cruelty and desertion did not apply in either case and Elsie was granted custody of my father.

Mr. Hampshire's petition states:

*"The said Laura Eliza Hampshire has frequently committed adultery with Charles Frederick Cooke. That on the 6<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> and other days of November 1922 at 55 Portland Court aforesaid the said Laura Eliza Hampshire committed adultery with the said Charles Frederick Cooke."*  
(In the High Court of Justice, Probate Divorce and Admiralty Division, Nov. 21, 1922)

Elsie's petition for divorce states:

*"That from about the month of August 1923 down to the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October 1923 at 25a Walton St. Chelsea aforesaid the said Charles Frederick Cooke lived and cohabited and habitually committed adultery with a woman whose name is at present unknown to your petitioner."*  
(In the High Court of Justice, Probate Divorce and Admiralty Division, Oct 31, 1923)

It is noteworthy that 1923 was the first year women were allowed to apply for divorce in England under the Matrimonial Causes Act (1923). Widespread social changes for women following WW1 would have led to this reform. However, divorce would still have been seen as a source of shame or scandal at the time. I wonder how all the respective families felt about it and how long they knew about the affair. Charles and Eliza seemed unable to resist each other, carrying on their liaison for a number of years over two continents, and sacrificing so many relationships. Their relationship changed the course of two families and I regret that my father did not have a chance to know his father.

### **The Mysterious Mrs. H.**

From the divorce papers I also learned Mrs. Hampshire was born Eliza Tranchell in 1875 which made her 14 years older than my grandfather. She was married in 1898 to a produce merchant, had 2 children born in Kuala Lumpur in 1899 and 1904 and divorced in 1923. She died in 1931 at the age of 56 and her probate in 1931 left 338 pounds to her daughter and sister.

### **Visiting Ancestral Homes in England 2015**

I, my husband, Brian Wildcat, and son Nigel spent the rest of our trip visiting my grandparent's ancestral homes in Eastbourne, Sussex and Otford, Kent as well as touring Stonehenge, Bath and London. My membership in the Wetaskiwin Genealogical Society proved very helpful, as fellow member, Bob Maynard arranged for me to meet his brother David in Eastbourne, both having lived there previously. David had looked up my great grandparent's grave at the huge Ocklynge cemetery and brought us right to the site, which we would not have found if left to chance. It was a poignant moment as we tried to scrape lichens off an old tombstone, left flowers and sweetgrass and reflected on the journey that had brought us there. David also brought us to 2 Hyde Gardens, where my family had lived, to Beachy Head, an extension of the white cliffs of Dover and to buildings that my great grandfather had designed.

### **Another Tool in the Toolbox: DNA Testing 2017**

DNA testing became a natural extension of my curiosity about my father's family. So far I have only found four high matches on my paternal side. Luckily my mother also submitted a test which has been helpful in sorting through the matches.

### **Final Thoughts**

At the age of 60, I have had the unique experience of expanding my small family and connecting with living descendants in Edmonton, White Rock, Oliver, Penticton, Toronto and Beamsville! I have learned that building relationships takes time and hope this story will add to our shared history. I have appreciated the family sharing their photos, documents and stories which in turn has helped me deconstruct and reconstruct my own family narrative, gradually uncovering this 100 year old story.

It has been an epic journey but as yet unanswered questions remain.

- Was my grandmother kind or unkind for not sharing the truth with my father? To her credit she created a hero's story for dad to remember his father by. Not to her credit, she separated him from his paternal family, especially his nearby uncle and cousins.
- Did my grandfather also suffer from mental health issues? His military papers, which include a sick leave indicate a diagnosis of debility and nerves on one page and debility from four years in the tropics on another page. What are the circumstances around his death in a mental hospital?
- What happened to my grandfather and Mrs. Hampshire after the divorce?

I am grateful to the Wetaskiwin Genealogy Society for sharing all of their collective experience and knowledge which allowed me to better organize (ongoing!) my own research and experiences, learn how to source and date documents and to improve my computer skills. This story has preoccupied me and I sometimes I wonder if all the effort, time and expense that goes into researching family mysteries might be better spent elsewhere, but then ... there is another discovery that demands to be explored!

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"There are only two lasting bequests we can give our children - one is roots, and the other, wings." -- Hodding S. Carter

*When a loved one becomes a memory
that memory becomes a treasure.*

WETASKIWIN OF OLD> ELECTRIC LIGHT BUILDING



5002 – 53 Avenue

The 1903 fire that destroyed much of downtown Wetaskiwin prompted town councillors to provide electricity, water and sewage as part the rebuilding process.

In September, 1904 they entered into several contracts to "build a power house, to drill a well, to supply boilers, (whose massive piles remain in the basement today), and to erect a smoke stack. In 1907 electricity powered the street lights. By 1910 water flowed to the powerhouse where compressors pumped it through the mains. Natural gas was the unexpected result of digging a water well; in 1913 gas replaced coal as the power source for the boilers.

In 1929 Calgary Power took over the supply of Wetaskiwin's electricity and water and purchased the property from the City. Additions were added: in 1950 at the rear and in 1966 on the east. In about 1981 Calgary Power moved out of this building.

The Wetaskiwin & District Museum found a home here and on June 3rd, 1986 officially opened its doors to the public. It outgrew the space and moved out in 2004.

Once more the building was vacant, and soon doomed to demolition.

.....> IS RENEWED by Sharon Aney MANLUK THEATRE



Meanwhile a local drama society was investigating various vacant properties and saw possibilities in this large historic brick building. On May 3, 2006 the Wetaskiwin Theatre Society bought the building from the City for \$1.00.

Its volunteers have invested over 100,000 man-hours of work in clearing and cleaning the space, deconstruction of partitions, evaluation by engineers, fund-raising, etc. No debt has been incurred thanks to donated materials and services by local trades and businesses, and funding from groups and individuals.

The leaky roof was repaired. Painted brick walls were cleaned to original condition. To allow for insulation and electrical installation for stage lighting the tongue-in-groove ceiling was carefully removed ... and then replaced! Support posts were replaced by a steel beam to allow a clear view of the stage. Dressing rooms, rehearsal rooms, costume & prop rooms, meeting rooms, and a workshop are located in the additions. The foyer allows for informal small events.

By 2016 theatre seating was installed for 142 patrons. Concerts, plays and other performances now have a fine venue. Through all this, Waterworks Players have staged 3 main plays or musicals each year.