September 2015 Newsletter

There is no significant new functionality this month because I was making major changes to the infrastructure of the site. When I started this project there was no standard way to access SQL databases, so I used the best method I could find, something called [PEAR MDB2](). However since then a new standard method has been defined, so this month I changed about 60% of the files on the site to migrate to that new standard method, [PHP Data Object (PDO)](), which will facilitate future maintenance and make the implementation more portable.

Resources on the Net:

When doing your research many of the older documentary sources are now available on the web, so you can do your research from anywhere without having to find rare copies in libraries or at used book-stores. In particular there are a large collection of historical documents gathered by the University of Calgary and Université Laval in both English and French at [OurRoots.ca]().

Frequently as you are using resources such as Ancestry.com you will see that a fellow researcher has posted a scanned image of a page from a book, without identifying which book the page came from. Sometimes the researcher has even forgotten what book it came from, it is just a photo-copy that he or she made in a library once upon a time. If that is the case then pick some relatively unique piece of text from the page and do a Google search enclosing the piece of text in quotes and then putting the word "book" after the string. The Google database includes the complete text of millions of books including every book in the possession of the New York Public Library, the National Library of Britain, and many other major collections scanned by optical character recognition (OCR). So the odds are that Google can tell you exactly what book the page is from. You may have to play around with it a bit, because OCR can be unreliable in text recognition because it does not have the knowledge of tens of thousands of words that you have in your memory, or the ability to recognize characters in uncommon fonts.

Any book whose author has been dead for over 60 years is in the public domain in North America (potentially subject to change due to the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations), so you should be able to find a free copy on the web that you can either read there or download to your tablet or e-reader.

For example I was doing a bit of research on Laura (Ingersoll) Secord, because one of the Secords in my database had a family history that claimed she was a sister-in-law of the heroine. There was a lot of information on her family and her husband's because both her father, Thomas Ingersoll the founder of Ingersoll, Ontario, and her husband, James Secord, were United Empire Loyalists. I found a book published in 1935 that had details of the genealogy of many UEL, simply by looking for text from a page of that book that had been posted on Ancestry by a researcher who had forgotten where it came from. The Secords, by the way were French Huguenots who founded the city of New Rochelle, New York. Both James Secord and Laura Ingersoll were from near New Rochelle. You may recall that the Protestant held city of La Rochelle is being besieged by the French Army under Cardinal Richelieu during the early events of *The Three Musketeers* by Alexandre Dumas. If you would like to improve

your French one enjoyable way is to download a free copy of *Les Trois Mousquetaires* from either ebooksgratuit.com or gutenberg.org.

In conclusion:

As usual check out September 2015 Updates to Website Functionality for details on the changes made to the implementation of the site during the past month, and a list of bugs that have been fixed. Also check out List of Recently Added Individuals for information on the recent growth of the tree which currently holds 86,875 individuals, 24,657 families, 62,605 events, and 267,954 citations.