



Anglo-Celtic Roots

Quarterly Chronicle • Volume 30, Number 4 • Winter 2024

In This Issue

Who was Annabella Chatterton?

The Indomitable Frances Core

We Shall Remember Them:

Lance Corporal William

Thomas Bestford



Anglo-Celtic Roots

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Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement No. 40015222

Indexed in the Periodical Source Index (PERSI)

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The British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa acknowledges that its activities take place in the ancestral homeland of Indigenous peoples who have inhabited these lands for millennia. We acknowledge the enduring presence here of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. We recognize the importance of bringing awareness and understanding of our diverse nation's past to all, and we promote research and education programs that bring us together as Canadians.

British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa

Founded and incorporated in 1994

Charitable Registration No. 89227 4044RR0001

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Cover Illustration:

**Annabella Chatterton, date
unknown.**

Source: Author's collection.

From the Editor:

This, my last issue as editor, begins with the second-place winner of our recent writing competition. Carol Annett tells the story of her mother-in-law's paternal grandmother, who may have worked for a person of historical significance during a short absence from her hometown of New Carlisle, Quebec.

Ann Burns delves into the life of her maternal great-grandmother Frances Core and discovers a mystery. Ann attempts to solve the case of the mysterious husband.

Lance Corporal William Thomas Bestford served in the Royal Engineers (Northumbrian Field Company). He was stationed near Vierstraat when he was critically injured and taken to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station at Bailleul, France.

Finally we have the last *Cream of the Crop* column from John Reid. John has been sharing his knowledge and finds with us in every issue since Winter 2011. I thank him sincerely for his regular contributions all these years; I know that they will be missed.

Barbara Tose



From the President



Christmas has come early this year! Paul Cripwell stepped forward in mid-November to take on the tasks of managing editor for our quarterly journal *Anglo-Celtic Roots* (ACR) and lead our dedicated team of editors and proofreaders. He immediately began work on the spring issue. We thank Paul and celebrate the continuation of our much-valued journal.

Thirty years ago, before the inaugural BIFHSGO Board had even convened a meeting of potential members, they prepared the initial issue of ACR, which was distributed to the interested folks who first gathered in January 1995.

Encouraging members to write their family histories and printing them quarterly has seen one of their major goals achieved, as ACR has been published ever since.

Many editors over the years have nurtured aspiring storytellers, guided their writing, tactfully suggested amendments, and painstakingly edited and laid out the final versions, producing a quality and at times award-winning

publication. Some of them still work with the team as editors or proofreaders, and we thank them for their continued dedication and generosity.

The recent BIFHSGO survey told us that members value ACR highly. I hope the team knows how much their work is appreciated.

With this issue Barbara Tose steps down, after having designed and laid out ACR for 11 years, as well as working as managing editor for the last five of those 11 years. We thank her for her leadership, her creativity, her generosity and her patience. We know she would like to spend more time on her own family stories—we'll watch for them in upcoming issues.

So, my Christmas wish has already come true—ACR will continue publication into the future. I wish you a happy and healthy holiday, and I look forward to hearing—and reading—more of your family history stories in 2025.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Dianne'.

Dianne Brydon

Who was Annabella Chatterton?

BY CAROL ANNETT



Carol enjoys writing about her husband Richard's Gaspé ancestors. "Mary Imhoff: The War Bride on Our Family Tree," appeared in ACR's Spring 2021 issue; "Gaspé Fiddler: Bert Law" and "Felix Joseph Annett: Still Going Fishing" were published in 2023 by the Southern California Genealogical Society. Carol dedicates this piece to her late mother-in-law, Vel Annett, who told her about Annabella, and to her late father-in-law, Ken Annett, a Gaspé historian and genealogist. Carol, who coordinates the BIFHSGO writing group, encourages everyone to write down their family stories.

"Who's in these photos?" This question can uncover surprising stories about ancestors if you ask the right person. That's what happened when I posed the question to my mother-in-law, Velma Annett, who preferred to be called Vel. At least once a week, she would telephone my husband, Richard. If I answered, Vel chatted with me briefly before asking, "Is he there?" which was my cue to pass the phone to him.

One time she called while Richard was on a sailboat in the Atlantic Ocean. Since I had no news about him, our conversation might have ended abruptly. Instead, I asked her about a woman in some family photos.

"That's my grandmother, Annabella Chatterton," she answered. "What was she like?" I asked. "Annabella was wonderful," she said fondly. We talked several more times before Richard returned. Vel, whose memory was undimmed at 90 years of age, shared memories of her grandmother.

I have linked her fascinating recollections with background research to answer my original question—"Who's in these photos?"—and to tell the story of the life and times of Annabella Chatterton.

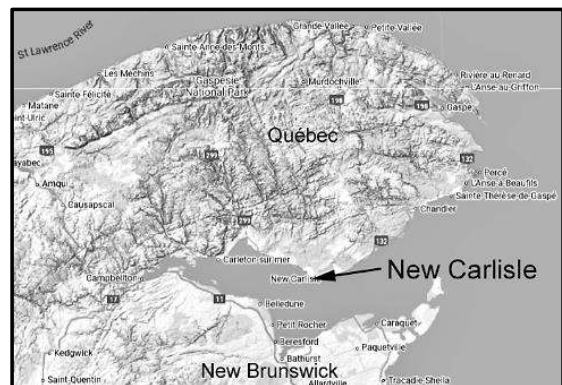


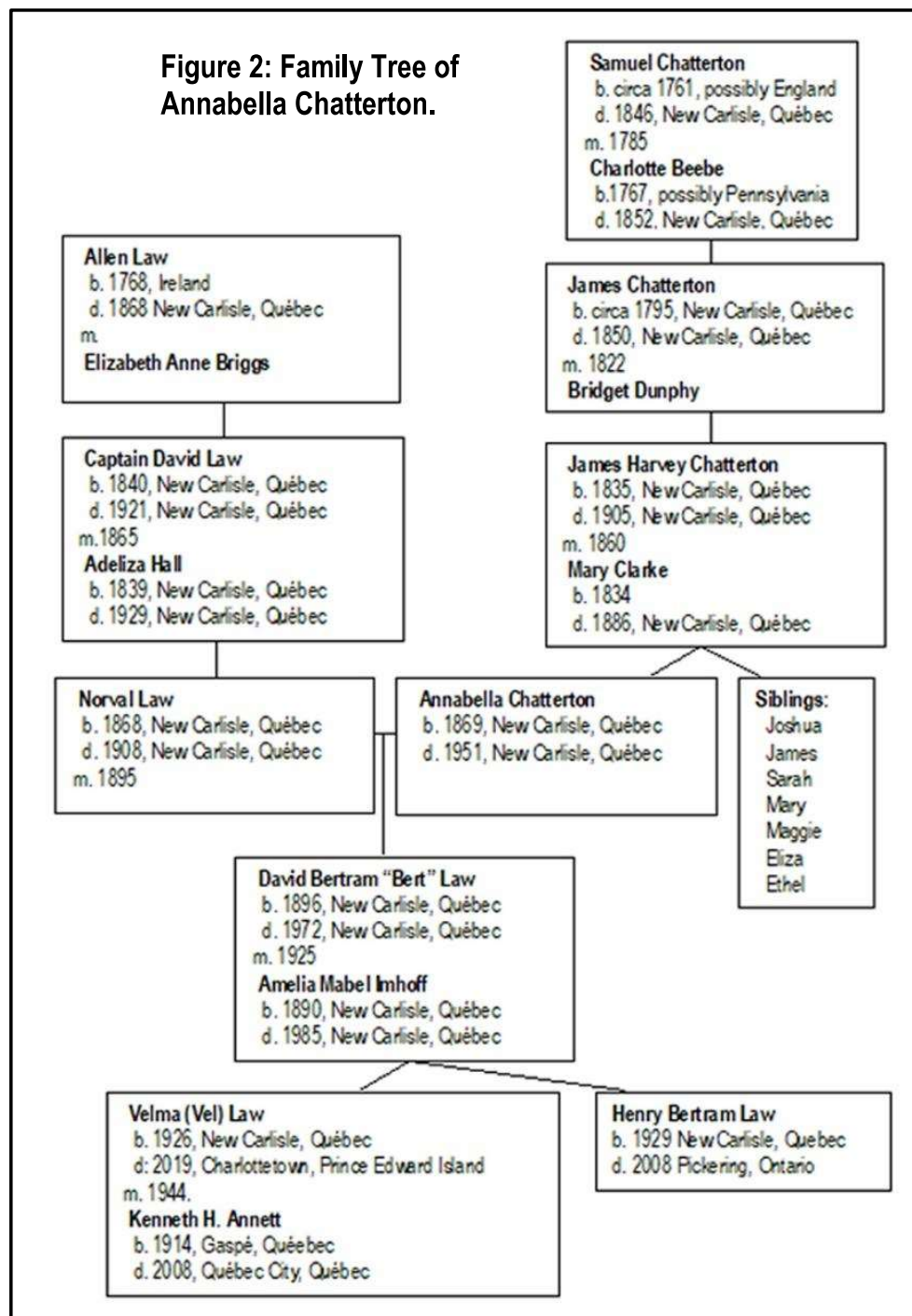
Figure 1: Map showing location of New Carlisle.

Source: Google Maps.

Loyalist Roots in Gaspé

Like Vel, Annabella was from New Carlisle (Figure 1), a historic seaside town on the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec, well-known as the place where former Quebec Premier René Lévesque spent his childhood.¹ The town was founded in 1784 by Loyalists who fled the 13 Colonies around the time of the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783) and by discharged soldiers who settled there after the war.^{2,3}

Vel was proud of Annabella's Loyalist origins, but she wasn't interested in the genealogy. She left that to her late husband, Ken, a researcher specializing in the history of anglophones in the Gaspé. From Ken's monograph, "The Beebe Family," I learned that Annabella's great-grand-mother, Charlotte Beebe, had Huguenot and Loyalist roots with connections in New England, England and France.



Charlotte Beebe was born in 1767, possibly in Pennsylvania. When war broke out, her father fought for the British side with Butler's Rangers. After his death in 1779, Charlotte's mother fled the American colony with her children. Around 1780, Charlotte's family arrived at the refugee camp for Loyalists at Machiche near Trois-Rivières on the St. Lawrence River.

In 1784, when Charlotte was about 17 years old, her family sailed downriver to the new Loyalist settlement at Petit Paspébiac, later called New Carlisle.

Annabella's great-grandfather, Samuel Chatterton, served in the British Army with the 31st Regiment of Foot during the Revolutionary War. After his regiment was disbanded, he accepted Governor Haldimand's offer of a land grant in Gaspé, drawing Lot 168, a parcel of 100 acres.

Tradition has it that the marriage of Samuel Chatterton and Charlotte Beebe was performed in 1785 by the Lieutenant Governor of the District of Gaspé, Nicholas Cox, before there were clergy in the area.⁴

By the time Samuel and Charlotte's great-granddaughter Annabella was born in 1869, Chattertons had been living in the New Carlisle area for decades⁵ (Figure 2). Annabella was the fourth of eight children born to Harvey Chatterton, a farmer and carpenter, and his wife, Mary Clarke. The family of ten appears in the 1881 Census of Canada, in which the youngest child, not yet baptized, was recorded as "Baby."⁶ Annabella would have cared for her younger sisters after her mother died in 1886.⁷

In 1891, 22-year-old Annabella was still living with her father and six of her siblings.⁸ She and a younger sister now had jobs as domestic servants. Sometime after the 1891 Census was recorded, Annabella made a bold change. She left New Carlisle to work in a big city.

One of the Barons

I was puzzled as to why one of our pictures of Annabella was a cabinet card portrait taken in the city of Montreal. "Lots of girls from New Carlisle went up to Montreal to work in those days," Vel explained. She thought that Annabella found a position through someone she knew.

"What did she do in Montreal?" I asked. Vel said that Annabella worked as a housekeeper in the home of a wealthy man. She was certain that Annabella said his name was Smith. "He was one of the barons," Vel added emphatically. "A lumber baron?" I asked dubiously. "Yes, I think so." A lumber baron in Montreal seemed unlikely to me, but a baron named Smith sounded familiar, for some reason.

I searched Google for “Lumber Baron Smith Montreal.” However, the lumber barons were based, as I expected, not in Montreal, but in Bytown, the future Ottawa. I searched again, omitting the word “lumber.” Now, the first person on the list was a baron of a different sort: Sir Donald Alexander Smith, 1st Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal. Whoa!

This “Mr. Smith” was definitely wealthy. Born in Scotland in 1820, Donald Alexander Smith entered the Hudson’s Bay Company as a clerk, rising to principal shareholder and governor of the company. His appointments and achievements in business and politics were numerous. He negotiated a peaceful solution during the first Riel uprising in 1870. He was a member of Parliament for Selkirk from 1871 to 1880. In 1873, he withdrew his support for Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald during the Pacific scandal. He was a member of Parliament for Montreal West from 1887 to 1896. He became president of the Bank of Montreal, chancellor of McGill University and Canada’s high commissioner in London.

Smith was a financier of the Canadian Pacific Railway. In 1885, he was given the honour of driving home the last spike, an event captured in one of the most iconic photographs in Canadian history (Figure 3). In 1886, he became Sir Donald A. Smith and in 1897 was raised to the peerage as 1st Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal.

A man of immense wealth, he was a renowned philanthropist, contributing generously to McGill University and the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal. Sir Donald A. Smith also funded Royal Victoria College, exclusively for women students, who were called “Donaldas” after their benefactor.⁹

When I told Vel that her grandmother might have worked for this notable Smith, she was unaware of him or his historical significance. I was the one who was flabbergasted and excited by the possibility of a connection. Could I prove that Annabella worked for Sir Donald A. Smith?

Annabella Chatterton and Sir Donald A. Smith in Montreal

The cabinet card portrait is our only record of Annabella in Montreal. The photographer, J. T. Lambly, at the corner of St. Lawrence and Vitre Streets, was in business from 1888 to 1892.¹⁰ Annabella wore a high-necked, long-

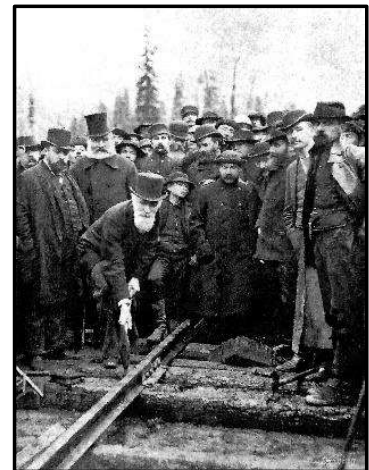


Figure 3: Donald A. Smith driving the last spike of the CPR, Craigellachie, BC, 1885.

Source: Alexander Ross/Library and Archives Canada/C-003693.

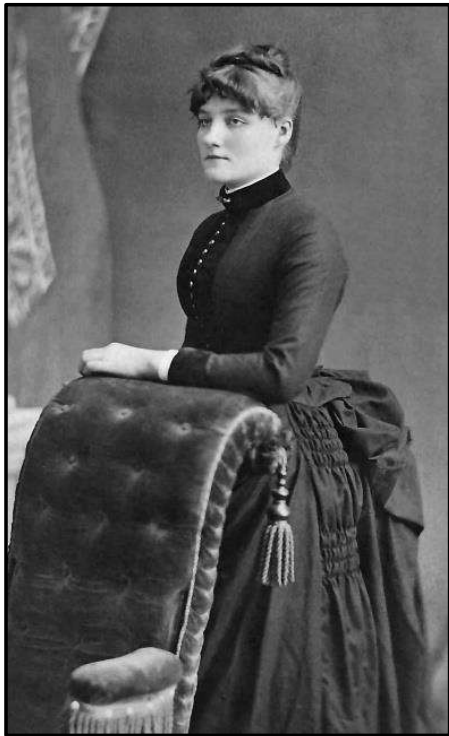


Figure 4: Annabella Chatterton, circa 1892.

Source: Author's collection.

sleeved Victorian street costume in dark fabric with a close-fitting bodice, velvet bib, collar and cuffs and a large bustle (Figure 4).

This was probably the way she was expected to dress as a housekeeper for a well-to-do employer, but it doesn't prove that she worked for Sir Donald Alexander Smith. I turned to historical accounts, census records and the Montreal city directory.

Vel's grandmother said that her employer lived on Dorchester Street (now called Boulevard René-Lévesque). Biographical accounts note that in 1876, Sir Donald Smith purchased a grand stone mansion at 1157 Dorchester on the corner of rue du Fort.¹¹ Lavishly renovated, Smith's three-storey mansion included a mahogany staircase, Italian tiled fireplaces, stained glass windows and a conservatory. The house was located in the southwest corner of

the historic Golden Square Mile, where his neighbours were other wealthy Montrealers, such as CPR president William Van Horne and dry goods store owner James Ogilvy.

Smith engaged more domestic staff than his neighbours. The Census of 1891 notes that William Van Horne employed one cook and three maids and James Ogilvy had one general servant. Sir Donald A. Smith's household, however, included a dozen employees: a ladies' maid, two housemaids, a table maid, a table waiter, a kitchen maid, a cook, a laundress, three domestic servants and two coachmen.¹²

Annabella, who was in New Carlisle in the spring of 1891, could only have been employed by the Smiths in Montreal between the summer of 1891 and the summer of 1895. The Montreal city directory shows Sir Donald A. Smith residing at 1157 Dorchester Street over those years, when he was Member of Parliament for Montreal West.¹³

One story that stuck in Vel's memory concerned a certain errand Annabella did for the Smiths. She was regularly sent to the west island of Montreal, where wealthy families had homes in the country. The reason for the trip, Annabella told Vel, was to obtain fresh laid eggs from a farm.

The expedition to procure the freshest eggs may actually be a clue linking Annabella to Sir Donald. In her biography of Lord Strathcona, Donna Macdonald goes into detail about Smith's unorthodox eating habits.¹⁴ He was unusually fond of simple foods like eggs and milk. He ate sparingly, skipping lunch to allow himself eleven uninterrupted hours for work. One visitor reported that Smith declined the dinner entrée served to his family and guests and requested a large bowl of soft-boiled eggs served with copious amounts of butter and a quart of milk.

Did Annabella Chatterton fetch fresh eggs from the country to satisfy the particular tastes of Sir Donald A. Smith?

Annabella told her young granddaughter, Vel, that she was employed in Montreal by a wealthy man named Smith living on Dorchester Street, who had a penchant for farm fresh eggs. He was, as Vel understood it, "one of the barons." These anecdotal details match known facts about Sir Donald A. Smith, who lived in Montreal when Annabella was there. Vel's memories and my research suggest that Annabella's employer might have been this eminent Smith, though I was unable to find direct evidence to back up the hunch.

Annabella departed Montreal just before Sir Donald Smith's appointment as high commissioner for Canada in London in 1896. In the summer of 1897, newspapers announced the appointment of Canada's new peer. He chose the names Strathcona and Mount Royal, honouring both his Scottish heritage and his connection to Montreal. Though he returned often to Montreal, Lord Strathcona was in London when he died in 1914.¹⁵

Wife, Mother, Widow and Grandmother

Meanwhile, on 24 July 1895 in New Carlisle, Quebec, Annabella Chatterton, 26, former housekeeper to a wealthy family named Smith in Montreal, had married Norval Law, 27, a farmer¹⁶ (Figure 5). Norval's Irish-born grandfather had been a police constable in New Carlisle. His father, David, was a sea captain and his mother was Adeliza née Hall¹⁷ (Figures 6).

One year after her marriage, Annabella gave birth to a son, baptized David Bertram. Bert would be her only child.¹⁸

Annabella and Norval enjoyed 13 years of marriage before Norval became ill. Annabella told Vel that her

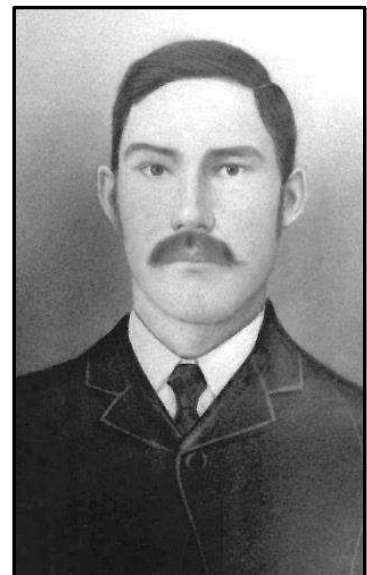


Figure 5: Norval Law.
Source: Author's collection.



Figure 6: Captain David and Adeliza Law.

Source: Author's collection.

husband journeyed to Montreal to see a specialist at the Royal Victoria Hospital where he was told his brain tumour was incurable. Norval Law died at the age of 40 in 1908.¹⁹

Now a widow and single parent, Annabella continued to live on the Law farm with her in-laws, David and Adeliza Law^{20,21}(Figure 7).

Bert attended school and worked on the farm. He grew into a fine man who enjoyed his dog, fishing and playing the fiddle. In July 1918, Bert was drafted into the Second Quebec Regiment, but he never went overseas.²² Two years after World War I ended, Annabella's father-in-law, Captain David Law, died and her 25-year-old son became the man of the family.²³



**Figure 7:
(L to R) Two unknown girls, Captain David Law, Adeliza Law, Annabella Law, her brother, Josh Chatterton, and her son, Bert Law with dog; New Carlisle, circa 1909.**

Source: Author's collection.

Bert continued farming and over the years took on positions as secretary-treasurer of various local boards as well as the role of returning officer for federal and provincial elections. Annabella's son became well-respected in the region.²⁴

In 1925, Bert Law married Mabel Imhoff, whose family had deep roots in New Carlisle.^{25,26} When Bert and Mabel's first child, Velma, was baptized in October 1926, the baby's grandmother, Annabella, signed as a witness²⁷ (Figure 8). The Law house was full of life now, with Adeliza, Annabella, Bert, Mabel and baby Velma—four generations under one roof.

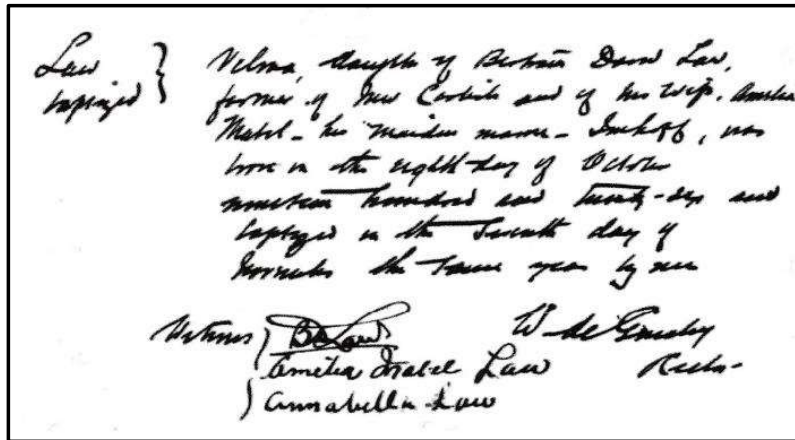


Figure 8: 1926 Baptism of Velma Law witnessed by Annabella Law.

Source: Drouin Collection, www.ancestry.ca.

Annabella's mother-in-law, the widow Adeliza Law, died in her 91st year in January 1929, a few months before the birth of Vel's brother.^{28,29} Now Annabella was the matriarch of the Law household. In the 1931 Census, "Bella" was living with her son, Bert, his wife, Mabel, and her grandchildren, Velma and Henry.³⁰

When she was growing up, Vel spent a lot of time with her live-in grandmother. "More than with my mother," she said. Annabella passed on to Vel an appreciation of art, quality furnishings, smart clothes, beautiful needlework, gourmet cooking, fine china and formal table settings. Vel attributed Annabella's refined skills and sophisticated tastes to those few years she worked as a housekeeper in the opulent home of a rich family. Vel loved her grandmother's fancy cooking, particularly a bread pudding baked with a layer of jam and a topping of meringue. She listened raptly to stories about the early life of grandmother and her family. Vel's Aunt Ethel, Annabella's youngest sister, went to Detroit where she was said to have worked as a private nurse for the wealthy Ford family.

Annabella allowed Vel into the parlour, which was normally off-limits to children. Thanks to her grandmother, Vel could identify people in the family photos on the parlour walls, including her grandfather, Norval, whom she never met.³¹

Life was disrupted for Vel and Annabella's family around 1939 because Bert rebuilt the farmhouse. Vel once told my husband that while the larger house with modernized plumbing, electricity and hardwood floors was being constructed, they cleaned out the chicken coop and slept there.

After they moved into the new house, World War II arrived virtually on Annabella's doorstep. In April 1942, newspapers reported that a twin-engine bomber of the Royal Air Force Ferry Command crashed near New Carlisle, killing the three crewmen.³² Annabella knew that the plane landed on her son Bert's property in the field beyond the orchard.

Six months later, a Nazi spy rowed ashore from a German U-boat. At a hotel in New Carlisle, he attracted suspicion by paying with out-of-date currency. News of the inept spy's capture was censored from the press until after the war, but local residents knew the story.^{33,34}

When the war ended, Annabella had an added reason to celebrate. Her granddaughter, Vel, married her beau, LAC Kenneth Annett, RCAF, in New Carlisle on 26 June 1945.³⁵ Perhaps Annabella had a hand in setting out the dainty sandwiches and the three-tiered wedding cake on a fine lace table cloth decorated with crystal bowls of lily-of-the-valley at the wedding reception in the Law home.³⁶

Great-grandmother

After a short honeymoon, Ken and Vel Annett left Gaspé for the Eastern Townships of Quebec, where Ken had a teaching job. Annabella said goodbye to the granddaughter who had lived with her since she was born. In the summers, Vel went "down home" on her own while Ken worked as an instructor at army cadet camps to supplement his teacher's salary.³⁷

In the summer of 1950, Ken and Vel, now with two sons, made their first family road trip to New Carlisle in a brand-new Austin sedan. When they arrived, 6-month-old Richard, who, Vel told me, had been tucked in a cardboard box in the back seat, was presented to his great-grandmother, Annabella.

The Annett family pilgrimage to New Carlisle was repeated every summer. But the last time Vel saw Annabella would have been in the summer of 1951 (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Four generations (L to R) Bert Law, his mother, Annabella Law, with her great-grandson, Christopher, and her granddaughter, Velma Annett, 1951.
Source: Author's collection.

Her beloved grandmother died the following winter on Christmas Day at the age of 82.³⁸ Vel regretted being unable to attend her funeral.

Postscript

In 2011, five years before Vel told me her memories of Annabella, my husband, Richard, and I visited Highgate Cemetery in London, England, where we saw monuments to historic figures, including Karl Marx, George Eliot and Christina Rossetti. In the West Cemetery, we came across a huge mausoleum in which a Canadian couple were buried—Donald Alexander Smith, 1st Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal, and his wife, Lady Strathcona (Figure 10). That's why, when Vel later told me that Annabella worked for a Smith who was "one of the barons," it sounded familiar.

Maybe Sir Donald Alexander Smith played a part in Annabella's story, maybe not. However, thanks to Vel's memories, which she related to me over the phone just three years before her own death in 2019, our photos of Annabella have a much larger story to tell.

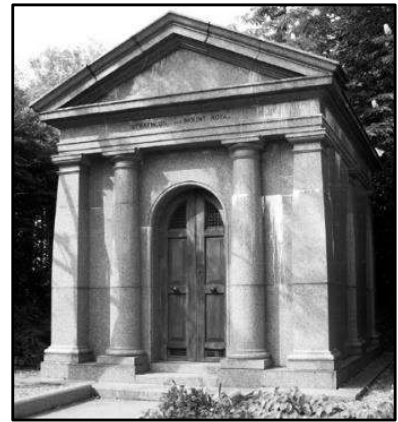


Figure 10: Mausoleum of Lord and Lady Strathcona, Highgate Cemetery, London, 2011.

Source: Author's collection.



Figure 11: Annabella Law, née Chatterton, New Carlisle, Quebec, 1951.

Source: Author's collection.

Who was Annabella Chatterton? She was a daughter, sister, wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother (Figure 11) who raised a fine son as a widow. She was born two years after Canadian Confederation and during her lifetime her country fought in two world wars. She was a descendant of Loyalists and for most of her life she stayed in the same historic, English-speaking region of Quebec where her family had lived for generations. But for a few years, she left her hometown and worked in the mansion of a wealthy man in Montreal.

Spending time in this cultured milieu, so different from her modest Gaspé home, had a lasting effect on her tastes, her skills, and her bearing, and gave her plenty of stories to share with her only granddaughter, who thought she was wonderful.

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- ²⁷ Quebec, Canada, Vital and Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1621–1968 (*Ancestry*), entry for baptism of Velma Law, born 8 Oct 1926, New Carlisle, Quebec.
- ²⁸ Quebec, Canada, Vital and Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1621–1968 (*Ancestry*), entry for burial of Adeliza Law, died 7 Jan 1929, New Carlisle, Quebec.
- ²⁹ Quebec, Canada, Vital and Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1621–1968 (*Ancestry*), entry for baptism of Henry Bertram Law, born 16 May 1929, New Carlisle.
- ³⁰ 1931 Census of Canada (*Ancestry*), entry for household of Bertram Law, ED Bonaventure 33, Sub-district 0011, New Carlisle, Quebec, page 10, lines 29–33.

- ³¹ Telephone conversations between Velma Annett and the author, Carol Annett, 2016.
- ³² "2 Canadians Dead in Bomber Crackup," *The Gazette* (Montreal), 23 April 1942, page 7 (*Newspapers.com*).
- ³³ Kenneth Annett. "Nazi Spy At New Carlisle," Article 324 from *Gaspe of Yesteryear* (<https://gogaspe.com/host/annett/>: accessed 11 Mar 2024).
- ³⁴ Jack Brayley. "Stupid Spy Betrays Self By Using Old-Style-Currency," *The Montreal Daily Star*, 14 May 1945, page 1 (*Newspapers.com*).
- ³⁵ "Annett-Law," Wedding announcement, *The Montreal Daily Star*, 19 July 1945, page 15 (*Newspapers.com*).
- ³⁶ Kenneth Annett, *Saga 1*. Self-published memoir. Undated newspaper clipping re the Annett-Law wedding.
- ³⁷ Kenneth Annett, *Saga 1*.
- ³⁸ Kenneth Annett. Extracts of Law burials from register of St Andrew's Anglican Church, New Carlisle: Registration number 1197, Annabella Chatterton Law, widow of Norval, died 25 Dec 1951, buried 27 Dec 1951.
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The Indomitable Frances Core



BY ANN BURNS

Ann started researching her family history in 2003 and joined BIFHSGO in 2006. On a 2011 trip to England, she met Sunderland cousins who obligingly showed her the area where Sunderland and Core ancestors once lived. Sadly, none of the original homes survive. Although Ann spends most of her research time and travel on Irish ancestors, Core and Sunderland family stories feature prominently in her recent writing, with help from some of Frances Core's other great-grandchildren.

My maternal great-grandmother, Frances Core, was born in Bradford, Yorkshire, England, during the reign of Queen Victoria. In stature, and sometimes demeanour, she resembled the Queen. The path of her life was strewn with tragedies and challenges that would daunt the less determined.

Family stories do not tell of a sweet grandmotherly type, although photographs make her appear like a smiling cherub. She was never spoken of fondly and had a bitterness about her. I know of her only from stories, as Gram Crawford, the final of the four surnames she had during her lifetime.