

Congratulations to Cindy Paradis

Cindy Sutton was born in Ontario. She lived in Edmonton for some time before moving to Saskatoon where she met her husband, Remi Paradis in 1988. Her genealogy activities began in 1992 when she started working at the Saskatoon Public Library in the Finance Department and was working with different computer programs. She didn't have a lot of experience with computers, and wanted to continue learning at home so she purchased her first personal computer. While exploring this technology, Cindy found a genealogy shareware program called Brothers Keeper installed on her computer. She found this interesting and thought she could fill in all the blanks that appeared, but it didn't take her long to figure out how wrong she was.

At that time, Cindy's maternal grandmother, father, and a couple of aunts and uncles were still living so she talked to them to see what they could tell her about the family.

Unfortunately, Cindy didn't ask her grandmother enough questions before it was too late – she somehow thought that her grandmother would be around forever – a classic mistake for a budding genealogist!

One day, during a lunch break at work, Cindy was exploring the library to see what it was all about. Growing up she did not have a lot of experience with libraries and had never been in one other than at school. She was really surprised by what could be found. One afternoon, the microfilm readers in the Information Services Department caught her attention and she went over to see what they were and what they did. There was a man there doing research. His name was Murray Smith and he stopped what he was doing to talk with Cindy. He told her what he was researching and showed her what was available on microfilm in the cabinets behind him. One of the cabinets contained the vital statistics indexes for Ontario. Cindy took out the reel for marriages in 1905. She had known that her maternal great great grandparents were married that year. Putting the reel on and searching for the name Graham, Cindy found the entry! The couple were married on December 25, 1905. She was hooked! Murray showed her how to order the film from the Archives of Ontario and told her she needed to obtain an actual copy of the marriage registration. It took a couple of weeks before the film came in and Murray was in the library at the time, so he helped her find the registration on the film. It was so easy, although you had to wait to get the film in, it did not cost a cent.

Cindy knew she was going to have to do a lot of research in Ontario Vital Statistics, and she was now on the genealogy path. Over the years she found a great deal of information on

these films for all her family lines. All of these records are now online at Ancestry.ca. but in the days when Cindy started, the research had to be done using microfilm. Although she now uses Ancestry, she still enjoys researching the old-fashioned way. Cindy knows that, as good as a database may be, there can still be problems and it sometimes pays to look at the microfilm. Cindy also extensively used library microfilms on the Canadian censuses which are still available at the library.

Although Cindy started researching her family history in 1992, she did not join the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society (SGS) until 1995. Her reason for joining was to meet others who shared her interest in genealogy, and who would not look at her like she had two heads when she talked about family history. We all know that look!

Cindy's involvement with SGS and the Saskatoon Branch of the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society (SBSGS) has been continuous and extensive for 29 years. With the SBSGS she has volunteered her time providing refreshments at branch meetings (2004-2017), served as a greeter, and worked on Fundraising (2004 onward), Publicity/Public Relations (2004-2015) and Program and Education (ongoing) committees. She currently assists with managing the SBSGS Facebook Group. Cindy was a member of the Planning Committee for the very successful 2018 SGS AGM and Conference in Saskatoon and devoted many hours to that, both before, during and after the conference. In 2012, Cindy volunteered to be the Membership Coordinator and still holds that position as we begin 2024. She was elected Vice President of SBSGS in 2016, serving in that role until 2020 when she assumed the responsibilities of President for two years. She has served as Past President since 2022. These positions included her in what was previously called the SBSGS Executive, until it was renamed a Board of Directors in 2019, which means Cindy has contributed to the governance and functioning of SBSGS for almost two decades. Adding to that, she was elected to the SGS Board of Directors in 2019 and served for two years.

Cindy's volunteer work has helped promote genealogy in multiple ways and at different venues. She has volunteered to set up a booth and represent SBSGS at the annual Heritage Festival in Saskatoon for more than 10 years, Ukrainian Day in the Park for two years, and Mount Royal Community Day. She has participated in Open Houses, worked at fundraising barbeques in the community, and provided numerous presentations including to seniors at the Saskatoon Council on Aging and Bethany Manor. Her major interests and skills include researching in Canada, especially in Ontario, and genetic genealogy. She is one of the go-to members to answer questions that arise in the SBSGS Canada/USA and Genetic Genealogy/DNS Special Interest Chat Groups. She is also a true taphophile and has visited

and taken pictures at cemeteries across the country and shared those with other family historians on sites such as Canadian Headstones and Find A Grave.

Cindy is a lifelong learner and has completed two Professional Learning Certificates in Genealogical Studies at the National Institute for Genealogical Studies: Canadian Records in 2014 and General Methodology in 2015. She has always been quick to help answer questions received locally or from individuals contacting SBSGS with Saskatchewan based queries.

Cindy Paradis was “bitten by the genealogy bug” over 30 years ago and ever since then she has been willing to share her time, knowledge and skills with multiple individuals and organizations, thus advancing the study and practice of genealogy. Saskatchewan, and the broader family history community, have been fortunate to benefit from her many contributions.

Thank you, Cindy.