

Genealogy Basics – InMemoriam.ca, a Source for Canadian Vitals

By Joe Petrie

INTRODUCTION:

I was recently introduced to InMemoriam.ca by a first cousin living in Ontario who sent me a Tobin obituary. His focus was on one obituary for one Tobin from Cape Breton. My Mom was a Tobin from Cape Breton.

I was addicted immediately. I research my collateral families (relatives descended from the same ancestor as another person but through a different set of parents, grandparents, and other forebears). I searched and read every Petrie Obituary or Memorial record in the InMemoriam.ca database. As of 22 November 2016, there were 76 Petrie records. I have copied and pasted some vitals especially to replace blank vitals. Also I copied and pasted much of the InMemoriam.ca record into Notes in my database. Why? The InMemoriam.ca records and most obituaries usually contain vitals like date and place of birth, of death and of burial. In addition, the InMemoriam.ca and other obituaries usually list parents and survivors. Finally, for a genealogist, the material significantly pre-dates official records.

The official records are really out of date. For example, for Nova Scotia deaths, the official records in novascotiagenealogy.com are about 50 years behind the InMemoriam.ca records. I suspect that the other Provinces are also behind – maybe even farther behind. In the United States, we may be even further behind. In Massachusetts, for example, the birth, marriage and death register records are nearly 100 years behind. (The Massachusetts Index records in Ancestry go back to the late 1950s - but only contain a few fields and the date is a year in YYYY format.)

BACKGROUND:

The following statements are from ABOUT INMEMORIAM.CA:

InMemoriam.ca is the Canadian leader in online memorials, collaborating with more than 135 newspapers across Canada to help readers during their time of loss.

InMemoriam.ca is an online service that helps family and friends express condolences of departed loved ones on personalized Memorial Websites.

Visitors can share remembrances through words and images to compose an enduring condolence to your loved one.

InMemoriam.ca is a wonderful new source. I gather from many sources. For my families, I try to fill-in all vital fields, specifically, dates and places of birth, of christening; of marriage, of death, of burial. Usually, it is fairly easy to gather some vitals for a few generations. Then time-consuming gathering starts. Because my parents were from Cape Breton, most obituaries in my database came from the members' site of the Cape Breton Genealogy and Historical Association (cbgen.org) web site. A lot came from cousins. My database is full of obituaries.

I am an extended line genealogist for most of my families. I work on finding all ancestors and siblings - and their all descendants. I try to do it for a couple of my wife's families. Researching her Irish families is difficult.

Some genealogists become Family Historians. They research the time periods, working conditions etc. I am a Family Historian for a couple of my Cape Breton families and one of my wife's Irish families.

In addition, I specialize in on-line genealogy. I continually check for the newest on-line databases, the latest updates to databases etc. Sometimes, family and friends send us information that leads us to new databases. InMemoriam.ca is a new database that I probably would not have found on my own.

HOW I USED INMEMORIAM:

I started with my Petrie family. My Cape Breton Petrie is one of the many families where I gather vitals for collateral families. The Petrie family goes back to settlement of Sydney in 1785. For the Petrie search, I worked in the right pane in InMemoriam.ca. First, selected the green English Tab, typed Petrie in the Last Name of the green QUICK SEARCH block and clicked on the green SEARCH button.



The next screen showed tat there were 76 records. Warning: there are some duplicates.



The links for the 76 records are on 4 pages. The image on the left is hyperlinked to the obituary or memorial.

SUMMARY:

For my Petrie database, I added 18 new records. In addition, I updated 20 existing records.

In addition, I have begun researching my other Cape Breton families. I'll save Boutilier for last because of the numbers of records in my database. Remember that Dad and Mom were both Boutiliers but Dad did not know it.

Finally, I added InMemoriam.ca to my Genealogy Methodology Checklist, i.e., my genealogy tool kit.

#

Your corrections, comments and suggestions are appreciated. Please Email me at joe-apg@norwoodlight.com .

Joseph F. Petrie, AB (Economics and Business – St. Anselm College)
 MA (Economics – Boston College)

Founding Member, Friends of Irish Research (FIR)

Member, Cape Breton Genealogy and Historical Association (CBGHA)

Member, Family History Society of Newfoundland and Labrador (FHSNL)

Member, Association of Professional Genealogists (APG)

Member, New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS)

Research Correspondent, Cape Breton Genealogy and Historical Association (CBGHA)

Member, Friends of Morrill Memorial Library, Norwood, MA

Resident Genealogy Volunteer, Morrill Memorial Library, Norwood, MA

Genealogy Volunteer, St Anselm College, Manchester NH