

Alberta Family Histories Society

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William Aberhart Family History

Premier of Alberta 1935-1943

William ABERHART b. Feb 1844 Germany, m. **Louisa PEPPER** b. 7 Dec 1849 Fullarton Township, ON d. 20 Feb 1944, buried: Maitlandbanks Cemetery, Seaforth, ON. William d. 20 Jul, 1910 Seaforth, ON.

I. William ABERHART, Premier b. 30 Dec 1878, Hibbert Twp, ON, m. 30 Jul 1902, in N. Dumfries Twp, ON, **Jessie Mary FLATT**, b. 01 Jun 1878, Galt, ON, d. 1966, Calgary, AB, buried: Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Burnaby, BC. William died 23 May 1943, Vancouver, BC, buried: Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Burnaby, BC.

William went to school at #7 Hibbert Twp but by the time he was ready for high school, the family was living on the Mill Road so he walked into Seaforth. He was known as "Whitey" to his classmates and as well as being a very bright student, he participated in more extra curricular activities than any of the others. As his mother said, he was into everything. Even at this stage in his life he was an organizer, arranging student activities in sports and social affairs. Among his studies, mathematics was his favorite subject. He gave his most conscientious efforts to all subjects and activities.

He graduated from Seaforth High School in 1898 and spent one year at the Chatham Business College from which he received a Commercial



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Specialist Certificate in 1897. William then went to Normal School and his first school as a teacher was at #7 Morris Twp, a small rural school near Wingham, ON. Then in 1901 he joined the staff at Central Public School at Brantford with a salary of \$600. a year.

We must not forget to mention William's intense interest in Bible study. Even during high school and his early teaching years, he joined Bible classes and organized classes for the school staff and for the local church. He even considered entering the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. However this would require four years of study and financing by the church and the latter became a problem. The church was hesitant to finance a candidate with a wife and two children.

In 1905 he became principal of Brantford Central Public School and in 1907 he enrolled with Queen's University for extra mural studies leading to his B.A. degree. All the while he kept up his Bible classes and even offered his services as a lay preacher.

In 1910, he and his family moved to Calgary, Alberta where he became the principal of Alexandra School. From 1915-1935 he was a high school principal. He founded the Calgary Prophetic Bible Conference in 1918 to promote Bible study and conducted weekly radio broadcasts beginning in 1925. By 1939 over 9000 children across the prairies, were enrolled in his Radio Sunday School. He became known to everyone as "Bible Bill".

When the Great Depression hit he turned his time to political efforts to help the farmers of the west. In 1932 he became interested in the Social Credit movement and promoted its doctrines in his broadcasts. Because he was convinced of a need for monetary reform, he organized the Social Credit Party in 1935. That same year his party won the election with a landslide. "Bible Bill" was now the Premier of Alberta and remained in that office until his death in 1943.

William was a tireless worker and he combined his phenomenal energy with systematic efficiency, rare talents in oratory, a remarkable ability to gauge public opinion and great compassion for his fellowman. During the 1943 Session which ran from Jan. 17 to Apr. 7, Aberhart as Premier, Minister of Education, Attorney General and leader of the Government was always faithfully at his desk. He also found time to write and deliver his weekly broadcasts to the nation on post-war reconstruction. He was National President of the Democratic Monetary Reform Organization. He was Dean of the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute and spent every second Sunday afternoon broadcasting from its pulpit.

By the end of this Session in April, he was for the first time exhausted. His wife insisted they go to Vancouver to their daughter, Khona's home where he could rest. After being seen by a physician and consultations with other doctors, it was discovered that he had a disease of the liver. He went into Vancouver General Hospital on April 18 for treatment. This was the first time that he had been in a hospital as a patient and the first period of idleness since childhood. He was allowed to return to his daughter's home under the care of a nurse but his condition deteriorated. He returned to the hospital in May and died on May 23, 1943 at the age of 64. Aberhart was the seventh Premier of Alberta and the first to die in office. It was a great shock to the province and also the whole country. His funeral service was at the Canadian Memorial Church in Vancouver and he was buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in suburban Burnaby, BC.

Most of the information on William Aberhart was obtained from a book entitled "Aberhart of Alberta" written by L.P.V. Johnson and William's daughter, Ola MacNutt.

A. Khona Louise ABERHART b. 01 Nov 1903, Brantford, ON, m. James COOPER. They lived at Half Moon Bay, BC.

**I. Patricia Janette COOPER m. Mr
Hilton**

**a. Jaime Louise Michelle
Hilton**

**II. Marilyn Louise COOPER m. Mr
Ross.**

a. Dianne Ross

**B. Ola Janette ABERHART b. 31 Aug 1905,
Brantford, ON, m. 17 Feb 1927, in Calgary, AB,
Charles Albert Stuart MacNUTT, b. 12 Oct
1903, Kensington, PE, (son of Charles Albert
MACNUTT and Emma Amanda DINNIS)
occupation Manufacturer's Agent, d. 30 May
1989, Calgary, AB.**

**I. Beverly Kaye MacNUTT b. 03 Sep
1929, Calgary, AB, m. 03 Jun 1952,
in Great Falls, MT, divorced 1970,
John McAfee Jr. McLAIN, b. 21 Aug
1922, Bassfield, MS, (son of John
McAfee Sr. McLAIN and Minnie Beth
FREEMAN) d. 11 Jan 1995,
Hattisburg, MS.**

**a. John McAfee McLAIN
b. 28 Mar 1953, Regina,
SK, m. 15 Jul 1978, in
New Orleans, LA, Judith
Ann HICKMAN, b. 13 May
1956, Houston, TX,
(daughter of Willett J.
Jr. HICKMAN and Peggy
Ann BYRN) occupation
Artist.**

**i. Kelsea Beth
McLAIN b. 03
Apr 1985,
Houston, TX.**

**II. Dauna Marie MacNUTT b. 20 Apr
1934, Vancouver, BC, m. 11 Nov
1954, in Calgary, AB, Robert
Charles ALEXANDER, b. 24 Jun**

1933, Edmonton, AB, (son of Robert Davidson ALEXANDER and Fay Reid EDWARDS) occupation Accountant.

a. William Charles Davidson ALEXANDER b. 15 Jun 1955, Calgary, AB, occupation Airline Pilot, m. 25 Aug 1990, in Montreal, QC, Helen Marie MILLER, b. 11 Apr 1962, Port 'O' Spain, Trinidad, (daughter of John Desmond MILLER and Michilen Marie DEVAUX). Helen brought two children into the marriage. Please note that in the Province of Quebec, women retain their maiden name after marriage.

i. Sabrina Marie FRANCOEUR b. 20 Mar 1981, Montreal, QC.

ii. Jonathon FRANCOEUR b. 27 Oct 1982, Montreal, QC.

iii. Charles Desmond ALEXANDER b. 23 Dec 1989, Montreal, QC.

iv. Kelly Marie ALEXANDER b. 07 Jun 1992,

Montreal, QC.

b. Susan Janette

ALEXANDER b. 15 Jun
1955, Calgary, AB, m. 19
Jan 1991, in Faro, YN,
Stephen James
CARMICHAEL, b. 27 Feb
1962, Kemptville, ON,
(son of **William Harry**
CARMICHAEL and
Eleanor Grace BEACH)
occupation Welder.

i. Shelby

Marie Eliza
CARMICHAEL
b. 26 Nov
1991,
Whitehorse,
YN.

ii. William

Robert
Jackson
CARMICHAEL
b. 25 Jun
1993,
Whitehorse,
YN.

c. Stephanie Reid

ALEXANDER b. 02 May
1958, Calgary, AB,
occupation Executive
Assistant, m. 24 Sep
1994, in Okotoks, AB,
Serge Napoleon LAITRE,
b. 04 Sep 1956, Val d'Or,
QC, (son of **Hector Oscar**
LAITRE and **Rolande**
Lorette BEDARD)
occupation
Machinist/Millwright.
Serge brought two
children into the
marriage.

i. **Scott
Joseph
LAITRE** b. 05
May 1986,
Calgary, AB.

ii. **Jerry-Lynn
Marie LAITRE**
b. 09 Nov
1987, Calgary,
AB.

d. **Morgan Kaye
ALEXANDER** b. 02 Nov
1964, Calgary, AB,
occupation Office
Administrator, m. 16 Nov
1991, in Calgary, AB,
Howard William **TARVES**,
b. 15 Jul 1962, Calgary,
AB, (son of **Terrance
John James TARVES** and
**June Annabelle
JOHNSON**) occupation
Firefighter.
