

# We Honor Our Ancestors

Collages and Stories  
by Ms. Lordan's Grade 4

Mystic Valley Regional Charter School  
Malden, Massachusetts  
2018



Sharon Santillo, Editor  
[www.familystoriesthroughart.com](http://www.familystoriesthroughart.com)

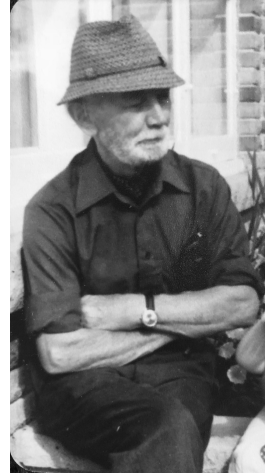


This book was inspired by  
Honoring Our Ancestors,  
Harriet Rohmer, Editor

We dedicate our book to our parents,  
our grandparents, and our families

# I Honor my great-grandfather Alan Bligh Westcott

by Oren



Alan Bligh Westcott, my great-grandfather, is the person I would like to honor. He is my mom's mom's dad.

He was born in England in 1906. During his life, a big event was World War II, where he was a Lieutenant Colonel organizing supplies from the north of England. It was also where he would meet his wife (my great-grandmother) Nell. In 1951, he moved to Canada with Nell and his daughter (my grandmother) Patience. He moved because of his job and became vice president of Foseco in 1953.

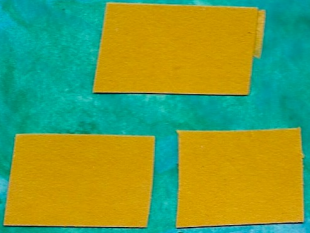
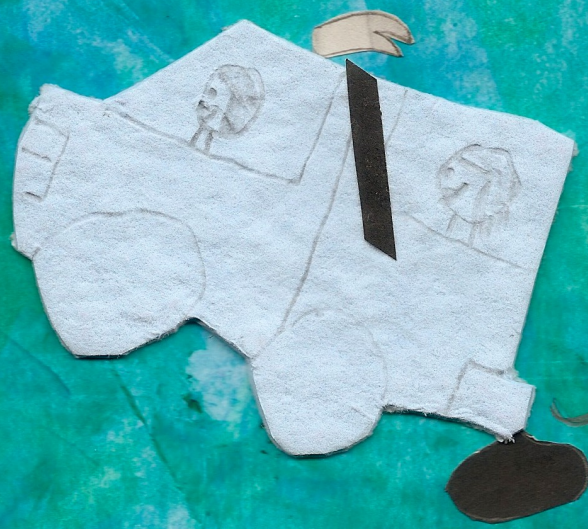
Some of his special talents were metallurgy and cricket. Cricket is kind of like baseball. He was so good at cricket that he joined the Guelph Cricket Club. He was also the president of the Rotary Club of Guelph from 1965-1966.

We have two special objects that belonged to him. One is his pipe. Another is his old-style car. It is a 1932 Lagonda. My uncle is still trying to fix it. That car won a big car show. It is a big pride of my whole family.

I have something else from my great-grandfather – my middle name.

Alan was a very witty man and told stories a lot. He died in 1988 of Alzheimer's disease at the age of 82.

# WWWII



## *Editor's Notes*

This book came together over 5 months in five hour-long sessions. We introduced the idea to the class in January of 2018 by reading excerpts from a collection of stories and paintings that fourteen adult artists had created about their ancestors. We talked about what an ancestor is and I was impressed with the student discussion that followed on what it means to honor someone.

I gave all the children a bowtie family chart to fill out with parental help, then turn over to the interview form. Pick one ancestor to honor. Interview that person or someone who knew them and return the form to class.

We finished the first session using scraping techniques with Biocolor paint to create a background for a collage and a cover for a book of all our stories.

In February, I modeled for the students by creating a collage about my grandmother. I talked about the images I used and why I wanted to honor this ancestor. The children used found papers, drawings, maps, a plethora of materials to create a collage about their chosen ancestor.

Putting the collage in a small desktop easel for inspiration, we wrote a first draft in March, keeping all our papers in a folder month by month. Again, I modeled by writing about my grandmother. I assigned the children 'detective homework'. "Be curious and see if you can ask questions and find out more about your ancestors. Details will make our book even more interesting."

April found us doing a pair-share reading of our stories to each other. Does the opening sentence make you want to read more? By the last sentence, do you have an idea why the writer is honoring this ancestor? Do the art and writing complement each other? Revise art as well as writing as needed. While we worked, Ms. Lordan read *The Gardener* by Sarah Stewart. It is a fictional account of The Great Depression, a composite of many true stories when relatives took in children while their parents were going through hard times.

Final tweaks in May included parents e-mailing photos and getting correct spellings of names. I urge all families to keep asking questions and collecting family stories. Research is showing the importance.

Links for further reading:

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/jan/14/children-family-histories-tales>

<https://www.cnn.com/2015/06/03/living/telling-kids-family-history-benefits-feat/index.html>

<http://shared.web.emory.edu/emory/news/releases/2010/03/children-benefit-if-they-know-about-their-relatives-study-finds.html#>.