

# Our Ancestor Retson

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## Foreword

This monograph is a work in process.

### Surname: Retson, Ritson, Raton

The family name that we go by is Retson. When I was 12, I was old by my Great Uncle John indicated that the name in England many years ago had been Ritson but that when an ancestor crossed the Border at Gretna Green, Scotland to get married, his wife failed to dot the i and the name became Retson.

George F. Black's The Surname of Scotland has two relevant entries for the surname Retson:

Retson. A surname in the shires of Dumfries, Ayr and Dumbarton. A variant of Ritson, q.v.

Ritson, explained by Bardsley as "son of Richard" from the North England, nickname, Rich or Ritchie, whence the patronymic Richison, corrupted to Ritson. This is a familiar Cumberland surname.

The Ritson family name was, according to Joseph [Ritson], a corruption of Richardson. In his 'Memoranda' he records the genesis of the word thus: 'Richardson, Richison, Richson, Ricson, Ritson.' But it is highly doubtful if there is any other authority than personal fancy for this evolution" (A. Burd, Joseph Ritson, a critical biography, Urbana, Ill, 1916, p.13

According to the Swyrich Corporations, the name Retson, Wright or variations such as Right, Write, Wrighte are all derivatives of the old English word wyrhta which means a worker, woodworker, carpenter, craftsmen of watermills or windmills.

There is another 'Retson' not of our line which came from Retsons of Greece. The name is traceable to a Greek Ancestor who immigrated to the United States

Our line traces back to the border counties of England and Scotland, specifically Cumberland and Westmorland which by the Local Government Act of 1972 after 1974 were incorporated into Cumbria. (Other Retsons trace back to Greece and Lebanon. The Greek derivation comes from Retsons and is pre-dominantly United States.)

Our tree traces with a high degree of certainty to John Retson born in 1809-10 and less certain to John Retson born just before July 25 1779 in Westmorland, England and less certain again to Richard Ratson born in 1760 and his father Richard Rattson born about 1740. Ancestors before that date are speculative. Also speculative are those who trace their ancestors down from Thomas Retson who the author believes to be John's brother, Thomas born 1786.

### **Retsons in the World**

The website, <http://forebears.io/surnames/retson> indicates that with 277 Retsons in the world, Retson ranks the 707, 980th most common surname in the world. The largest number live in South Africa (73) followed by the United States (67), the England and Canada (48) Scotland (33) and then Australia (7). To date I have identified four lines, 1. The English - Scottish line (My Line), 2. the Greek Line (a derivation from "Retsons" located in the United States) 3. an Iranian line 4. a Jewish line. I have made contact with a representative from the Greek line and would welcome contact from one of the other line to get a history. This file generally follows the English Scottish line which has now spread out over England, Scotland, Canada, United States, Australia and South Africa.

### **Retson DNA**

The Author's DNA Tests provided the following Haplogroup:

Paternal Y-DNA Haplogroup I1a renamed I-M253. (Should be very relevant for direct line Retsons)

Maternal mtDna Haplogroup: H1 1a2a1

If you are thinking about entering the genetic genealogical arena consider the following three companies for testing. Costs for basic Autosomal test have generally fallen to under \$100.

1. <https://www.familytreedna.com/>
2. <https://www.23andme.com/en-ca/>
3. <http://dna.ancestry.com/>
- 4.

In the spring of 2015 the author James Retson completed his first DNA test

with 23andMe.com. He completed a 2nd Autosomal test with Familytreedna.com towards the end of 2015 as well as adding a YDNA test (Paternal Line). Early in 2016, he added a MtDNA test from familytreedna.com and finally an autosomal test with ancestry.com. Commencing in 2016 he began to reorganize his ancestry books along surname lines in order to keep track of all the descendants of that line beyond the point that his family branched off.

All will be happy to hear - I am 2.9 Neanderthal. Neanderthals were a group of humans who lived in Europe and Western Asia. They are the closest evolutionary relatives of modern humans, but they went extinct about 40,000 years ago. The first Neanderthals arrived in Europe about 200,000 years ago. Neanderthals — Homo neanderthalensis — and modern humans — Homo sapiens — lived along side each other for thousands of years.

Genetic evidence suggest that they interbred and although Neanderthals disappeared about 40,000 years ago, traces of their DNA — between 1 percent and 4 percent — are found in all modern humans outside of Africa. Apart from the curiosity of finding what percentage of a modern human's genome is Neanderthal, the information has great value for science. By comparing our DNA with Neanderthal DNA, scientists can detect the most recent evolutionary changes as we developed into fully modern humans.

I have a number of possible relatives but only about 5 have been able to be identified with specific relationship tags as a result of precious genealogical research.

### **Y DNA Chromosome**

The Y-DNA chromosomes is passed down from father to son and in the western world surnames tend to follow paternal lines. To date the closest exact match to me is a Rob Garton Smith of a suburb of Perth, Australia. He is a match at 111 markers of the Y-chromosome. Our Ancestors have been searched back with fair certainty to a John Retson in Westmorland, Northern England. Richard Bain of Scotland has traced his line back to a Thomas Retson, Westmorland. We believe the two were brothers and that their father was Richard Retson (Ratson) in the same local. If he could find a living Retson in his line who matched up with the same chromosome we would establish that we had a common ancestor -most likely a Richard Ratson.

We have a match at 111 markers with Robert Garton Smith. If we connect Robert Garton Smith a male Retson in Richard Bain's line, we could make the same conclusion. His genealogical research can be found at <http://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Smith-56567>. For this reason I have combined the Richard Bain tree with my own and included a Descendent tree below which assumes the connection with a common ancestor Richard Ratson

### **Richard Rattson 1740- Margaret Milburn**

1. **Richard Rattson** was born about 1740 in England. He married Margaret Milburn.

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### **Richard Ratson 1760 - Margaret Tarne**

2. Richard Ratson, AKA Ritson, Retson, son of Richard Rattson and Margaret Millburn was born Nov 30, 1760 in Kendal, Westmorland, England.

Until some of our descendants partake in a DNA gathering exercise and we gain more knowledge of our Ancestors the leading candidate for the earliest ancestor with a name that resembles Retson is Richard Ratson. From the Kendal Parish Records:

#### Marriage

Rich Ratson, widower, Hutton, Mgt. Tarne, widow, New Hutton, Sept 27, 1778

#### Baptism:

John of Richd and Margt Ratson, July 25 1779 at New Hutton

James of Richd and Margaret Ratson, Rawhead, Nov 15 1781 at New Hutton

Miles of Richd and Margrt Ratson, Rawhead, Jan 17 1785 at New Hutton

Thos. of Richd, and Margaret Ratson, Jan. 13 1788 at New Hutton

#### Richard and Margaret's children:

3. i. John Retson born at Kendal, Westmoreland, England before 25 July 1779, died in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland in 1842
4. ii. James Retson born in Westmorland before 15 November 1781

5. iii. Miles Retson born in Westmoreland before 17 January 1785
6. iv. Thomas Retson born in Westmorland before 13 January 13 1788

### **John Retson 1779-1842 and Ann Bateman 1790-1859**

#### **7 Error! Bookmark not defined.**John Retson 1779-1842

John Retson or Ritson, supposed son of Richard Retson and Margaret Tarne, was born in Kendall, Westmoreland, England before 25 July 1779. John Retson was baptised in New Hutton, Westmorland, England on 25 July 1779 according to Kendal Parrish Records. According to the 1841 Scotland Census in Sorn District, John was 60 which would have his birthdate around 1881.

The Author's Great Uncle John Retson (born 1879), his grandson, relates a story about his grandparents eloping across the border from England to Scotland at Gretna Green (See modern pictures below) and his grandfather not doting the i on his name thus it becoming Retson. If John eloped, he never-the less got married locally before running off to Scotland. He married Ann Bateman, daughter of Thomas Bateman and Margaret Noble in Kendal, Westmorland, England on 26 June 1809. She was born April 18 1790 in Beetham Bts, Westmorland. She died March 15 1859 in Woodhead of Gilmillscroft, Sorn. John is believed to have died about 1842 in Sorn. Their first child John was born between 1809 and 1810. John Senior's death certificate gives his age as 82, 3 months which would make John Jr.'s his birth arriving in August 1809. His parents married the 26 June 1809 adds some interest to the story of Uncle John.

Gretna Green 2004





Exactly when he crossed the English border to Scotland can not be determined, conclusively, but presumably it was sometime after the birth of his first son John around 1809-10. John presumably was resident at Sorn from the birth of his second son James 11 September 1811 until his death in 1842.

### **Sorn**

Robin Smith's *The Making of Scotland, A Comprehensive Guide to the Growth of Scotland's Cities Town and Villages* reports that Sorn is an ancient parish centre on the upper reaches of River Ayr about 5 km east of Mauchline, about 21 kilometres from Ayr. The keep of Sorn Castle was originally built in 1409. A new church was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century a bridge was built over the River Ayr. The village was also known as Dalgain. The Farquharsons built the small mansion of Gilmilnscroft House in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1950s the population of Sorn was about 525. By 2001 it had decreased to around 400. Pictures below include friendly Mr. MacDonald located in a stone cottage across from the Church talking to Canadian Tourists; myself holding on to chains located on the exterior of the church used once upon a time for adultery, and other diverse sinners, inside pictures of the church and Sorn's Billy Gibson and Wife. In all of Scotland you will not find a prettier village and one that should be visited by all.



death of John Gibson December 25 1906. Notice to all Retsons in Canada: I indicated to Billy Gibson that they would be welcomed to stay at any Retsons home if they made it to Canada.

John and Ann Retson's children included,

- 8 i. John Retson b. Bet. 1809 – 1810 in West Kendal, Westmoreland, England; m. Jean Hamilton 14 Mar 1834 d. 11 Nov 1891 Ayr, Sorn Parish (See below)
9. ii. James Retson b. 11 Sep 1811 in Sorn, Ayrshire; m. Mary Thompson on 12 Jul 1849 in Paisley, Renfrewshire; d. 16 Apr 1883 at Burgh Poorhouse, Paisley, Scotland. They had 9 children (See <http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf> )
10. iii. George Retson b. 26 Sep 1813; d. Aft. 1861; m. Agnes Dodds at Inchinnan, Renfrew, Scotland, on 18 Feb 1842 who was born 22 January 1822 at Inchinnan. She died in North Hero, Grand Isle, Vermont, United States in 18 December 1888.
11. iv. Miles Retson b. 19 Feb 1815 in Dalgain St, Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland, d. 9 Apr 1892, Woodside, Tarbolton; m. Margaret McCrae, at Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland 21 Jan 1842 who

was born at Sorn on Oct 24, 1811. She died in Tarbolton on Apr 17, 1888. They had six children (See <http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf>).

12. v. Margaret Retson b. 9 Dec 1816; m. John Watson, 28 Jun 1837, Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland. They had one child (See <http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf>).
13. vi. William Retson b. 23 Nov 1819 in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland; died in Woodhead, Sorn 28 Oct 1892 m. Margaret Weir at Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland 16 Dec 1851 who was born in the Sorn Parish on Apr 22, 1818 and died in Sorn 17 December 1899. They had four children (See <http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf>).

14. Thomas Retson 1788 - 1855

Thomas Retson, son of Richard Ratson and Margaret Tarne baptised at New Hutton on 13 January 1788. He died Dec 1855 in Kendal, England. He married Elizabeth Jackson in Kendall on Mar 26, 1811. I want to give full credit to Richard Bain for the research on Thomas and his line and down. Thomas born about 1786 in Burnside, Westmorland, married Elizabeth Jackson March 26 1811 in Kendall. I am searching for a living male Retson in Thomas' line to compare to my DNA to make the definitive connection. For those interested in his descendants see <http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf>

#### **John Retson 1809 – 1891 Jean Hamilton 1811 - 1886**

15. John Retson 1809- 1891

John Retson, son of John Retson and Ann Bateman was born between 1809 and 1810. His marriage to Jean Hamilton 14 Mar 1834 gives his age as 28 which would have his birth as 1806. He lived in Sorn at least until the birth of his youngest daughter Mary born in February 1857. He died in 11 November 1891 in Fenwick just north of Sorn. His death certificate gives his age as 82, 3 months which would make his birth August 1809. His parents married the 26 June 1809 which might explain his parent eloping. It is unknown when he moved to Fenwick from Sorn but after the death of his last child in February 1857. Jean Hamilton was born in Mauchline, Ayrshire, Scotland on 27 August 1811. She died in Lintmill, Sorn, Ayrshire on 22 April 1886.

John and Jean had eleven children,

16. i. Margaret Retson b. in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland on 14 May 1834; d. 16 January 1883 in Thomsons land, Baillieston, Old Monkland, Lanark. m. Alexander Thomson at Woodhead of Gilmiln, Sorn 3 Jul 1863 who was born in 1833 and died in Thomsons land, Baillieston, Old Monkland, Lanark aft 1881.
17. ii. Anne Retson b. in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland on 5 Sep 1836, d. on St Cuthbert St., Catrine 24 Nov 1884; m. William Hendry Reid, at Lintmill, Sorn, Catrine on 13 Apr

1855, who was born in Sorn 29 December 1819 and died in St. Cuthbert St. Catrine, September 26 1909; They had eleven children (See <http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf> ).

18. iii. Jane Retson b. c. 1839 in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland; d. 05 August 1873 at age 34 at 30 Townholm, Kilmarnock; m. Alexander Fraser Hamilton, in Lintmill, Sorn, Ayr, Scotland on 23 Mar 1868 who was born in Barony, Lanarkshire, Scotland on 01 July 1838. They had four children (See <http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf> ).
19. iv. John Retson b. in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland on 5 Feb 1841, d. 05 Jun 1901 Auldon, New Sneddon, Paisley; m. Jane Pinkerton Russell at High Church, Paisley, Renfrew on 13 Apr 1866 who was born in Paisley, Renfrew, Scotland on Feb 05, 1841 and died 38 Back Sneddon, Paisley on 24 June 1881. They had eight children (See <http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf> ). After the death of his first wife he married Agnes Craig at the Church of Scotland, Paisley on Aug 09, 1883
20. v. William Retson b. in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland on 2 Nov 1843, d. 13 Oct 1900 Halliday Hill, Dalton, Dumfriesshire; m. Elizabeth Bradley at Kirkmichael, Ayr on 27 Jul 1866; who was born in Crosshill, Kirkmichael, Ayr and died in Longtown, Cumberland, England in Jun 1930. They had eleven children (See <http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf> ).
21. vi. James Retson b. 12 Dec 1845 in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland; d. Auchensail, District of Cardross, County of Dumbarton on Apr 21, 1923. Mary Anne Cunningham, daughter of Alexander Cunningham & Mary Fisher, 5 June 1868 in West-Town, Sorn, Ayrshire who was born abt. 1843 Kilmarnock or Sorn, Scotland and died Auchensail, District of Cardross, County of Dumbarton on Dec 02, 1923. They had six children. (See <http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf> ).
22. vii. George Retson b. 9 May 1848 in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland; m. Mary McManus, 31 Dec 1871 d. 1 Dec 1910 (see below)
23. viii. Janet Retson b. in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland, 4 Dec 1850, d. 1 Apr 1909 50 East St. Darvel, Ayr; m. William Hendry, in Sorn Parish on 5 Jun 1871, who was born in Sorn Parish on 12 Jun 1852; They had 11 children (See <http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf> ).
24. ix. Thomas Bateman Retson b. in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland 9 Jun 1852, d. 21 Jul 1921 Partick, Glasgow, Lanark; m. Agnes Jamieson 10 Dec 1879, Lintmill, Sorn Parish, who was born in Ireland abt. 1858. They had 7 children (See <http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf> ).
25. x. Agnes Dodds Retson b. in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland, 29 Mar 1854, died in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, Scotland on 4 Nov. 1923. She appears to have died unmarried.



26. xi. Mary Retson b. in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland, 26 Feb 1857, died after 1901; m. Robert Murdoch Gebbie in Lintmill, Sorn on 31 Jul 1879 who was born in Riccarton, Ayr, Scotland on 08 May, 1857. They had three children (See <http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf>).

**George Retson 1848 – 1910      Mary McManus 1852- 1937**

26. George Retson, son of John and Jean (Hamilton) Retson, was born in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland 9 May 1848. He was baptized Jun 04, 1848 at Sorn. He married Mary Armour in the United Presbyterine Church, Catrine, Sorn Parish, 31 Dec 1871 who was born in Sorn about 1852. He died December 1 1910. Mary died at 15 St. Ninians Road, Prestwick, Scotland on 29 March 1937.

The 1881 census describes his occupation as mole catcher and farmer of 32 acres in Fenwick

George had moved to Fenwick by at least early 1875. Fenwick (pronounced fen nick) as “finnick” has been on earlier maps of Scotland at least since 1600. A parish school was started in 1638 and a new church in 1643. At one time the town was known as cobblers. The Fenwick weavers, an association founded in 1769 has been claimed to be the first co-operative society. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century a woolen mill was at work at Waterside near Hareshaw nearby Fenwick. Laigh Fenwick 1 km from Fenwick proper had a meeting point of no less than 7 roads. In 1895, there were churches, an Inn, smithy and a post and telegraph office. Gardrum was then a corn mill and nearby was Pokelly Castle and Hall. The Castle vanished in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By

1950 there was a population of 1000. By 1971 an A77 bypass had been built and in 2000 the extension of the M77 motorway from Malletsheugh (Newton Mills) to Fenwick was begun.

George and Mary had 10 children,

27. Margaret Armour Retson b. in Sorn Parish, Ayrshire County, 13 December 1872; m. Alexander George Archibald in Bible Hill, Colchester County on 19 Jan 1914 who was born in West River, St Mary's, Guysborough, Nova Scotia on 02 April 1872. She died 19 Dec 1914 in Glenelg, Guysborough, Nova Scotia within one year of her marriage to a George Alexander Archibald without leaving any children. Mr. Archibald remarried to Belva MacDonald and had 6 children.

28. Jane Hamilton Retson A.K.A. Jean b. in High Fenwick, Ayrshire, Scotland, 5 March 1875; she died 31 October 1957 in Prestwick.



She married John Brown, widower. She raised his two children, a boy who was killed in WW1 and daughter known as Wee Jean Brown.

29. Mary Retson b. in High Fenwick, Ayrshire on 26 April 1877. She married Rev. Andrew Burns, a widower (first wife Agnes Shaw born 21 April 1862) 3 July 1906. Son, Andrew by first wife became a doctor and married an actress who was also a singer. She came to Canada during WW2 and Stayed with birth William and John before divorcing Andrew and headed off to Caribbean.

30. John Retson b. in Fenwick, Scotland on 7 April 1879. John was the first of 5 brothers and one sister, Margaret. He came to Canada on the Siberian arriving in Halifax 23 April 1902. James and Thomas returned to Scotland. He married Bessie Jane Johnson in Truro, Nova Scotia on 22 Jan 1913 and had four children,

John (Jack) William Lowney Retson b. in Truro, Colchester County, Nova Scotia on 11 Nov 1913, died in Truro, Colchester County, Nova Scotia Aug 18, 1980, m. Irene Sylvie Kenney in Truro, Oct 07, 1936 who was born Mar 27, 1918. She died in Brentwood Colchester, County on 17 Jan 2007. They had 6 children.

Ada Armour Retson b.in Truro on 12 Dec 1916, died in Bible Hill on May 08, 1984, m. Jack Ellsworth MacLean in Truro, on Jan 21, 1939 who was born in Truro on Apr 22, 1910. They had five children.

Maie Jean Retson b. in Truro on 26 Nov 1921, died in 1990 m Harry Roger Pryor who was born in Manchester England in 1918. They had 5 children.

Georgie Retson b. in Truro, on 15 May 1926, died unmarried in Truro on Apr 01, 1986

31. George Retson b. at Townhead, Fenwick, Ayrshire on 2 December 1881, d. 1962, m. Edith Taylor in Nova Scotia on 14 November 1912 who was born in Valley Colchester County, Nova Scotia on Nov 12, 1877 and died in 1962. They had one daughter Mary Ester Retson born about 1916 in Nova Scotia who married Andy Tucker.

32. William Rankin Retson b. 22 February 1884 (See Below)

33. Annie Retson b. in Fenwick, Ayrshire, Scotland on 14 Mar 1887; d. in Fenwick, on 5 Jan 1896 at age of 8 years.

34. Janet Retson b. in Fenwick, on 22 August 1890, d. in Fenwick on 24 Sep 1890 of pneumonia age 1 month 2 days.

35. James Retson born 15 November 1891; died 1982, m. Elizabeth Beattie. They had three children

Margaret Retson

Mary Jane Retson b 05 Aug 1921, m. David Jamieson and had 7 children

George James Beattie Retson b. 26 Nov 1928 m. Marie Irvine and had 4 children

36. Thomas Bateman Retson b. in Fenwick on 23 February 1894; died 26 Nov 1917 in France a casualty of World War 1, unmarried

### **William Rankin Retson 1884 – 1975 Beatrice Mary Clifford**

William Rankin Retson, son of George and Mary (McManus) Retson was born on 22 February, 1884 at Townhead, Fenwick, Ayrshire, Scotland. He worked in the garden 10- hours the day before he died in his sleep with the official date given as July 14 1975 at age 91.

William commonly known as Bill or Billie immigrated to Canada arriving in Halifax from Glasgow on May 6 1903 on board the Mongolian, at the age of 19 years. Three other brothers, George, John and James and a Sister came to Canada. According to brother John who first arrived 23 April 1902 at the age of 22, the brothers had to decide between Canada and Australia and flipped a coin to decide. George came first, followed by John, Bill (William) and finally Jim (James). Jim remained only one year before returning to Scotland.

For the last few years before coming to Canada, he worked in a butcher shop. He came to Canada with some cattle and his daughter Doris doesn't know if he meant to stay in Canada when he first came over. The first night in Canada he slept in a hay mound on the campus of the Nova Scotia Agriculture in Bible Hill.

Bill met Beatrice Clifford, a girl of Irish ethnic background, but who could claim Nova Scotia ancestry back to the 1760s. They married in Truro 25 December (Christmas) 1907. The entire marriage file on William Rankin Ritson contains the license, affidavit necessary to obtain it, consent of Rebecca Clifford, mother of Beatrice Clifford who was 20 years of age. On the affidavit, William Rankin signs "Retson", on the marriage register he signs Ritson. All official documents and newspaper report in the Truro Daily News of Saturday December 28 1907 have the names spelt as "Ritson". He and his wife Beatrice had their honeymoon in Scotland. Later he and his family lived in a house on the campus from the end of 1905 until about September 1928 when they moved to the 101 Ryland Avenue.

Bill was quite a livestock man. He had a Canadian Championship cow at Toronto Royal Fair named Princess Beatrice. The early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were good years for Nova Scotia, Premier George Henry Murray found coal royalties of \$437,000 in 1902 increase to \$487,900 in 1903 and \$619,000 in 1904. Surpluses were reported of \$32,800 in 1903 and \$66,000 in 1904. Expanding Revenues meant expanding services and the Nova Scotia Agriculture College located in Bible Hill (North side of Salmon River) so long in Works was nearing completion. The world looked good. Bill worked himself up to Farm Manager of the Nova Scotia Dairy farm at the Nova Scotia Agriculture College.

The Tories under Edgar N. Rhodes came to power in the elections of June 25 1925 with a landslide of 40 conservatives to 3 liberals. Rhodes set about attacking the "machine" that had held power for so many years. The Provincial Highway Board was abolished and the roads put directly under the department of highways and its minister. The Office of purchasing agents was abolished and its functions conferred on three department officials nominated by the minister of public works and mines. Rhodes attempted to make officers holding tenure of office during good behaviour amenable to the people through their elective representatives. The upper house forced amendments to this act in 1925 and 1926 however Rhodes gained the upper hand by the 1927. Conservative rank and file continued to make inordinate demands for patronage and Bill was aware in 1928 that a number of Tories were gunning for his job which he lost by October of 1928. The greatest surprise was not that he lost his job but that it went to his Tory brother, John Retson. He moved off the campus to 101 Ryland Avenue and commenced to work for the Ayrshire Breeders. John in turn lost the position when the liberals returned to power.

He was a trustee of the College Road School. Their Children include,



37. Mary Doris Retson b. in Bible Hill, Colchester County, Nova Scotia 19 Aug.1909; died Oct 31, 2008 at the age of 99 years. She married Lawrence Thomas Hancock, 29 Jun 1933 at 101 Ryland Ave. Bible Hill who was born in Shawbridge, Quebec on Apr 20, 1907.

They had one daughter Leslie Margaret Hancock.

38. George Clifford Retson b. in Bible Hill, Colchester County, Nova Scotia on 19 Dec 1912, d. 17 Feb 1997; m. Grace Elizabeth Atkinson, 26 Jul 1941 in Ottawa, Ontario who was born in Waskada, Manitoba on Dec 11, 1916.

39. Rebecca Jean Retson b. in Bible Hill on 18 Nov 1917, d. in Truro, Nova Scotia on 23 September 2015, m. William Angus Jenkins in Truro, Nova Scotia on 01 Jul 1943. They had two daughters, Catherine Faye Jenkins and Heather Jo Jenkins.

40. William Armour Bateman Retson b. 16 Mar 1925 Bible Hill Colchester County, NS; m. Clara Emma Parlee, 08 Nov 1963 Moncton, N.B.

#### **George Clifford Retson 1912 – 1997**



George Clifford Retson, son of William Rankin and Beatrice (Clifford) Retson was born in Bible Hill, Colchester County, Nova Scotia on 19 Dec 1912. He died in Truro, on 17 Feb 1997. He married Grace Elizabeth Atkinson, in Ottawa, Ontario on 26 Jul 1941 who was born in Waskada on Dec 11, 1916.

Cliff Retson was born on the campus of the Nova Scotia Agriculture College, Bible Hill, Colchester County, Nova Scotia and lived in a small house on the campus until 1928 when the family moved to 101 Ryland Ave. He attended school at College Road School until Grade 9 and Colchester County Academy. He graduated from the Academy in 1929 and entered Acadia University where he studied in economics. He was a skilled athlete excelling in Basket Ball and Track and field. He graduated with a B. A. in 1933. He attended NSAC 1933 - 1934.

He commenced work with the Department of Agriculture in 1934. He worked with the department in Newfoundland 1934 and 1935. He went to Ottawa in August 1936 and worked with the Department of

Agriculture of Canada until the advent of the war, 1939. He served in the army stationed first at Petawawa, Officer training program in Brockville, Ontario, Shilo, Manitoba and Esquimalt B.C.



Cliff married Grace Atkinson on 26 July 1941 in Ottawa. Cliff was called up from the reserve to the active army in September 1942 and was transferred to Nova Scotia. Grace followed on October 10. Grace stayed at 101 Ryland Ave. that winter. In spring of 1943 Cliff left for a 6 week stay in Trois Riviere and then on to Brockville for four months. Grace went to Peg Embree on Collin Ave off Eglinton. She worked for Underwood who provided office help. On her last job she worked at Plaxton law firm.



Cliff was transferred to Shilo October 1943 and Grace moved to Ottawa. They visit each other at Portage La Prairie for Christmas with Sister Jean. After Grace moved to Brandon for the winter at a family called McGills. Cliff would come in from Shilo on week ends. Cliff took off for Prince Rupert (Japanese threat) in spring of 1944 and was then sent on a 6 week course in Esquimalt. Grace went to Victoria to stay with friend from Kerrobert, Muriel Gardener who had rented a bungalow house in Victoria.

Ted was born a day later at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria. In fall of 1944 Cliff was then transferred to Prince George until the end of January 1945 and then to Petawawa, Ontario. Grace moved to Pembroke. Following the war, he entered the Department of Labour in Ottawa until he transferred back to the Department of Agriculture. He moved back to Bible Hill in 1947 (July 1) to take charge of the federal agriculture economic branch, first located on the NSAC

campus. July and August 1947 was spent at 101 Ryland. In September 1947 they rented an apartment from Arleigh Burgess on 112 Main St. Bible Hill. On November 11 1948 they moved to Queen St. Truro.

They moved to what was then labeled 2020 Prince St. Salmon River on November 11 1949. The municipal address. latter changed to 2031

He attended Cornell University in 1949 spring term Cliff went back to Cornell at the end of January 1950 and came home for July and August. He went back for the fall term and came home for Christmas. He received his M. Sc. during spring convocation 1951. He was a school trustee and then Head Trustee for the local Salmon River School district and active in the decision to build the new Salmon River High School which once served grades primary up to Grade 9.

He studied the Bible in a scholarly fashion and was Adult Sunday School teachers for years following a tradition set by his mother.

He was an ardent curler adult and played at the Provincial level for the Brier. He was an avid gardener and throughout his life maintained an extensive front and back garden.

He retired in 1977. Later in life he was inducted into the Nova Scotia Sports Hall of fame for his Athletic prowess in the late 1920s and 1930s.

#### Cliff and Grace Retson's children

William Edward Retson born in Victoria, British Columbia, He married Beverly Ann Torbiak. They had one daughter, Donna Lee Retson.



Madeline Jane Retson born in Ottawa, Ontario. She married Gordon Sinclair Earle. They had three children, Katherine Anne Elizabeth Earle, Lynda Mavis Maureen Earle, and Gordon James Ronald Earle.

James Clifford Retson born in Truro, Nova Scotia. He married Roberta Gili. They had two children, Jillie Elizabeth Marie Retson and Julia Ann Roberta Retson

Mavis Ruth Retson born in Truro, Nova Scotia. She married Marc Anthony Yorke. They had two children, Nicholas Robert Andrew Yorke and Katherine Alicia Jane Yorke.

Donald George Retson born in Truro, Nova Scotia. He married Joscelyn Elizabeth Proby. Donald had two sons Andrew James Dykeman and Etienne David William Alexandre Retson Brisson. By Joscelyn he had a daughter Serena Christine Retson and a son Daniel Hamilton Retson who died in very early infancy.

Robert John Retson born in Truro, Nova Scotia. He married Carol Christine Craig. They had three children, Colin Robert Retson, Craig Scott Retson, and Christina Holly Retson.

## James C. Retson and Roberta Gili



L. to R Julia, Jillie, James, Roberta Retson

41. James Clifford Retson, son of George and Grace (Atkinson) Retson, the third son of George Clifford Retson and Grace Elizabeth Retson was born in Truro, Nova Scotia. He married Roberta Gili, daughter of Guido and Maria Gili in Hamilton, Ontario on 29 June 1774.

James was called "Clifford" until around February 14 1956 when he decided to have himself called Jim. He was an avid swimmer and worked at Victoria Park Swimming Pool during

his summers from Grade 10 to fourth year in University. He was active in vocal and instrumental music. He played violin (5 Years) in Mrs. J. Arch Fraser's orchestra, clarinet and saxophone in the Truro Concert Band, Truro Junior Band and CCHS Band (Bass Drum). He sang in the Junior and Senior Choirs of First Baptist Church and in operettas at CCHS. He graduated from Central Colchester High School in Onslow, 1966, attended Dalhousie University, Halifax, in the Faculty of Science from September 1966 to May 1968 and U. B.C. From September 1968 to May 1970 where he graduated with a B. A. in Psychology. He attended Laval University, September 1970 to May 1971 and worked the summer in Quebec. He attended law school in Toronto graduating from U. of T. in 1974.

He married Roberta Gili in 1974 and had two daughters Jillie in 1979 and Julia in 1980. He was admitted to the Nova Scotia Bar December 12, 1974. He practiced law in Truro from 1974 to September 1978 solo and then in partnership with Dave Curtis from 1978 to 1982 before returning to Dalhousie to obtain his M.B.A in 1984.

He was on the Board of the Truro Boys and Girls Club, the Advisory Board of Parents Without Partners, Cobequid Mental Health Centre, a member of the Truro Police Commission, Truro and District Human Rights Affirmative Action Committee, Truro Heritage Committee. He was a Sunday School Superintendent at First Baptist Church. He was a town counselor from 1980 to 1982.

He moved to Kenora in 1984 where he worked for the Kenora Association for Community Living from August 1984 to 2003. He became a member of the Rotary club in 1989 and served as Director of Vocational Services for many years before serving as president 2007-2008. He taught Sunday school at Knox United and held lead roles in various Church Operettas. He was a member of the Kenora Community Police Committee and Race Relations sub-committee. Throughout his life he has an interest in genealogy, canoeing and kayaking. In his mid fifties he took an interest in flowers and turned his yard into a flower garden.

They had two daughters,



42. Jillie Elizabeth Marie Retson born in Truro Nova Scotia. She attended schools in Kenora Ontario. She graduated from McMaster University BA Anthropology and then medicine at University of Western Ontario.

She married Pieter Joubert and have two children Julia Alexandra Joubert and Gabriel Michael Joubert. Doctor Jillie Retson practices medicine in Kenora, Ontario. In 2015 she received recognition as a Nova Award winner as one of the top 40 professionals in North Ontario.

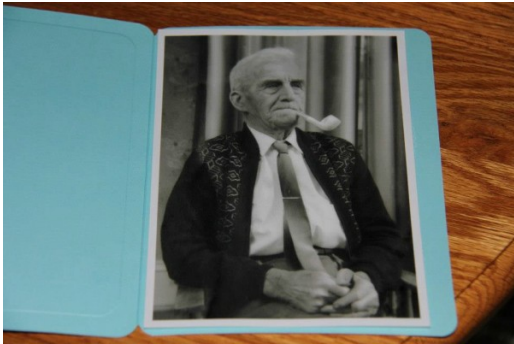


43. Julia Ann Roberta Retson born in Truro Nova Scotia. She attended schools in Kenora Ontario. She graduated from Carleton University with B. Eng. And then B. ED Dunedin, New Zealand. She worked in the Visual Effects Industry in New Zealand and Australia. (Movies included Water Horse, Avatar, Lovely Bones, Legends of the Guardians, The Owls of Ga'Hoole and Happy Feet Two). She married Philip Loader. They have two children Isla Gili Lorraine Loader and Siena Grace Fiona Loader both born in Bundaberg, Queensland, Australia. She currently teaches in Agnes Waters, Queensland.

### A Tribute to those who helped and Inspired

To Uncle John who first inspired my interest in my Ancestors at the approximate age of 12.

Photo courtesy of Julia Nicholson, his great grand daughter



To Nana Clarke whose research passed on to me from Billy Gibson, then in Sorn, Scotland, introduced me to hundreds of ancestors and co-laterals.

To Elinor Rawlings whose communications over several years confirmed Nana Clark's research and who provided several birth, marriage and death certificates that resolved several confusions concerning names and differentiated individuals with same names.

To Rick Bain's whose extensive research on the descendants of Thomas Retson who first suggested the possible connection between Thomas and John Retson in Westmorland County England.

To Patricia Ann Perrin Mackey whose late night telephone call 12-2.00 AM Nova Scotia time and subsequent file research disclosed the fact my parents both descendent from the same distant great grand parents, Jeremiah Belcher whose two daughters married two brothers, thus highly increasing the odds that some Belcher genetic material would be carried down the line. Her extensive file incredibly facilitated genealogy research on both parent's side.

To the numerous others who provided information on other lines and who are more appropriately recognized in the books on those lines.

### **Retson Websites**

<http://retson.ca/retsongeneology.html>  
<http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf>.  
<http://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Retson-7>

A complete listing of the Retson descendants may be found at <http://retson.ca/Retson.pdf>. I would invite living descendants to send me a bios that I might include as notes under their names.

|                        |                |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Richard Rattson        | 1740           |
| Rich Ratson            | 1760           |
| John Retson or Ritson  | 1779 - 1842    |
| John Retson            | 1809/10 - 1891 |
| George Retson          | 1848 - 1910    |
| William Rankin Retson  | 1884 - 1975    |
| George Clifford Retson | 1912 - 1997    |
| James Clifford Retson  | 1948 –         |

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