



This newsletter may interest particular those related to persons related directly or indirectly to Grace and Clifford Retson. My genealogy website is located at <http://www.retson.ca/retsongenealogy.html>

Christmas Traditions

Christmas our local genealogy club discusses Christmas Traditions at our December meeting. This year it was suggested that we bring a picture to illustrate a Christmas tradition that we have celebrated from either our family of ethnic group, our family of origin or present nucleus family. After rejecting a number of ideas using things such as decorations, etc. I hit upon the idea of the happy tradition of sharing Christmas dinners. I ask my wife, (the keeper of many pictures) to forward one such picture. The picture she sent me (displayed to the right) represented a unique exception to the tradition that proved the tradition.



The Christmas tradition celebrated every year of my life is having at least 1 to 3 dinners celebrate with other members of the family either on Christmas Eve, the 25th or sometimes the 26th.

At home in the Truro area we alternated between our home and the Jenkins at 101 Ryland Ave Bible Hill with a Turkey dinner. Post 1984 in Kenora we alternated with sister Janes Family in Winnipeg often having a Christmas Fondue in Kenora followed by Supper the following day or two in Winnipeg. After they returned to Nova Scotia their daughter's family would join us for a visit in Kenora. The tradition called for a well decorated Christmas table with plenty of food and deserts.

The exact date of the picture is uncertain but at least over 20 years ago. It was the only occasion during the last 50 year that we did not spend at least part of Christmas Eve at home. We traveled to share Christmas with Roberta's family in Hamilton. That year we held the Christmas Eve meal at sister Danila's home. Present were my Family (Roberta, Jillie and Julia); Roberta's parents, Guido and Marie; Roberta's 2 siblings Adrian and Danila as well as her 3 daughters Liz, Sandra and Debbie and joining us for the first time Adrian's fiancé Leanne. They subsequently had 3 daughters as well. Sadly Guido departed in 2010 and Danila, this past summer. Roberta's mother at age 103 is still living in Hamilton.

This Christmas tradition is recalled with fondness and thankfulness for the most important part of Christmas – family.

Retson Line Genealogy Research Part 3

In this part I begin with the individuals who first created my interest in genealogy in what might be sub-titled, "The Story of John Retson and Ann Bateman".

In Part 2 we had John Retson (1809-1891) living with his own family in 1841. In another household we have his father John living with his 3 oldest children:

John Retson in 1841 for John Retson (father of John)

1841 England, Wales & Scotland Census

Woodhead, Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland

First name(s)	Last name	Sex	Age	Birth year	Birth place
John	Retson	Male	60	1781	England
Anne	Retson	Female	50	1791	England
James	Retson	Male	25	1816	Ayrshire, Scotland
Miles	Retson	Male	20	1821	Ayrshire, Scotland
William	Retson	Male	20	1821	Ayrshire, Scotland

Note: In the 1841 Census there was also a policy of rounding down ages was in place. As such, people aged:

15-19 were recorded as 15, 20-24 were recorded as 20, 25-29 were recorded as 25, 30-34 were recorded as 30
35-39 were recorded as 35, 40-45 were recorded as 40, 45-50 were recorded as 45, 50-55 were recorded as 50
55-60 were recorded as 55, 60-65 were recorded as 60

We know that this John was at least 60 and as he was baptised July 25, 1779, he had to be at least 61

I do not have the exact birthdate of John, but he was baptized July 25, 1779, which would place his age in 1809 at marriage at least 29 years. Ann Bateman, his wife, was baptized in 1790 and so perhaps 19. As she was not yet of the legal age to be married in England she required her parents' consent.

The parents of Ann were not happy with Ann's choice. The fact that John and Ann did get married in England indicates that they did eventually consent to the marriage. Perhaps they did not consent until they discovered she was already pregnant. Why were they not happy with John? Ann, according to My Great Uncle John, was a "noble woman" and John was a gardener. In 1960 when I first heard this story, I assumed that the term "Noble" referred to nobility and that the reason for the parents' dissatisfaction had to do with class. Later in my research, I found out that she was not a member of the aristocracy, but rather the daughter of one Thomas Bateman and Margaret Noble. Perhaps we will never know if the dissatisfaction was class discrepancy, age difference or other reasons .

Parents of John Retson baptized July 25, 1779

I received an email from a Richard Bail in the early 2000s steering me to the parents of John. In 2007 as incoming Present of my Rotary Club I attended the International Rotary conference held in Salt Lake City Utah home of the Records held by the Latter-Day Saints (commonly referred to as Mormons). While there I was able to see the records of the Baptism of "John Ratson" by his parents Rich. and Margaret Ratson , I returned in 2016 to record the citation (FHL Filmstrip 1471685 accessed May 10, 2016, at Salt Lake City Christenings at Kendal 1779 July 25 John, son of Richard & Margaret Ratson of Raw Head in New Hutton). Years later further

research revealed that Margaret Ratson was born Margaret Bell, first married William Tarn, and following his death married Richard Retson as Margaret Tarn.

Parents of Richard Ratson [Retson]

From the Kendall Parish records we have the baptismal records of Richard Rattson, 30 Nov 1760, Baptism Place: Kendal, Westmoreland, England. (FHL Film Number: 97375):

"Nov 30 Rich? Son of Marg! Millburn of the Hay and Rich? Rattson Supposed Father"

Father Richard, first married Elizabeth Banks in Kendal, England on 02 Jun 1764 and after her death, Margaret Milburn. She was the mother of Richard who was baptized in New Hutton, (near Kendal on 30 Nov 1760). Richard had four sons, John (baptized July 25, 1779, and father of our line), James, Miles and Thomas, and one daughter Elizabeth. Thomas and Elizabeth remained in England and hence descendants of Retson live both in Northern England and Scotland. Margaret had two sons by her first husband William Tarn who were raised by Richard and Margaret after William Tarn's death. To date, this is the end of the story of the Retson line.

The Retson Virtual Cemetery

This fall I commenced a new project which I have called The Retson Virtual Cemetery. Early in the project, with the assistance of AI I composed a poem to express some sentiments about the project. The goal of the project is reuniting families of origin to assist in their remembrances; to collect the names of every direct ancestor and their siblings and the location of their burial. Some death affects us more than others especially those who died well beyond their expected longevity – perhaps due to accidents or due to disease or illness. It is said that the dead live on in those they leave behind. We treasure their memories. Some I believe are better remembered much longer than others and by those who never knew them while living. Members of the Church of Latter Days Saints believe that their souls may be elevated to higher plains by Baptism by Proxy, after their deaths. While I do not share such belief I am warmed by such concern of their descendants.

To date (December 15, 2023) I have collected over 90 pages of our ancestors and continue to add names and pictures on a weekly basis.. My eventual goal is to complete the work on “Find a Grave” website <https://www.findagrave.com/> . This will permit one to move between siblings, between Parent and child and from generation to generation. You can add artificial flowers as well as notes of condolences to their memorials. (See for examples one I left after starting this project at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/245663973/esther-jean-atkinson> .

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/search?firstname=&lastname=retson&birthyear=&deathyear=&location=&locationId=&memorialid=&mcid=&linkedToName=&datefilter=&orderby=r&plot=&page=1#sr-31293798> is the link for 81 names with Retson (Note not all of these are related to us as there were independent lines of Retsons. Some await pictures of headstones which await local genealogy club members or other kind individual to add. Pictures and bibliographies also continue to be added by descendants. See for example,

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/143905232/george-clifford-retson>
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/143977652/grace-elizabeth-retson>

I also continue to request edits for many who lack details of births, deaths or are not connected to family members. Please contact me if you would like assistance in finding your relatives’ memorial or creating one if none has yet been created.

A Tribute to the Forgotten

*In the quiet corners of forgotten cemeteries,
Where mossy gravestones stand tall and weary,
Here lies a tribute to those once cherished,
Now in silence, their memories nourished.*

*In the hush of the wind, whispers their tale,
Of laughter and tears, of love that prevailed,
Once they were vibrant, once they were here,
Now they rest under the sky, crystal clear.*

*The echo of their laughter, the warmth of their touch,
In the hearts of the loved, it meant so much.
Now in the stillness, under the moon's glow,
They sleep in peace, as the night winds blow.*

*The forgotten ones, in their eternal sleep,
Have stories untold, secrets they keep.
In the rustle of leaves, in the bird's song,
Their presence lingers, all day long.*

*This is a tribute to the lost, the forgotten,
In our hearts, their memories woven.
Though time moves on, and life unfurls,
In our thoughts, they are still part of our world.*

*So here's to the lost, the once adored,
In the silence of the graveyard, their lives we applaud.
Their stories live on, in the stones worn and weathered,
In our hearts, their memories treasured.*

James C. Retson November 28, 2023

Additions to <http://www.retson.ca/retsongeneology.html> since December 1, 2023
Retson Virtual Cemetery <https://www.retson.ca/retsonvirtualcemetery.pdf>

This newsletter was sent to individuals who have expressed an interest in this genealogy at some time. If you do not wish to receive future updates, please email me at jretson@shaw.ca and indicate so.