



January 15 2022

Retson Genealogy Newsletter

This newsletter may interest in the genealogy and in particular those related to persons related directly or indirectly to Grace and Clifford Retson.

Methodist and United Church of Canada

My genealogy website is located at <http://www.retson.ca/retsongeneology.html>
On the left side you will see a list of Family Roots.

Its fitting that I finish the series on the Churches of our ancestors with the United Church of Canada as this is where the largest number of us have ended up. This Church in Canada took in our Congregationalist, Presbyterians and Methodist. Ancestors in Canada. John Wesley launched the Methodists, another off shoot of Anglicanism. John Westley, born in 1603, along with his brother, were ordained Anglican priest.. On the trip to America he witnessed a band of Moravians' calmly singing during a raging storm. After two unhappy years in Georgia he returned to England and made contact with Moravian missionaries in London. From them, he accepted the doctrines of justification by faith alone and of instant conversion. He along with his brother Charles took to the open air and began to preach in fields, barns and private homes. After he was unable to attract other clergy to his revival he reluctantly agreed to the use of licensed lay preachers.

Theology received little attention with practical religion being the goal. The only principle which received emphasis was the insistence on man's free will in opposition to Calvinist predestination. Assurance of salvation became another Methodist tenet, although this doctrine of perfection became soft pedaled. When Anglicans refused to ordain preachers in the colonies Wesley assumed the power himself and Methodism moved from a revival movement in Anglicanism to a separate Church. Methodism grew in the United States to make up the largest church by 1850. In Canada, Methodists joined with Congregationalist, along with most Presbyterians in Canada, to form the United Church in Canada in 1925. The two Churches share much in common: short on theology, and confident in the essential goodness of man. Personal moral standards ruled out alcohol and tobacco. At one time. in the United States dancing, card playing and all forms of gambling weren't tolerated as well, but all are now tolerated.

The twentieth century witnessed the decline of the membership and power of the church. The latest religious survey conducted by Pew research (<https://www.pewresearch.org>) in 2018 (pre-pandemic) found a declining share of Canadians identify as Christians, while an increasing share say they have no religion at all. The most recent survey in Canada, conducted in 2018, found that a slim majority of Canadian adults (55%) say they are Christian, 29% Catholic and 18% who are Protestant. About three-in-ten Canadians say they are either atheist (8%), agnostic (5%) or "nothing in particular" (16%). Canadian census data indicate that the share of Canadians in this "religiously unaffiliated" category rose from 4% in 1971 to 24% in 2011. Five groups, including Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Buddhism, make up 8% of Canadian adults. Most Canadians say religion's influence in public life is waning in their country. Our 2018 survey found that roughly two-thirds of Canadian adults (64%) say religion has a less important role in their country than it did 20 years ago. One-in-five reported attending religious services at least weekly, and 29% said they pray daily. Around a third (36%) said they never pray, and about half said they seldom (24%) or never (25%) go to church or other worship services. Still, more than half of all Canadians (55%) in the Center's 2018 survey said religion remains at least somewhat important in their lives.

Our American Ancestors

This completes my side excursions on religions. The reason for this side excursion is the extensive research I have been completing during the last two years of Covid19 on our American ancestors. Much of the work on our Canadian ancestors was completed by looking at Census, vital stat records and by sharing with many of ancestors, many of whom have since passed away. One of the things I regret is that I didn't spend more time in discussing the lives lived by such individuals as opposed to merely collecting birth, marriage and death dates. In what did they believe? What did they value?

In contrast, much of the research of our American Ancestors required reading of books and historical articles. I had to do the brief excursion into religion to understand where to find genealogical records. Perhaps this was merely because most of our American Ancestors came to Canada by 1800 and I was dealing with an earlier time period. I learned more about American history and culture before 1800 than I ever did in school. However, was the greater emphasis on religion merely a function of time. To what extent have we diverged since we shared a common heritage in the British Isles. I got the perception, that, while the two nations shared in many ways, a common cultural background we are quite different. And the difference developed quite early.

Our last few immigrants who arrived directly from the British Isles were William Retson from Fenwick Scotland emigrated 1903; Daniel McNab born 1827 Westerkirk, Dumfriesshire Scotland, emigrated in 1856 with Wife Jean Hope; Robert Burns born Feb 13 1824 Hawick, Scotland emigrated 1843 with wife Elizabeth Richardson and then John Clifford born about 1801 emigrated in 1826 from Cork Ireland. Before that most of our ancestors actually emigrated to Canada from what is now the United States of America.

The earliest parts of what is now the United States to be settled were lands to the south of United States including Florida, Texas and New Mexico. {expand on this}

Most of our ancestors came through Massachusetts and then migrated to Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York and New Hampshire. It is said that is easier to trace genealogy in Massachusetts than any other state. This is because more records are available. Every town not only kept records but printed those records for the convenience of researchers. Birth and death records were maintained at the state level since 1850. The New England Historical and Genealogical Society has been in existence since and maintains extensive databases available by membership.

On December 11 1620 according to the calendar then in use, December 21 according to our current calendar, our Plymouth Colony ancestors arrived on the Mayflower. Many who spend the long arduous task of locating their original American ancestors, are surprised to find that some arrived on the Mayflower. Of 102 that set sail on the Mayflower, 100 arrived alive in Massachusetts. 50% of the 100 who arrived, died within one year. However of those who survived, they multiplied and populated the future country of United States. Adams and Kasakoff in their Anthropology, Genealogy, and History: A Research Log, report that an insurance company actuary calculated that in 1978 there were about 120,000,000 Mayflower descendants alive in the United States. So we are not very unique. Our descendants were Francis Cooke, his son John and Richard Warren.

Through the initiative of the Massachusetts Bay Company, another colony was formed at Salem in 1628 and two years latter more than a thousand colonists arrived founding the towns of Boston, Charlestown, Roxbury, Dorchester, Watertown and Newton (latter called Cambridge). Many of our ancestors, listed below, populated these towns. Within 10 years more than 20,000 immigrants had landed in Massachusetts. Our ancestors that arrived in New England included,

Richard Warren 1578-1628 arrived on "Mayflower" 1620
His wife Elizabeth Walker 1583-1673 arrived 1623 on Anne

Francis Cooke 1583-1663 arrived on "Mayflower"
 His wife Hester Mahieu 1582-1666 arrived 1623 on Anne
 Hugh Mosher 1609- 1666 arrived on "James" in 1632,
 George Hubbard 1594- 1683 arrived about 1633,
 Richard Maxson 1613-aft 1640 1634
 Thomas Lynde 1615-1693 arrived 1634 on the Griffith
 Samuel Smith 1602-1681 arrived 1634,
 Rowland Stebbins 1592-1671 arrived on the "Francis" leaving Ipswich, England in late April but did not
 clear the custom's house until Nov 12 1634.
 Jeremy Belcher and Ann Belcher, arrived 1635 on the "Susan and Ellen"
 Thomas Stanley abt 1601- 1663 arrived 1634
 William Brooks 1610-1688 arrived 1635 in Virginia.
 Samuel Chapin 1598- 1675 arrived 1635
 Roger Preston 1614- 1665 arrived on April 8, 1635 on the Elizabeth
 John Gould 1610-1690 arrived about 1636,
 Thomas Graves 1598-1662 arrived 1637
 Samuel Wright -1665 bef. 1638
 Henry Burt 1595-1662 and Wife Eulalia March emigrated in 1638
 John Porter 1594-1647 arrived 1639
 Francis Ball 1599-1648 Dorchester 1639
 Joanna (Hincksman) Hoare 1588-1661 arrived 1640

They first settled in Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Many of our ancestors figured into American history – in King Phillip's War, in The Salem Witch Hunt, as ancestors of several subsequent American Presidents, Loyalists to the British, as well as American Patriots. Most of these immigrants were from England.

In about 1719 our Scots-Irish ancestors arrived in America. These included John Archibald 1691-1751 and Matthew Taylor 1690-1770 who settled in Nutfield (Londonderry) later clarified to be in New Hampshire.

Our first American ancestors (pre-loyalists) who emigrated from United States to Canada arrived in Nova Scotia in the 1760s (Archibalds, Lynds, and Hoars). Another group, arrived in Southern Ontario following the American War of Independence (Spicers, Martins, Moshers, spouses and families)

You can find the beginnings of their stories by following links located on the left side of the page at <http://www.retson.ca/retsongeneology.html> I will continue to add missing families and expand on existing families as I gain new information. Some general information may help you understand some of the stories.

First, A note about Old Style-New Style dates, Julian & Georgian Calendars

The old calendar used up to about 1752 in Protestant countries was the Julian Calendar based on 365.25 days. In 1652 Great Britain and empire switched to the Julian Calendar and since the actual year is 365.2422 days long the switch over caused a 11 day out of synch problem. To solve this problem, it was proclaimed that September 2 would be followed by September 14. As well the old-style calendar the calendar year began on Lady Day 25th of March i.e. the year ran from 25 March to 24 March. Hence January 24, 1712 old-style would-be January 24, 1713 new style. The correct way to describe a date in the "overlap" period from January 1 to March 24 is to state the Old/New Style as 1712 /1713 which means

"January 24, 1712 old style is what we call January 24, 1713"

Also, since the calendar began in March the months if numbered are as follows, March 1, April 2, May 3, June 4, July 5, August 6, September 7, October 8, November 9, December 10, January 11 and February 12. Many who are not familiar with calendars with interpreted 12th day of 2 month prior to 1752 as “February 12” instead of the correct “April 12th”

Relationship Charts

Relationship charts are being added to every story if they are not found in the newsletter. The purpose of the relationship charts are to show readers whether or not the individual is related to them. If you can trace yourself to an individual on the chart you are related to the individuals at and above the person you can trace to.

An individual who traces through Cliff Retson is a paternal ancestor and one who trace through Grace Atkinson is a maternal ancestor. If you would like clarification as to your relationship to a specific individual send me an email and I'll send the relationship of the individual to yourself.

Historical, Geographical and Cultural information, Sources and General Resources

As time goes by I will continue to add more cultural and social information to put flesh on the times that our ancestors lived. General resources will be included at the end of each ancestral line. Nathaniel Philbrick's Mayflower, A Story of Courage, Community and War, covers the Mayflower story very well. An adapted version for young people is found in The Mayflower and The Pilgrims' New World, both available in paperback and kindle versions at amazon. Other excellent reading includes Eugene Aubrey Stratton, Plymouth Colony: Its History and People: 1620-1691 and Rebecca Fraser, The Mayflower, the Voyage, and the Founding of America,

David Hackett Fischer, Albion's Seed: America: a cultural history, also available in paper and Kindle versions, covers the Puritan period well.

Other sources that may be of interest include,

Woodard, Colin. American Character (p. ix). Penguin Publishing Group.

Adair, John Eric. Founding Fathers: Puritans in England and America (Uncovering the Seventeenth Century) . Sapere Books.

Saul, John Ralston, A Fair Country [A contrast with Canada]

Fischer, David Hackett. Fairness and Freedom, A History of Two Open Societies, New Zealand and The United States. Oxford University Press. [A contrast with New Zealand]

Additions to <http://www.retson.ca/retsongeneology.html> since December 1 2021

Warren <https://www.retson.ca/warren.pdf>

Cooke <https://www.retson.ca/cooke.pdf>

Wilcox <https://www.retson.ca/wilcox.pdf>

Retson Genealogy Newsletter Dec <https://www.retson.ca/retsongenealogynewsletterdect2021.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.