



July 15, 2024

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/retsongeneology.html>

Shared Ancestors and Descendants

After the last newsletters I received, among others, two emails that continued my reflections on the value of sharing genealogical research, looking at both ancestors and their descendants in genealogy research as well their “ethnic” background.

The first came from Pat Perrin Mackey and as a result filled in a missing line (2nd line marked below)

Pat Perrin Mackey (George², Ebin³ Alexander⁴ Ebenezer⁵ and Andrew⁶)

- Also, Pat¹ George² Elma³ Emogene⁴ Amos⁵ Orrin⁶ Andrew⁷

Also, Pat¹ George² Ebin³ Alexander Ebenezer⁵ Abigail⁶

Pat together with sister Bonnie, as well as contacts provided by them have been of immense help in breaking through brick walls over the years. One brick wall removal helped identify Abbie Spicer (in my Direct line) as Abigail Spicer that eventually helped find my line back to United Empire Loyalist Spicers, the Mayflower Passengers Francis Cooke and Richard Warren and Jamestown Virginia settlement Gregory Spicer. I also learned that we found our respective spouses in the same city, Toronto, in roughly the same neighbourhood. I shared some of Pat’s research with the second email sender, Susan Ruth Anderson.

Pat ancestors have examples of tree collapses where certain ancestors are related by more than one path. The most interesting one for me was Jeremy Belcher who had two daughters one Abigail and Dorcus who married two Gould brothers, one line of descendants produced my father, and the other line produced my mother.

DNA research connected me to Ruth whose one line connects us and Pat indirectly.

😊 “Last year I got my Metis Card at long last. Happy dance. It took me 67 years to get the Metis card but at last it was done...I also was granted a Harvesters Card to allow me the right to hunt, fish and mine in our area of Georgian Bay. How cool is that?”

“I was the first indigenous woman to become an EMT and become registered as an Advanced Auto Extrication Specialist. My oldest daughter was the first indigenous woman to join the Canadian Navy as a rescue diver.”

An excellent guideline for persons interested in applying for Metis Nation of Ontario entitled RESEARCHING YOUR MÉTIS ANCESTORS IN ONTARIO can be found at https://www.metisnation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/genealogy_guide_PRINT_2014-02-14-up2021.pdf More general information can be found at <https://www.metisnation.org/>



“Where are you from?”

At a lū‘au (Hawaiian: lū‘au, also anglicized as "luau") on the north of island of Oahu, where we celebrated our 50-wedding anniversary, we were all ask, “Where you are from?” One daughter replied “Canada”, the other “Australia”. The daughter from Canada exclaimed, “Julia You are from Canada.

In her defence, Julia has lived in Australia or New Zealand for at least 20 years. She laughs that in Australia she is regarded as Canadian. Interestingly in Kenora she is regarded as “local”, while I who came to Kenora exactly the same year and lived twice as long as her in Kenora, is regarded as from Nova Scotia. Her classmates since 4 were aware that she was born in Nova Scotia.

While in Hawaii I learned a new term unfamiliar to me: “ polyculturalism”. The indigenous people who inhabit the islands of Polynesia are called Polynesians. They have many things in common, including language relatedness, cultural practices, and traditional beliefs. Polynesia comes from “poly” meaning “many” and “nesia” meaning islands. Polynesia is a subregion of Oceania, made up of more than 1,000 islands scattered over the central and southern Pacific Ocean. Using AI, I got the following information on “polyculturalism” (OPEN AI, GPTCHAT 4, accessed July 24, 2024):

Polyculturalism is an approach to understanding and interacting with diverse cultures that emphasizes the interconnectedness and mutual influences among different cultural groups. Unlike multiculturalism, which often highlights the distinctiveness and separateness of various cultures, polyculturalism focuses on the ways in which cultures are interwoven and have historically influenced each other.

Key aspects of polyculturalism include:

Interconnectedness: It recognizes that cultures are not isolated but have continuously interacted, shared, and borrowed from one another throughout history.

Mutual Influence: Polyculturalism stresses the idea that cultural exchange and influence are bidirectional, with different groups contributing to and shaping each other's cultures.

Fluidity and Change: This perspective acknowledges that cultures are dynamic and constantly evolving due to these interactions, rather than being static and unchanging.

Cohesion and Harmony: Polyculturalism promotes social cohesion and harmony by focusing on commonalities and shared histories, rather than differences.

Critical Perspective: It often involves a critical examination of how power dynamics, colonialism, and globalization have impacted cultural exchanges and influences.

By emphasizing the shared aspects and common grounds between cultures, polyculturalism aims to foster a more integrated and inclusive society.

My family in Colchester County in the 1960s onward (I left in 1984) were actively involved in what was termed the “multicultural movement” which emphasized respect for various cultural groups rather than merely “distinctiveness and separateness”. It is true that as a 12-year-old, I preferred to be identified as belonging to the “Scottish” ethic group than the “English”. My wife, however, when she first met me in 1974 did not see any difference between the two. To her Scottish culture meant “oatmeal, popcorn and pancakes”, two out of the

three probably not generally recognized as particularly “Scottish”. My “Scottish” relatives in a 2006 visit indicated that I wasn’t “Scottish” but rather Canadian (ethnic group). Having experienced living at one year in 3 different Provinces (BC, Quebec and Ontario (Toronto) before moving to Northern Ontario, “Canadian”, in the context of ethnic culture, simply didn’t seem to cut it.

Once, while asked in a genealogy class what my ethnic group was, I claimed “Nova Scotia” but that too, seemed elusive.

So often one hears “You have to know where you came from to know where you are going!”
“Where am I from?”: I was born in Truro, Nova Scotia, I have lived twice as long in Ontario as I have in Nova Scotia. I have been heavily influenced by my years in British Columbia, Quebec and Kenora as my many cultural groups I experienced in 10 years in University. According to my DNA from AncestryDNA I am,

- 41% Scottish
- 30% Ireland
- 15% England
- 7% Germanic Europe
- 5% Wales
- 2 Sweden and Denmark

While many ancestors lived in the area south of the Canadian border in what is now US, the most recent crossed the border by 1800.

While my DNA indicates that I am 75% Scots Irish, and I do admire the poetry of Robert Burns, an enigma in himself. As a 12-year-old I could accept this designation as Truro was indeed founded by the Scots Irish from New England. However, I find it increasingly difficult to identify with any particular cultural group. This year I started the process of redesigning my local websites on Kenora. As part of the process, I simplified the design by dropping my icon photo using the Nova Scotia tartan. I have been asked so many times what Nova Scotia had to do with Kenora. While perhaps the website will lose its distinctive character it will probably more accurately reflect the more inclusive City that the town is becoming. That is not to suggest our history, including its wild and unruly past will be changed or be forgotten. The City is involved in a critical examination of how power dynamics, colonialism, and globalization have impacted cultural exchanges and influences. It does acknowledge that, like its buildings and landscapes, its culture is dynamic and constantly evolving.



The Next Generation

On Wednesday, June 27 we traveled to Winnipeg to celebrate the high school graduations of twins, Tyler and Ryan Huston Earle, children of Kathy Earle. Time flies. This family, as well as the family of her sister Linda Earle, representing, the third generations of Cliff and Grace Retson’s Descendants, are the first to all finish high school. We had a lovely time at a private dinner at a Winnipeg Golf Course sponsored by Dave Huston. And the dance goes on

And at the other end, over in Australia, Isla Loader, daughter of Phil Loader and Julia Retson is just beginning high school. She takes the bus over an hour to get there and another hour to return home every day. The other day she discovered and was so excited to have Edmund Rice among her ancestors. However, I had to dampen that excitement by pointing out that the Edmund Rice that was her



relative was not the same Edmund Rice who founded Edmund Rice founded the congregation of Christian Brothers in 1802 who was responsible for the inspiration to others and for the school she now attends (One was born in Ireland – our ancestor in England.) She wanted to follow the descend of our ancestor to make sure that he didn't have and children or grand children called Edmund, She suggested we go on a Zoom call so that she could trace her lineage back to Edmund Rice on Ancestry and once on I was so terribly impressed with her ability to follow our lineage back (She is about the age I was when I first became interested in genealogy- Children are so much more technologically smart than my generation). She also wondered why I didn't have a "Loader Site" at <https://www.retson.ca/retsongeneology.html> . I committed to starting one which she can take over once I am gone.

Genealogy – An Expensive Hobby?

When I started some 60 years ago the cost of my hobby was a scribbler. However, I wanted a scribbler to keep notes and wanted a strong one that wouldn't fall apart in a year. This lasted about 20 years. My next big expenditure about 8 years later was a paperback book, 8 x11 inches, which had preformatted pages for family groupings. This (overlapping with the scribbler lasted), again, almost 20 years. Some years later, I discovered the joys of software that could keep track of all my data - paper records were simply becoming unmanageable. I would highly recommend a genealogy software package for anyone who has a serious interest in the hobby. The initial cost was about \$25 but every 2 or 3 years since then I have upgraded which costs about the same \$25.

Until Ancestry came along I was still spending less than 2 digits per year, which included books and supplies such as binders. My first entry into ancestry was with a free 6-month subscription with a purchase of Family tree maker. Eventually I took out a World Deluxe subscription to ancestry when the bulk of my research was beyond Canada. This costs more than \$300. You can avoid this cost by simply going to your local library or if they don't have an institutional copy then the local Mormon (LDS Family Search Center).

In Kenora, I began helping others with their genealogy research. The local genealogy club helped index the local newspaper for genealogy data and I began to assist visitors from outside Kenora. During the pandemic I started to do more of my research for outsiders from home. For purposes of efficiency, I added subscriptions to My Heritage and Find my Past. By this time, I was doing more genealogy research for others than myself. I don't accept any money for my time and effort but in my mind I treat my work as part of my contributions to charity. I share my wife's attitude, that as one gets older one has a duty to contribute to the world and this may take many forms. It may take the form of making the world more beautiful for others by planting a flower garden. Or it may take the form of expanding your hobby to assist others.

I read in a recent blog that serious genealogists in America spend over \$1000. This includes database subscriptions, education classes and material, society memberships, software and updates. Those who travel to research can easily spend much more. There are many ways of keeping the expense down such as using libraries and public online trees. Like any other hobby, how much you should spend should be determined by how much you get out of the hobby and the rewards form alternative use of your resources.

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.