



June 15, 2023

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>

## **1931 Census**

<http://www.cangenealogy.com/1931-intro.html>

Canadian Census are one of the greatest assets for Canadian genealogists. Last year the United States released the 1950 census, In June 2023 Canada will release the 1931 census 92 years after it was taken on June 1, 1931. The 1931 census of Canada, the seventh national census since Confederation in 1867, was undertaken on June 1, 1931. It took several months to complete the census, but the June 1 date was key date: people who died after that date were to be included, and children born after that date were to be ignored. The 1931 census of Canada showed the population, at 10.3 million, had risen by about 18 per cent since the previous national census in 1921. It also revealed that the population shift to the west was continuing, as was the movement to urban areas from rural.

The 1931 census had six schedules:

1. Population
2. Agriculture
3. Livestock, fruit growing, etc. in towns
4. Merchandising and service establishments
5. Blindness and deaf-mutism
6. Institutions, including penal, mental and neurological, child-caring, homes for adults, hospitals sanatoria, dispensaries, clinics and day nurseries

The population schedule -- the one to be posted online in June -- had questions dealing with the name, family, kind of dwelling, age, sex, conjugal condition, birthplace, citizenship or nationality, racial origin, language, religion, education, occupation, unemployment and more.

Records in the collection may include the following information:

Name, Birth year and place, Gender, Racial heritage, Languages spoken, Literacy, Marital status, Religion Relationship to the head of the household, Address, Details about their home, including building type and radio ownership, Names of family members, Nationality, Occupation and employment details, Education details, Immigration details

Conducted during the Great Depression, the 1931 census included questions about unemployment. If applicable, you may also find the following information:

Causes of unemployment  
Length of unemployment  
Medical history concerning unemployment  
Living conditions relating to being unhoused

If your family member was born or died in 1931, they may not be included in this collection. Census day, June 1st, was the deadline for inclusion. Individuals are included if they died after June 1st, as are babies born before June 1st.

Census taking began on 1 June 1931, and was the seventh national census since Canada's confederation in 1837. The main purpose of the census was to use population data to determine parliamentary representation accurately. Data was collected by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, then published as a thirteen-volume analysis. Overall, the census recorded over 10 million people, indicating Canada experienced a population growth of 18 percent since the previous census.

Held during the height of the Great Depression, the seventh national census differed from previous years by including an expanded section about unemployment. Government officials hoped that the data gathered by the census would help combat economic problems. Interestingly, collecting census data would provide aid for a small segment of the unemployed population. Working as an enumerator paid five cents per person counted, offering temporary income to those hired. Enumerators were thoroughly trained and were required to work until their district was fully counted. Biases and assumptions based on the part of the enumerator may also be present in the records.

The census is to be opened for research on June 1, 2023. Plans call for it to be indexed by name by the end of the summer. By June 3 I could bet on the national website at <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/index1931>. The Retson Family is found in Nova Scotia, District Colchester County Subdistrict Salmon River #9 Page 2 (See below). The ages fit the family for their ages at their last birthdays, The date of 1902 is gratuitously given as the year of arrival in Canada, which I believe is inaccurate by one year. The indexing will not be completed until the fall but is highly unlikely that the name will be correctly indexed as "Retson". Earlier census indexed the name of the parents as Ritson (1921) and Benson.

L.O.	10.	Parent	Birth	Year	Sex	Age	9	10	Head	21	21	47	Scotland	Scotland	Scotland	1902
		William	Beath Hill	R.	M.	45										
		Bertie														
		Doris														
		George														
		William														

## 2021 Census and after

We won't see the 2021 census until another 92 years. The 2020s were much like the 1930s. The world appears to be broken for many.

Starting under the finance minister of Paul Martin and continuing under the Stephen Harper government preoccupations turned away from solving social problems to worrying about the national debt. Sparked by the 1964 report of a Royal Commission chaired by Justice Emmett Hall, in 1966 the Government of Canada passed the *Medical Care Act*. This Act offered to cover 50% of the national average per capita cost of all insured medical services, net of plan administration costs and patient premiums. These 2 federal initiatives underpin Canada's national Medicare plan. In 1976/77, the last year for which funding for these 2 Acts is recorded distinctly in the Public Accounts of Canada, the coverage was 48% of hospital spending and 49% of physician spending. To this point, the federal government had honoured its 50:50 commitment. Thereafter the federal share continued to fall. As of 2023 the federal government covers 22 per cent of provincial and territorial healthcare costs. Report after report indicates problems with the medical system from shortage of doctors, long waits in emergency services, long wait for surgeries and specialist appointments.

Canada remains the only developed nation with a publicly funded healthcare system that does not include universal coverage for prescription drugs. Any serious study or trial on free prescribe drugs that has been completed have all suggested that money could be served by such a program. The liberal party membership voted to place such a program at the top of its priority list and yet its leadership fails to move forward. The pharmacology industry is just too powerful.

Homelessness continues to increase with little hope for improvement. About 1 in 4 persons counted during the 2021 census were or have been landed immigrants or permanent residents in Canada, the largest proportion among G7 countries. During the past year the population increased by over a 1 million. Canada is not providing anywhere near the new housing stock to meet this increasing population. To boot, every year an incredible number of rental properties are being turned over to Air B&Bs.

So, what policy initiative do you support,

(1.) less immigration?- we need immigration to cover the shortage of employees in almost every field in Kenora, immigration, immigration is good for the long term economy of Canada, immigration or even temporary residency is necessary for those escaping conflict in Ukraine, Syria etc.

(2.) banning more conversions of Airbnb? – this model appears to be becoming more and more attractive to homeowners who are facing increasing costs of capital and repairs, legal costs facing bad tenants, insurance and other costs versus upfront revenue, higher returns and less headaches; long term tenants on the other hands are being squeezed with dwindling options and demand more regulation and land use bylaws.

(3) increased federal and provincial entry into the housing market by increased social housing, capital incentives or subsidizing mortgage costs- Increased rates by the independent Bank of Canada charged with controlling inflation is already increasing the cost of Capital and increased Government borrowing will likely lead to increased cost of government borrowing. Political pressure comes from the conservative leading population against increasing the government debt load placing a limit on how far progressive leading parties will go to solve housing problems and still remain electable.

Capital incentives might be in the form of tax free savings accounts, full (or partial) mortgage interest deductibility (available in the United States, lower rate) or outright capital incentives either in the form of outright cash or forgivable loans. Politicians simply lack the will and the electorate simply fail to see the long term costs of failure to act more decisively.

Drug abuse has increased due to the extensive use of Opioids encouraged by its manufacturer. The Opioid crisis continues to be a major health concern in Canada. The number of individuals enrolled in treatment programs in Ontario alone, has increased from 6000 patients to over 40,000 patients from the year 2000 to 2016. Substance dependence, continues to be highly stigmatized. Perhaps one of the largest barriers limiting our collective ability to address the opioid crisis is the lack of consensus of the extent of the problem and uncoordinated ideas of appropriate solutions.

The Culture war while more pronounced in the United States appears to be heading north to Canada. Anti-science culture raised its head during the recent Covid 19 pandemic.

One bright spot is the recent the passage of the federal Bill C-22, The Canada Disability Benefit Act, passed in the Canadian Senate in June. You can read the full Bill here: <https://www.parl.ca/legisinfo/en/bill/44-1/c-22> The Act once implemented may assist in lowering the level of poverty among the disabled. Questions remain as to the level of commitment of the federal government to put meat on the bare bones of the legislation. So far the

Federal Government has only committed to the funding of 21.5 million to set up the infrastructure for the new program. The rate set for the benefit will in part determine the degree to which poverty will be eliminated for the disabled (it is estimated that two of every 5 Canadians living in poverty have a disability). Additional questions include the level of disability required to be entitled to the benefit as well as whether Provinces will attempt to claw back any of the benefit. I worked on this file as part of my work before August 2013 and as an individual since. It will probably be 2025 before the disabled will feel the effects of the legislation.

## **Were our Ancestors “Border Reivers”?**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Border\\_reivers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Border_reivers)

Border reivers were raiders along the Anglo-Scottish border from the late 13th century to the beginning of the 17th century. They included both Scottish and English people, and they raided the entire border country without regard to their victims' nationality. Their heyday was in the last hundred years of their existence, during the time of the House of Stuart in the Kingdom of Scotland and the House of Tudor in the Kingdom of England. The seat of the Sovereign of England in London and the Sovereign of Scotland in Edinburgh, a long way from the border counties left the citizenry to fend for themselves and family networks provided protection. Raids were often made on other networks. The lesson to be learned from this period in history is the fragility of life liberty and security in the absence of a sovereign power who can effectively provide order by holding a monopoly on power.

Reive, a noun meaning raid, comes from the Middle English (Scots) reifen. The verb reave meaning "plunder, rob", a closely related word, comes from the Middle English reven. There also exists a Northumbrian and Scots verb reifen. All three derive from Old English rēafian which means "to rob, plunder, pillage". Variants of these words were used in the Borders in the later Middle Ages.

In 1587 the Parliament of Scotland passed a statute: "For the quieting and keping in obiedince of the disorderit subjectis inhabitantis of the borders hielands and Ilis." Attached to the statute was a Roll of surnames from both the Borders and Highlands. Included among the surnames are many of our ancestors on both maternal and paternal lines: Armstrong, Little, Thompson, Irvine (Irving), Bell, and Jardine. Additional historic riding surnames recorded by George MacDonald Fraser in *The Steel Bonnets* (London: Harvill, 1989) include: Burns, Turnbull, Turner, Milburn, Bell, Tailor, Noble.

Upon his accession to the English throne, James VI of Scotland (who became James I of England) moved hard against the reivers, abolishing border law and the very term "Borders" in favour of "Middle Shires" and dealing out stern justice to reivers. Legislation was passed in 1606 and the next 150 years to the end "of preventing of Thefte and Rapine upon the Northerne Borders of England". Many of the reivers were forced to emigrate or were exported to Ireland or British North America. The historian David Hackett Fischer (1989) has shown in detail how the Anglo-Scottish border culture became rooted in parts of the United States, especially the Upland South.

Additions to <http://www.retson.ca/retsongeneology.html> since June 1, 2023

Busecot Ancestors <https://www.retson.ca/busecot.pdf>

Parke Ancestors <https://www.retson.ca/parke.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](mailto:jretson@shaw.ca) and indicate so.