



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

Our Burns Ancestors

4th great grandfather

	John Burn b: 10 Jul 1740 Drumbuy, Beith, Ayrshire, Scotlan d:
---	---

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

3rd great grandfather

	Alexander Burns b: 25 Jun 1778 Hoonum, Roxburghshire, Scotlan d: 22 Jun 1862 Cavers, Roxburgh, Scotland
---	--

You can find their story at <http://retson.ca/burns.pdf>. Our Burns ancestors were of Scottish ancestry. The earliest Burns ancestor discovered to date is John Burns born 10 Jul 1740 in Drumbuy, Beith, Ayrshire, Scotland. Robert Burns born on February 13 1824 emigrated to Canada in 1843 with wife Elizabeth Richardson. Direct ancestors are listed with Arabic numerals their children with small roman numerals and grandchildren with capital roman numerals. A descendant outline of the Burns family at <http://retson.ca/burnsdescendants.pdf>.

2nd great grandfather

	Robert Burns b: 13 Feb 1824 Hawick, Scottish Borders, Scotlan d: 10 Sep 1901 Brussels, Huron County, Ontario,
---	--

Great grandfather

	Robert Burns b: 14 May 1853 Brussels, Huron County, Ontario d: 31 Dec 1929 Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada
--	--

John Burns was born in 1750 in Scotland. He married Margaret “Peggy” Brown about 1768 in Cranbee, Fife, Scotland. They had at least 5 children, the first one of which, Alexander Burns born in 1778 in Hawick, Roxburghshire, Scotland continued our line. Alexander Burns married Agnes Jaffrey in Bedrule, Roxburgh, Scotland on 12 Mar 1803. They had at least 7 children of which the sixth Robert Burns born February 3 1824 in Wilton, Roxburgh, Scotland (near Hawick) continued our line. This was the first of a succession of Robert Burns

Maternal grandmother

	Esther Jane Burns b: 26 Jul 1886 Neepawa, Manitoba, Canada d: 11 Feb 1961 Vancouver, British Columbia, Can
---	---

Mother

	Grace Elizabeth Atkinson b: 11 Dec 1916 Waskada, Manitoba, Canada d: 04 Jun 2008 Truro, Colchester County, Nova S
---	--

This Robert was a tailor in Hawick, Scotland. He served a brief period in the Enniskillen Dragoons before leaving for Canada at the age of 19 in 1943. He farmed near Brussels in



Robert and Elizabeth Burns

Huron County, Ontario. His wife to be, Elizabeth Richardson, sailed to Canada in 1844 being at sea six or seven weeks. She was born on 14 Nov 1823 in Ecclefechen, Dumfries, Scotland. They married he at age 20 and her 21 and lived on the farm near Brussels, Ontario. He died of cancer in Brussels Ontario September 10, 1901, His wife died in Brussels on February 9, 1903

Their third child of eleven Robert Burns II was born May 14 1853 at Brussels Ontario. He 04 1878 in Morris Township, Huron County, Ontario. In the spring of 1881 along with infant daughter Grace they travelled by train to somewhere passed Portage la Prairie at the end of the line. Their first homestead was at Elkhorn. The land at Elkhorn was not very productive and in 1884 or 1885 they moved to Neepawa where married Jane McNab, December

Jean's parents had settled. There they homesteaded on a quarter section at Neepawa (SW ¼ 17-14-15.) purchased by his father-in-law Daniel McNab on January 7, 1881.

It was hard going initially. When they had a crop failure there was not enough money from the previous crop to carry on. According to Robert, after a total failure they lived through a whole winter by trading horses. He had a good team in the fall and kept trading for a poorer team getting a little money "to boot". At the end of the winter, he had a very poor team but was able to put in a crop with it. He same winter he tried to make a little money by hauling wood from Riding Mountain. He would leave home about 4.A.M driving 18 miles. After cutting the wood he would star his homeward journey hoping to sell his load of wood or exchange it for merchandise.

While time were at times tough they always had food, mostly products from their own farm. The children were well dressed for Jane (McNab) Burns was a wonderful sewer. She would at time sew for neighbours but would never accept money as this would have been a reflection on a man for his wife to work for money. The initial log house was simple with hooked rugs on the floor and crocheted tidies on homemade chair backs. The log house was replaced by a large house, barn and granary. They enjoyed community pleasures such as barn raisings, quilting bees, picnics, dances, church suppers and school concerts. Their oldest daughter Grace died in a diphtheria epidemic in June 1889 at the age of nine.

The family was brought up in the strictest Presbyterian tradition. It was a grave sin to sing anything but hymns on Sunday. Elizabeth Burns recalls her brother Robert being reprovod for whistling Annie Laurie on Sunday. Shoes were polished Saturday night and the girls' dresses starched and ironed. On Sunday they drove six miles to church in Neepawa where even the youngest child was expected to sit still during the long Presbyterian service. Usually, the attended Sunday school in the afternoon where Jane taught a class of boys. Robert was on the Board of Management. Frequently the family would be invited to have dinner with friends in town between morning service and Sunday school. The family kept open house for friends on the farm and many people would drive out from Neepawa for dinner or have their children spend a week's holiday in the country.

He retired from farming in 1917 and moved to Regina, renting the farm to son Bob who had been given the first quarter. Robert died in 1929 and his wife in 1941. His fifth child Esther Jane Burns, born July 26 1886 at Neepawa, Manitoba ended the name of Burns when she married Ed Atkinson 25 Jan 1912 in Neepawa Manitoba. They subsequently moved on to Kerrobert Saskatchewan and eventually ended up in Vancouver

Our Armour Ancestors

Switching over to the Paternal line we have another Scottish root, the Armours. Our Armour ancestors that I have traced lived in Scotland in the 18th and 19th century. Margaret Armour's marriage to Francis McManus on 15 September 1851 brought an end to the Armour line. In turn the McManus line married into the Retson line. Our great uncle retained this family name two generations later.

The earliest Armour discovered to date is Alexander Armour, born about 1792 in Fenwick, Ayrshire, Scotland. He died on 19 Feb 1870 at Catrine, Ayrshire, Scotland. He married Margaret Cook on 07 Mar 1812. They had at least 6 children, David Armour b. 31 Mar 1821 in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland, d. 23 Jul 1886 in Catrine, Ayrshire, Scotland, John Armour b. abt 1826, Margaret Armour b. 29 Jul 1828 Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland, d. 20 Apr 1869 in Catrine, Ayrshire, Scotland, m. Francis McManus 15 Sep 1851 in Sorn, William Armour b. 2 Apr 1831 Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland, Mary Armour b. 28 Mar 1834 Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland, and Elizabeth Armour b. 28 Mar 1834 Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland. Margaret Armour continued our line.

3rd great grandfather

	Alexander Armour b: 1792 Fenwick, Ayrshire, Scotland d: 19 Feb 1870 Catrine, Ayrshire, Scotland
---	--

2nd great grandmother

	Margaret Armour b: 29 Jul 1828 Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland d: 20 Apr 1869 St Cuthbert St. Catrine
---	---

Great grandmother

	Mary McManus b: 1852 Sorn, Ayrshire d: 29 Mar 1937 15 St. Ninians Road, Preswick, S
---	--

Paternal grandfather

	William Rankin Retson b: 22 Feb 1884 Townhead, Fenwick, Ayrshire, Sc d: 14 Jul 1975 Bible Hill, Colchester County, Nov
---	---

Father

	George Clifford Retson b: 19 Dec 1912 Bible Hill, Colchester, Nova Scoti d: 17 Feb 1997 Truro, Colchester County, Nova S
---	---

Self

	James Clifford Retson b: 28 Jul 1948 Truro, Colchester County, Nova S d:
--	--

Margaret Armour was born on July 1828 at Sorn Ayrshire Scotland. She married Francis McManus an Ironstone miner in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland on 15 September 1851. She died on 20th April 1869, at Catrine, Ayrshire, Scotland. They had at least two children, Mary McManus ABT 1852 Sorn and Francis McManus 07 Jul 1856 Milton, Glasgow, Lanark, Scotland. .

Sorn is a small village in East Ayrshire, Scotland. It is situated on the River Ayr. It has a population of roughly 350. Local services include: a pub, a church, a general store, a motorbike shop and a television shop. There is also a village hall and a bowling green and primary school. It was the first home of the Retsons in Scotland before they moved further North to Fenwick, a village in East Ayrshire, Scotland, UK. In 2001, its population was 863. The Author and his family visited Sorn during our trip to Scotland in 2006. Unfortunately, we didn't have time to make it up to Fenwick.

Work on DNA

During the past month I have been working on expanding the number of descendants of various ancestors. The purpose of this is two fold. The ultimate purpose is to gain leads to earlier ancestors. The more individuals one has in one's database, the more individuals that may provide links. For example, one source of leads is to find parents listed in birth records, baptismal or marriage records. In modern records one would expect any of these records would contain the names of parents. In early records the mother may only be listed by her married surname and often even with out her first name. For example, John Retson's wife may be listed only as Mrs. John Retson. On the other hand, if you have

6 children only one need to have the first and maiden name of the mother to provide a most like name for the other 5. This may not be the case as the husband may have had more than one wife.

The second reason is increase the number of siblings in one's database is to provide physical collaboration of "paper genealogy". Records are prima Facia evidence of paternity and maternity. However, DNA research may produce unexpected results often called brick walls. During the past month I have been attempting to link up a "DNA Cousin" to a second Great grandfather. Working with a pair of sisters both of whom are shared matches and looking at who else they have shared matches, I have fairly certain identified the line of ancestors that we share in common but we have not been able to connect the descendants to each other. After some searching both sides have begun to suspect a non-parental event. That is, we have an established line of ancestors but possibly one of those ancestors father was not the biological father. The newspapers are full of stories of surprises of this sort but the further back you go, the more difficult it is to determine where the break occurred. The more DNA descendants matches you can find and work back the greater the likelihood of zero in to the break.

Racism, White Fragility and Supremacy

During the past month we have been treated to an interview that raise issues of racism within family lines, with in established institutions and white fragility and white supremacy in the face of it. As I learn more about some of our ancestral lines I have become aware of the fact that we have had slave owners, and religious and ethnic begets at one end of or lines and on the other hand an ever increasing diversity at the other end. Many of our

common ancestors have produced white, biracial and mixed heritages. We count among our DNA cousins North American natives, “Blacks”, “People of Colour”, “Biracial”, Burmese (Today county is named Myanmar), English, Scottish, French, German, and Italians. We come from varying degrees of knowledge and experience of this diversity. Given this varying degree of experience it would be surprising if we have a equal knowledge of the negative impacts of discrimination, racism or bigotry. It behooves those of us who have benefited from past history of discrimination and white supremacy to come to terms with our histories and the history of those of us who have suffered because of it. While we may not be responsible for the actions of our ancestors, we are responsible for correcting the negative impacts they have left our DNA cousins.

In future I will cover some of our ancestors whose descendants were executed as witches. And some of those same lines included Presidents of the United States and Prime Ministers of Canada. Often the information on these ancestors is sparse so we can not judge whether they were ahead or behind their contemporaries. We have some interesting comparisons between siblings and I have made personal choices as to which character, I preferred. For example, we have Leonard Hoar who died in 1675 the same year that he resigned as President of Harvard University because of reaction to his harsh treatment of students and the same year that his brother negotiated the release of a famous American Minister from Non-friendly Natives after his property had been ravaged by a white militia who sought to move “Praying Indians” from the neighbourhood. That same John Hoar was fined for non-attendance at weekly church services, while his brother Leonard would more likely be preaching twice a week. One might be regarded as more christian and the other more “Christlike”. It is hard to refrain from expressing ones preferences, to hide ones ideology or philosophical or religious points of view. Few of our ancestors were pure anything and some had at the same time admirable and less admirable characteristics. I have attempted to show both.

Additions

I attempt to indicate when I have made corrections, and additions. Sometimes they are minor and some time major. What might be considered a slight addition by some may be considered major by others. Some discoveries one month lead to many continuing additions during the next few months. I apologize to those who print out files only to find substantial revisions the next month.

Additions to <http://www.retson.ca/retsongeneology.html> since February 1, 2020

Armours	http://retson.ca/armour.pdf
Bateman	https://www.retson.ca/bateman.pdf
Clifford	http://www.retson.ca/clifford.pdf
Hayes	https://www.retson.ca/hayes.pdf
Holliston	http://retson.ca/holliston.pdf
Kennedy	http://retson.ca/kennedy.pdf
Nobles	https://www.retson.cs/noble.pdf
North	https://www.retson.ca/north.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.