



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>

The Baptist Heritage in the Cobequid Townships

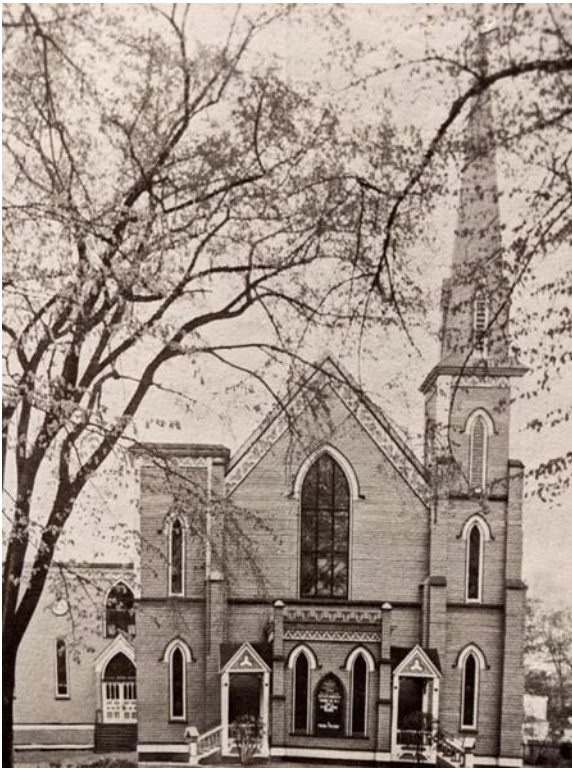
The radical Henry Alline moved with his family from New England to Nova Scotia in 1760. During the American revolution he maintained a position of neutrality. In 1781 he began to travel through Nova Scotia where few established churches existed. He rejected Calvinist theology of predestination. He wondered why:

All the world must be sent to hell and be punished with all that could be inflicted on them for [Adam's] sin, excepting here and there one, that God had picked out, and the rest, though they were invited to come to Christ, and sort of sham-offer of salvation made them, yet there was none for them, neither did God intend to save them, when he made them the offer.”

Henry Alline preached in Onslow in 1782 for 10 days. In the late 1780s the extensive Onslow connection of Lynds and Blairs had an intense New Light stir. In 1791 an Onslow New Light Congregational church was uniting people who had been baptised by either sprinkling in the Congregational manner or immersion in the Baptist manner. One of the Deacons was Thomas Lynds, son of our direct ancestor, Jacob Lynds and father of Susannah Lynds.

In 1804 the Onslow New Light Congregational Church adopted an open communion Baptist constitution, with unimmersed members continuing in fellowship. Susannah Lynds was baptised by immersion that year. In 1809 the majority voted to admit to the Lords supper only those who had been baptised by immersion which led to a split into two churches. Both Thomas Lynds and Susannah (now McCurdy) supported close communion. In 1810 The close communication excommunicate McCurdy for slander. She subsequently became known as the Petticoat Apostle known for her preaching throughout the Maritimes and New England inspiring the rath of many male counterparts who objected to female preachers. She preached extensively from 1721 onward. She died in 1853 (Miller 's information about her death is inaccurate). Many of our ancestors moved to the Baptist Churches

In 1857, 42 persons from the Onslow Baptist Church petitioned the Eastern Baptist Association to constitute a separate Church in Truro. On January 2, 1858, a council appointed to consider the matter decided that those withdrawing from the Onslow church should form a church and the next day their minister Rev David W.C Dimock inaugurated the new Church and became its Minister. This Church, originally known as Prince Baptist, was formed by a group from an Onslow. Baptist church in 1858. One of the oldest churches in the area, the group first worshipped in a meeting house on Walker Street while construction took place on its purchased Prince Street plot. As more Baptist churches were “planted” along Prince Street, such as Zion and Immanuel, it became the First Baptist Church of Truro. The Church had a major rebuilt from 1956 to 1958.



First Baptist Church 2020

First Baptist Church 1956

The congregation of First Baptist faced declining membership in the 21st century. Finally in the spring of 2021, following a multi-month consultation process, and with 89 per

cent of members in favour, First Baptist decided to shut down and gift their church building to the auspices of Groundswell Church. Seventy-eight members of the current congregation and its leadership will have to decide where they want to take their faith. Each church expresses worship differently, but both are part of the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada, along with others in the area such as Immanuel, Zion and Truro Heights Baptist churches.

The partnership with Groundswell started through worship nights inside the church. Groundswell, was founded by Giffin in 2018. Before COVID, Groundswell held two services each Sunday at the Cineplex theatre in Millbrook and one in East Hants Elementary School. Currently, over 200 typically attend Sunday virtual services on YouTube. Some people thrive off the virtual aspect, but it wasn't conducive for everyone.



Rev. Paul Worden of First Baptist Truro, left, and Pastor Tammy Giffin of Groundswell Church <https://www.saltwire.com/atlantic-canada/lifestyles/regional-lifestyles/first-baptist-truro-gifting-its-building-to-groundswell-in-easter-moment-100570658/>

I am in the process of adding a file on the history of our ancestors who

resided in Colchester County which is located at <https://www.retson.ca/cobequidtownships.pdf>

Researching the Atkinsons

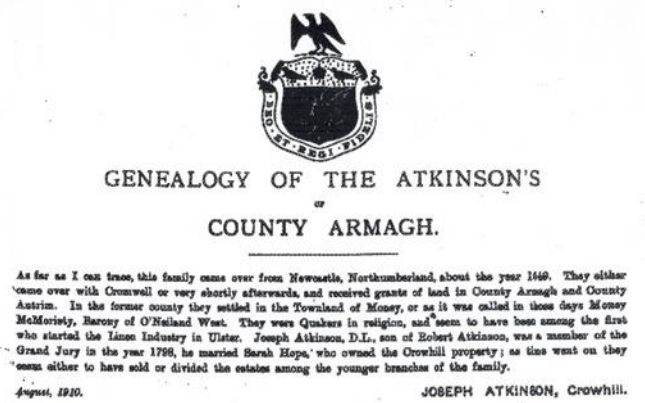
My genealogy hobby started in grade 6 with my father's side of the family. About three years later, my mother passed me a letter containing a unpublished manuscript from her uncle Will entitled Report of William Atkinson, Northern Ireland and his Descendants. The report typed up by my Aunt Jean contained the basic facts that he had found taking me back to William Atkinson. The report mentioned a headstone with the inscription:



WILLIAM ATKINSON 1785-1865 JANE COULTER His Wife 1810-1880
MOSES, MARY A. And ANN Their Children At Rest

Years later I was able to get a copy of this headstone off ancestry. Researching various census records of both William and Jane I concluded that William had actually been born in 1791 and Jane 1801.

There is where the line of Atkinson ended until about 5 years ago. About 5 years ago I received a call from Rose Mary Lynn from British Columbia We talked for some time and shared information that we had gathered over the years. She was looking for a manuscript that she thought might be useful entitled the Genealogy of the Atkinsons of the County of Armagh by Joseph Atkinson 1910. She believed a copy existed at the New England Historical and Genealogical Society but when I checked there was none to be found. However in my attempt to find this manuscript I came upon a blog located at



<https://landedfamilies.blogspot.com/search/label/Armagh> which mentioned several Joseph Atkinsons. After much further research I concluded that possibly William Atkinson was the son of William and Agnes Atkinson of Money Township, Kilmore Parish, Armagh County Ireland. This has yet to be proven.

In 2022 we were finally able to track down a copy of the manuscript from a Dr Martin Arkinson of Calgary. Unfortunately, this manuscript provided no further information

Computers, Electronic calculators, iPhone, the Internet and all that

Computers have changed our lives over the last 30 years and will continue to do so in the next couple of decades. They certainly have affected the genealogy hobby. But the timing of those effects was not uniform across the population. Some of the effects were mega in nature and some micro.

In my first year of university, a female in my chemistry lab from Truro had an electronic calculator that did away with her need to acquire the skills of learning how to use a slide rule. My first experience with computers was in my second year of university when I worked as a lab rat for a psychology professor at Dalhousie university. One of her experiments was to study the effects of alcohol on the learning of rats. I had to enter data on punch cards which were then fed into a main frame computer to be analyzed using multiple regression. Two years later, I took my first computer course learning assembly language and Fortran. I doubt if today's university students have ever heard of punch cards, assembly language, or even Fortran.

The first computer I bought was bought in Truro Nova Scotia in the 1970s. It had a memory capacity of 1 meg and since it had no memory storage, everything would be lost once the computer was turned off. When I

returned to university in 1984, I used a main-frame computers and learned the full range of computer programs. My father was impressed that I would complete two assignments involving step-wise multiple regressions in two days as he had only completed one during his entire MSc degree in 1951-52. As well, the next year I purchased a programable calculator which gave me an edge over other students in the MBA class. Questions were raised as to whether such machines should be permitted but no decision had been made by the next year when I graduated.

When we moved to Kenora the first Computer that I worked on was one that was purchased for my employer, the Kenora Association for Community Living. I used common word processing, and spreadsheets which permitted me to put together budgets for various programs and the entire corporate budget in about one tenth of the time as had been completed by my predecessor. Latter I learned an accounting package called Accpac and relational database program from the Canadian Certified Accounting organization in the late 1980s which permitted me freedom from the accountants giving me detailed information and management control.

The first computer for home used cost \$10,000 and didn't have a hard drive. A hard drive was purchased over a year later for about \$1000. The second computer purchase was purchased for about \$3000 within 3 to 5 years which had at least 100 time the capacity of the first. I no longer required a secretary to type my letters. I got into emailing early and could communicate with government in Thunder Bay and Toronto without a week or more delay caused by slow mail. My mother took a course on how to create an email but decided that she would pass away before such a skill was ever necessary. I left employment before texting replaced emails and telephone as the main means of communication. Can we imagine how school could have been conducted during the recent pandemic without, the internet, the world wide web and google chrome books distributed to every student for use at their homes.

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Computers, the internet and electronic data storage completely revolutionized the genealogy domain. My genealogy research commenced by collecting information from my relatives in the Truro area and writing information in a Hilroy scribbler. During my 3rd year of University at UBC I bought a paper back 8 1/2 by 11 paperback that served as a receptacle for data stored by families. The purchase of a computer in 1985 or 86 together with a genealogical software package called Family Tree Maker radically transformed the hobby. A trip to Scotland in 2006 and a chance encounter with a Billy Gibson, contact with Patricia McKay from Malagash, and Nana Clark and Elinor Rawling from Scotland increased my data collection exponentially. DNA data and genealogy courses began in 2015-2016 with webinars which permitted presenters from around the world. The computer became an essential tool in education, research, storage and exposition.

It is hard for our children to understand a world without any of these inventions or how they have impacted our lives and our modes of communication.

Additions to <http://www.retson.ca/retsongeneology.html> since March 1 2023
Our Archibald Ancestors <http://www.retson.ca/archibald.pdf>
Cobequid Townships <https://www.retson.ca/cobequidtownships.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.