



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

The Individual and the Community –

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

The attitude towards the role of the individual and community and the responsibility of both for the other has varied over the centuries. During the current year the issue has been couched in the language of liberty, freedom and the power of the state to regulate and protect. The right has been very active during the last few years protesting the right of the community to protect itself. In Canada the most noteworthy event known as “The Freedom Convoy of 1922, pitted the rights of the individual and the community.

From the time our ancestors arrived in North America to 1922 the world has moved between the poles of respecting the rights of the individual to the right of the community to protect the community. Our ancestors who arrived in North America in 1620 were bound to the community, morally, in religion and economically. Puritans in America believed that the community was punished for the sins of the individual and hence it was the entire community’s responsibility to constantly watch the behaviour of the individual and call the individual to account. An excellent novel by Amy Belding Brown, *Flight of the Sparrow* illustrates this moral tenement and how it affected their behavior. The individual was required to conform to the Puritan’s moral standards and accept punishment for failures. Puritans believed it was the government's responsibility to enforce moral standards and ensure true religious worship was established and maintained.

Economically the community commenced its existence at Plymouth as a socialist community with all property held in common and the fruits of their labour shared as well in common. The settlers were to share everything in common for 7 years and then the profits would be divided according to the number of outstanding shares. But by 1623 many were complaining that the industrious ones were working to support the lazy ones and it was decided to give every man woman and child the use of one acre to be cultivated as they wished for their own crops. Eugene Aubrey Stratton’s *Plymouth Colony: Its History and People 1620-1691* gives an excellent source for those wishing to learn more of this period.

It is not surprising that communitarianism philosophy dominates when a united community requires the support of every member. In those periods there is no room for extreme individualism. Those periods have included the initial settlement in Plymouth, the initial settlement in the Cobequid townships in the 1760s in Nova Scotia and the initial period of settlement in what would become Ontario in the period following the War of Independence in the United States.

One of the problems of this philosophy is that it’s protection only applied to those who were accepted as belonging to the community. The indigenous and black community have not been included. Our 9th great grandparent John Hoar of Concord in his petition to the court in Boston on May 24th, 1682, indicated

I Humbly now present to this Hon’rd Court that in the time of the warr I tooke the charge of about sixty Indians belonging to Nashoby by the order of Majo’r Willerd, Majo’r Gookin, Mr. Elliot, and the select men of Concord. I built them a fort that cost mee of my own estate fourty pounds and went with my teame in Hazard of my life to save and bring home there Corne and also borrowed Rey and hors for them to

plant and sow which I was forced to pay for myself. I also made several Journeys to Lancaster and to the Counsell and two Journies to the Indians to redeme Mrs. Rowlinson and Good wife Kettle with two horses and provisions and gave the sagamores considerably of my owne estate above whatever I received of the Countrey and by the favor of god obtained of them that they would fight noe more but in ther owne defence; Seth Perry also had several things of mee to give the Indians that hee might escape with his life.

After building the fort to protect the “praying Indians” from the white community, a militia under Colonel Moseley forced its way over the protest of Hoar and forced marched the Indians to Deer Island where over 50% of them died.

Gradually, a political and economic theory known as liberalism replaced the demand for conformity –. Liberalism is a political and moral philosophy based on the rights of the individual, liberty, and consent of the governed and equality before the law.

John Locke, generally regarded as the father of modern liberalism, developed the then-radical notion that government acquires consent from the governed which has to be constantly present for the government to remain legitimate. Locke argued that when the monarch becomes a tyrant, it constitutes a violation of the social contract, which protects life, liberty and property as a natural right. By placing the security of life, liberty and property as the supreme value of law and authority, Locke formulated the basis of liberalism based on social contract theory. His influential *Two Treatises of Government* (1690), the foundational text of liberal ideology, outlined his major ideas. In 1776 at the time of the American War of Independence, Adam Smith, wrote his classic book *The Wealth of Nations* which set out the tenants of what has become known as Capitalism.

Liberalism up to at least the 20th century was based on core concepts such as classical economics, free trade, laissez-faire government with minimal intervention and taxation and a balanced budget. Classical liberals were committed to individualism, liberty and equal rights. Charity and welfare was left to the Church. Liberal philosophy is the culmination of an extensive intellectual tradition that has examined and popularized some of the most important and controversial principles of the modern world. Its immense scholarly and academic output has been characterized as containing "richness and diversity", but that diversity often has meant that liberalism comes in different formulations and presents a challenge to anyone looking for a clear definition. In Europe and North America, the establishment of social liberalism (often called simply liberalism in the United States) became a key component in the expansion of the welfare state. The early waves of liberalism popularised economic individualism while expanding constitutional government and parliamentary authority.

Later waves of modern liberal thought and struggle were strongly influenced by the need to expand civil rights. Liberals have advocated gender and racial equality in their drive to promote civil rights and a global civil rights movement in the 20th century achieved several objectives towards both goals. Other goals often accepted by liberals include universal suffrage and universal access to education. Beginning in the late 19th century, the rise of social liberalism entered the liberal intellectual arena. This new kind of liberty became known as positive liberty to distinguish it from the prior negative version and it was first developed by British philosopher .

Thomas Hill Green in *Prolegomena to Ethics* (1884). Green rejected the idea that humans were driven solely by self-interest, emphasising instead the complex circumstances that are involved in the evolution of our moral character. Green viewed society as an organic whole in which all individuals have a duty to promote the common good. In a very profound step for the future of modern liberalism, he also tasked society and political institutions with the enhancement of individual freedom and identity and the development of moral character, will and reason and the state to create the conditions that allow for the above, giving the opportunity for

genuine choice. In a few years, this New Liberalism had become the essential social and political programme of the Liberal Party in Britain and it would encircle much of the world in the 20th century.

In addition to examining negative and positive liberty, liberals have tried to understand the proper relationship between liberty and democracy. As they struggled to expand suffrage rights, liberals increasingly understood that people left out of the democratic decision-making process were liable to the "tyranny of the majority", a concept explained in Mill's *On Liberty* and in *Democracy in America* (1835) by Alexis de Tocqueville. As a response, liberals began demanding proper safeguards to thwart majorities in their attempts at suppressing the rights of minorities.

The New Deal of Roosevelt followed Green's view. Canada passed legislation in 1941 and post war followed with legislation to protect veterans. In December 16 1966 the United Nations General Assembly passed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It came into effect on January 3 1976. Canada ratified this treaty in 1976. Unfortunately the Supreme Court of Canada have given short shift to its effect in Canada.

In the 1980s under Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Regan in the United States and Martin there was a turn away from social protections under a movement named neo-liberalism. They were heavily influenced by Milton Friedman and Wife Rose's book *Capitalism and Freedom* originally published in 1962 by the University of Chicago Press which discusses the role of economic capitalism in liberal society. Their later book *Free To Choose* is easier to read.

Communitarianism is a philosophy that emphasizes the connection between the individual and the community. Communitarianism usually opposes extreme individualism and rejects extreme laissez-faire policies. The other end of the poles was occupied by the Libertarians. Libertarianism is a political philosophy that upholds liberty as a core value. Libertarians seek to maximize autonomy and political freedom, and minimize the state; emphasizing free association, freedom of choice, individualism and voluntary association. To day, all countries in the West vary between these two extremes.

The latest show of force by those supporting a individualistic, libertarian streak was the occupation of Ottawa initially sparked led by an Alberta based alt right group known as Canada Unity (CU). Canada Unity's Ontario organizer for the convoy, said that the intent of the protest was to dissolve the federal government. The exact reason or purpose of the protest are hard to comprehend. The protest called for the end of vaccine mandates in Canada during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the mandates that the protesters objected to are under provincial jurisdiction. Freedom Convoy's spokesperson Ben Dichter stated on Fox News that "We want to get rid of the vaccine mandates and the (vaccine) passports. And that passport, that's the really concerning one".

The organizers of the original mid-January crowdsourced fundraising campaign, "Freedom Convoy", on GoFundMe—first, Tamara Lich, and later Benjamin J. Dichter, who are not long-haul truckers, described the goal of the truck convoy from all across Canada to the nation's capital, as a demonstration against the newly implemented January 15 federal cross-border COVID-19 vaccine mandate, targeting long-haul truck drivers, according to a January 28, 2022 CTV News article. However the United States had the same requirement. As the convoy reached Ontario, it began to expand from its original goals. Several protesters voiced opposition to perceived authoritarianism and corruption by Justin Trudeau, stating they wanted him "out of office", while others said: "This is not an anti-vaccination movement, this is a freedom movement".

Additional protest formed in Alberta and at the Windsor-Detroit border. ,This later is estimated to have cost in excess of \$750 million in lost automobile trade. The cost of the Ottawa occupation is estimated in excess of \$50 million.

The Case of John Hoar and the freedom convoy provides an interesting comparison. It is at times difficult to determine the exact nature of a conflict within a population. John Hoar lived in a very conforming demanding community. He was constantly in conflict with his church and authorities. Yet in the instant of his stand for the “praying Indians” of Nashoby he was actually supporting the established authority the Massachusetts Court. His stand might be seen as simply a protest for the respect and dignity of the indigenous community.

The freedom convoy and many other protest around the world are seen as issue of Freedom versus Arbitrary authority. Yet when the Ottawa Police failed to regain lawful order, the protesters appeared to be quite willing to deprive the local Ottawa community of their freedoms. The protest might be seen as an example of right-wing bigotry as much as a protest for “freedom” for the individual.

The invasion of Ukraine and the atrocities committed in Ukraine bring home the necessity of the West to protect democracy and developed it into a practical philosophy that protects all the community and produces an environment that all may develop and flourish. Democracy demands of its citizens a respect for all regardless of race, religion and class. It demands a certain minimum standard of food and economic security. It demands a general respect for law and order. We are facing difficult times.

DNA and Destiny

Nature is what we think of as pre-wiring and is influenced by genetic inheritance and other biological factors. Nurture is generally taken as the influence of external factors after conception, e.g., the product of exposure, life experiences and learning on an individual. To what extent is our personal destiny controlled by our genes, to what extent are we controlled by our culture and to what extent are we merely free to determine our destiny.

My grandson Gabriel pointed out to me the other day that we share 50% of our DNA with the common banana so how much influence can our ancestors DNA have on our health, our personality and our future. Are similarities with some of our ancestors merely coincidental or can they be traced. In the coming 3 or 4 months I will take a 2 month course called Genetics & Medical Family History to attempt to answer some of these questions as they relate to our ancestors. It might be fun to track some characteristics and document ancestors and cousins with diabetes, cancer or celiac. I am starting to track simple hereditary patterns and the reason they occur, with a view to assembling a medical pedigree. If you wish to share feel free to do so and if you feel free to have your information shared in a newsletter let me know this as well.

Additions to <http://www.retson.ca/retsongeneology.html> since April 1 2022

Our Rice Ancestors <http://www.retson.ca/rice.pdf>
Our Retson Ancestors <http://retson.ca/retson.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.