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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>

New Communities at Ancestry, Cultural Groups and making sense of a divided world

During the past while reviewing my DNA Genealogy I see that Ancestry DNA has added a new Community entitled “Edinburgh to Newcastle Upon Tyne” to its DNA Genealogy. This new categorization appealed to me as a place to put a line of Ancestors which neither seemed to fit into England or Scotland. Around the age of 12 I learned from my Great Uncle John, that we were not really Scottish our rather English. As time went on I found that indeed some of our Scottish Ancestors had originally come from England. But this line seemed to differ from the bulk of our other English Ancestors in many ways. First they were from the North of England. Secondly, while almost all the other English ancestors had left England for North America in the 1600s. Thirdly, this line was the least religious of all the English ancestors. Finally, while this line was the most rural, and generally in a lower economic class than the earlier ancestors. This line was the latest line to make earlier discoveries of origin.

The new community area covers an area commonly referred to as the Borders. The term Borders sometimes has a wider use, referring to all of the counties adjoining the English border, also including Dumfriesshire and Kirkcudbrightshire, as well as Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland in England. Roxburghshire and Berwickshire historically bore the brunt of the conflicts with England, both during declared wars such as the Wars of Scottish Independence, and armed raids which took place in the times of the Border Reivers. The Borders were once seen as a unitary people but as time went on the Border between Scotland and England began to divide the people. “ Carlisle is an English city inhabited by English citizens nominally attached to the Church of England and definitely situated in England while Hawick would be horrified if anyone suggested it was not true-blue, ‘Flower of Scotland’, dyed in the wool Scots.

Ancestor family roots which would be included in this areas on the paternal side include, Retson, Hamilton, Bateman, Bell, Turnbull, Turner, Noble, Templeton, Gibson, Howat, Bowman, Law, Skilbeck, and on the maternal side, Burns, Richardson, Jaffrey, Brown, McNab, Hope, McMin, Little, Coulter, Cambell, Roddick, Harkness, Irving, Currie, Campbell, Armstrong, Thompson, Irvine, There are many others who have yet to be researched.

Border reivers were raiders along the Anglo-Scottish border from the late 13th century to the beginning of the 17th century. The reivers were both English and Scottish and raided both sides of the border impartially, so long as the people they raided had no powerful protectors and no connection to their own kin. Livestock was easily rustled and driven by mounted reivers who knew the country well. The raiders might also remove easily portable household goods or valuables and take prisoners for ransom. The difficulty and uncertainties of basic human survival meant that communities and/or people kindred to each other would seek security through group strength and cunning.

They would attempt to improve their livelihoods at their nominal enemies' expense, enemies who were frequently also just trying to survive. Loyalty to a feeble or distant monarch and reliance on the effectiveness of the law usually made people a target for depredations rather than conferring any security.

Both sides of the border were divided into Marches, each under a march warden. The march wardens' various duties included the maintenance of patrols, watches and garrisons to deter raiding from the other kingdom.

March wardens (and the lesser officers such as keepers of fortified places) were rarely effective at maintaining the law. The Scottish wardens were usually borderers themselves and were complicit in raiding. They almost invariably showed favour to their own kindred, which caused jealousy and even hatred among other Scottish border families. Many English officers were from southern counties in England and often could not command the loyalty or respect of their locally recruited subordinates or the local population.

By the death of Elizabeth I of England, things had come to such a pitch along the border that the English government considered re-fortifying and rebuilding Hadrian's Wall. 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. There has been much cross-border migration since the Pacification of the Borders, and families that were once Scots now identify themselves as English and vice versa. Hawick in Scotland holds an annual Reivers' festival.

Borderers (particularly those banished by James VI of Scotland) took part in the plantation of Ulster becoming the people known as Ulster-Scots (Scotch-Irish in America). Reiver descendants can be found throughout Ulster with names such as Elliot, Armstrong, Beattie, Bell, Carruthers, Hume and Heron, Rutledge, and Turnbills amongst others.

The battles which took place in the Borders are difficult to understand from an outsiders perspective since battles were not so much as battles between Scotland and England as battles between those who supported nobles who supported the King and those who opposed the king. Religion played a significant role being three sided: Church of England, Presbyterian (Covenantors) and Catholics.

The Battle of Culloden, fought on April 16, 1746, was the final confrontation of the Jacobite Rising of 1745. This battle marked a decisive defeat for the Jacobite forces led by Charles Edward Stuart, commonly known as "Bonnie Prince Charlie," against the government troops commanded by the Duke of Cumberland, who was the son of King George II of Britain. The Jacobites were seeking to restore the Stuart monarchy to the British throne, believing that the throne rightfully belonged to the Stuart family. The government army, on the other hand, was determined to enforce the rule of the Hanoverian King George II.

The conflict was brief yet brutal, lasting only about an hour. The defeat was crushing, with around 1,500 Jacobites killed or wounded, compared to significantly lighter casualties on the government side. The aftermath of the Battle of Culloden was grim for the Jacobite supporters. The British government took measures to dismantle the clan system, which was a fundamental part of Highland culture, in an effort to prevent further rebellions. These acts included proscribing the wearing of tartan and carrying arms, and the influence of the clan chiefs was significantly reduced. Jacobite aspirations for the British throne were ended and the integration of Scotland into the United Kingdom began leading to profound social, cultural, and economic changes in the Highlands.

My research on family Roots from the Border area have been affected both by the rural nature of the rural area and the availability of records from Scotland. The most valuable site for researching Scottish records is the website ScotlandPeople. But unlike most databases that charge one sum for all records ScotlandPeople charges per record. I have recently returned to my research on Scottish ancestors with the use of Scotland People.

During the past month I have taken up reading some books as a result of the finding of the "New Community". The first book is Moffat, Alistair. The Borders: A History of the Borders from Earliest Times (p. 1). Birlinn

Limited. Of which I have the Kindle Edition. This book gives an excellent history of the area and I am in the process of reading it in detail.

The second book, *Albion's Seed, Four British Folkways in America*, (America: a cultural history) by David Hackett Fischer I purchased many years ago but gained a new appreciation for it. We tend to look for a single cultural group identities such as English, or Scottish, Irish without realizing that there may be more than one such cultural group from a Country. Fisher identifies four British cultural groups of which the fourth one covers this community. I highly recommend this book as well for those looking for commonalities among this community and our ancestors from Northern Ireland. Many of these ancestors were originally from Scotland and while I have not traced them all back to Scotland believe most came from this community.

The third book, Fareed Zakaria's *Age of Revolution. Progress and Backlash from 1600 to the Present*, dovetails nicely with *Albion's Seed*. I bought this book in an attempt to understand the situation to the south of us. As I continued to read it, it almost seemed to be a sequel to the first. Fareed concludes three forces—technology, economics, identity—together almost always generate backlash that produces a new politics. Progress is always followed by backlash and an attempt to return to a nostalgic past.

During the month of April and May, the media is filled with news stories of student and others protesting on university campuses in the United States and Canada concerning the war in Gaza. The period reminds me of the 1960s when I was a student both at the University of British Columbia (UBC Vancouver) and University of Laval (Quebec).

British Columbia was on a geological fault line and following a minor earthquake in Vancouver earlier in the University year the Student Association believed it should take steps to protest the American government underground nuclear testing in Alaska. A number of buses were hired to take students from the University to the American border at Blaine, Washington. I hadn't taken a great deal of time to study the issue due to a heavy course load, but since classes were canceled for the day I joined a couple of friends and climbed aboard the buses.

At the border there was the usual round of chants and rants and speakers making what I considered unrealistic demands. I was standing beside an RCMP officer who came from Nova Scotia and after sharing with him that I came from Nova Scotia I began to engage in discussions about the different culture at Dalhousie (which I had attended the year before) and Vancouver. All of a sudden there was what appeared to be a spontaneous wave of students move by us heading down the road. The officer received a message which he translated to me that a certain contingent of officers, not including himself were being directed to move to another location to another border crossing. While sympathetic to the students I must admit that I felt I had more in common with the officer that day.

The next year at University of Laval while heading to classes one day, I had to move through a massive student assembly to get my "Junior Year Abroad" program. There I learned that Pierre Laport, a Quebec Cabinet Minister had been kidnapped and the Army was being called out to enforce "The War Measures Act". I was living with a family of separatist sympathizers, and felt very secure. Many of the other non-Quebec students that day were considering pulling up and heading home.

Growing up I considered myself lucky. I was born in a relatively stable period, following two devastating "World Wars", in a relatively rich and progressive country and in a period of technological innovation that provided great hope for the future. I experienced a changing world but one that seemed to make sense as the change occurred. In some sense, I never experienced the world I lived in as 'revolutionary'.

What makes a period revolutionary? In his "Introduction", Fareed indicates that in 64 BC, the youngest brother of Rome's greatest orator, Cicero, decided to write for his brother a guide of sorts to winning elections, a set of practical lessons for his sometimes too idealistic sibling. Among his suggestions: "promise everything to everyone, always be seen in public surrounded by your most passionate supporters, and remind voters of your opponents' sex scandals" Judging by today's standards more than two thousand years later, political consultants have not changed their advice.

In examining my ancestors lives, the period that sticks out as the most 'revolutionary' was the period surrounding the American Revolution. On my Father's side, our first ancestors to arrived in Canada preceded the American Revolution, arriving in Colchester County Nova Scotia in the 1760s. Their arrival followed a mere 5 years following the expulsion of the Acadians who had refused to swear allegiance to the king. On April 17, 1777, His Majesty's Council reported

Resolved that the Inhabitants of Truro, Onslow and Londonderry be call'd on to take the Oath of Allegiance Supremacy & Abjuration at a Special Sessions of the Peace to be held forthwith for that purpose in the Township of Onslow [HM Council Minutes]

Some background to possibly explain why these townships were target might include the Battle of Fort Cumberland also known as . The Battle of Fort Cumberland (also known as the Eddy Rebellion) was an attempt by a small number of militia commanded by Jonathan Eddy to bring the American Revolutionary War to Nova Scotia in late 1776. (For those interested in greater detail I would refer you to the following 3 link:

https://books.google.ca/books/about/Memoir_of_Col_Jonathan_Eddy_of_Eddington.html?id=KkLLxWdz_eKAC&printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button&hl=en&newbks=1&newbks_redir=0&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

<http://www.erudit.org/revue/ram/1932/v11/n1/300101ar.pdf>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Fort_Cumberland_\(1776\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Fort_Cumberland_(1776))

Eddy attempted to besiege and storm Fort Cumberland in central Nova Scotia (near the present-day border between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) in November 1776. Eddy and his forces were successfully repelled. In retaliation for the role of locals who supported the siege, numerous homes and farms were destroyed, and Patriot sympathizers were driven out of the area. The Battle of Fort Cumberland was poorly documented. The involvement of local inhabitants in the siege was generally understated or unknown but it was believed that several men from Cobequid were involved. To date I can find only one of our Ancestors, Thomas Archibald, 5th son of David Archibald (brother of Samuel our direct ancestor) was ever charged for his activities in support of Majesty's enemies and he was acquitted.

On May 5th, 1777, at a Council meeting in Halifax the results of the Oath Taking were considered. It was resolved that all persons who refused to swear the oath should be held and deemed as Popish Recusants and should be proceeded against by due process of Law. Council was provided with a list of names of those who had refused to take the oath. Included were our Onslow Ancestors, David Hoar, Thomas Lynds, and our Truro Ancestors, Thomas Archibald, James Archibald (2), Thomas Archibald Junior, David Archibald 3rd, Matthew Taylor(2), John Archibald Junior, Samuel Archibald (2), and Robert Archibald. Our direct ancestor David Nelson took the oath as did David Archibald Junior. On June 13th, 1777, the Samuel Archibald was denied his seat for Truro having refused to take the Oath.

Lack of documentation prevents discovery of any consequences for refusing the Oath, but none were deported as was the case of the Acadians.