



Retson Genealogy Newsletter

November 15 2022

This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Grace and Clifford Retson and traces the genealogy of that couple. A website is located at <http://www.retson.ca/retsongeneology.html>

Wikitree – The One Tree Project - www.Wikitree.com

Wikitree is a tool that I started using a couple of years ago to make my databases available to those who did not subscribe to Ancestry, My Heritage or Find My Past. I also found it an excellent source to links to new information for more distant ancestors. If anyone wants to be added to a Trusted List to help add biographical information send me an email.

Wikitree is a community tree which has to date has 32,136,201 persons 10,562,271 with DNA test connections. Wikitree is open to everyone and completely free. Everyone, even non-members, are welcome to enjoy the fruits of the tree, but to be able to actively participate in adding ancestors, a volunteer needs to agree with the mission and sign our 9-point Honor Code and agree to 9 points. (see: https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Special:Honor_Code)

<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Retson-7> is my profile, <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Retson-8> is my father's and <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Atkinson-4474> my Mother's.

Each day I add additional profiles and every now and from time to time add bibliographies.

If you would like to make additions go to

<http://www.wikitree.com/index.php?title=Special:Userlogin&type=signup>.

Once you sign up you'll be welcomed by one of our Greeters. They'll help you get going and share links to pages that can help you learn more about the site and our community.

Without contributing you can see how many of our relatives have been added to date. To see all my ancestors go to <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Retson-7> and click on the tab marked ancestors. I have the tab in red, circled in red. There is an App called ancestor explorer which can produce a downloadable listing. This app is found under the tab Find choose App and then Ancestor Explorer and fill in the information of whose ancestor you want. This is the profile name that appears at the end of the website for each ancestor. Example Retson-7 for myself. <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Retson-7>

Profile (public view) Edit Images Family Tree & Tools Changes

Comments Matches Sources

James Clifford Retson
 Born 28 Jul 1948 in Truro, Nova Scotia
 Son of George Clifford Retson and Grace (Atkinson) Retson
 Brother of Ted Retson, Jane (Retson) Earle, Mavis (Retson) Yorke, Donald Retson and Bob Retson [\[add sibling\]](#)
 Husband of Roberta Gill — married 29 Jun 1974 in Hamilton
[\[add spouse?\]](#)
 Father of Jillie Retson and Julia Retson [\[add child\]](#)
 Profile manager: James Retson [\[send private message\]](#)
 Retson-7 created 21 Feb 2016 | Last modified 10 Nov 2022 | Last tracked change: 1 Nov 2022
 00:06: Admin WikiTree added the October 2022 Club 100 badge for James Retson. [\[Thank Admin for this\]](#)
 This page has been accessed 785 times.

Retson-7 (James Retson) has 367 ancestors within 12 generations.

Name	Birth Date	Birth Location	Death Date	Death Location
John Archibald	1858-09-00	Coleborne, Londonderry, Ulster, Ireland	175-09-10	Londonderry, Woodbridge County, New Hampshire, New England
Marjaret Auchinloch	1758-00-00	Londonderry, Rockingham Co., New Hampshire	1784-00-00	Tuas, Galzfelder Co., Nova Scotia
Robert Archibald	1858-00-00	Londonderry, Ireland	1785-03-00	East Gony, New Hampshire
Samuel Archibald Sr.	1714-00-00	Londonderry, Ulster, Ireland	1774-07-15	Truro, Colchester, Nova Scotia
Alexander Armour	1792-00-00		1870-02-19	Canine, Ayrshire, Scotland
Marjaret Armour	1828-07-28	Born, Scotland	1889-01-20	Canine, Scotland
James Armstrong	1778-00-00	Dunfries shire, Scotland	1818-04-15	Ayr, Dunbartonshire, Scotland
Edward Ashton	1858-00-18		1944-01-09	
Edward Ashton	1857-02-20	World, Grenville County, Ontario	1957-01-14	Vancouver, British Columbia
Frank Atkinson				
Thomas Atkinson	1828-09-00	Ireland	1919-01-15	Menloville, Ontario
William Atkinson	1751-12-21	Minery Hill, Co. Armagh, Ulster, Ireland	1824-11-28	Minery Parish, County Armagh, Ireland
William Atkinson	1791-00-00	of Money, Kinross Parish, County Armagh, Ireland	1885-12-00	Monkville, Grenville County, Ontario, Canada
Elizabeth Bagley	1660-06-00	Newport, Newport, Rhode Island	1717-12-29	Taunton, Newport, Rhode Island
John Bagley	1850-00-00	Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts Bay	1711-12-17	Newport, Newport, Rhode Island
Francis Ball	1818-00-00	England	1848-10-00	Springfield, Hampshire, Massachusetts
Mary Ball	1873-08-12	Springfield, Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay Colony	1785-10-14	Springfield, Hampshire, Province of Massachusetts
Samuel Ball	1648-08-18	Springfield, Hampshire, Massachusetts	1686-03-18	Springfield, Hampshire, Massachusetts
Jane Barber	1600-00-00	Helm-on-Spreading-Moor, East Riding, Yorkshire, England	1650-09-07	Rowley, Essex, Massachusetts Bay Colony
Milfray Barker	1578-00-00	Yorkshire, England	0000-00-00	
Ann Barzman	1790-04-18	Bethman, Westmoreland, England	1889-03-15	Duan, Ayrshire, Scotland, United Kingdom
Thomas Bateman	1770-00-00	England	0000-00-00	
Alexander Beabe	1555-00-00	Great Addington, Northamptonshire, England	1624-01-06	Great Addington, Northamptonshire, England
Alice Beabe	1600-00-00	Great Addington, Northamptonshire, England	1656-10-00	Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts Bay
Deacon Bellinger	1638-08-00	Spencer, Essex, Massachusetts Bay Colony	1720-08-00	Spencer, Middlesex, Massachusetts Bay
John Bellinger	1813-00-00	Wethers, England	1860-08-20	Lowell, Essex, Massachusetts Bay

I have been adding additional persons to this tree with the ultimate goal of including all persons from my database. If you want to add your Bibliography I can add your profile and once you join, I can add you to a trusted list that will allow you to add and edit the profile. I will be sharing some profiles in future newsletters.

Under the tabs on the top, right side are various tools and apps that can be used to produce list of ancestors of any person by typing in the profile name (example my profile is Retson-7).

Are all Retsons Related? One Name Study

Continuing from last month, there are Retsons in the world that are not related to us. The largest number of Retsons are located in United States at 72 followed by Scotland at 70. One of the largest families of Retsons not related to us is the Greek line (see <https://www.retson.ca/GreekAmericanRetsonLine.pdf>). This family emigrated to the United States and acquired the name Retson upon entering the United States. Nicholas George Retson was naturalized 17 Oct 1898 in the Connecticut District Court. I have a number of the names that are listed on the public file as simply male or female Retson but are not disclosed on the page listed above for privacy reasons. This family has a number of names similar to our line such as George and James. There are a number of Doctors (PhDs as well as medical). The largest concentration of this family is in Wisconsin and California. I am slowly moving to a one name Study and at the moment am storing the information on it at <https://www.retson.ca/RetsonOneNameStudy.pdf> and by placing profiles on Wikitree (Search for Retsons)

Poverty and Welfare

As I go further back in time searching for ancestors I am amazed at how much easier it is to find the rich than the poor. The rich tend to leave more records such as land records, wills, tax records and news recorded in newspapers including their obituaries. The poor tend not to own land, may not have significant property to require a will and rarely make the news. In the past the poor lacked the writing skills to leave written histories of their lives or community. When others write histories of their ancestors, they tend to wax eloquently on the rich, the powerful, and the famous and less so on the greater number that contributed to the survival of the line including the poor. I use an app in Wikitree that gives me the ancestors who are missing at least one parent. This essentially represents the end of the ancestral lines. So often the line ends (or should I say the ancestral line begins in poverty.)

Much more was written about the rich and powerful. <http://www.vlib.us/medieval/lectures/paupers.html> discusses the poor during the middle ages. The poor is taken here as meaning all those who were thrown on the charitable resources for support. In the Middle Ages, poverty was common. About 20% of the medieval population were destitute and homeless, wandering the roads of Europe looking for work or for charity, and climbing beneath a roadside hedge to die. Life was harsh, with a limited diet and little comfort.

The poor fell into one or another of three groups:

1. The physically incompetent: the mentally retarded, blind and deaf, halt and aged, the deformed, maimed or mutilated, "lepers," epileptics, emotionally disturbed, and others.

2. The socially marginalized: widows and orphans without protection, any criminals who had been "marked," captured soldiers who had been maimed, old women, the "immoral," and others cast out of their own societies.
3. The economically deprived: those who had been left homeless by the agricultural and commercial revolutions or during early years of immigration to frontier lands.

The "socially marginalized" widows in previous centuries suffered upon the death of their sole breadwinner. Unless they could return to their families of origin they were forced to remarry early. Often husbands who lost their wife would search out widows that could help in looking after the children. Marriages of convenience were more common than romantic affairs. A report on the issue of adoptions in Nova Scotia during the 1950s suggested that poverty was the greatest cause of infants and children being given up for care by others.

Our ancestors that came over on the Mayflower had a few rough years particularly the first year when over 50% of those who landed in Plymouth perished. Again our ancestors who landed in the Cobequid Townships of Truro and Onslow had a rough few years until the land was cleared, crops were planted and shelter secured. During these periods neighbours depended on each other and food was shared as required.

Other examples of economic poverty followed technological changes such as the use of poisons to catch moles in Scotland. Skilled molecatchers could earn a good income before the use of poisons. After poisons anyone could catch moles and the occupation fell on rough times. Economic poverty could also follow political changes such as highland clearings in Scotland where farmers lost grazing lands. Ireland also suffered poverty due to economic changes occurring in Europe and England

England was basically a subsistence economy where each village made most of the things it needed and most of the population were subsistence farmers. Women were subordinate to men, in both the peasant and noble classes, and were expected to ensure the smooth running of the household. Children had a 50% survival rate beyond age one, and began to contribute to family life around age twelve.

Before the state, the Church provided relief from poverty. The Church administered a 10% tax on Europe's total annual production (the tithe) to help the poor. Many felt that God had made the poor to give them the opportunity to gain merit through charity, so they did not attack causes: the poor will always be with you. By the 1100's, the middle class came to the aid of the Church with added endowments and with the establishment of private and municipal charitable institutions. By about 1200, the matter had gotten entirely out of control. The situation grew somewhat better after 1300. Plagues and famines kept the numbers of the poor down, particularly since the paupers died in far greater numbers than the well-to-do. When the Black Death took about a third of the population, laborers were suddenly in short supply. The paupers now had a chance at a better life. But the propertied classes immediately began to condemn and regulate, rather than assist, them. It became clear to many that the paupers were a guarantee of cheap labor, and that the leaders of the economy had no wish to see them disappear.

By the close of the fourteenth century, many previously well-to-do groups had been driven by economic pressures into poverty, and there were stirrings of protests against an unjust society and economy. The poor were increasingly regulated and guarded, and institutional assurances erected that they would not better their condition. In 1388 Control of vagrancy was maintained by requiring that able beggars be severely punished. By 1494 any vagrant able to work was whipped or in severe cases had his ears cut off or were hanged. 1547 poor law allowed for branding and slavery for persistent vagrancy. 1552 Parishes were required to have a strong chest for receipt of alms for the poor. 1597/98 a poor rate was made compulsory and the division made between those capable of living in their own homes with some outdoor relief money and supplies and indoor relief for

the “lame, impotent, old and blind” taken into parishes abiding house or poorhouse. Parish chest records may be the earliest record we have of some of our ancestors.

A temporary Poor law of 1601 was made permanent in 1640 provided for the Oversees of the Poor, civil parishes were considered the administrative unit for of poor relief, poor houses were erected in each parish and cost covered by taxes, on inhabitants, land owners, those in receipt of tithes and parish fines. The 1662 Act of Settlement established the concept of each person being settled in one parish that was responsible for them. In 1691 law required a register to kept of those who were receiving poor relief. The parish chest kept both the register and the funds for relief. These records are sometimes the only records available concerning our poor ancestors. Parishes were responsible for those who were regarded as settled . Those who were not able to provide for themselves were not permitted to enter.

Relief of the Poor and Welfare provided by the state has been with us since at least the beginning of the 1600s. No one likes welfare. Conservatives regard it as a threat to the work ethic, and a reward for laziness. Progressives regard it as incomplete, inadequate and punitive. Poor people who have to rely on it find it degrading, demoralizing and mean. Over the past 100 years progress has been made in most developed states by the provision of social insurance which provide entitlements for everyone by virtue of fixed, objective criteria such as age, disability or unemployment. Additionally in most developed states education, medical health universal income assistance such as family allowances have set a minimum level of standard of existence.

Post World War 2 saw an evolution in the concept of social rights based on citizenship in addition to or necessary for the enjoyments of political and civil rights. In the United States the civil rights movement transformed the historic links between race, poverty and opportunity into a national disgrace. The Analyses that followed riots in the that country argued what everybody already knew: poverty was an issue of race as well as class.

In Canada, progress continued from early in the war years to the 1980s. Social rights advanced including the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share in the full social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society. The state more and more was regarded as being required to provide a modicum of material security in an insecure world that a relentlessly market-based society would deny. The provision of education, health care, social assistance, unemployment insurance , minimum standards of employment minimum wage legislation and a host of other measures moved forward. The 1980s brought a reaction from conservative forces which continue to the new century. The federal government’s repeal of the Canadian Assistance Plan made dramatic cuts possible. The Supreme Court in *Finlay v. Canada (Minister of Finance)* held that Provinces were merely required set benefits levels that were “compatible” with an individual’s basic requirement, but did not have to “fulfill” or “equal” basic requirements. The recent pandemic tested the proposition as to how well an individualized society could survive in the modern era. The states massive involvement in the economy and welfare during was accompanied by strong an attempt at preventive measures of vaccines which followed riots in our capital city. Mandatory social security has begun to replace welfare as considered important variable in a modern society Forces opposed to this notion will continue into the future.

Additions to <http://www.retson.ca/retsongeneology.html> since October 1 2022
Our Armour Ancestors <https://www.retson.ca/armour.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.