



EDGAR EVENTS

**Researching and sharing Edgar family
history – No. 21, October 2008**



DNA Update

by James Edgar (Editor) (jamesedgar@sasktel.net)



Dr. Bill Edgar in Yorkshire, England, has his result – as I said in the last newsletter, I suspected he would be an I1b or an I. So, **SteveUK** owes me 12,000 pints of Guinness because I was right — Dr. Bill is in Haplogroup “I” and quite closely related to **James Edgar** of Thornhill and **Norman Edgar** of Dumfries, both of whom we convinced to submit their DNA to our cause last May.

Recall from last issue Steve was laying odds that Dr. Bill was an E3b, while I steadfastly held onto my suspicion that he was an I. See more about this in Steve’s following article.

We’ve also had some recent queries from scattered Edgars about joining our DNA group – welcome aboard **Roy Edgar** of Ohio, who joined us late in August; **Philip Edgar** of Charlotte, Michigan; **Kandie Cansler** of California; **Janice Hogg** of the UK; and **Sharlene Miller** (researching PA and OH Edgars in the USA).

New DNA Tests

by Steve Edgar of Weston, Crewe (steven-edgar@sky.com)



So Dr. Bill is Haplogroup “I” (my hope is that he doesn’t mind the “Dr. Bill” title, but these nicknames do help separate individuals with the same names). He is on the Ancestry.com table as William Edgar (Yorkshire), and he has close ties with Norman Edgar (Dumfries) and James Edgar (Thornhill). Both from County Dumfries and Galloway in Scotland.

Significantly, Dr. Bill’s ancestors came from Roughfirth (sometimes called “Roughforth”) and, after a bit of investigation at the local pub (the work James and I have to do on behalf of the trust is demanding, but we manage) (good beer as well!), we found that the Roughfirth name is now used for an island in the estuary near Kippford. Kippford is on the east bank of the Nith estuary in Dumfries and Galloway. Dr. Bill has a very good and accurate family tree dating back to Samuel Edgar (b. 1768) and Jean McKinnel (b. 1771). Samuel was born and bred in Roughfirth. This was a tremendous opportunity for the DNA project, as we don’t have a 250-year history for any proven family from this area of Scotland — and now we have DNA as well!

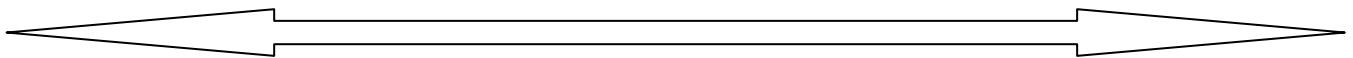
The match showing is six generations from James and Norman, who are two generations from each other. The point is that the ancestors on Dr. Bill’s table are very likely the ancestors of James and Norman; Samuel (1768) being the common ancestor. We need to trawl the census records for Norman and James and make these matches. Now we know they are related, life is a lot easier, even if we find a date that is slightly out. In fact, Norman and James should be matching on either the 1901 or 1881 census — their match is that close.

Without going into too much detail, without permission, James's father was James, Norman's father was Thomas. Neither could give me their grandfather's name, who could well be the connection. In Norman's family, the names Samuel, William, and Thomas show, similarly to the earlier family of Dr. Bill.

This places the family in Roughfirth accurately in the mid-1700s. We do know from Dr. Bill's records that they were seafarers, and, with the other matches in Co. Down and Cumbria, it does seem to fit the pattern of this Edgar family moving around and settling around the Irish Sea. The other worldwide connections point to migration from Ireland.

What does puzzle me is the relationship between the "I"s and the "I1b"s. We have relationship matches that seem to contradict each other. Some "I"s are closer to "I1b"s than they are to other "I"s (and vice versa). The two groups share a lot of DNA matches but seem to contradict on the generation counts. No doubt, this puzzle will sort itself out with more DNA results; we might even get a "missing link" that solves the puzzle. [Note: Ancestry.com are presently in the process of refining their Haplogroup predictor, so we should see this conundrum resolved shortly. I and I1b are pretty much the same thing. Ed.]

These results are showing clearly that there are four groups of Edgars: I1a; 'I + I1b; R1b; and E3b. The first two are really strong indicators of old family origins, the E3b has too little results as yet to categorize it a major family, but could indicate an early adoption into the family. The R1bs are the puzzle; they are so diverse; they are not related to each other, why not? Are we short of results? We just don't seem to get the matches. I can't believe that this group is as unconnected as the DNA results show. If the results are really as diverse as this, then it is indicative of adoptions later rather than sooner in their family history. No doubt, time will tell.



*Steve Edgar of Weston, Crewe (steven-edgar@sky.com) suggests this as a good read — borrowed shamelessly from an article written by **Larry D. Smith, Brockville, U.S.A.** for www.ulsterancestry.com/ulster-scots-3.html*

This is the third in a series about how the Edgars and other Protestant families got into Northern Ireland and then populated the New World.

The Great Migration (Ulster Sails West)

The Great Migration from Ulster to America began in 1717. In some instances, Ulster families had immigrated to the New World before 1717, but those instances were few and isolated. Not all of them succeeded. In 1636, a group left Ireland but had to return because of violent storms *en route*. A group of Presbyterian families from the Laggan [north of Glasgow, Scotland. Ed.] had better luck in 1684 and safely accomplished their

voyage. Here and there, over the years, individual families made the trip across the Atlantic Ocean.

Some families left Ulster for religious reasons, but most left in response to economic hardships. The English Parliament began to impose trade restrictions on the manufacture and sale of woollen articles in the late-1690s. Up to that time, Ulster had thrived on her wool and linen industries and had prospered more than any other province in Ireland. The immigration of the Huguenots in the 1680s to Ulster had strengthened her already strong wool industry by introducing some new methods for the manufacture of linen from flax. The prosperity Ulster was experiencing was seen as a threat by the English who, in 1698, petitioned the King to protect their own interests. Parliament, at the King's urging, passed the Woollen Act in the following year. The Woollen Act prohibited the exportation of Irish wool and cloth to anywhere except England and Wales [plus that the Irish should export linen, provisions, and fish instead. Ed.]. The Woollen Act resulted in a period of economic depression throughout Ulster.

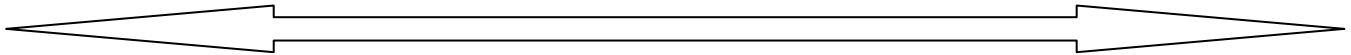
Coupled with the economic hardships spawned by the Woollen Act was a legal practice known as rack-renting, instituted in the early 1700s. Rack-renting was the practice whereby a renter could legally raise the rent when a lease had run out. Although that practice does not seem unusual in this day and age, it was quite a departure from the traditional during the 17th and 18th centuries. The traditional practice was for a lease to run approximately 30 years, with the option of being renewed at the same rate. The renter would be inclined to improve the property under the assumption that he would be able to reside there indefinitely, and then pass the lease on to his own sons. Money was hard to come by and rack-renting forced many renters to default on their payments. A widespread hatred of the practice, and those landlords who employed it, swept through Ulster. Having received favourable reports from others who had gone to America, many families resolved to leave Ireland.

The thing that finally led to the Great Migration came in the form of a severe drought that stretched from 1714 to 1719. The drought affected not only food crops, but also hindered the growing of flax, and thereby adversely affected the linen industry. Lack of sufficient grass for grazing and the disease known as rot killed the sheep needed by the wool industry. It is often noted in a broad statement that the Europeans immigrated to the New World because of religious persecution, and that may well have been the reason for some of them. But the Ulster-Scots came primarily because of the droughts and the failing economy in their homeland.

There were five major waves of emigration from the Irish province of Ulster. It should be noted that there were very few instances recorded of any of the native Irish leaving their homeland; the Irish first immigrated to the United States after the mid-1800s when the failure of the potato crop caused widespread famine. The emigrants who left Ireland prior to the American Revolutionary War came solely from the province of Ulster. More than 5000 people emigrated from Ulster in 1717-1718. Those families sent back favourable reports, which helped to pave the way for future migrations. Between 1725 and 1729, there was another wave of emigration from Ulster, again induced primarily by the suffering caused by rack-renting. During that migration, it was estimated that over 6000 people left Ulster in 1728 alone. In 1740, a major famine devastated Ireland, and brought about the third major wave of emigration from Ulster. The fourth wave emigrated in 1754-1755, partly as a result of hardships occasioned by drought and

partly because of an effort made by the governor of the province of North Carolina to attract settlers to that colony. Governor Dobbs had left Ulster himself, and his call was answered by many other Ulstermen. The last major wave of emigration occurred between 1771 and 1775. At least 25,000 people are believed to have emigrated during this period. That great wave of departure from Ireland was motivated primarily by the eviction of so many families from county Antrim, when the leases on the estate of the Marquis of Donegal expired and the settlers could not comply with the rack-renting demands. Altogether, approximately 200,000 people, primarily of Scottish descent and Presbyterian faith, left Ulster and sailed for America between 1717 and 1775.

The Ulster-Scots chose the colony of Pennsylvania as their destination in the New World. When considering which colony to make their new homes in, the Ulster- Scots really had only limited choices. The southern colonies were not very enticing with their slave labour and plantation system of agriculture. Nor was Maryland because it had been established as a Roman Catholic colony. Although not Catholic, New York had made it clear to earlier immigrants that she would not tolerate religious diversity. Of the choices between New England and Pennsylvania, the earliest immigrants had been made to feel unwelcome at Boston, the primary port of entry. The single colony that welcomed the Ulster- Scots with open arms was Pennsylvania. As noted previously, Governor Dobbs of North Carolina invited fellow Ulster-Scots to settle in that colony, but that was only after Pennsylvania had become overly crowded with immigrants. In fact, that was one of the selling points the governor used to entice settlers southward from William Penn's colony.



[The placement of the next article from another writer, Frankie Sawyer, of Tennessee seems entirely appropriate. Ed.]

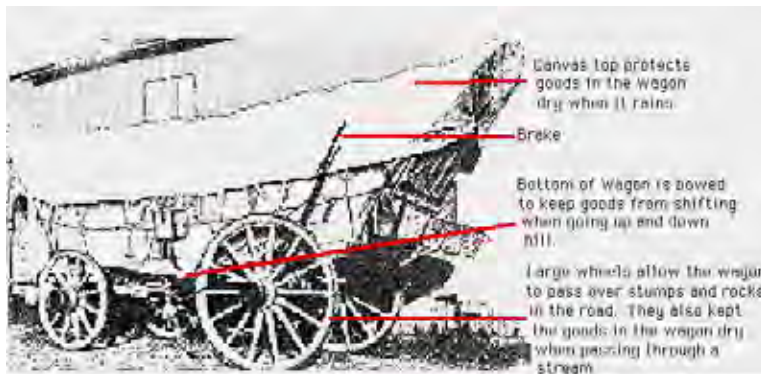
The Great Pennsylvania Wagon Trail and the Scots-Irish

by Frankie Sawyer (docnhim@infionline.net)

The Great Pennsylvania Wagon Trail and the Scots-Irish are intrinsically bound together, for the trail opened the way for settlement in the eastern and southeastern America. The trail followed the route of Indian pathways, and adventuresome immigrants utilized the poorly defined thoroughfare as they traveled east of the Appalachian Mountains through Virginia, the Carolinas, and into Georgia.

It is said that the Scots-Irish who came to America in the early beginnings were middle-class farmers and tradesmen, who left the poor rural counties of Northern Ireland looking for a better life. They brought their skills, their dreams, and their determination. To be sure there were many poor, dispossessed immigrants, many of them coming during the times of famine. Interestingly enough, while the Scots were looking for new

land, their goal was not to claim it, but to use it and move on; forever restless, looking for something better, hardships encountered notwithstanding.



By about 1765, the trail was cleared for wagon travel and the influx grew to unimaginable numbers. Portions of the trail were little more than narrow footpaths and needed clearing. Great Conestoga wagons, some 25 feet long and 11 feet high, pulled by 10 or 12 horses or oxen, plodded south toward new lands and new opportunities.

One can only imagine what a stream of traffic was moving - people walking, livestock herded along, and the noise of creaking wheels, braying animals, voices echoing through the forests, and outriders always on the lookout for hostile Indians. Amenities along the way were few. It took weeks to cover what modern transport covers in a day, but the steel determination and indefatigable spirit of the Scots-Irish never gave up.

To be sure, Edgars were involved in this migration, for in the early land records of Walton County, Georgia, a Jonathan Edgar of Philadelphia is listed as purchasing land in that area just northeast of Atlanta. Evidence of this purchase appears just prior to the entry in the U.S. Census of John Thomas Edgar, my forefather. The U.S. Census, which began in 1790 and each ten years thereafter, has Edgars listed in different locations in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia; all those entries being in the general area of the Great Wagon Trail. Certainly, their kinship cannot be documented, but it seems safe to assume that a relationship existed among some of them. Perhaps some of these Edgars were Loyalists and received land grants from the English, but those records are hard to find. The War of 1812 could have claimed Edgar lives, and I have wondered if that may be why we have been unsuccessful in finding a trace of John Thomas Edgar's parentage. It was soon after the War of 1812 that we found the Edgar brothers - John, Hugh, Absalum, and Henry in Walton County, Georgia.

The tenacity and determination of these early settlers is amazing. The difficulties encountered and hardships endured are unimaginable in this 21st century. The rustic log cabins that were thrown together, the small garden patches and farmland carved from ancient towering forests, little if any medical care, and the constant fear of Indians is "movie stuff" to the 21st-century American.

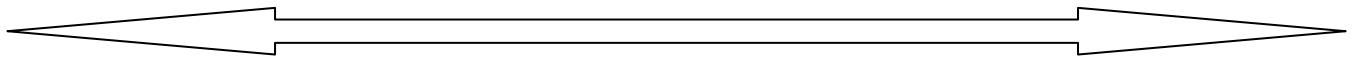
Where the dangerous ferry crossings existed, mighty concrete bridges facilitate present day travel. Where the rustic cabins stood (now tourist attractions), magnificent homes are established. Where humble log churches provided places of worship, there are now modern buildings equipped with the latest in technology. All these improvements in lifestyles are due to those early determined settlers from across the sea. Many of their graves lie overgrown and forgotten, and



many of us do not even know the name of grandparents, much less names of their ancestors. This lack of knowledge, of course, is due in part to poor or no records and partly due to indifference to those self-sacrificing Scots-Irish, Germans, and English settlers.

Of course, it was not just in North America that the Scots-Irish settled, and no doubt, many of the same hardships were endured elsewhere. Much has been written on various aspects of these hardy people, and each segment of the Edgar family has its own story of survival. But the Great Wagon Trail from Philadelphia still echoes the sounds of movement as people searched for a better life. And, we each owe a debt of gratitude to their willingness to sacrifice, and the efforts to lay the foundation for us, their descendents.

Some of the ideas in the article were taken from "The Scots-Irish from Ulster and The Great Philadelphia Wagon Road," provided by Brenda E. McPherson Compton



SteveUK and I received the following letter from Bill Edgar of Australia – fascinating!

Hi James & Steve,

My local librarian sent me this connection to an interview with Blaine Bettinger of the blog site thegeneticgenealogist.com. He has an ebook on his blog...it seems like it will be good for our members.

[Video Interview of Blaine Bettinger, the Genetic Genealogist](#)

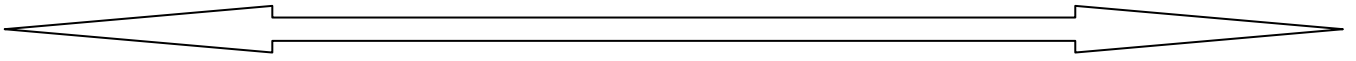
via [Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter](#) by Dick Eastman on 24/09/08

Blaine Bettinger is a leading genealogy DNA expert. He is author of *The Genetic Genealogist*, a blog at www.thegeneticgenealogist.com. That site is also subtitled, *Adding DNA to the Genealogist's Toolbox*. I recently had a chance to interview Blaine for Roots Television.

Blaine described the use of DNA to help one's genealogy research. He talked about what DNA can prove and what it cannot prove. He recently interviewed a number of leaders in genealogy DNA. Blaine also described his eBook, "I Have the Results of My Genetic Genealogy Test, Now What?" The eBook is available free of charge at his Web site. Finally, Blaine gave a peek into the future of DNA. Roots Television recorded a video of our conversation that you can view right now on your computer. To do so, go to rootstelevision.com/players/player_conferences.php?bctid=1811559654

Bye for now

Bill & Ros.



And finally, one of my photos from a trip abroad.... This is a view of the sea from above Annalong, on the east coast of Northern Ireland.

