



EDGAR EVENTS

**Researching and sharing Edgar family
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As I mentioned in the last edition, this month is “Project America.” I have received some information which I will be sharing, but we still need more.

The first thing we need to do is analyse why the Edgars turn up in America and when. They certainly came from Ireland, Scotland or England. We in the UK have “lost” relatives, brothers and cousins in our family that just disappear. Communication back then is not what it is now — letters took weeks, months to get there. The reason behind the migration could also be the reason for non-communication. If you are struggling to feed your family, expensive postage is not high on your list of priorities!

I would suggest that the majority of migration was due to economics. Families were always large in the past and the infant mortality rate was also high. So families didn't normally get too big. From the late 1600s onwards, medicine was improving and more children were surviving. If the father owned land it was split between the siblings on his death. These children did the same with their children. In 2 generations a 100-acre farm could easily be split over 30 grandchildren with only 3 acres each. Three acres might mean starvation! A lot of land was leased when the leases ran out, renewal was too expensive (perhaps because there were more people wanting the lease!). The potato famine was another factor. The pressure to get out and try a “New World” must have been irresistible. Three thousand miles on a crowded boat and a 500-mile walk is not for the faint hearted. They were a tough lot (to say the least).

I have recently found a load of “cousins” in the USA. I had found that my ancestor leased some land in Keggall, near Newry. The lease was in the names of Samuel, George Jr., and Joseph Edgar. Joseph is my ancestor. Where were the other two? I have spent a lot of time researching Newry and can confidently say they were not there. I was reviewing some two-year-old e-mails and came across one from Jack Ruffer in California. He mentioned a George and Samuel that migrated from Ireland and settled in Ohio (and produced a dynasty). Upon checking, Samuel had ten children, Joseph had eleven. Eight of these children share the same name! To my mind more than co-incidence. Their birth dates fit the time period. The lease on the land ran out at the time they migrated. Time now for a DNA test to prove this.

Richard Edgar in N Ireland (www.geocities.com/edgarwebsites) sent me a document “Genealogy of the Edgar family” written by C.G. Edgar in Detroit in 1930. (Copies attached).

This is the family of Thomas Edgar b. Oct 16th 1689 in Edinburgh, Scotland. He married Janet Knox, also from Scotland, when they arrived. They arrived in America in 1719/1720. There must be at least one thousand Edgar descendants from this couple. The New world certainly suited them! (I have always maintained that the collective noun for a group of Edgars is a 'fecundity') The family detail is tremendous, the small community inter-marriage details are really interesting and the names of individuals incorporating their ancestors surnames must be a real clue to their descendants.

Jack Ruffer in California sent me this Web site set up by Sharon Whitney. This is details of their ancestor Samuel Edgar b. 1789 in N Ireland. I believe that this Samuel is the brother of my Joseph. So, thanks to cousins Sharon and Jack, I now have about 200 relatives in America <http://worldconnect.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=:2688636&id=I545969942>

Edgar History

***This is nice, in that it explains how different blood lines and adoption can explain DNA origins

Origin of the Edgars of Nithsdale, Scotland

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The name "Edgar" most likely came to the British Isles with the Anglo-Saxon invasions in the middle centuries of the first millennium A.D. In the Old Low German, parent language of both Old English and Old Scots, this given name was "Ædgarr" or a derivative and meant "blessed spear" (good hunter). It was fairly common in pre-Norman England.

One particular Edgar found his way into English history, then Scottish history, in the latter part of the 11th century. This boy was the grand-nephew of the Saxon king, Edward the Confessor, whose death in 1066 sparked one of the more pivotal succession crises in Europe. Through royal intermarriage and assassination, England had competing claims for its throne. Edward, the heir-apparent, withdrew to Normandy for his own safety during the reign of Cnute, head of the Scandinavian branch of the royals. He became a houseguest of the Dukes of Normandy, first Robert and then William.

After Canute's death, Edward returned to England to assume the throne. A political compromise was struck. Edward was betrothed to a daughter of one of the Scandinavian earls; their marriage and resulting offspring would combine the factions. However, Edward reportedly spent his wedding night in the chapel, taking a vow of celibacy. We do know for sure that Edward The Confessor died without having fathered a child with his queen.



Dunfermline Abbey, burial place of King Edgar

Succession came down to three individuals when Edward died without a direct heir. First, the Scandinavian Prince Harold. He immediately stepped forward and claimed the English crown. Second, Edwards young grandnephew, Edgar the Ætheling (Unready). Third, William, Duke of Normandy. William claimed that Edward the Confessor had promised the throne to him in exchange for prior Norman protection from his rivals.

William and his Normans invaded England in the late summer of 1066. They first went after Harold, whom they defeated and killed at the Battle of Hastings. Not wishing to participate in William's nobility reduction scheme, Edgar and

his elder sister and guardian Margaret escaped from England. Margaret went to Scotland to plead for protection from the recently-widowed King Malcolm III (Canmore). Malcolm was infatuated with this beautiful and educated young lady and made her his queen. They were joined by little brother Edgar, after whom Malcolm

and Margaret named one of their own sons. That boy went on to become King Edgar of Scotland, the first of three sons of Malcolm and Margaret (Edgar: 1097-1107, Alexander I: 1107-24, David I: 1124-53) to sit on the Scottish throne. The Edgar name was now officially in Scotland.

***King Edgar known to the Scots as Ecgair mac Mael Cholium, on the death of his father and the usurpation of his uncle, Donald Bane, Edgar had sought refuge in England. With the aid of William Rufus Edgar, led an army into Scotland in 1097, which succeeded in dethroning his uncle. He bears the distinction of being the first King of Scotland to be of mixed Gaelic and Anglo-Saxon blood.**

*****We know that the Edgars of Wedderlie are very likely of Norwegian stock. There are hints here of French (Celtic) and Saxon origins in the line for King Edgar. This fits in with the Celtic and Saxon DNA findings (e.g. Richard in Tandragee and Gwen's family in NSW are R1b; Steve in Toronto and James in Melville are I1a).

Edgar the Peacemaker (AD 943-975) - King of the English AD 959-975

King Edgar the Peacemaker (commonly translated as the Peaceable) was always more popular than his brother, Edwig, and was able to take over Mercia & Northumbria even before he became king. He had the first recorded coronation, at Bath Abbey, and the current ceremony is still based on his model. Edgar's reign was a time of relative peace and tranquillity and he was recognised as over-king by Saxon, Danish and Welsh monarchs who rowed him down the River Dee to his Royal Court at Chester! Like his brother, Edgar had a ferocious sexual appetite and is said to have demanded sex with several **courtiers'** daughters, while kidnapping one lover and murdering the husband of another! Despite this, he was well known for his promotion of the Christian Church and, with his friends SS. Dunstan, Aethelwold &



Oswald, he introduced many reforms and founded lots of new monasteries. He was thus revered as a saint after his death and was buried in a beautiful shrine in Glastonbury Abbey. He was the father of St. Edward the Martyr and Aethelred the Unready. His second wife was the wicked Queen Aelfthrith.