



EDGAR EVENTS

**Researching and sharing Edgar family history
No. 5 May 2007**

Here at last is the spring Edgar Review! We have no excuses for the delay, it's just that a lot of things have happened since the first review. One of the most important being that James Edgar of Melville, Canada, has taken on the role of Editor of this bulletin. We also have had a massive change in what we understand about the Edgar family. No doubt you all thought (as did we) that the Edgars were all one family and were from Wedderlie in the Scottish borders, and that we were all descended from Crinan in AD 1000. We had Steve Edgar in Toronto (SteveTOR) with his direct lineage back to Crinan and the Cospatricks, etc. This was a good place to start to work out how we all fit in with the one family. Our problem was, and remains, lack of evidence. The further back you go, the less evidence there is—unless of course you are nobility or famous! Any evidence pre-1800 is pretty scant, and all we can do is guess and surmise.

Then came the fateful day in a coffee bar in Newry when Richard from Tandragee, N. Ireland, James from Melville, Saskatchewan, and SteveUK sat discussing the problem. There the three of us Edgars sat together, but how were we related? James' wife, Jodie, first suggested DNA testing and the idea was taken up; some research on DNA testing houses led us to Relative Genetics in Salt Lake City as the most comprehensive testers at the best price. (\$195 US for a 43-marker test on the male Y chromosome).

We started off with SteveTOR and James. They proved to have a match at 81.4%, which, when you work out the calculations and statistics, shows a link around 800 years back (or so). This indicates that James and SteveTOR shared an ancestor in or around 1200. Their origin is Norway, as indicated by their haplogroup of I1a. This was very encouraging.

James has evidence that his family are from Benagh near Kilkeel in Co. Down, Northern Ireland, as does Bill from Australia. In 2006, James, his brother, Steve (SteveKAM), and SteveUK went graveyard searching in the area. We found Benagh Road and a small shop, where we stopped and asked the question, —“~~A~~ are there any Edgars still in the area?” As a result, we met Jacky Edgar, and an agreement was made for a test. Jacky's aunt Martha had done some family history research and got back to around 1800 to Arthur Edgar.

Bill Edgar (BillAUS) had done some research, and he too got back to Arthur Edgar in Kilkeel (Benagh), a coincidence or link? There was not enough evidence to confirm either way; his DNA analysis provided a fabulous result. Bill, James, and Jacky are related at 95%. It looks like their respective ancestors were cousins or brothers in the period 1770 to 1800. The good part of this is that their further research will no longer be conjecture, they KNOW that they are related, but how? (Look for more on this in the next issue! Coming soon!!)

Next we have Robert Allen Edgar and Ellen Edgar (Ellen provided a male relative's DNA); they are an 85% match, which means they are related to each other 500 years or so ago. Their Haplogroup is I1c.

Richard of Tandragee and Gwen of Australia (tested her father) are the same race, *i.e.* R1b Celts, but are unrelated in about 10,000 years. The Celts were a huge tribe from Europe and settled most of it at one time or another. This means that there are two Celtic

Edgar origins. The Romans, Normans, Saxons, and Norsemen would have been a major influence in forcing these Celts out of one area and into another. One could be from Ireland and the other from northern Spain. Which one came from where can't yet be identified.

The latest result is Alfred Edgar from Argentina. His ancestors are from Co. Down in Northern Ireland, no matches but with an origin of the northern Balkans?? The Argentina Edgars—Alfred & Co.—are I1b.

Finally we come to SteveUK's result, E3b from northern Greece (Macedonia), with no matches.

So what do we have? We have ten results in so far. Four have a direct connection to Norse origin, two have a direct connection to an unknown origin, two have a very old connection, but are two separate Edgar families, and the remaining two have no links at all so far. This makes five Edgar origins: a Norse, 2x Celt, an unknown, a Balkan, and a Greek.

So what can go wrong with our results?

There are unknown factors that can be upsetting. The test we are doing is on the male line, we assume that the name is carried on by this line. Is this a fact? Is it true? There is plenty of evidence that names change, or get changed. We see corruptions and derivations of Edgar; but suppose for some of us ~~Edgar~~ is the corruption? What was the original name? Other factors could be adoption and illegitimacy. (It's a wise child that knows its own father!) Are our ancestors really who we think they are? Only the Norse Edgars can say this with certainty.

A question asked recently is ~~what~~ "what nationality or race is an individual?" What were their ethnic origins? This is another matter entirely. First, it poses a question. If a Scotsman marries an English girl, and they have a son, who he marries an English girl, and they have a son who marries...*etc., etc., etc.* After 500 years of this, the family has a Scottish name, but what are they ethnically? They will be 95% English. But who are the English. ~~England~~ is a country that was invented in about AD 800, from the Angles who settled there from northern Germany. Scotland was named after the Scotia people who invaded from Ireland and pushed out the Picts, who were also pushed out by the Norsemen and Vikings.

There is another test that can be done on female mitochondrial DNA (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitochondria#Use_in_population_genetic_studies), which will trace back through all of your ancestors and express as a percentage what their origins were. This is the test most widely used on TV programs to demonstrate that no one is a purebred! Everyone was a mixture from northern Europe, southern Europe, the Middle East, and northern Africa. No one can say they are of solely one particular origin. Native tribes in the jungles of South America and New Guinea are about as close to purebred as you can get.

The good news from this is that we can all feel free to go and join our local Hibernian, Caledonian, or Cambrian Societies safe in the knowledge that someone somewhere back in the past was Irish, Scottish, or Welsh in our ancestors. If you are refused membership, ask them to prove you are not! If they do, imagine the research that they will have had to do on your behalf! Might save you a load of work!!

This test however will do nothing to help our research, since all it provides is statistics; whereas the test we are doing has an absolute target. SteveUK's overriding question being, —Which Kebab shop was my ancestor in charge of on Hadrian's wall?"

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From James (Melville) Edgar's photo album:



This is his gr-grandfather, James Edgar, born in Kilkeel (Benagh) in 1805. The image is copied from the original tintype.

James came to Quebec with his father, Charles, and brother, Robert, in about 1820; cut down trees and built a ship to fill with lumber and sail back to Ireland. There they dismantled the ship and sold the lumber. From the proceeds, the Edgar family moved to Canada in about 1821 – mother, father, two brothers, and three sisters (at least). This is the first time we've published this —1821" date — a marriage of one of James' sisters in Montreal in October 1822 establishes that date. The 1821 is pure speculation— given as —about," but probably accurate.



On the left is Alex (a.k.a. William) Edgar, one of the early pioneers of Canada, who was part of the NorthWest Mounted Police (NWMP) in the —March West," before they were given the —Royal" designation. The force eventually evolved into the RCMP. His fascinating story is at jameswd.sasktelwebsite.net/#Stories

At right is John Jamieson, husband of Susan Janet Adelaide Edgar, both from Williamstown, Glengarry Co., Ontario, Canada. They moved to Passmore, B.C. early in the 1900s. Susan was one of James Edgar's daughters.

This is from Bill Edgar in Australia...

ARTHUR EDGAR - DRUMMANMORE (near Kilkeel), COUNTY DOWN, Northern Ireland, b. 1797 - d. 1880

My Great Grandfather was William Edgar and his parents were Arthur Edgar and Elizabeth Thompson.

William arrived in St. Arnaud, Victoria, Australia in 1875 and was —~~married~~ married to the girl next door” Isabella Agnes McMillan on 25 Sept 1876, he was 36 and she was 21. We know these facts from their marriage certificate and from property rate records. William and Isabella’s father Robert were both involved in Gold Mining for alluvial gold before getting into working at sawmills, labouring, and contracting as Gold went to deep mines.

William’s July 1912 obituary published in the St. Arnaud newspaper gave us clues to his largely untraceable past. —*ANOTHER of the old residents of St. Arnaud, Mr. Wm. Edgar has died at the age of 76 yrs. Deceased, who was born in Newry, County Down, Ireland, came to Australia when only a young man landing in Adelaide in the 1850s. He remained there only a few months, then moved to Victoria when the diggings were observing attractions. He subsequently tried his luck in New Zealand, where there was a gold rush at Molyneaux; not meeting much success he returned to Melbourne, and later moved northwards and arriving in this district in the 1870s. After working at sawmills at Charlton and Avoca forests, he finally settled in St. Arnaud where he married Agnes Isabel, daughter of the late Mr. & Mrs. McMillan. Mr. Edgar followed the occupation as a civil engineer, and carried out several works including bridge building and section of the main drain for the borough council. He was a founder of the Orange Lodge, St. Arnaud, though later, through failing health, he was unable to attend meetings as often as desired. He was always an inspiration to the brethren of No. 103 when able to be present. He had held honoured position of W.M. of the Royal Black Receptory. During the past few weeks there were indications that the end was close at hand. A widow and five sons are left. Mrs. Edgar has not been at all well for some time. Two sons are in Western Australia, one in Benalla, and the two youngest, Henry and George, are in St. Arnaud. The funeral took place at St. Arnaud; the burial service at the Presbyterian Church was read by Mr. W.J. Meirish (missionary) and that of the Orange institution by Brother H.E. Davies (chaplain). A number of wreaths were sent by sympathizing friends, including No. 32 ladies, as a mark of esteem in which he was held. Two tablets (from R.B.P. No. 700 and Kara Kara No. 103) were placed on the grave.*”

(The N.Z. reference of Port Molyneaux refers to a town that was on the mouth of the Clutha River until a flood wiped it out. It was near the now city of Dunedin.) We have been unable to trace him on any ship passenger list. We think he was a ship’s carpenter but have no seaman number to use to trace him on British seaman lists. This story is our only record of travel.

William & Isabella had 9 sons, Robert Arthur b. 1878 – d. 1952, aged 74 (my Grandfather); William James b. 1880 – d. 1944, aged 63; Frederick John b. 1880 – d. 1951, aged 68; Andrew b. 1885 – d. 1885, at 6 mths of whooping cough; Charles Ernest b. 1886 – d. 1907, in a gold mine accident at Kalgoorlie, West Australia, aged 20; Angus

b. 1891 – d. 1894, at 3; Henry Wallace b. 1894 – d. 1944, aged 50; James Brown b. 1896 – d. 1897, at less than 1; George b. 1898 – d. 1914, at 15. The coroner’s report on George’s death said – “He was hit on the head by a stone thrown by a girl.”

When William arrived in St. Arnaud, there was another Edgar family there. Edward Edgar from Tipperary was there when allotments were first sold in 1858 and he was a director of a gold mine in 1862. Alex R. Edgar, possibly a son of Edward, was a leader in the Methodist Church in Victoria. I think they left St. Arnaud not long after William arrived but have no date.

We had an Edgar reunion in 2004 in St. Arnaud, which went over 3 days and each of William’s sons who married and had children were represented, as well as two of our Northern Ireland relatives. In all, about 80 family members attended—some only for one day others the whole time. Younger generation’s names are known but as most are still alive I need to have their authority to publish their details.

William’s parents were Arthur Edgar and Elizabeth Edgar nee Thompson. We think they had the following children from what we have been told and what has been found: Elizabeth b. 1832 – d. 1916; James b. 1834 – d. 1906 (married Jane Fleming); William (my gr-grandfather) b. 1840 – d. 1912; Robert b. 1842 – d. 1912; Ann b. _ - d. _ (married James Cooper Mar 1855); Mary b. 1835 – d. _ (married Joseph Sloan in Jan 1853 and had a child Eliza Sloan). Arthur and most of the past family we know of are buried at the Mourne Presbyterian Church in Kilkeel. I think that it is a larger church than the Kilkeel Presbyterian Church. Does anyone have any histories on these and other churches in and around Kilkeel?

We have a Probate issued 30 Oct 1900 on Arthur Edgar who died 7 Oct 1880 proved by Thomas Girvan of Drummanmore and Robert Thompson of Porcreaghan, both farmers. Value of the estate was pounds 460/16/-. Will was written on 3 July 1879 and signed with his mark. He willed all his interest in his lands houses and chattels to his wife Elizabeth for her lifetime and after her death to his son Robert Edgar. He also willed his daughter Eliza the sum of 50 pounds and the use of the east room and the little garden to the east of said room. Another 25 pounds went to granddaughter Eliza Sloan to be held in trust. Son James Edgar was to get 10 pounds. (James somehow received the farm. Robert did not marry and Arthur’s wife had predeceased him dying in Jan 1880 and he died October 1880.

Perhaps Robert allowed James to run the farm and left it to him when he died in 1912.)

Arthur’s son James lived and worked the farm. He married



THE EDGAR FARM

KILKEEL, NORTHERN IRELAND

Jane Fleming and they had the following children. William b. 1862, said to have gone to America; Robert Henry b. 1866 (married Mary Wilson), also said to have gone to America about 1886; Arthur b. 1868 – d. 1946 lived in Manchester, UK; Martha b. 1868 – d. 1896 (married John Baird); Elizabeth b. 1870 – d. 1910 (married William Walmsley); Thomas b. 1880 – d. 1953 (married Ellen Boyd). Thomas inherited the farm, which was not very large but self supporting.

I have enclosed a drawing of the farm house in Drummanmore, which was 2 storey; upstairs two bedrooms one end for boys, the other girls, downstairs kitchen, main bedroom and back room for the maiden aunt. The children ate meals on the staircase, the older you were the higher up the stairs you sat. They had a seaweed allocation that allowed harvesting a set area near Greencastle. This was then used as fertiliser to grow potatoes, vegetables, and feed for cattle, hens, sheep, and pigs. Does anyone have any details of this seaweed scheme?

I have been unable to find any parents of Arthur or siblings. I also have had no luck with my William's ship's carpenter or seaman roles. Should you have any clues, please let me know.

Bill Edgar – Victoria, Australia.

NOTE In the family story No. 4 of Charles Edgar (Review 2), Steve said he met Jacky (William John) Edgar who said his father is William, grandfather Thomas, and great-grandfather Arthur. Jacky is unknown to me but these are similar names to my relatives, if James as gr-grandfather was inserted before Arthur, in his list it would match my list, this I think proves the value of the Review for gathering and providing information.