



# EDGAR EVENTS

**Researching and sharing Edgar  
family history No. 13, February 2008**



## DNA Update

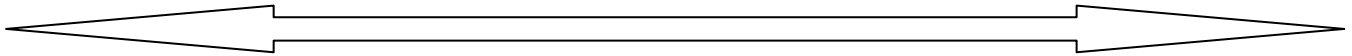
by James Edgar (Editor) ([jamesedgar@sasktel.net](mailto:jamesedgar@sasktel.net))



soon.

You will probably recall in the last issue, I urged all who were waiting in the wings to order a DNA test to get on with it. Well, at this writing, we have two new Edgar DNA Project members - Jennifer (Edgar) Detta of Kimberley, B.C. has just received her results – they indicate that her uncle (the DNA donor) isn't related to any other Edgars. Jennifer's Uncle Bob is an R1b – a Celt! And, Peter Edgar of Australia has just sent his DNA in for analysis; watch for the results

In conversation with our contact at DNA.Ancestry.com, Darlene Odenwalder, she advises that the plan to have Family Project Groups on their site has faltered a bit – they are a couple of months away from that happy day. She has asked me to be a "Beta Tester" for the software, so I am looking forward to lending a hand in the project.



[Editor's Note: In the final lines of last month's issue, I mentioned my brother, John Edgar – the most courageous man I ever knew. The following is from my sister Marylen (Edgar) McKenzie ([mjm51@isys.ca](mailto:mjm51@isys.ca)). Some of my own memories follow.]

My brother John Leslie Edgar

I am the "baby" of the family, and my brother John was the eldest. He was seventeen when I was born, so part of this comes from a handwritten book my mother, Helen Edgar, wrote for our family history:

"September 8, 1932 - 9:25 p.m. John arrived...

John was a big, strong baby weighing eight lbs. and thirteen ounces. He had a peculiar cry, was not too handsome, seemed to be fretful. I could distinguish his cry from the nursery, which was a considerable distance from my bed...

He [Les – my Dad] came back to Kamloops to pick up John and me to go home. When he sat down beside me, I started to cry. He was cross with me & wanted to know what was wrong. I had not thought this thought before, but I said, "Because I dread Dr. Irving coming to see me, because he's going to talk about operating on the baby." Les got even more cross, and said I was stupid to even think such a thing.

Next morning at 10 a.m., while I was nursing John, Les came in as white as this paper and sat beside me. I wondered why he was so white. He said he had smelled ether on the way in and it made him feel sick. I accepted that. Then at two o'clock he again came, looking pretty sick, but he told me John had to have surgery. Dr. Irving had phoned Les to meet him at the office. He told Les about John's back and took him to the hospital to see John's back; Les had come from that encounter to see me at ten o'clock. Les said over and over, "God will be good to us."

On Monday morning, Dr. Irving came in and Les was also there, and told us all the minus's of John's condition. Spina Bifida is caused early in pregnancy, when the separate halves of the cell join together and there is an improper fusion. The results can be imbecility, enlarged head,

crippling of the limbs, and lack of bladder and bowel control. Even if he lived through the surgery, his life expectancy was twenty-one years. John ended up with lack of bladder and bowel control and malformed legs. His upper body was extra strong and he had a better than average brain.

Somehow we lived through Monday and Tuesday. John was operated on by Drs. Irving and Wallace, with Dr. Ireland assisting. John was given a brandy rag to suck during surgery...

John had the opposite to club feet. His turned out and up against his outer leg...

He had not been a pretty baby from birth. His head was purplish and swollen and he had forceps marks on the sides of his head. By four weeks he was the most beautiful baby you ever saw. He had a perfectly bowed mouth, large dark eyes and lovely hair. He was gaining one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half ounces a day. He suffered with colic because of a spastic bowel condition.

...Dr. Wallace would come into the nursery and feel John's head, pull his legs and walk out, with never a word to me. I would cry. Dr. Ireland would come in pull John's legs and feel his head and walk out, and I would cry. Dr. Irving would come in and put his arm around me and say, "Well, how's my little mother today?" He'd tell me John was doing fine and I'd be set-up for another twenty-four hours. Next day we would go through it all again.

...When he cried the top of his head swelled up and when he stopped it sunk in. His forehead had a long hollow the length of my finger and one down the back of his head."

*This is Marylen's story:*

Over the years my brother had many operations and spent many months away in hospitals in Victoria, B.C. and Portland, Oregon. He grew to manhood and, by the time I have any memories of him, he walked with two canes, and you had better behave because I swear he could whack you with those canes from anywhere in the room!

He got a job as a dispatcher for a taxi stand. He owned a standard-drive car and had it rigged so that his right leg, which had a little feeling, could do the work as his left leg had no feeling. He then got on as a dispatcher for the ambulances at the hospital but I remember he didn't like it because his room was near the morgue.

John then was hired by the Department of Highways of British Columbia as a dispatcher, and later some progressive boss saw his potential and hired him to do office work. He became an office manager and retired after twenty-five years service. During this time John married Margie Ferrier and they raised three children. The children were from Children's Aid and needed a home. He became a HAM radio operator, smoked like a chimney, and drank coffee by the buckets because he heard drinking lots of liquids helped prevent bladder infections, which he had many, many times. It did help.

I have some wonderful memories of my brother, and no memories of him ever saying, "Oh, poor me, look what I was dealt in life." I spent several summers at his home in Golden, B.C., and we did many things together like going into the National Parks and seeing the wild animals, taking pictures of these animals, picnics, camping out for the day or the weekend, or just driving to see and enjoy the scenery. We would all load in—John, Margie, Steve, Pat, Phyllis, me, and off we'd go. John would be singing about his Blue Canadian Rockies because he loved music, and country music at that. If he was sore or too tired to go for a long car ride, he would take us to the local garbage dump, just at the right time as the sun was going down, to see the bears—there were always two, sometimes up to five bears, at the dump to watch.

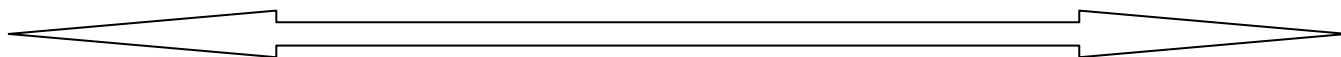
One time we got there and three cubs were up on the posts of the dump fence, just sitting there while mama bear looked for food.

John was wheelchair-bound the last ten years of his life, but he never let that bother him. He just kept right on going with his life. He suffered much pain in those last ten years because of his deteriorating body; sometimes he was white with pain, but I never heard him complain about it. He died in his sleep on December 22, 1988.

If he had died when it was predicted, it would have been when I was four years old and I would have few, if any, memories of him. I am glad he lived until he was fifty-six years old.

Rest in peace, I will always love you.

Marylen



From your editor...

At John's funeral in Kamloops in 1988, the eulogy by the minister of the Presbyterian Church there stated "If I could use one word to describe John – it is "Courage." That is what I meant when I wrote above that John was the most courageous man I ever knew. He suffered — Lord knows he suffered — but he did it quietly. He died at age 56, premature by modern standards, but for a spina bifida baby, he lived an extremely long life.

John's many problems at birth included an open hole in his back about the size of a silver dollar that drained spinal fluid; a malformed skull; and malformed legs and feet. These were fixed by skilful surgery, but his legs were still only partially useful, because he had no feeling below the waist. Above the waist, he was a large man, barrel-chested and very muscular. Interestingly, his nerves grew as he matured. I was with him one day in Kamloops while he weeded his garden; we had just been called in for lunch, and as he used his canes to stand he felt, for the first time ever, the excruciating pain of a sharp stone inside his boot. I also recall another time when he described the increasing muscle tone in his legs. He couldn't lift one leg over the other, yet, strangely, one day at his desk he did just that. He looked down and said to himself, "I can't do that!!"

Unfortunately, this was also about the time that his infection-wracked body started to give up on him, so he never had the opportunity to explore the phenomenon further. John developed open weeping wounds on his hips from sitting so much – the equivalent of bedsores. These sores needed daily attention, cleaning, dressing, and disinfecting. Of course, keeping the sores clean was an impossible task, so infection inevitably entered the wounds. He developed osteomyelitis, an infection of the bone itself. His hip joints began to disintegrate, and that's what eventually placed him in a wheelchair.

In spite of all this, John kept active, with an abiding interest in country music, model making, airplanes, large equipment like trucks, loaders, railway locomotives, cranes, tractors, and such. I was a locomotive engineer in my former life, and once when I lived in Vancouver, our brother Bob and I took John to the railway yard in Surrey (Port Mann) and hoisted him up onto a locomotive on Bob's back. It was one of those "thrill-of-a-lifetime" moments. Even though the locomotive never moved, you could see John absolutely glowing with excitement! Now this was BIG!!

Thanks to our other brother, Steve, we have an old picture from 1957 showing the family in front of the house that Dad built in Kamloops. Mum took the picture, and, from left to right, we are:



Dad (Les Edgar), Steve, Marylen, Aunt Mary (Mum's sister), James, Bob, and John, with his faithful dog, Mike.

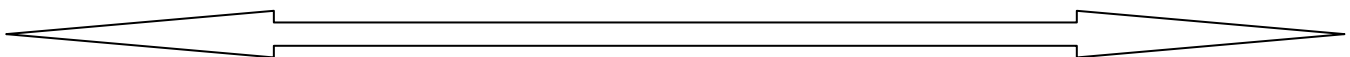
You can see John's canes right behind the dog's head. As Marylen said in her narrative, John was amazingly accurate with those wooden extensions of his body – if you misbehaved, he would give you a whack from across the room!

It's twenty years since John's passing and hardly a day passes that I don't think of him – he was a person we looked up to, in all the many ways that we can imagine!

Here's a photo of (almost) the entire family at Mum & Dad's 50th Anniversary in Kamloops, 1979. Grandma Somerville and John were ready for the wheelchair races!



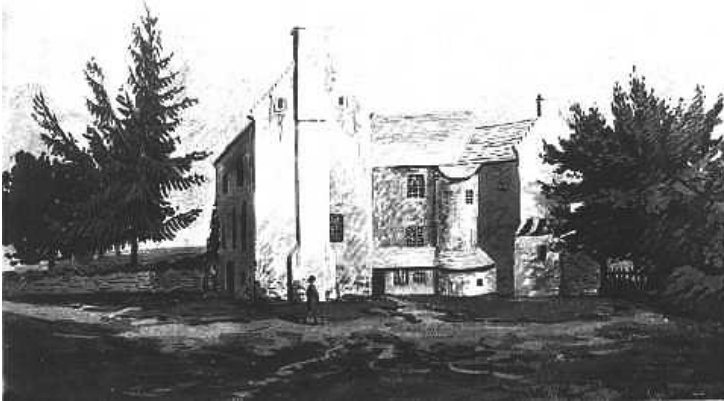
Figure 1 – BR: Marylen, with Christina, Steve, Mum, Terrie, Robin, Steve, Dad, Bob, Andrew, Jamie, James  
FR: Pat, Grandma Somerville, John, Stacie, Nicolas, Phyllis



# Wedderlie

by James Edgar ([jamesedgar@sasktel.net](mailto:jamesedgar@sasktel.net))

Wedderlie was home to the Edgars for just over 400 years in south-eastern Scotland, near Kelso. I happened to stumble across a document on the Web a while back, and I will be including some of the items from it in this and upcoming issues. Here is the frontispiece – a drawing of the building that now stands across the way from the home of the Tilson family.



The building has hardly changed at all in a few hundred years. Notice the gent in the drawing above – his clothes suggest an era about 300 years ago (or so).

Wedderlie contains some amazing construction details. For instance, a stone spiral staircase winds up into the upper floors; stone fireplaces large enough to walk into; and tall narrow windows in the old “Fortalice,” for archers to use their weapons without danger of being hit back by attacking marauders (Vikings perhaps?).

To the right of the building is the “Keep,” where cattle and other animals would have been placed for safekeeping during raids.

In 2005, Steve Edgar of Crewe, England, and I visited the farm, where John and Marion Tilson raise Angus cattle with their daughter, Wanda. They are gracious hosts!

Compare the picture at left to the one below, which I shamelessly borrowed from Marion Tilson’s site ([www.wedderliefarm.co.uk](http://www.wedderliefarm.co.uk))



This broadsword hangs in one of the rooms at Wedderlie, a reminder of battles past. Marion Tilson told us that it had been dragged out of the soil by a plough.

Steve and I found it warming that the Tilson’s had named their first bull, “Edgar of Wedderlie.”

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Now, let’s look at the PDF I found...

The preface to the document, entitled "An Account of the Sirname Edgar: and particularly the Family of Wedderlie in Berwickshire" looks like this (notice that the heading contains an image of Sanquhar, another Edgar holding in Dumfriesshire):



RUINS OF SANQUHAR CASTLE.

### Prefatory Remarks.

The object of the present work, is to supply in a collective form, most of the scattered records and notices of various families bearing the ancient sirname of *Edgar*, in order that genealogists may find, ready to hand, materials, for the most part extracted, during a long course of investigation, from the Public Archives of Scotland; and which may be found to throw some light on the origin of the Edgars of Wedderlie, in Berwickshire, and on their numerous offshoots, which have gradually fallen into comparative decay.

Except in a few instances, the compiler's researches have not extended to a period *later* than the middle of the eighteenth century; his aim having been, rather to point out the *early* Cadets of Wedderlie, from whom descents may yet be traced, by those who may have an object in doing so.

As all the materials used in the tabulation of the Pedigree of Edgar of Wedderlie are to be found detailed in this volume, the reader will experience no difficulty in testing the compiler's accuracy; and on the other hand, the latter expects equally authentic evidence to be produced in refutation of any statements that may appear erroneous.

It may here be observed, that amongst the voluminous records of the General Register House, Edinburgh, it would be well nigh impossible for one person entirely to exhaust the notices of a particular Surname which may occur in deeds, &c., registered under *other names*, and without special clues certain obscure points in the present work must await collateral assistance of this description.

Of the nine hundred and fifty-two parish registers of Scotland mentioned in the Registrar General's Report, comparatively few are older than the commencement of last century—and, so far as the compiler has been able to discover, the Sirname Edgar is to be found in only about twenty. Thus the present collection necessarily bears no proportion to the mass of records from which it has been derived, and the information obtained, in some instances, may be thought too trivial; yet we cannot altogether ignore the remark of a reviewer\* of "the Historical records of the Family of Leslie," that "no one can say at what time the *smallest particle* of information may not become valuable" in giving "help for historic purposes." †

The motive which led the compiler to undertake his task, was a *distrust of Family Traditions*, which although sometimes useful as clues, are quite as often the *sources of the strangest delusions and pretensions*. Impressed with this pardonable scepticism, he has endeavoured to act up to the principle inculcated in "the Curiosities of Literature," that "what we can ascertain, it would be a dereliction of duty to conceal."

Few notices of Edgars occur in published works; and in those of the present century, in which the name is found, such notices often betray their origin, and cannot stand the test of the public records.

*Technical* difficulties have prevented the use of the forms of Latin abbreviations, to be found in old charters, &c., but it is hoped that little inconvenience will arise from their omission in these pages.

In conclusion, the compiler begs respectfully to acknowledge his obligation to the Custodians of the Public Records of Scotland—and more especially to GEORGE BURNETT, Esq., Lyon King of Arms, R. R. STODART, Esq., Lyon Clerk Depute, and THOMAS DICKSON, Esq., Curator of the Historical Department, Register House, Edinburgh. He has also received valuable assistance from private sources, for which a similar acknowledgement is due. Nor is he altogether disobliged—in a literary point of view—by the use made of a portion of his materials by "a Committee of the Grampian Club," in the recent *anticipatory* volume, which has been published in disregard of his prohibition.

What else is in this ancient document? Well, you can go to the site where I found it at Brigham Young University Library.

[contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/FH14&CISOPTR=59439&REC=2](http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/FH14&CISOPTR=59439&REC=2)

It is quite large (185 pages) and will take up far too much of our precious newsletter to put it all in here, but I've copied in one page to give an idea of the flavour. It reads like a family tree from about 1072 onwards, and describes how the Edgars became owners of Wedderlie, plus how they're related to the Edgars of Keithock. The author cites numerous ancient records to defend his thesis that the Edgars, owners of Wedderlie, were in fact descended from the Cospatricks...

## THE PRINCIPAL FAMILIES OF EDGAR.

### Edgar of Wedderlie.

EDGAR is an old and peculiar surname. One might suppose that, even at the present day, it would be common, at any rate about large cities, and in those districts whose characteristics are still, to a certain extent, more especially Saxon. When, however, we come to inquire narrowly, and refer to Directories, we find it of rare occurrence. For example, if we take the diocese of *Winchester*, and run over the index of wills in its Probate Court, from 1498 down to the present time, or, at any rate to the close of the last century, among numerous Saxon names, that of Edgar occurs but thrice; and in two of these wills, oddly enough, we meet with the same corrupt spelling of the name which, in the contemporaneous registers of the northern kingdom, was so prevalent.

It is doubtful whether, prior to the present century, even where Scottish patronymics were largely infused, there were any persons of this name in the sister isle.\*

In England, an ancient family of the name settled in Berkshire at an early period. That, and the Edgar family in Suffolk, may have had a common ancestor; and it may not be saying too much to suggest their descent from one or other of the Edgars who appear in the pedigrees of the Saxon Earls of Northumbria.

A few persons named Edgar † seem to have been in attendance upon, or connected with, the courts of several of the ancient kings of Scotland. One named "Gilbert, son of Edgar, was witness to the execution of a charter by William the Lion, about 1176. Another, named "Edgar, son of Henry," was witness to a charter by King David, about 1208. Another, "Gilbert, son of Edgar," was witness to a charter in 1200; and "Walter, son of Edgar," was witness to a charter of the lands of Scrogges, in 1208.

In Rymer's "*Fœdera*" three notices of this name are to be found. 1. In the 24th Edward I. (1296),—"Walterus Edger persona de Penicok vicecomiti de Edinburgh." 2. 1st Edward II. (1308),—"De vadiis prisonibus Scotiæ," &c., "habere facias Galfrido Edger.....in castro nostro Ebor." 3. 7th Edward II. (1314)....."quod Isabella de Brus in Castro prædicto sub custodia vestra, de mandata nostro, jam existens, habeat secum, ut de familia suâ, Elenam Edger, Johannem de Claydon, Samuelem de Lynford et Willielmum de Preston," &c., &c.

Besides these, we find a notice of a Sir Patrick Edgar, ("Ric de Barneby Domino Patricio Edgar Militi") in 1272, in the *Chronicle of Lanercost*; and in the reign of King John, (*Abbrev.*

...and so on for another 175 pages.

## ***Great Images***

I always like to end with a photo or two taken while on one of our trips to Ireland. I love the green fields in the foreground – truly an Irish scene! This picture is a long-distance shot of Slieve Gullion, Co. Armagh. Here is some text describing the mountain, found on this Web site ([www.mythicalireland.com](http://www.mythicalireland.com)).

A mythical mountain with two cairns on the summit

The mountain of Slieve Gullion is mentioned many, many times in the ancient Irish battle epic, the Táin Bó Cuailnge, as Sliabh Cuilinn. Situated a few miles west of the Cooley Mountains, it lies just across the border in Northern Ireland. Gullion, along with the Cooley Mountains, is volcanic in origin. It is 573 metres at its tallest point. There is a lake at the top of the mountain, known as the Lake of Sorrow or the Calliag Bheara's lake. The Calliag is a witch or a hag, and she has associations with other peaks, such as the hills of Loughcrew in County Meath, and the hill of Bellewstown, home of the famous annual race meeting, also in Co. Meath. There are two cairns either side of the lake. The Northern Cairn is a round or circular mound of stones approximately 40 feet in diameter, while the Southern Cairn is a large Passage-Grave standing at 570 meters above sea level, making this the highest surviving passage tomb in Ireland. This is an ancient area; people have lived here for over 6,000 years and have left their traces in stone, in megalithic tombs, burial chambers and cairns.

