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Photo impressions: a family history

Helen Elizabeth Obermeyer

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PHOTO IMPRESSIONS:
A FAMILY HISTORY

by

Helen Obermeyer

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

MFA PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAM
SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTS AND SCIENCES
ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
October, 1980

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I, Helen Obermeyer, prefer to be contacted each time a request for reproduction of my thesis, Photo Impressions: A Family History, is made. I can be reached at the following address:

Date __________ Signature Helen Obermeyer
This thesis is dedicated to my mother,
Joan Grant Obermeyer.
# Table of Contents

Personal Thoughts ............................................ 1  
Technical Notes .................................................. 7  
Family History ..................................................... 16  
  Grant Family ..................................................... 20  
  Mouat Family ..................................................... 37  
  Obermeyer Family .............................................. 51  

## Appendix

Letter written by William Peter Grant, 1907 .................................................. 58  
Fraser Genealogy ..................................................... 61  
McLean Genealogy ..................................................... 64  
Marriage Certificate for Andrew McLean and Merion Grant................................. 67  
Joan Mouat's Birth Certificate ........................................... 68  
Marriage Certificate for Joan Mouat and James Peace ......................................... 69  
Cemetery Inscriptions .................................................. 70  
Alexander Fraser Og's Will ............................................ 72  
Alexander Fraser's Will .............................................. 73  

Bibliography ......................................................... 75
Illustrative Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert Fletcher Grant</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Genealogy</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of Bridgeville</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Ross Grant</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage License for William Grant and Cassie Jane Ross</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of Concord Mills - Property Owners</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of Concord Mills Community</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert and Margaret Mouat</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Mouat and his First Family</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Second Family</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouat Genealogy</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Agnes Peace</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Obermeyer Family</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obermeyer Genealogy</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage License for John A. Obermeyer and Sallie B. Coultas</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Peter Grant</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Thesis Proposal approved, talk with Thesis Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March - May</td>
<td>Collect family photographs, research family history, make photographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Genealogical trip to Nova Scotia, research family history and make photographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Make plates, print, convene Thesis Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Print editions, compile notes, write first draft of Thesis Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Make plates, print, convene Thesis Board, submit first draft of Thesis Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Frame prints, prepare for Thesis Show and Opening, send announcements, Thesis Show, Thesis Sharing, Submit final draft of Thesis Report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Personal Thoughts
This thesis has not only been an imagemaking experience for me, but one that has been steeped in the past and in compiling a comprehensive statement on my family history. Many of the images I used were handed down through the family. I was faced with reconstructing places I had never seen, but were a part of me, and people I had never met, but were of my own flesh and blood.

It was a discovery process, much like a detective story, piecing together clues, never knowing what was around the next corner. As always, the more I learned, the more I realized there was to know.

Much of this report will deal with those shadowy figures who are my ancestors. This new found knowledge has a great bearing on my work. Although my etchings are not literal interpretations of events in the past, most of them stem from this heritage.
My original intent was to create autobiographical photoetchings. As I stated in my thesis proposal, I wanted to work with the image as an icon or symbol for an experience I have had. The print would not be a realistic portrayal of the scene but one altered by memory and feeling. Color and collage would play an important role in setting the mood, because for me, memory is often a patchwork of many colors and images.

Almost immediately after I began work on my thesis I began to stray from my original purpose. A few of my pieces deal with this theme, but I became so involved with the family research that the main body of the thesis deals with "where I come from." Many of these images are collages of family photographs altered by my perceptions and fantasies about the past.

I have always enjoyed making collages. I began piecing together pictures from magazines when I was about twelve. In this early work I always put in hidden meanings and played private jokes with the images. This interest carries through in my work to this day.

Photoetching's counterpart to the negative in photography is the Kodalith positive. I am very manipulative with my Kodaliths. I cut them up, patch them together and try and combine them in such a way that my ideas will best be communicated to the viewer. This is the stage in the photoetching process where I do most of my brainstorming.
I consulted with several of my professors before I began work on my thesis. I found that one of my major problems was sorting out their advice, putting it in its proper perspective and deciding how pertinent it was to my work. It is often a good idea to seek objective opinions, but seeking too many of them may only confuse you. Each person has a personal bias from which he or she sees the work and I had to realize this before I could make sense out of their comments.

Everyone agreed that a major challenge of the thesis would be to combine the qualities of printmaking and photography in a successful way. My early photoetchings were very photographic and I had to work through this in my later prints.
One thing that I have noticed, is that I usually end up telling the stories behind the images when I show them to someone else. I have always enjoyed listening to other people's personal stories because it always adds so much to your enjoyment of their work.

My first good thesis image came as a result of a visit with my parents in Connecticut. While I was there I photographed our family heirlooms. My mother and I had a lot of fun digging them out of the attic and she told me family stories connected with them as we worked. It was a great way to learn more about the family history. We got down Aunt Bert's china, my father's baby brush, the family silver and we even found my mother's girlhood curls wrapped in a newspaper dated 1932.

I also photographed our Grandmother clock that has chimed every fifteen minutes in our house for as long as I can remember. The first image of my thesis is of the face of the clock with my silhouette in the middle. The edges of the plate are pitted and so the print has the feel of an old daguerreotype.

When I made this print it felt like a clue, an arrow pointing the direction the rest of my thesis should take. I think that the image offered me answers as to how to combine the past and the present in my work. It also offered me a challenge - to make the rest of my thesis as beautiful and full of meaning as that first print.

About halfway through my thesis I gathered my prints together and looked at them as a body of work. I was surprised at how somber and serious they looked. I decided that this
would have to change and I began to loosen up and be more
playful with my imagery. I lightened my colors, gave them
more intensity and began to work with embossing in my prints.

I stated previously that one of the challenges I had
to face in choosing photoetching as my media, was whether
I could successfully combine photography and printmaking. As
I worked on my thesis my printmaking skills developed and
became more refined. My prints, as prints, began to take on
a quality of their own. My collaging skills also developed
so that the photographic imagery became less intrusive. I
believe that I met the challenge and combined the two processes
in such a way that they compliment each other.

I had a lot of fun sequencing the show. When I first
looked at the framed prints I didn't see how I would ever get
all the pieces to relate. There were so many sizes and colors
to deal with. As I worked everything seemed to fall into place
and by the time I was ready to hang there were only a few
adjustments to be made. I was very pleased with the way I was
able to juxtapose recent images with those out of the past.
This opened the work up to viewing on many more levels than
a simple chronological sequence would have allowed.

The response to the show was very positive. Most people
liked the personal nature of the work, it seemed to be something
that they all could relate to. Now that I have seen the prints
as a body of work my original ideas seem to have crystallized.
The sequencing and framing cleaned up the work, unified it and
made it more pleasurable to look at.
Self portraits have been a recurring theme in my prints ever since I did my senior project on them at Stephens College where I did my undergraduate work. I have extended this idea in my thesis and questioned "where I come from" and "how does that effect who I am now." Researching my family history has given me new ideas to key in to. I am able to tap the resources of many fields, medicine, history, sociology each has a bearing on my work and can enrich it. Instead of centering in on myself, my prints can reach out and deal with issues that effect everyone. I feel that this quality will sustain my interest long after my thesis work is done.

I have been thinking about the direction my work should take now that I have finished my thesis. I believe that the answer lies in my portrait of Elizabeth. The narrative quality of my early work seems to have given way to sheer emotion and feeling in this print. I want to deal with the present, instead of reminiscing about the past, and do more portraits of my friends and immediate family.
Technical Notes
One of the things that I really love about the photoetching process are the materials. The paper that you use is of a very fine quality. You mix the inks yourself - a wide range of colors that vary in intensity and tone are possible.

The zinc plate, while not as beautiful as copper, has many endearing qualities of its own. It is a softer metal and therefore more pliable and easy to work with. It doesn't hold detail as well as copper and gives a rougher representation of the photographic image when etched. This quality can be used to your advantage. The etched plate usually looks more beautiful than the finished print. It has a very tactile nature with its deeply bitten crevices and fine surface detail. The plate has a presence that the printmaker must come to terms with.

Photoetching is a messy process. The clue is to get everything set up and ready to go before you begin to print so that you can pull an edition quickly and cleanly. Once you find your work rhythm you have it made and printing becomes a very contemplative experience.
Applying the Photoresist

The first step in the process is to clean your plate thoroughly with a fine grit and then wash it off with whiting and ammonia. The plate must be thoroughly degreased so that the resist will adhere cleanly.

As is to be expected, the photoresist is sensitive to light so all of the following procedures must be done in subdued light or under a yellow or red safelight. KPR 3 is the photoresist that I use. I dilute it 1:1 for most work and use it straight for deep etching.

To coat the plate I pour a puddle of photoresist on to the middle of the plate and tilt it in all directions until every part of the plate is covered. Air bubbles can be removed with the edge of a paper towel. Stand the plate on end over a paper towel and let air dry for 30 minutes.

The next step is to prebake the plate on a hotplate on a #2 setting. This hardens the resist and provides for more accurate image formation.

The photoresist is sensitive to the ultra violet rays of the spectrum. I expose my plates under a carbon arc lamp. It has a vacuum system that insures maximum contact between the Kodalith and the plate. If you want to expose your plates at home a sunlamp or direct sunlight is suggested. A sheet of glass over the plate and Kodalith will insure good contact.

Exposure times will vary according to the density of your Kodalith, the thickness of the photoresist coating and the distance of the light from the plate. It is a good idea to
run a test plate, just as you would a test strip, to determine the exposure that you want.

Next, develop the sensitized plate in KOR developer for 2 minutes. This process causes a latent image to be formed. In order to make the image more visible a blue dye must be poured on to the plate. Let the dye sit for a minute and then wash off the excess with a fine mist of water. The newly developed resist is fairly sensitive. Don’t blast it with water or you may inadvertently remove some of the resist. Bake the plate after this step as well in order to harden the resist and make it more resistant to the acid.

**Etching the Plate**

The two procedures that I use most often to etch my plate are the openbite and the aquatint. In the openbite process you place your exposed and developed plate in an acid bath. The acid eats away at the image, the longer the plate is left in the acid the deeper the impressions become. When a plate that has been etched in this manner is printed, ink collects along the edges of the bitten areas and is wiped out of large open areas. In order to hold tone in large open areas you must use the aquatint process. Fine rosin dust or spraypaint is applied to the plate's surface. Each dot of rosin or paint is acid resistant and the acid bites into the spaces between the dots. This roughens the surface of the plate so that it will hold ink. The longer you bite the aquatint, the deeper these pits become and the darker your tone will be.
I use nitric acid mixed 15:1 for most of my etching. This dilution will hold good detail in the plate and works a little faster than a 20:1 solution.

Experience will tell you how long to etch to get what you want in your image. If you are just starting out I have listed some suggested times below:

**Openbite** (produces a linear effect when printed)
- very shallow: 3 minutes
- shallow: 5 minutes
- medium: 15 minutes
- deep: 1 hour
- extremely deep: 6-8 hours

**Aquatint** (produces a tonal effect when printed)
- very light: 3 minutes
- light: 5 minutes
- medium: 8 minutes
- dark: 15 minutes
- very dark: 30 minutes

I usually openbite my plates for five minutes to give them better definition in detailed areas and then aquatint them. For an extremely light tone, openbite the plate for a minute and a half. This will produce enough plate tone in those areas to distinguish them from the unetched portions of the plate.

**Printing the Plate**

After the plate has been etched it is ready to print. I usually remove the photoresist with lacquer thinner or Solvent 95, although this is not necessary. Apply ink to the surface of the plate with a square of cardboard. Move the
cardboard in short circular strokes to make sure all areas of the plate are covered and to insure that ink gets into every crevice.

Next wipe the plate with a wad of tarletan. It is a good idea to have two on hand, one for the initial dirty wipe and the second for a finer wipe. Move your arm in a circular motion, don't scrub the plate, this will only make your prints inconsistent. Then use a piece of newsprint to remove the excess ink that the tarletans missed. A final wipe is done with the side of your hand. This picks up the very fine layer of excess ink still left on the plate. The last step in the inking process is to go over the edges of the plate with a cloth slightly dampened in solvent.

The plate is then placed on a clean press bed and a piece of dampened paper is laid over the top. This is run through the press and the ink is transferred to the paper. When you peel the paper away you have a print. To insure that the print dries flatly, I place it between clean blotters underneath a large flat board.
There are a few words of caution I must give anyone thinking of working in the photoetching process. The photoresist and developing chemicals are extremely dangerous and must be used in a well ventilated area. Heavy rubber gloves must be used at all times when handling them. If the resist or developer should get on your skin by accident flush the area immediately with water. The fumes are also very dangerous so avoid breathing them. It is a good idea to wear a respirator with the appropriate filter pack for the chemicals being used.
I have outlined the photoetching procedure in the
previous pages. If a more detailed account of the process
is needed Kent Wade's *Alternative Photographic Processes*,
published by Morgan & Morgan, is an excellent sourcebook.
Once the basic procedures are mastered there are many fine
nuances that can make a world of difference to your prints.

Photoetching is basically a high contrast process, this
quality was something that I had to deal with throughout my
thesis work. I found a few ways to get around this contrast,
techniques that made my prints more subtle and refined.

One of the things I did was to use a Kodalith positive,
developed in D-72, to make my image. Developing the film
in D-72 gives it a much wider tonal range and allows for
multiple exposures on the plate.

1. Coat the plate and expose it with the Kodalith
positive under a carbon arc lamp. This will
overexpose the highlights and midtones and cause
them to disappear. Then etch your shadow areas as
you want them.

2. Recoat your plate, register the Kodalith positive,
expose for the midtones and etch.

3. Coat your plate a third time. Register the Kodalith
and expose for a very short time, perhaps 30 seconds.
Openbite these areas for a minute and a half in 15:1
acid in order to put a light delicate tone in them.

As I worked I was able to experiment with a variety of
etching times and techniques to produce a plate full of tonality
and a far stop from the basic high contrast photoetching.

It is fairly easy to put a photographic image on a plate,
just like it is fairly easy to expose a piece of photographic
paper under the enlarger. But we all know that it usually takes quite a bit of burning and dodging to make a good print. The same idea applies to etching, instead of burning and dodging you use the action of acid on metal to produce the tone you want.

A printmaker once told me that you cannot ruin an etching plate and I think this is very true. You must be willing to work with it, to push it to it's limits, to scrape out areas that you don't want and emphasize those areas that are most important. It may even be harder for the photoetcher to alter his plate than it is for the etcher who starts from scratch. The photoetcher is given a beautiful image, full of photographic detail, as his starting point. He can let it rule him or he can learn to make it work to it's best advantage. The photoetcher must be brave. He must let accidents occur, because this is often how the most exciting images are made.

It usually takes me a day and a half to work the plate until it is ready to proof and perhaps another day or so to work it into a finished image. Because I work over a period of days I have a chance to reflect on the image and the direction I want it to go. My ideas are always altered after I have pulled the first proof no matter how many preconceptions I might have had about the Kodalith.

I always work on a couple of plates at a time so that I can work on one while another is etching in the acid. The etching of the metal can be a slow process, especially if you
are going for fine detail. It takes time and there is no getting around it. I find that if I have to sit around waiting for the plate to etch I am tempted to pull it out too soon, so I try and keep myself occupied with another plate. Another advantage of working with a couple of plates at once is that their preciousness is destroyed and you etch them much more courageously.

Printing the plate is another area where you can refine your ideas or alter your intent. I always mix my own colors. Straight out of the tube is usually too much for me, although at times these very intense pigments can add a nice accent to an area of a print. I lean toward dark blues and browns. I like to neutralize my colors, but I try and stay away from adding white to my inks because of the oxidation that occurs when it is rubbed into the zinc metal. I also tend to avoid opaque inks because I prefer a more translucent quality in my prints.

My color selections are usually very subjective, and are based upon the feelings that are built up as I work on the print. Sometimes they come very naturally to me, other times it takes alot of experimentation to work them out. When I was printing my Tempus Fugit plate I threw together some leftover inks I had on my palette to make a quick color proof. I was sure that the color was all wrong for the print but I tried it anyway. As it turned out the color "made" the print.
Family History
I first became interested in my family history about a year ago when I unearthed some family photographs in our attic. Most of them had been handed down to my mother by my grandmother. We went through them together and tried to figure out who was who.

Since I was interested, my mother showed me a series of letters that had been sent to her by Cousin Charles Mouat in 1971. Cousin Charles was very interested in family history and they had an extensive correspondence in which they exchanged information. My mother knew only what had been passed on to her by word of mouth, but Cousin Charles had researched the family through letters and record searching. Most of what we know about my mother's mother's side of the family we learned from him. In one of his letters Cousin Charles says:

"I look at genealogy in this fashion; I am on a broad boulevard of life: the various films, books, letters, all take me on trips of various nature...This is an unending chain of events of yesterday taking the searcher on a trip back in the days and area travelled by his ancestors. It also tells you in some fashion "who am I," "from whence am I," and "what am I here for."

Cousin Charles' letters are very long and detailed, one runs to seventeen pages. They contain too much information to absorb in one sitting, but every time you reread them you find something new. What I have attempted to do in my report is condense the information so it is more manageable to the general reader. In order to make it more interesting I have
interwoven my family history with information about the social conditions of the times.

My mother also showed me a copy of a letter written by her grandfather, William Peter Grant. (See Appendix) It held a wealth of information about the Grant side of the family, dating back to the time of the Revolutionary War. This was what really got me started on my family research. To find a document written seventy years ago about my ancestors was very exciting and inspiring. The letter gave me a chance to get to know my great grandfather William Peter and to learn about his experiences and those of his ancestors, first hand. My mother and I later learned that William Peter was a very unusual man, some said eccentric, because he would get up very early in the morning and write. I have nothing but respect for this man who had the foresight to record his thoughts for those who followed him.

This letter inspired my mother and I so, we decided to go to Nova Scotia to see if we could find out more about the Grant family. We took the ferry from Portland, Maine to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia and then drove along the coast to Halifax. As we passed through picturesque little towns we began to get a feel for the wild beauty of the area and the rugged nature of the Nova Scotian's life.

We spent five days in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia in Halifax. Here we found microfilmed copies of the records of St. Columba's Church, the Presbyterian church that our ancestors had attended. We also found cemetery records,
marriage and death records and some old wills written by our ancestors. We had the opportunity to obtain copies of maps dating back to 1860 with the names of property owners written in. Through these maps we were able to pinpoint the exact location of our ancestor's land. Research in the public archives gave us the opportunity to verify our facts and provide us with names and dates that we had not known about before. It also gave us a chance to see documents that our relatives had written or signed and we began to get a more personal feel for the people we were researching.

Next we drove to Pictou County, the area where our relatives had lived. We arrived there Saturday. Sunday we attended services at St. Columba's Church. There we were introduced to Weldon Fraser, one of the local experts on genealogy. He and his family were very kind to us and took us on a tour throughout the countryside. We were especially interested in seeing the cemeteries, many of which were hidden deep in the woods. The only way to get to them was over tiny dirt roads and at one point we came to a big mud hole. Mr. Fraser got out of the car, walked up and eyed it for a few minutes, then got back in the car and with expert handling eased us across. My mother confided to me later that there was something about the way Mr. Fraser handled the situation that reminded her very much of her father. In fact many of the mannerisms and ways of speaking of the people put her in mind of him.

It was a misty rainy day and at each cemetery Mr. Fraser
and I got out and searched for family headstones. The first one we found was in Marshdale cemetery, which we were later to learn was the burial site for most of our family members.

Mr. Fraser put us in contact with John McLean, a man he thought might be related to us. We went to visit Mr. McLean at his farm and the minute I saw him I knew we had found a relative, he looked so much like my grandfather and great grandfather. He remembered hearing tell of many of our relatives and took us to the site of the original Grant farm. The house had burned down a few years ago, but the foundation was still intact and you could see where the barn had fallen in. Everything was grown over, but the apple trees were in bloom, a reminder that people had once lived there. The feeling of the place is something I will never forget.

Cousin John also took us to see his Aunt Florence McLean McDonald. She and her husband Fraser McDonald, a historian in his own right, will celebrate their sixtieth wedding anniversary next year. Aunt Florence remembered many of our relatives, including great-great-grandmother Elspeth McKay. I really cannot express how my mother and I felt upon meeting these people for whom we had searched so long.

I kept a photographic record of all the places we went on our trip. My mother and I often returned to places other people had taken us so I could concentrate on making pictures. When we were with people like Mr. Fraser or Cousin John McLean it was much more interesting and important to listen to what they had to say.
Robert Fletcher Grant
Grant Genealogy
Peter Grant
b 1740 Scotland
immigrated 1775
d 1791

Alexander (wheelwright)  Peter Josiah (storekeeper)  William  Jane  Jessie
b 1776  (storekeeper)  d 1812  m  Alex McPhie

Mary Fraser
b 1787  d 1873

William  ?  Peter Lyman
b 1812  d 1889  b 1810
m  m

Elspeth McKay  Mary Henderson
b 1815  d 1907  b 1836  b 1840

William  Anne  William  Anne  Mary  Margaret  Catherine  Jessie
b 1836  b 1838  b 1842  b 1840  b 1845  m  m  m  m

Mr. Bell  Daniel  Angus  Donald McQuarry  Fraser

Catherine  Jane  Allan  William  Robert  Alex  Jessie
Ross  Thomas  Grant  Oliver  Melville  Catherine
b 1847  b 1871  b 1873  b 1880  b 1886  b 1891
d 1928

Jessie  Margaret  Elspeth  Robert  Isabel  Mary  Marion  Thomas
Christina  Beatrice  Alice  Fletcher  Bertha  Ann  Ruth  Ross
b 1874  b 1875  b 1877  b 1879  b 1881  Maud  Stella  b 1886
m  d 1893  d 1972  d 1963  d 1960  b 1883  b 1884
  d 1886  d 1980

William Patterson  Helen Peace

Theodore  Katherine  William
Grant  Isabel  m  m

Joan  Robert William
Mr. Bagby  Jack Arthur Obermeyer

Mary  Jo Ann  Helen Elizabeth
I have been able to trace my ancestors back all the way to Peter Grant born in Invernesshire, Scotland about 1750. He was the first Grant to settle in Bridgeville, a town on the East River of Pictou County, Nova Scotia. He had planned to settle in the United States but when he arrived there he found the country in such a wasted state due to the Revolutionary War that he went on to Halifax. There he joined the 84th Regiment and did garrison work until the war ended.

"The 84th Regiment was raised in the year 1775, and known as the Royal Highland Emigrant Regiment. It consisted of emigrants just arriving and Loyalists who had already been there for some time. They were not only broke, but many of them were in debt for their passage. They were told that by enlisting they would have their debts paid, plenty of food, as well as full pay and in addition would receive for each head of family two hundred acres of land and fifty more acres for each child, as soon as the rebellion was suppressed... Their uniform was full Highland Garb - Black Watch tartan, with purses made of racoon."

When the regiment was disbanded in 1784 Peter Grant received a soldier's grant of 300 acres of land on the east side of the East River at Bridgeville. He must have been highly regarded because he was one of the first elders to be ordained in Pictou County. Before a church was built services were held under an old elm tree in Bridgeville which is still standing today.

Bridgeville was similar to many of the small Nova Scotia communities of it's day.

1 Bridgeville Women's Institute, A' Gleann Boidheach, pp 2-3.
"The typical farming community was situated in a river valley. There close to the intervals that skirted the river, the farmers built their homes and the settlement followed the course of the valley. Beyond the hills on either side, the forest stretched away enclosing the settlement and dividing it from its neighbors."  

In the early days there were no roads and the settlers found their way by blazing the trees. Their first homes were log cabins made in small clearings in the woods.  

"The history of each settlement was much the same. Families came in over rough trails to claim the lands allotted to them. Each chose a site for a home and erected a rough dwelling, usually of one or two rooms. The first small clearing grew as the men of the family hacked away at the forest. There came a still night when the scattered debris of some weeks' work would be touched off, and a group of silent, weary folk stood in the glare to watch the flames lick upward into the night."  

One of the most demanding tasks that faced the settlers was to clear the dense forest that covered every inch of their new land. The newly cleared land was very fertile.  

"There was no need for ploughing or cultivating; seed thrown on the new soil sprang up in overwhelming luxuriance responding as if by magic...Just as the untouched earth yielded a rich harvest so the woods provided game in abundance - deer, caribou, moose, partridge, ducks - and the waters teemed with fish - salmon, herring, cod, mackerel, oysters and lobsters."  

These first settlers were strong and courageous people. They were bound together by the ties of their Scottish Heritage and the remnants of the clan system. They all spoke Gaelic and were staunch members of the Presbyterian Church.  

4 Charles Dunn, Highland Settler, p. 29.
Peter Grant had four sons and five daughters: Alexander, Peter, Josiah, William (my great-great-great-grandfather), Jane, Christie, Catherine, Jessie and Margaret. Peter Grant died in 1791 and is probably buried in Bridgeville cemetery. We could not find his grave marker because in the early days ordinary fieldstones with inscriptions which have long since worn away were used to mark the graves.

The children each went their separate ways. A couple of them were storekeepers, most of the girls married and moved away, but William remained on the home farm. He was married in 1808 to Mary Fraser of the Middle River area. The Fraser property was quite some distance from his home and he must have traveled a long way to do his courting. This was not unusual because in those days men traveled long distances for wives and married them with very little previous acquaintance. As an example there is the case of Dr. MacGregor, the first Presbyterian minister in Pictou County:

"He himself had no time to go a-wooing, but friends recommended highly the virtues of Miss Ann MacKay of Halifax. The Doctor wrote Miss MacKay stating his circumstances and offering her his hand. She accepted and the two met for the first time a few minutes before their marriage in Halifax."\(^5\)

William Grant died a young man at the age of 35, leaving his wife with two small children and another yet unborn. Mary Fraser Grant returned to her father’s house at the forks of the Middle River and that is where William Grant Jr. (my great-great-grandfather) was born.

Alexander Fraser Og*, Mary's father, was well known in his day as he was an old landmark of the area. He had also immigrated from Invernesshire, although he had first settled in Antigonish, a neighboring county to Pictou. On account of the religion of the people there, probably Catholic, he did not like it and so he wandered west until he came to the forks of the Middle River. There he took up a grant of 400 acres of land. His wife's name was Margaret and they had seven children: Alexander, Roderick, William, Robert, Mary Margaret and Ann.

Alexander, the eldest son of Alexander Fraser Og, married Jessie Chisholm. They had ten children: Alexander, Roderick, David William, Margaret, Lavinia Jane, William George, John Robert, James, Jessie Ruth and Daniel.

As you can see, these early settlers had very large families and the names from generation to generation are so similar that it can get very confusing. They used a traditional naming order which I found to be a great help in tracing the lineage back:

- First son named after the paternal grandfather
- Second son named after the maternal grandfather
- Third son named after the father
- First daughter named after the paternal grandmother
- Second daughter named after the maternal grandmother
- Third daughter named after the mother

Most of these early Nova Scotia settlers were farmers. All the work was done by hand and so they needed large families such as the Frasers had.

* Og means "the younger" in Gaelic
"Everything was home-made, outdoors and in. The settler built his own house, barn and pig-pen; he made his farming implements - carts, sleds, harrows, yokes, rakes, baskets, barrels, milk dishes, cheese presses, brooms...The house was by turns a cheese factory, a soap factory, a carding mill, a spinning jenny, a weaving mill and factories of other sorts...In the attic were stored the home-grown medicinal herbs, from which, with mortar and pestle, various concoctions for the sick were made." 6

They worked with very simple implements; the axe, the hoe and the sickle. They would clear about 15 acres of land a year and farm the virgin soil until it gave out. Then they would clear more land. This may seem like a small amount of land to plant compared to the size of their grants, but we must remember that to a man with such primitive tools 15 acres was a lot of land to farm. These early settlers had a great thirst for land and this was the reason for them taking on such large grants and leaving much of them fallow. Many of them had never before owned their own land and so this was like a dream come true.

William Grant lived with his grandfather, Alexander Fraser Og until he was twenty one. Then he and his brother Peter bought three hundred acres of land at the forks of the Middle River, or Concord Mills and the settlement was then called. After farming his land for awhile, Peter Grant sold his land and moved to Toney River, another area of Pictou County.

William Grant was married to Elspeth McKay in 1835. Her parents were Murdoch McKay and Catherine Matheson, good Scottish names. She was born in Sutherlandshire, Scotland.

in 1815 and the McKay family immigrated to Nova Scotia in 1819. Conditions aboard ship were very bad in those days and they must have had a rough time of it. Provisions were few and quarters were cramped, but the immigrants kept up their spirits as best they could with song, pipemusic, dancing, wrestling and other amusements. When the family landed they stayed in Cariboo the first winter. In the spring of the following year they came to New Lairg, a settlement down river from Concord Mills. Murdock McKay carried on his back one hundred pounds of flour and twenty pounds of Codfish, a distance of twenty miles. He was considered one of the ablest men in the parish where he had resided in Scotland.

William Grant and Elspeth McKay also had a large family. William, born 1836, and Ann, born 1838, died very young and are buried in the community cemetery in Marshdale. Next came Ann, then my great-grandfather William Peter, Mary, Margaret, Catherine, Jessie and Merion. You can imagine how William Peter must have felt growing up amongst all those girls.

William Peter Grant married Catherine Jane Ross, or Cassie as she was sometimes called, on the 15th of May 1873. They went to Truro for the service, probably on the railroad which had opened up a few years before. They had nine children: Jessie Christine, Margaret Beatrice, Elspeth Alice, Robert Fletcher (my grandfather), Isabel Bertha, Mary Ann Maud, Marion Ruth Stella, Thomas Ross and William Albert.
Catherine Ross Grant
**PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA.**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Date and place of Marriage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>His age</td>
<td>Thirty (30)</td>
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<td>Profession or trade</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
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<td>Residence</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where born</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' names</td>
<td>William Grant &amp; Eliza his wife</td>
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<tr>
<td>Their profession</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full name of BRIDE</td>
<td>Taste True Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Twenty five (25)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Condition, (spinster or widow)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Her place of residence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' names</td>
<td>Robert Ross &amp; Margaret his wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their profession</td>
<td>Farmer (husb)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Officiating Clergyman</td>
<td>John MacMillan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denomination of Clergyman</td>
<td>Church of Scotland</td>
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I certify that the marriage of the persons above named was duly celebrated by me at the time and place, and in the manner, stated in this slip.

Name Illegible

Officiating Clergyman.

This slip is to be filled up by the Clergyman, and returned to the Issuer of Marriage Licenses, along with License, if married by License, or Proclamation, of Banns, within ten days after performance of marriage ceremony, under a penalty of Four Dollars for each neglect. Issuer will pay to Clergyman Twenty-five Cents for this Return, if correctly made, and is required by the Board of Statistics to be careful that in every case it accompany the License when returned. Should the Clergyman neglect, after having been informed of the provisions of the law— or refuse to comply with it—the Issuer has no resource but to exact the penalty, as he is responsible for the Return being made. Parties married are required to sign their names opposite the words, "Signatures of parties Married." All blanks must be filled in ink.

JOHN COSTLEY, Sec., Board of Statistics.
Now that the settlements were established the highlanders began to have more time to relax. Gaelic Folk culture played an important part in the lives of these hard working people. After the work was done they would get together at someone's house to enjoy a few hours of leisure. The chief delight at such a ceilidh(gathering) was to lie in the warmth of the fire and listen to Sgeulachdan, the ancient folk tales of the Gael.

Most of the Highland settlers were illiterate but they brought with them from Scotland a rich heritage of household arts, games, dances, music and unwritten literature. There was a Gaelic folk song for every activity, milking, churning, carding, etc. to help make the work go faster. They were also a superstitious people, despite their strong religious beliefs. They believed in the curative effects of incantations, in the little people and in second sight.

The Grant farm was very self sufficient. All food was grown on the farm and clothes and farm equipment were made by hand. What little surplus there was was used to obtain a few luxuries in town.

The role of the women on the small farm was an important one. Most people think of them spending all their time cooking, cleaning and raising children, but in those days they had to do quite a bit of outdoor work as well. They tended the garden, fed the chickens and collected the eggs, milked the cows, gathered and preserved wild fruits and herbs.
and even helped harvest the grain. They made all the clothing and bedding by hand, carding the wool, spinning it into thread, weaving it into cloth and then sewing it. They stoked the fires and often split their own firewood. And last but not least, they tended the babies and the sick.

The small farm reached it's heyday in the 1870's. As the culture became more mechanized things began to change. It became unprofitable to run a small farm and the children of the farmers were lured away by the romance and prospects of the big city. Soon the population of these small communities began to dwindle.

"The houses sagged with neglect, the spruce and fir crept into the fields, farm lanes grew up in grass and alders. The house fell into the cellar, the barns collapsed and molded away...The soil breathed in relief once more."

This is the pattern that my family history follows as well as that of thousands of other Nova Scotia families. We had strong farming families until the children of William Peter Grant began to grow up and move away. The girls all went to Boston, where Elspeth and Stella became nurses, Bertha a secretary and Christine a seamstress.

My great-aunt Florence McDonald remembers them well, "They were all so beautiful. They came home every summer for a visit. They wore those great big hats people wore in those days and had such lovely clothes."

In the early 1900's my grandfather, Robert Fletcher, traveled to Western Canada where he cleared land and established a large wheat ranch near Nanton, Alberta. He was later joined

by his brothers Ross and William.

According to Cousin John McLean who, after completing his education, returned to Pictou county to continue the family farming tradition, "In 1913 Uncle Bill and Aunt Cassie packed up everything they had, loaded the furniture, the livestock and the farm equipment on a train and took off for the wheat ranch in Alberta."
Robert and Margaret Mouat
Robert Mouat and his First Family
The Second Family
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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My mother's mother's side of the family are from the Orkney and Shetland Islands. These islands lie to the north of Scotland and are halfway between there and Norway.

The islands were first settled by the Picts or Early Caledonians. Their special environment made them especially attractive to Prehistoric people. They are treeless and low lying and this made them very easy to settle. Remnants of their culture can still be found throughout the islands in the form of Brochs, the forerunner of the Medieval castle and in circles of standing stones much like those found at Stonehenge.

Sometime later the Norse and the Swedes overran them and took the country, holding it for many years. Our line is in good portion Norse although it is intermixed with Lowlands Scots.

The islands were joined to the Scottish Crown in 1472 as a dowry in the marriage of James III to Princess Margaret of Denmark.

On the islands of Orkney and Shetland life is wedded to the sea. The ocean is visible from almost every point on the islands and it influences every aspect of life there. As far as I can tell most of my ancestors made their living from the sea.

My great-great-great-grandfather, Robert Mouat Sr. was a seaman. He was born about 1800 and married Jean Nicolson. He died very young in life, probably of drowning, and left
his wife to care for their children; Robert Jr., Thomas and Grizel. The family was from Scarphles on the mainland of Shetland and Robert Mouat Jr., my great-great-grandfather, grew up to be a jack of all trades. According to family legend, he was a sea captain who ventured to far off places in sailing ships, a crofter (tenant farmer), general merchant, fishcurer and Shetland Pony farmer.

He first married Agnes Johnson, daughter of John Johnson and Catherine Halcrow, at Leebutton, Shetland on 27 January 1848. Catherine Jane was their first born, born in England where Robert Mouat was a seaman at the time. Then came Grace, Joan (my great grandmother), Maria Agnus and Thomasina Helen. Agnes Johnson died at Tow Cunningsburg, Shetland on 13 October 1860, probably in childbirth.

After the death of his first wife Robert Mouat married Margaret Mouat, daughter of Charles Mouat of Unst, Shetland, landed gentry and merchant. They had eight children: Mary Charlotte, Jane Margaret Janet, Marjorie Barbara Davidson McKenzie, Robina, Robert, Charles J.W., George Gall and William Kerr.

We know that in 1868 Robert Mouat owned a Shetland Pony Ranch. He was forced to borrow heavily because of depressed conditions on the islands at that time. The herd was destroyed by an epidemic of hoof and mouth disease and when this tragedy occurred he immigrated with his family to Canada.

The family sailed from Glasgow on 29 May 1873 on the
SS St. Patrick, an Allan Lines Ship, and arrived in Quebec 12 June 1873. A cabin sold for $70 and $80, steerage was $25. Steerage passengers had to provide their own beds and bedding and eating and drinking utensils.

After arriving in Quebec the five sisters of the first family went to Brooklyn, New York and the second family went to Toronto with their father and mother.

The women of the Shetland Islands do very fine handwork. The finest wool from the necks of sheep is usually reserved for the now almost extinct lacework - shawls of such fine texture that they can be drawn through a wedding ring. Although not many family heirlooms exist our family does have one of the lacework shawls in our possession. We also have a hand made quilt in the "Bird and Basket" design which an authority has identified as being made between 1825 and 1850. Both were probably made by Agnes Johnson Mouat or members of her family and brought to Brooklyn by the girls of the first family.

After they arrived in Brooklyn the girls lived in the vicinity of Sterling Place. At a meeting of a Scotch social group Joan Mouat met James Peace. They were married in 1879 and went to Toronto on their wedding trip so James could meet Joan's father and the rest of the family.

James Peace, my great grandfather, born in 1851 had bright red hair and six given first names but no one ever wrote them down so there is no record. He was from Stronsay
in the Orkney Islands. His parent's names were John Peace (a sailmaker) and Mary Taylor. Stronsay was an island known for its herring production. Now however the herring station huts are empty and the closing down of the stations was a catastrophe for the island.

In my great-grandfather's time ships would come from all over the world to load herring for export. In the summer when the fishing business was at its peak the place would be bustling with activity and the sun would be up so long that the fishermen would think it hardly worthwhile to go to bed.

In midwinter dawn would arrive around noon and the sun would go down early in the afternoon. The women would continue their household duties, which never vary winter or summer, but the idle fishermen would spend much of their time drinking and card playing, frittering away the earnings of the summer.

James Peace came to Brooklyn around 1875. He was a printer on the New York Herald Tribune. In those days the printers often drank and were unreliable. My great-grandfather sometimes had to print the paper practically single-handedly. He became ill with tuberculosis and was advised to go to New Zealand in hopes that the sea voyage and change of climate would effect a cure. He probably hoped to send for his family once he was settled. He died on board ship the day before the ship reached New Zealand. He was buried at Southern Cemetery, Dunedin, New Zealand 2 February 1888 aged 37. It
was three months before my great-grandmother heard of his
death and the $10,000 in cash he had taken with him just
disappeared.

This left Joan Mouat Peace to care for the three
children: Margaret Mouat, Helen Agnes (my grandmother),
and James. James, like his father, had red hair. He
developed tuberculosis of the spine and died when he was
four in 1890.

When Margaret and Helen were growing up they were
classmates and friends of the "Ebbets kids" and were on
occasion invited to sit in the owner's box when the Dodgers
were playing a home game. Mr. Ebbets, who owned the Dodgers
and built Ebbets Field in Brooklyn, would give each child
a scorecard and pencil. If they kept a perfect score each
would receive a nickle. As a result of that experience both
were lifelong Dodger fans.

My grandmother, Helen Agnes Peace, graduated from
Mt. Sinai Hospital School of Nursing in 1910. She was
slim and graceful with lovely auburn hair and hazel eyes.
When my mother was growing up people often said to her,
"Of course, Joan, you're very pretty but you should have
seen your mother at your age. She was simply beautiful."

After graduating from training my grandmother, well
chaperoned by her mother, danced ballroom dancing professionally,
with a partner, in the style of Vernon and Irene Castle at
exclusive supper clubs and hotels including the Palmer House
in Chicago.
When the season ended she decided to return to nursing as a private duty nurse. In 1917 she accompanied a patient to Arizona and was working, temporarily, at St. Joseph's Hospital in Phoenix when the hospital received an urgent request from the copper mining town of Jerome in Northeastern Arizona for nurses to care for patients at the Miner's Hospital during the flu epidemic. My mother and three other nurses volunteered to go to Jerome to assist during the emergency.

After arriving in Jerome, while working at the hospital, she established a homestead and had the land planted with maize. Later she met my grandfather, Robert Fletcher Grant, who had left the wheat ranch in Alberta in the care of his father and brothers, and was a foreman at the United Verde Copper Mine. They were married November 2, 1918.

After my grandparents were married they lived in Jerome and my grandfather continued to work in the mine. In June 1919 he and another man were standing on the rim of a bucket, carrying five miners, which had descended 300 feet into the mine when the cable slipped and the bucket dropped fifty feet and hit the bottom of the shaft. Of all the men my grandfather was the least seriously injured but every bone in both his feet was broken. He was unable to work for two years.

He was a patient at Miner's Hospital when my mother, Joan, was born there on August fifth. In celebration of
the occasion my grandfather sent my grandmother a silver loving cup filled with champagne.

My uncle, Robert William Grant, was born in Cottonwood, Arizona on February 8, 1922. By an interesting coincidence my grandfather became a naturalized citizen of the United States on that same date.

The family lived in several places in Northern Arizona while my mother was growing up, wherever my grandfather could find work in a gold, silver or copper mine. In 1933 they moved to Nevada City, a silver mining town in Northern California and my mother graduated from high school there.

When she decided she would like to become a nurse her parents felt it might be to her advantage to train at a hospital in the East. Since she had two aunts living in the Boston area she applied and was accepted at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston from which she graduated in 1941. During World War II she was a Lt. (j.g.) in the Navy Nurse Corps.

She and Commander Jack Arthur Obermeyer met at the Officer's Club in Boston. They were married September 15, 1945. My sister and I were both born in Boston: JoAnn on September 15, 1946 and Helen Elizabeth on February 11, 1955.
The Obermeyer Family

Gertrude Newman Obermeyer
holding Jack Arthur
Abner Obermeyer
b 1830
Oberammergeau
Bavaria, Germany
Migrated to U.S. 1851
d 1914

John
Abner
b 1859
d 1918

Fred

Charles

m

Sadie
Coultes
b 1864
d 1943

m

Harrison
Peter
b 1888
d 1969

Nina
d 1976

m

Deane
m

m

Helen Marie
d 1979

m

Mr. Maxwell

Jim Goddard

Lawrence
Goveia
d 1970

Gertrude
Newman
b 1894
d 1919

Evans

m

Jack

Arthur

m

Joan
Grant
b 1919

m

Jo Ann
b 1946

Helen

Elizabeth
b 1955
MARRIAGE LICENSE

State of Illinois, State of Illinois, County of Scott.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

To any Person legally authorized to Solemnize Marriage—GREETING:

MARRIAGE may be Celebrated between Mr. John A. Obermeyer of Winchester,

in the County of Scott and State of Illinois, of the age of 23 years, and

Mr. Sallie B. Croutt of Plainfield in the County of Scott,

and State of Illinois, of the age of 23 years.

WITNESS B. T. Bradley,

County Clerk, and the seal of said County, at his office in

Winchester, in said County, this 18th day of Oct. A.D. 1887.

B. T. Bradley

COUNTY CLERK.

STATE OF ILLINOIS,

Mr. M. Allen, Sr. Minister,

hereby Certify that

Mr. John A. Obermeyer and Miss Sallie B. Croutt were united in Marriage by me at

Winfield, Rock River, in the County of Scott and State of Illinois, on the 18th day of


M. Allen

Minister of Gospel.
Great-Great-Grandfather Obermeyer was born in Oberammergau, Bavaria, Germany. Oberammergau is known for its passion play which is performed every ten years. It has been staged ever since the beginning of the seventeenth century as a thanksgiving for the town being liberated from the Black Death.

Abner Obermeyer migrated to Winchester, Illinois in 1851 when he was about twenty. He was a butcher and sausagemaker. We know nothing about his wife, but we do know that he had three children. My great-grandfather, John Abner was a pharmacist and owned a drug store. Fred was a bricklayer and Charles owned the Illinois Brick company.

John Abner married Sadie Coultas of Point Pleasant on 18 October 1887. They had four children. Harrison Peter (my grandfather) was a licensed pharmacist but he preferred selling and was a salesman for a variety of products most of his life. Nina married a Mr. Maxwell and they had one son, Evans. Deane was a talented musician who studied piano and voice at the Chicago Conservatory of Music and appeared professionally on the concert stage. She married Jim Goddard who was also a musician. Helen Marie married Lawrence Goveia who was a very prosperous farmer and of Portuguese descent.

Harrison Peter, or Harry as he was always called, met my grandmother, Gertrude Newman, while she was attending Illinois College for Women in Jacksonville, Illinois and they were married in 1914. Jacksonville is located in the west central part of Illinois. My father says that when he
lived there the population was 17,747 and that it never changes because every time a baby is born a man leaves town.

Jacksonville is built around a central square with a bandstand in the center. Streets radiate from the square; North Main Street, South Main Street, East and West Street. It has always been a big Saturday night town since farmers and people from outlying districts come to town once a week to shop and celebrate in local establishments.

My father, Jack Arthur Obermeyer was born in Jacksonville in 1915. His mother died when he was four and he went to live with his Grandmother Sadie and later with his Uncle Charles and Aunt Ruth Newman. When he was eleven his father married Irma Kline and they moved to New York City. The family lived eight blocks from Yankee Stadium and some of the ballplayers, including Tony Lazzeri and Mark Koenig, lived in their apartment building. As a result my father and I have always been avid Yankee fans.

Jack graduated from Evander Childs High School at sixteen. He attended New York University for two years where he majored in Chemistry.

When he was eighteen he was appointed to the US Naval Academy from which he graduated in 1937. While attending the USNA he stood first in his class all four years. He was the first midshipman ever to do so.

He served aboard the Louisville for two years then attended the Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering course
at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. At the completion of the course he was assigned to the shipyard in Hawaii and had been there three weeks when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

In 1945 he was assigned to the Boston Naval Shipyard. He met my mother, Joan Grant, there and they were married 15 September 1945.
As you have read, my ancestors some from all walks of life and from many different places. As I worked on my thesis I began to think about what a different person I might be if events in the past had been slightly altered. If, by some quirk of fate, James Peace had lived to settle in New Zealand, I might be a New Zealander. If the Grant family had stayed in Nova Scotia, I might be a farmer's wife there. If Robert Mouat's herd had not contracted hoof and mouth disease I might be raising Shetland Ponies in the Shetland Islands. Through my photoetchings I have been able to take make-believe voyages to these places and moments in time. Searching out my family history and translating it into images has given me a rich heritage to pass on to my children and grandchildren.
Appendix
William Peter Grant
I was born and have lived here sixty-four years. I was born November 13, 1842, one year and four days younger than the present King of Great Britain and Ireland. My great grandfather was the first man that settled at the forks of the Middle River, that is where two branches of the Middle River meet, one branch coming from Lansdowne Woods, and the other from Glengarry Woods, where the water divides, one part coming to Pictou and the other to Colchester County.

My great grandfather's name was Alexander Fraser (Ogg), well known in his day, as he was one of the old landmarks. He first settled in Antigonish County, in what is now known as the Big Intervale. On account of the religion of the people living there, he did not like to live among them, so he wandered west until he came to the Forks of the said Middle River, and there made a stand. He took up a grant of four hundred acres of land, one half on each side of said Middle River, and covering both branches at the forks, now divided into four different farms.

My father, known in his day as William Grant, was born at his grandfather's, and lived with his grandfather until he was twenty-one years of age. My father was born in the year 1812. On leaving his grandfather, he served one year as a farm laborer with the late Rev. Angus McGillivray of Springville. There he and his brother, Peter Grant, late of Toney River, bought three hundred acres of woodland, where I now reside at Concord, joining Alex. Fraser's (Ogg) property. My uncle, Peter Grant, after making a farm by clearing the wood of the said land, as they usually cleared about fifteen acres a year. My uncle sold his farm, one hundred acres, to the late Donald McLeod, of the same place, and the remainder to the late Alexander Nicholson, Blacksmith, of Concord. These farms are still owned by descendents of the men that bought of my uncle, one owned by Alexander McLeod, grandson of the late Donald McLeod, the other part by Alexander Nicholson, son of the late Alexander Nicholson, blacksmith.

The next settlers after my great grandfather was a man by the name of Henderson. He built the first grist mill at Concord, and was succeeded by his son, Donald Henderson, who built the present mill, now going to decay, like the most of the gristmills in this country. Then about 1852 came the Arthurs of Green Hill, in possession of the Concord Mills, and remodeled them entirely. About the year 1859 came the McLeods of Hopewell to Concord but in the year 1861 the McLeods became interested in the gold fever then raging for the time in Goldenville, Guysborough County.

At the earliest opportunity, the McLeods sold this Concord mill to the present owner, James Murray of West Branch, R.J. in the year 1874. About the same time came the Douglasses, McLeods, McQuarries, McInnis, McLeods, McArthurs. They claim to be of Glengarry, but Glengarry is
the sister of Concord, as Concord was named much sooner than Gengarry. Concord was named by the Arthurs about the year 1855. Previous to 1860, Gengarry was named by the late Rev. Simon McGregor, when he was pastor of St. Columba Church, where he had his first charge in 1861.

I will try and describe my great grandfather as we are an old name in Pictou County. My great grandfather's name was Peter Grant, the first Grant who settled on East River, of Pictou, and the first elder ordained by the late Dr. McGregor, the first Presbyterian minister that came to Pictou. On leaving the Old Country my great grandfather, and a number of others, including the Frasers, saddlers, known as such. They intended settling in the United States, but on reaching there, they found the country in a very wasted state, and came to Halifax where all the able bodied men were kept to do garrison work, while the war was going on. At the close of the war, they were given free grants of lands with the minerals given them.

My great grandfather took his lands where Bridgeville now stands. That is the way that the present Grants hold the right to the iron ore. Now, my great grandfather's name was William Grant, who settled on a farm at Churchville, known as the McKillan Farm. My grandfather died a young man at the age of thirty-six or thereabouts, leaving my grandmother a widow, with two small children, and my father not born, that is why my father was born at his grandfather's, Alexander Fraser (Ogg) as my grandmother repaired to her father's house, after the death of my grandfather. After remaining a widow for ten years, she married the late John Cameron, elder, of that place, the father of the late William Cameron, elder, and grandfather of the present John Cameron, now elder in this place.

One of the old men of Concord, named Wm. McIntosh, eminent in his day, was one of the old elders of the Kirk Church now known as St. Columba. His farm was on the east side of the Middle River, containing about five hundred acres. He was killed while chopping wood in his own woods by a tree falling on him about the year 1850, when I was a young boy. I have a vivid recollection of the occurrence. The property was divided and sold in different lots, the homestead now owned and occupied by Alexander Munro, of Rocklin.

I have described my father's people, but not my mother's, but will now do so. My father's people came from Iverness Shire, Scotland, but my mother's people came from Sutherlandshire, Scotland. My mother was born in Scotland, in the year 1815 and came out here with her parents in 1819, when she was four years old. Her father's name was Murdoch McKay, an old Highland name, and my grandmother's name was Catherine Matheson. She was noted for her activity and lived to the age of one hundred years. My grandfather died about the age of eighty. He was considered one of the ablest men in the parish where he resided in Scotland. When they landed in Pictou, they stayed in Cariboo, the first winter.
In the Spring of the following year, they came to New Laig and my grandfather carried on his back one hundred pounds of flour, and twenty pounds of codfish, a distance of twenty miles. My grandfather's family consisted of four men or boys and two women or girls. They were noted for longevity. The oldest son died aged 88; the next at ninety; the next at 86; the youngest son left here sixty-two years ago, and was last heard of forty years ago. The last accounts he went to New Zealand. If living, he would be eighty-three. The youngest of the women died at the age of 82. My mother is living with me and is hale and hearty at 92, and from appearance is good for ten years yet.

Name Illegible
Fraser Genealogy
Alexander Fraser Og
  b c1765
d 1846
immigrated c 1785
m
Margaret

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mary</th>
<th>Margaret</th>
<th>Ann</th>
<th>Alexander</th>
<th>Roderick</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b 1787</td>
<td>d 1873</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>b 1798</td>
<td>d 1847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>m</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant (1st)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Roderick</td>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>Lavinia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>b 1823</td>
<td>b 1825</td>
<td>d 1849</td>
<td>b 1833</td>
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<tr>
<td>b 1799</td>
<td>d 1863</td>
<td>m</td>
<td></td>
<td>d 1864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>Agnes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b 1829</td>
<td>b 1830</td>
<td>b 1832</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b 1832</td>
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William
d 1851
Stonecutter
Connecticut

David
William
George
b 1827

William
George
b 1835

Robert
John
b 1837

James
b 1840

Jessie
Ruth
b 1842

Daniel
b 1846

Isabella
Fraser

Alexander
William
b 1857

Sarah
Anne
b 1853

Christina
Hannah
b 1855

Jessie
Ruth
b 1861

Alexandra
Lavinia
b 1869

Catherine
McDonald
b 1869

Robert
James
b 1875
McLean Genealogy

Compiled by

John Andrew McLean
Marian Grant (Meron)
b 1858 d 1933

Andrew McLean
b 1853 d 1939

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anna Louise b 1885 d 1960</th>
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<tr>
<td>v Elspeth McKay b 1888 d infant</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donald Gordon Kerr</th>
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<tr>
<td>v William Stetson b 1890 d 1965</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Marion b 1913</th>
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<tr>
<td>v Jas. Oliver Beulah Grant b 1911</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Albert MacGowan</th>
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<tr>
<td>v Alaire Barss</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nancy Darlene</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v Linda</td>
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<tr>
<th>Tom Jacob MacDonald Bondt</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v Karen Margaret b 1956 d 3 mos</td>
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<tr>
<td>v Elspeth Marianne b 1957</td>
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<tr>
<td>v John Wm Neil b 1958</td>
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<tr>
<td>v Malcolm Fraser b 1961</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>John Andrew Grant b 1922 b 1929</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v George Grant</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nancy Signe Beck b 1926</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v Ellen Belthia MacCormack</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tom Jacob MacDonald Bondt</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v Karen Margaret b 1956 d 3 mos</td>
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<tr>
<td>v Elspeth Marianne b 1957</td>
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<tr>
<td>v John Wm Neil b 1958</td>
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<tr>
<td>v Malcolm Fraser b 1961</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Susan Elizabeth b 1953</th>
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<tr>
<td>v David Jones</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John Alexander b 1955</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v Barbara McLean Peter Grant b 1956 d 1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v Shelly Ann b 1959</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>David Cullen Sherri Lynn b 1967</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v David Fraser Grant b 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v Paul Stetson b 1971</td>
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</table>
Catherine
Florence
m
Fraser
MacDonald

Beulah
Grant
b 1901
d 1974

m
Norman
Call
b 1895

Allison
McLean
b 1924

m
Norma
Burley
b 1929

Gordon

b 1926

Jame
Crosby

m
Terry
Moran

Elizabeth
Murray

m

Kenneth
Walker

John
Catherine
Elizabeth

Andy
Alex

George Andrew b 1954 m Carol A. McLanders
William Leslie b 1956 m Sarah Alexandra Coles b 1956
Margaret Anne b 1951
Ronald Alexander b 1959
Ernest McLean b 1964
**Provincial of Nova Scotia.**

**MARRIAGE SLIP.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Marriage</th>
<th>Place of Marriage</th>
<th>County of</th>
<th>Name Married: by Licence or Bond</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Andrew H. Lees</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Name of GROOM</th>
<th>His Age</th>
<th>Condition (Bachel or Widower)</th>
<th>Profession or Trade</th>
<th>Residence</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where Born</th>
<th>Parent's Name</th>
<th>Their Profession</th>
<th>Full Name of BRIDE</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Condition (Spinst or Widow)</th>
<th>Her Place of Residence</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where Born</th>
<th>Parent's Name</th>
<th>Their Profession</th>
<th>Witnessed Name</th>
<th>Signature of parties</th>
<th>Name Illegible</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officiating Clergyman</th>
<th>Denomination of Clergyman</th>
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</table>

**If certified, that the marriage of the persons above named was duly celebrated by me at the time and place, and in the manner stated on this slip.**

**Name Illegible**

**The above slip to be filled up and signed by the clergyman and returned within ten days after performance of marriage ceremony to the County Clerk of Marriages in effect. They are to be returned to receive a license to solemnize. When the marriage is performed by license, the slip must be returned with the license, to the County Clerk of Marriages License, and the priest will pay to the clergyman all costs for both Slip and License, and is entitled to the duties of the clerk of the county. The county clerk of Marriages License, who is authorized to pay the clergyman all costs for both Slip and License, will pay the duties of the clerk of the county. The clergyman must return all licenses, names and slips to the Provincial Secretary's office, with their quarterly accounts.
CERTIFICATE OF ENTRY OF BIRTH.
Under Section 37 of 17th and 18th Vict. cap. 80.

Jean Mount, Daughter of Robert Mount, Fish Curer, and Agnes Mount, Johnson, his wife, was born at 10 a.m. P.M. on the Twenty-fifth day of March in the year 1857, at Town Comminsburgh.

I hereby certify that the above particulars are extracted by me from the entry No. 9, dated March Twenty-fifth 1857, contained in the Register-Book of Births for the Parishes of Saint John, Comminsburgh in the County of Zetland.

Name Illegible

Date of Extract,
25th March, 1857.
This Certifies That on the twenty-seventh day of November, in the year of our Lord 1878, Mr. James Peace and Miss Joan Clement were by me united in marriage at No. 97 Clement Ave, Brooklyn, Long Island. In presence of Name Illegible, Name Illegible.
CEMETERY INSCRIPTIONS

Lansdowne Cemetery
(New Lairg Pioneer Cemetery)

In Memory of
Murdoch McKay
A native of Sutherlandshire
Scotland
Emigrated to Nova Scotia 1819
Died September 6, 1850
Aged 80 years

Marshdale Cemetery

In Memory of
William Grant
Died April 23, 1889
Aged 79 years

his wife
Elspeth McKay
Died March 23, 1907
Aged 92 years

Mary Ann Maud
Died August 14, 1886
Aged 3 years 6 months

Margaret Beatrice
Died November 26, 1873
Aged 17 years 9 months

Children of William Peter
and Catherine Jane Grant

William Grant
Died September 17, 1839
Aged 2 years and 11 months

also
Ann Grant
Died January 5, 1840
Aged 1 year

Both children of William Grant
of Middle River
Marshdale Cemetery

Alexander Fraser
Died October 3, 1847
aged 52 years

wife Jessie Chisholm
May 8, 1874

children
Annie died February 1849 aged 24
Lavinia Jane died May 17, 1864

John Cameron
Elder
Died March 19, 1863
aged 64

Mary (Fraser)
wife of John Cameron
died April 29, 1873
aged 86

(Mary Fraser was the former wife of William Grant of Bridgeville and the mother of William and Peter Grant)
Alexander Fraser Og's Will
Dated 10 August 1837

In the name of God Almighty I, Alexander Fraser, of the Forks of the Middle River, county of Pictou and Province of Nova Scotia, yeoman, being of sound mind and memory and taking into consideration the frailty and uncertainty of the present life and the certainty of death do make and declare this my last will and testament.

1st. I bequeath my soul to Almighty God when it shall be his blessed will to call me home and my body to be buried with as little expense as decency will direct and the expense thereto be paid out of my personal property.

2nd. I request that all my lawful debts be paid by executors after inventory and assessement of my personal property.

3rdly. I will and bequeath to Alexander my eldest son the seven hundred acres from the south side of the lot now owned and occupied by me wherein is the house and barn, the first hundred being already conveyed to him by deed and the said Alexander is to give his brother Roderick a payment in the following manner. That is five pounds yearly until the whole is paid and the first payment to commence at the end of the twelve month from my decease and pay it for four years with the said Roderick shall have 20 pounds coming.

4thly. I will and bequeath to William, my son, the remaining 200 acres of my lot being the south 200 acres of said lot together with 1 plough, 1 harrow, one rake and 1 pair of horses with 1 collar and a pair of harness.

5thly. I will and bequeath to Robert, my son five shillings in currency and to Mary and Margaret and Anne, my daughters each 15 shillings currency to buy a gown.

6thly. I will and order to Margaret, my beloved wife, if it shall please God to spare her after my decease the present house occupied by me during this life and that Alexander, my son, do keep for her two cows and six sheep both winter and summers and also provide sufficient quantity of fuel ready for use prepared at the door and give her yearly and every year during her natural life two sacks of flour, two and one half of oatmeal and 25 bushels of potatoes.

7thly. and lastly I order and nominate my worthy friend the Rev. John McLean and Alexander Fraser named to be my executors to see the foregoing will and testament duly executed. Signed sealed and declared by me as my last will and testament this tenth day of August 1837.

Alex. Fraser

Signed in our presence, sealed and declared to in the presence of each other. John Holmes John McKenzie Alexander Mohr

Filed for Probate
23 October 1846
Alexander Fraser's will signed 29 September 1847

In the name of God Almighty I Alexander Fraser of the Forks of the Middle River of Pictou county of Pictou and province of Nova Scotia being weak of body but of perfect mind and memory thanks be unto God. Calling to mind the mortality of the body do humbly make this my last will and testament in manner and form following, Viz.

First of all I commend my spirit to Almighty God that gave it and I commit my body to the dust whence it came to be interred after the manner of decent Christian burial and as touching such worldly effects wherewith it has pleased God to help me, I bequeath to my beloved daughter Ann Fraser one hundred acres of land of which I stand now possessed and no more and if there be any residue after my just debts are paid I bequeath and ordain that the same be paid over by my executors to my beloved children Margaret, Lavinia Jane, Jessie Ruth, William George, John Robert, James and Daniel to be divided among them in equal portions if not previously expended in giving them education.

And lastly I constitute and appoint William Grant and John Chisholm to be executors of this my last will and testament.

And in order to ratify and confirm this last will and testament I hereto do subscribe my name and affix my seal on this the twenty-ninth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven.

Alexander Fraser

Signed sealed and pronounced
and declared in presence of
Hugh McLeod
John Cameron
Alex. Fraser
Research Facilities Used

New York Public Library
Rochester Public Library
Wallace Memorial Library
Public Archives of Nova Scotia
Crown Lands Department of Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia Museum of Agriculture
Pictou County Historical Library and Archives
Hector Center Trust
Pictou County Probate Office

Individuals Consulted

Bruce Horne
Weldon Fraser
Rebekah Bush McBride
Florence McLean McDonald
Fraser McDonald
John McLean
JoAnn Obermeyer
Jack Arthur Obermeyer
Joan Grant Obermeyer
Louise Ormiston
Allister Ormiston
Ellen Ross
Kathleen Speller
Bibliography

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Immigration:


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McBride, Rebekah Bush and Litchfield, Isobel. How to Begin Your Family Research, 1969


Photography and Printmaking:


