



# EDGAR EVENTS

**Researching and sharing Edgar family  
history No. 55, August 2011**



## DNA Update



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

We have four tests waiting in the wings... The first is for **Richard Edgar** of Alexandria, Virginia. **Richard** is keen on discovering his Haplotype and has sent his swabs away for analysis already. His name came to us through **Jennifer Edgar Cann** of South Carolina.

The second test is for **Terry Edgar** of Glengowrie, Adelaide, Australia. We suspect he's related to my group as an I1, but we'll let the test results prove his lineage.

**Terry** is **Adrian Edgar**'s younger brother, who we've been in conversation with for the past few months. Both brothers descend from the same line as **Peter Edgar**, of Canberra, Australia, who has been in our family group almost since the beginning – he is one of the earlier testers. This is from one of **Peter**'s emails of a few years back:

I trace my descent through my father Don, his father Richard, his father Hugh and his father John Edgar (known as 'McPherson' Edgar, I don't know why).

John 'McPherson' Edgar came to South Australia (Adelaide) in 1848 aged 20, a Scottish labourer. He died in 1893, a well respected pioneer. (The British Colony of SA was established only in 1836). After early years at Glen Osmond (now an Adelaide suburb), he had earned a living as a dairyman and the owner/operator of a small shop, owning three adjoining properties in Halifax St, Adelaide. His last years were spent working as a brewer. His funeral notice asked 'Dumfriesshire papers please copy,' which is some evidence for our belief that he came from Dumfries, Scotland.

John had three sons Robert, Hugh and William. They each had sons (and daughters) and the list of descendants of John McP Edgar is quite a long one. I have been trying to persuade some of these sons of a son to do the test but so far without success. In particular, I have been in touch with Robert (descendant of Robert) who has just retired as a big wheel in the ANZ bank. So far as I can see, nothing has happened. I have also tried Max, descendant of William (not interested) and also Adrian (descendant of William). ... John McP Edgar's eldest son, Robert, married twice.... There was a son, also Robert, and he had a son Peter. I am now trying to find these people but so far without success....

With a couple of cousins, Robin Hagedorn (daughter of my father's sister) and Thea Clinton (descended from Hugh's sister Mary Emma Edgar (in whose house J McP Edgar was when he died), I have been trying to trace the parents of John McP E. My chief suspect is Robert Edgar, shoemaker of English St, Dumfries. That Robert had a son John born 1828, who was no longer in Scotland for the 1851 census. John McP Edgar's first son was named John after his father (he died as a child). His second son was named Robert (after John's father?) and that son became a shoemaker. There are other signs and, in particular, virtually all other suspects have been eliminated.

Here's hoping that **Terry**'s test helps clear up some of this lineage.

Next, we have **Michael Edgar** of Australia, who traces his tree to Portadown, Northern Ireland. His daughter, **Rachel**, first contacted us, and we have been piecing together their tree with help from people around the globe – what a wonderful network of researchers we have!

**Rachel** wrote to **John Edgar** in Australia (<http://sites.google.com/site/edgarsinaustralia/>):

My name is Rachel Edgar and I live in Victoria, Australia.

I am currently trying to trace back the 'Edgar' descendants of my Family Tree but cannot seem to find much information.

I came across your website but still couldn't see if there was anything relating to my direct descendants on it? I'm not sure what sort of information you have or how accessible it is but was wondering if you had any records from Ireland or Australia?

The information I currently have is below but I have come to a stand still & cannot find anything further back? If you have any information or know where I could look it would be very helpful.

- James Edgar; Born: 1864 Dublin, Ireland. Died: 1948 Portadown, Ireland **Great Great Grandfather**
- Keith Alan Edgar; Born 27/12/1895 Townsville, Australia. Died: 2/04/1966 Trentham, Australia **Great Grandfather**
- William James Edgar; Born 11/11/1927 Yenda, Australia (Still Living) **Grandfather**
- Michael John Edgar; Born 13/05/1954 Beechworth, Australia (Still Living) **Father**
- Rachel Mary Edgar; Born 09/09/1985 Traralgon, Australia Still Living) **Myself**

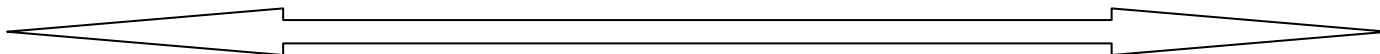
....

Rachel Edgar

Since that first contact (**John** forwarded the letter to **Steve** and me), we have filled out the tree somewhat, adding a possible father for **James** b. 1864, **William Edgar**. He's speculative right now, but worth pursuing as a lead – his place and time are about right.

**Michael's** test will prove interesting. I'm going out on a limb and casting my ballot for the I2b1 Edgars, of whom we have many.

Finally, **Roger Edgar** of Dunnville, Ontario, will get a test kit soon – ordered July 27. He will be member #203.



If you're new to the genealogy game, here are some sites worth looking at to help in your research (some are free; some require member fees, while others ask for payment to view actual records or documents):

[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

[www.freebmd.org.uk](http://www.freebmd.org.uk)

[www.emeraldancestors.com](http://www.emeraldancestors.com)

[www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)

[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

[www.census.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie)

[www.rootsireland.ie](http://www.rootsireland.ie)

[www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/sub.cfm?source=collections/virtualmem](http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/sub.cfm?source=collections/virtualmem)

[www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

[www.cyndislist.com](http://www.cyndislist.com)

## Ulster population facts and figures 1650 – 2000



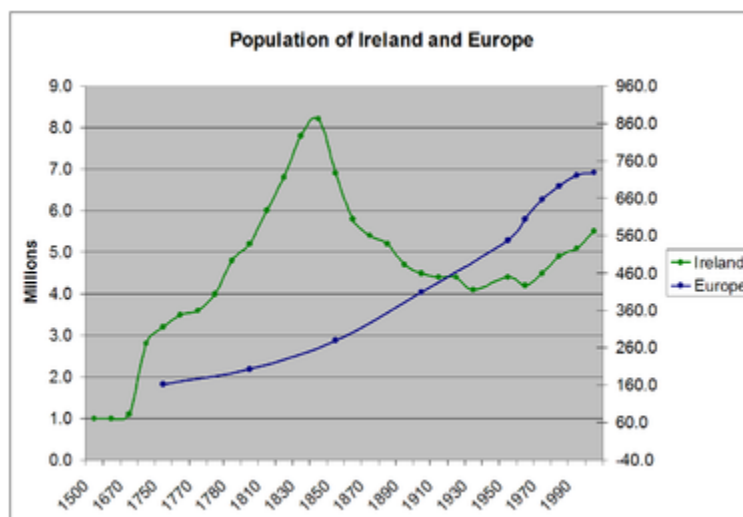
by Steve Edgar ([steven-edgar@sky.com](mailto:steven-edgar@sky.com))

Survey of 1824	Population	Aged 5- 15	No of Schools	Male	Female	Total students	% of pop	% female
Antrim	280 163	74 075	515	11 718	8004	19 722	27%	41%
Armagh	204 190	53 988	332	7 646	5043	12 689	24%	40%
Cavan	201 759	53 345	346	11 329	6541	17 870	33%	37%
Donegal	256 775	67 891	376	8 341	5542	13 883	20%	40%
Down	336 604	88 998	544	13 128	8306	21 434	24%	39%
Fermanagh	135 484	35 822	240	5 914	3822	9 736	27%	39%
Londonderry	200 510	53 015	380	7 970	5682	13 652	26%	42%
Monaghan	180 682	47 772	281	6 731	4155	10 886	23%	38%
Tyrone	280 836	74 253	435	10 876	7461	18 337	25%	41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 066 962</b>	<b>546 505</b>	<b>3449</b>	<b>83 653</b>	<b>54 556</b>	<b>138 209</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>39%</b>

The above is a survey carried out in 1824 for the population of Ulster, and specifically for children attending schools.

This is for the old province of Ulster; after separation, the new province consisted of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyrone. The counties of Cavan, Donegal, and Monaghan are now in the republic (something to bear in mind when you have a reference to “Ulster” pre-1800).

There were 2 million people in the province in 1824, and if you are to believe the statistics regarding the famine of 1847–1850, then half of this population would have either died or emigrated over the next 50 years. The majority of deaths and migration would have occurred in the poorer Roman Catholic families, who had fewer resources and less land to be able to survive. Certainly, many Protestants would have left, as well.



The graph here shows a comparison of the population of Ireland compared with Europe over the past 500 years.

There was certainly a population boom from 1680 up until 1847, and, realistically, this boom was a disaster waiting to happen. Population increases of this order are very unsustainable, and a projection of a population of over 20 million would have been on the cards by 1900; far

too many for a rural economy like Ireland to sustain. The potato famine was the result of a monoculture – the potatoes grown in Ireland were all the same variety, and blight spread very rapidly – virtually no potato crops were spared.



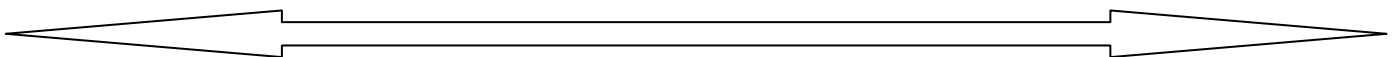
Post-famine, the population continues to drop and only really starts to recover in the 1930s. If it hadn't been the potato blight, it could well have been typhus, cholera, or any other killer disease that would have caused a population crash. Add to this the dwindling resources, pushing migration as an only option. What are the chances of finding living relatives still in Ireland, and also being able to trace ancestors during this period of death and migration. Ignoring the fact that the Dublin records office burnt down in 1923, the lack of information available could be due to the fact it was simply not recorded – vast numbers of people were moving around, emigrating, or dying with no one to keep records. It would be reasonable to assume that town populations would have been a bit more stable due to commerce; rural populations, with their reliance on agriculture, and the potato, in particular, would have been a lot less stable. After the famine, many people simply wanted “out.” Ireland was not seen as a viable place with a future.

Family stories and records are critical to finding your family in Ireland. DNA is a way of proving what the family story shows, without the support of written records. An example of this, James's family are from Benagh, near Kilkeel in Co. Down. The only supporting evidence of this was a piece of paper that children used as a primer to practice their writing that had “Benaugh” written on it. On our trip to Ireland in 2006, we found Benagh and an Edgar still living there who had accurate family records dating back to 1800. But there was no link to James's family, no proof on paper. A DNA test was done and the proof established, but how the link is formed is unknown. Others have done tests and also proved their links to this family, still without any evidence in writing.

The information for the connections has always come from the migrated family, they are the ones who keep the memory ties with “the Old Country,” they are conscious of their history and support it with family stories.

Pre-1800 is everyone's “brickwall,” nothing from the records at all. The only records that are of any use are church records – if you can find them! Due to the rural nature of the population, a lot of people didn't bother to register the birth, had the children baptised at home, or had the children baptised as a “job lot” by a travelling minister (one family of Edgars had six children baptised on the same day, along with four neighbours' children!) Add to this scenario that 50 years old was considered a good age, and the life expectancy of a child under 5 was less than 50 percent.

This brings to the front the value of those old family records. If you have a family oral tradition or papers, they are well worth revisiting to glean as much as possible from them.



Last month, we told the story of **Patrick Logan Edgar**, who died in Australia. We have even found his relative living in Battle, England (**Andrew Nicol Logan Edgar**), and had his DNA tested. Continuing the story, this is the late-1800s Australian home of **Patrick's** younger brother, **Richard**, from information we received from **Pat Davis**.



*"Richard & Lydia Edgar's home at 11 Talbot Street NEWTOWN, Greater Geelong City, has been heritage listed. [http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/places/result\\_detail/16580?print=true](http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/places/result_detail/16580?print=true)*

### **Statement of Significance**

*A characteristic symmetrical Italianate timber house, and its context surviving remarkably intact and evocative. The significant contextual elements include the garden layout configuration, edging tiles, parterres, trees and hedge (further research may establish the garden to be of Regional significance). It is architecturally significant locally as representative of this domestic style in its context and historically as a most evocative embodiment of life in Newtown 120 years ago.*

### **History**

*The house at 11 Talbot Street was constructed for **Richard Edgar**. Described as a 'gentleman', Edgar lived at **Keewong** as the house was known in 1911, until **Lydia Edgar** was nominated the owner and occupier in 1930.*

### **Description**

*A double-fronted symmetrical Italianate timber house. The concave skillion verandah extends around the front. It has rare surviving tray and roll sheet metal cladding (this should be inspected closely to confirm its significance), with a fretwork apron and cast-iron lade valance and brackets, timber posts and rare surviving canvas blinds.*

*The frieze has turned spindle brackets with lozenges and panels between. Chimneys are Venetian brick. Windows are tripartite and the entrance has side fanlights. The garden has cypresses at the entrance and a Pittosporum hedge, with a surviving cruciform garden layout, edged with a low privet Ligustrum parterre hedges."*



And, we find the following from the Geelong Eastern Cemetery:

Register No	Surname	Given Names	Service Date	
8633	EDGAR	RICHARD DAVID	07 Mar 1913	[PRS*5***90]
14499	EDGAR	LYDIA	19 Sep 1930	[PRS*5***90]

Pat Davis did a deceased search for other Edgars in Geelong Eastern Cemetery on <http://www.gct.net.au/search.html#>.

The following Edgars in the cemetery may or may not be related to Richard & Lydia:

Register No	Surname	Given Names	Service Date	
10712	EDGAR	DAVID JAMES	17 Jul 1919	METO*K***74
91205	EDGAR	FLORENCE MAY	13 Nov 1885	METO*K***73
98515	EDGAR	HELEN	26 Feb 1855	UNK*X***X
90595	EDGAR	ISABELLA MCELLINNEY	02 Jan 1898	METO*K***73
8780	EDGAR	THOMAS CLARKE	19 Aug 1913	MET*4***134

## Picture time

TUESDAY, JULY 12, 2011 The Daily News, Kamloops A5

### GOOD LIFE



KEITH ANDERSON/THE DAILY NEWS

**HORSES GATHER** Monday by the North Thompson River in Westsyde.

Used with permission. This is north of where I (James Edgar) was born – Kamloops, B.C., Canada. Thanks to brother Steve for sending this along.

From cousin, **Susan Telusso**, just after the previous issue of Edgar Events was posted....

Hi James,

Thank you so much for your newsletter - it is very interesting and provides many tips on searching for our roots. The article by Robin Hagedorn of Australia is very helpful and I will have it handy when I am planning my trip to Scotland and Ireland, which I want to take next summer, if I can find a job sometime soon and save some money.

I have recently made some important discoveries about my mom's family on the Wilton side and would like to return my attention, once again, to the Reeds/Reids. My ggg grandfather, James Reed/Reid, was married to Susannah McBain, the daughter of Lachlin McBain and Eliza Ann Edgar, who farmed in Glengarry County (Lancaster Township), Ontario, Canada. Susannah was born in Lancaster Twp in 1825, the McBain's first child. I have been unable to find any marriage records for James and Susannah and I don't know which parish they were married in. I found Lachlin and Eliza's marriage recorded in a Presbyterian Church (or Church of Scotland) in Montreal, Quebec.

Needless to say, I need more information from the churches of Lancaster Twp, and I have been searching but getting nowhere. I know that one of the Reeds' children, Charles, was born in Alexandria, Glengarry County on 17 November 1844 and that by at least 1849, the family had moved to King Township, York County, Ontario, north of Toronto. The Presbyterian Church in Canada found a birth record for Eliza Reed in the parish of Strange, King Township, dated 1849.

I have found and received lots of information about the McBains and their relatives in Scotland and Canada (including info about Farquhar McBain's participation in the War of 1812 in the Glengarry Highlanders) dating back to about 1700, but I am stumped as to where James Reed is from, although the census records consistently report his origins as Irish and that he was born in Ireland. You have suggested that he might have known the Edgars in Ireland and that's how he ended up in Glengarry County. I have also come across text references to other Irishmen returning to Glengarry County from King Twp to get married and returning to King with the bride in tow. I can't find any land records for the Reeds and I believe that is because James was a carpenter/wagon maker and did not own any land. He also seems to have lived in many larger towns, such as Oshawa, Ontario and Hamilton, Ontario, and I suspect this is because he could have many more customers in larger centres. The family returned to Glengarry in time for the 1861-62 census and seem to have been helping out the widow Eliza Ann (Edgar) McBain on the McBain farm. They then moved to Oshawa in time for the 1871 census and stayed there for at least 10 years.

Would you be able to pose a question for me in your next Edgar newsletter, asking readers to contact me at [suetolusso@rogers.com](mailto:suetolusso@rogers.com) if they can provide any information or leads?

Wishing you many more DNA links on subsequent test results!

Cheers,  
Sue



## More on Illegitimate Edgars



by Steve Edgar ([steven-edgar@sky.com](mailto:steven-edgar@sky.com))

We have usually been looking at Edgars who have been adopted into the family and taken the Edgar name, and how their DNA will vary from normal Edgar DNA. This time I have an example from the opposite side of the coin, an Edgar who changed his name to something else.

The full story of both these families are on Wikipedia, so I won't bother you with the intricate details here. Edgar Wallace was a well known author in the early part of the 20th century, he wrote the original story of "King Kong" and a series of books about "The Four Just Men," among others. He was the illegitimate son of Richard Horatio Marriott Edgar and Mary Jane "Polly" Richards. Polly was "adopted" by an entertainment family, the Marriotts, and was treated as one of the siblings. Alice Marriott, born in 1824, kept the group together and travelled the country with the troupe. Alice had her children by a "Robert Edgar" who was her supposed husband. There is a late marriage record, but all the children used the Edgar surname along with Marriott; it's not certain that Robert Edgar was their biological father.



The story goes that the family were celebrating an occasion and were all very drunk, Richard Horatio Marriott Edgar and Polly got together that night and Polly conceived who was to be Edgar Wallace. Richard Horatio remembered nothing and went on to marry another. To save embarrassment, Polly invented an assignment in London and went away to have her child who would become Edgar Wallace. Polly named her son "Richard Horatio Edgar"; he later adopted the Wallace part to aid his future journalistic career.

### Edgar Wallace

Meanwhile, his father, Richard Horatio Marriott Edgar, had married and produced more children – Alice, Richard, Jennifer, George, Joseph, and Adeline, all carried the Marriott-Edgar surname. George later dropped this forename and became known as "Marriott Edgar." He also had a literary career – among other things, he wrote monologues for



Stanley Holloway, (a famous British actor) the most recognizable being "Albert and the Lion." (These monologues were recited in a broad Lancashire accent and had a very "dry" humour. The story is about a child called Albert who prodded a lion with a stick and was eaten. His parents were more concerned about the loss of his new clothes than the loss of their child; check it out on Wikipedia). He started as a stage comedian and a female impersonator.

### Edgar Marriott

Due to their literary fame, Edgar Wallace and Marriott Edgar did meet in California, and, via a shared cousin, their relationship was revealed, and they became aware of their common heritage. Interestingly, Marriott Edgar named the Lion in his monologue "Wallace."

If we can trace male living descendants of these two and do DNA tests on them, we can prove three things:

- 1) That the above story is true; their DNA match should show an MRCA of 2, maybe 3
- 2) We could trace this mysterious Robert Edgar who started all this off in 1847. If the DNA from Wallace and Marriott is Edgar DNA, we can find some cousins earlier in time.
- 3) If there was no Edgar match, then the only likely Edgar will be the youngest daughter, who was born after Richard Horatio Marriott Edgar married, and Robert wasn't the father of the three earlier children.

I'm sure that something similar to the above happened to my family in the past, a name change pre-1800 would be very hard to find. The reason for the name change could be for various reasons, a crime, marrying out of the faith, having an illegitimate child, *etc.* Pre-1821, there was no census in the UK let alone Ireland. Very few records were kept at all. If a person called "Edgar" arrived in a new town, there was very little done to check his or her identity. How many instances of Edgars appearing and disappearing have you come across?

What would be good now would be to find some living descendants and make contact. Anyone fancy a project for the summer? Steve.



## Travel Plans

For the past several years, **Steve** and I have travelled to Ireland and/or Scotland. This year, however, our situations have changed, especially with the passing of our cat, **Ella**. **Jodie** needed a change of scene, so she and I decided to go on a "hug-a-cousin" tour together in the UK. We haven't travelled together since 2004, but we will this mid-September. Perhaps next year, **Steve** and I will resume our genealogy research trips.

**Jodie** and I have the plane tickets already booked, and people have generously offered to put us up for a night or two (or longer). Our three main areas of residence will be (roughly) Crewe – September 14 to 20; Market Harborough – Sep. 21 to 26; and Leigh-on-Sea – Sep. 27 to Oct. 7.



## **We now have 202 members on our DNA.Ancestry.com site!**

Welcome to **Richard Edgar**, **Terry Edgar**, and **Lynn Skillings**, our 200th member; and **Rachel Edgar** is our 201st member, joined July 20. **Rachel's** father, **Michael**, is testing his DNA. **Tim Edgar**, cousin of **Angela Reed** and **Jason Edgar** is a new late arrival, member number 202! And, don't forget **Roger Edgar**, who hasn't yet joined our family group, but soon will.

**Keep 'em coming...**