

Higginson-Innes Family Genealogy

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Higginson - Innes



ANCESTRY
OF
WILLIAM COOKE HIGGINSON
AND
MARY MARGARET INNES

BY
T. B. HIGGINSON

OLD RECTORY PRESS
BURKS FALLS
1967

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INTRODUCTION

The men of the Higginson family, for at least two hundred years, have been singularly fortunate in their wives, a process which culminated for me in one whom I have described as "dearest and best of wives, who has ever been my inspiration and guide".

Bill has been true to this tradition, for on December 9, 1967, he married a girl whom I fondly salute as a worthy successor to the other wonderful women of our family — Miss Mary Margaret Innes!



ANCESTRY OF WILLIAM COOKE HIGGINSON

Bill, as he is better known, is in his second year at Kabarnet, Kenya, with CUSO. Part of the time he has been acting Headmaster of the school there. He graduated from the four-year Mathematics Course at Queen's.

He was born November 16, 1943, at Rainy River, Ontario, son of Thomas Boyd Higginson and Norma Emmeline Cooke. His mother's parents, of whom one, happily, survives, were Catherine Jane O'Brien and Christopher Leonard Cooke. Mrs. Cooke, who was born June 18, 1878, is in her ninetieth year, still in excellent health.

Her paternal grandparents, John O'Brien (1794-1878) and Susanna Ferguson (1801-1870) met on the ship carrying them from Ireland to Canada, and settled near Cushing, P.Q. Their son Robert, Mrs. Cooke's father, married Mary Steele, daughter of Archibald Steele, and granddaughter of Samuel Steele and Jennie Arthurs. They moved from Cushing to Pickford, Michigan, where many of their descendants still live. Mrs. Cooke, however, was brought up by her uncle George and Aunt Emmeline O'Brien in Cushing.

Her husband's parents were Margaret Gray Cole and Christopher Columbus Cooke, son of Orrin Cooke and Catherine Spink, who were married in 1835. Orrin was one of seven sons of the pioneer, Reuben Cooke of Grenville, P.Q., among whose descendants is the popular mayor of "Beautiful Barrie", Mr. Lester E. Cooke. Orrin is mentioned in the very rare Canadian novel "They Two" by Richard Lanigan, as a pilot on the Ottawa,—the same profession as that of his son, Christopher Columbus Cooke. Catherine Spink was the daughter of Dr. William Spink who lived on Perth Road near Dundee, Scotland, and was an Elder in the Methodist Church there for thirty years.

Margaret Gray Cole, born 1843 and married 1862, was a member of the Salem branch, according to Frank T. Cole's "Cole Families in America", and could trace her ancestry to Thomas Cole who lived in Salem, Mass., before 1650. His son John married Mary Knight in 1667 and their son John, born 1668, married Mary Eaton. Their son Jonathan, born 1696, married Judith Bowen in 1724, and had a son John, born 1741, who was a Captain in the Revolution and present at the battle of Bunker Hill. He died in Westmoreland, New Hampshire, in 1786. (His father died in 1780 and is buried there also. As I mentioned in my "First Citizen of Hawkesbury", this is a fascinating link with the seventeenth century.)

Captain John Cole's wife was Lois Davis (1742-1830). Their son Salmon (1765-1840), the first settler on the site of Hawkesbury, Ontario, in 1790, was "a tall, good-looking, good-tempered man, and at 70 years of age was straight and active". His wife, Bathsheba Dodge, was a native of Wales, "a strong-tempered, energetic woman of massive frame and great strength". They were married in 1786 and came to Canada soon afterwards. Their son Salmon

Jr. (1795-1875), "a large fine-looking man, and almost a giant in strength", served in the War of 1812. He married Isabella Heatley in 1819. (She died in 1885 at the age of 89.) They lived for most of their lives near Buckingham, P.Q. It was their daughter, Margaret Gray Cole, who married Christopher Columbus Cooke.

We now turn to the paternal grandparents, William Arthur Higginson (1873-1926) and Jessie Blair Flanagan (1882-1952), who were married in 1911. My mother was born in Three Rivers, P.Q., daughter of Newton Flanagan and Mary Annie Blair. Her mother's people were from Scotland,—a cousin was the Col. Blair who won the Bisley Prize about 1930. Her parents were Robert Blair, son of David Blair and Ann Oliver, and Marion Purves, daughter of Francis Purves and Agnes Crammond.

The Flanagans had a history not, I think, without interest. Rev. John Flanagan is described by John Carroll in "*Case and his Contemporaries*", as "an Irishman by birth, and had been brought up a Roman Catholic. He was well educated, prepossessing in his appearance, and pleasing in his elocution". Later he joined the Anglican Church, was ordained by Bishop Strachan, and ended his career as Rector of St. Stephen's, Lachine (1850-1865). (He married Jane Ferroli, who, legend says, was of Spanish birth.) Lachine was at this time the headquarters of the Hudson Bay Company and we read that on August 5, 1852, he baptized the infant son of Sir George Simpson.

It is not surprising then that his son, Newton, born 1839, should enter the employ of the Hudson Bay Company, which he did in 1859, and remained with them for thirty years at Mingan (where he met Donald Smith, later Lord Strathcona), Lake St. John, and Nipigon. At Nipigon the late Bishop Renison tells us in his autobiography "*One Day At A Time*", Mr. Flanagan "seemed almost as important as God, because he was the source of all our supplies"!

My father was the oldest son of Thomas Tweed Higginson (1828-1903) and Margaret Owens (1850-1937). She was the daughter of George Owens (1822-1904) and Margaret McVean (1823-1916) who were married in 1844. Her mother was the daughter of John McVean and Mary Macmillan, and her father was

the son of Owen Owens (1791-1868) and Maria Lindley (1800-1827). Owen Owens came from Denbigh, Wales, to Canada about 1819 and settled at Stonefield, P.Q. His son, William, a lumberman, at one time owned the Papineau estate at Montebello, and became a senator.

My grandfather was the son of William Higginson (1788-1871) and Jane Tweed (1802-1890) who were married in County Antrim, Ireland, in 1819, just before embarking on the six weeks sailing voyage to Canada. (Their letters, describing the voyage and their subsequent settlement at Hawkesbury, are full of interest, and I hope to publish them some day.) Jane Tweed's parents, Thomas Tweed and Esther Dickie, came to Canada in 1820 at her request and settled near her home of Emerald Hill, where she and her husband spent the rest of their lives.

My grandfather was a man of wide literary interests, whose Diaries I edited and published in 1960. I consider him to be the founder of our branch of the family, of which Bill will eventually be head, as the oldest son of an oldest son of an oldest son. The "Tweed" in his name served to distinguish him from two other Thomas Higginsons, one his uncle and the other his cousin who have added to our family history a favourite line of poetry and a favourite slogan. The uncle was Lt. Col. Thomas Higginson, one of the early poets of Upper Canada. On his death in 1884 at the age of 90, Mrs. Margaret Dixon Macdougall wrote "*Another Pioneer Gone*", which contains the deathless line, "Made sweet the name of Higginson"! And in 1863, when Thomas Higginson, the cousin, was running successfully for Parliament, he was backed by Thomas D'Arcy McGee, who felt he was the only candidate not bound to support John Sandfield MacDonald, and so advised the electors of Prescott, "Vote for Higginson and Independence"!

In an effort to learn more of the early history of the Higginson family, I went to Ireland in 1954. I visited Ballyrankin House, the home of the poetess Moira O'Neill and her son Commander Charles Skrine. Her grandfather, Sir James Macaulay Higginson, had been private secretary to Lord Metcalfe, and I was given the original portrait of Metcalfe which he had left his secretary — a truly fabulous gift.

The founder of our family, Rev. Thomas Higginson, was born in 1699 or 1700 in Ballinderry, County Antrim, son of George Higginson, and entered Trinity College, Dublin, June 5, 1718. He was elected to a Foundation Scholarship in 1720 and graduated with the degree of B.A. in 1722. He spent the remainder of his life as a minister of the Church of Ireland, mostly at Cairncastle, near Larne (1731-1775), where a plaque was erected to his memory a year or so after my visit. He married Mary Boyd, daughter of Archibald Boyd and Mary Stuart, and their son Boyd Higginson, who died in 1806, was the father of William Higginson, the pioneer already mentioned. Boyd Higginson married Jane Crawford, daughter of William Crawford and Mary Young. She died in 1819 on the voyage to Canada and was buried at sea.



ANCESTRY OF MARY MARGARET INNES

Molly, as she is better known, is in her second year with CUSO in Uganda, at Kampala. Before that she graduated from Queen's with an Honours degree in Mathematics. Her earlier years were spent at the beautiful home near Brantford where we were so memorably entertained in June of 1967. She was born in January 1944, daughter of Jean Carlyle McCormick and Ernest Alexander Innes.

Her father, a graduate of the Ontario Agricultural College, 1931, acted as Agricultural Representative before taking up farming on his own account. He came from a distinguished farm home, "City View", near Woodstock, still in the family. His brother Gordon has recently been re-elected M.L.A. for Oxford. The Innes family came from Inch parish near Huntley in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, where James Innes (born 1776) married Isobel Taylor (born 1781). Their son Alexander (born 1819) married in 1858 Johanna McKay, a native of Caithness, and came to Canada in 1843, settling near Hamilton. Their son, James William Innes, born 1872, was a distinguished citizen of Oxford County, acting as Warden in 1925. He married Mary Schaefer (born 1874) in 1900, and their son Ernest Alexander has already been mentioned.

Molly's mother also comes from a distinguished family. Her father, Robert John McCormick, was the son of Alexander George McCormick (born 1848) who married Elizabeth Wilson in 1873. His father, Robert McCormick, born in Scotland in 1804, married in 1831 Elizabeth McGhie (born 1808) and came to Canada in 1842, settling near Paris, Ontario.

Robert John McCormick married in 1910 Jane Welsh Carlyle, daughter of Margaret McVicar and Thomas Carlyle (1833-1921). Margaret's parents, Adam McVicar and Helen Gray, came to Canada from Aberdeen in the 1840's and settled at Goderich. Thomas was the son of Alexander Carlyle (1797-1876) and Janet Clow (1809-1891) who came to Canada in 1844. He was the nephew of the great writer whose name he bore. Letters of the latter to his Canadian relatives bear witness to the lifelong affection he felt towards them, and make fascinating reading.

The Carlyles are an ancient Scottish family whose ancestral home was at Torthorwald near Dumfries. One of their charters is dated 1190, and a bell survives which was given by Gulielmus de Carleil in 1433. The first of the family of whom we have definite record was John Carlyle, born 1687, who married Isabella Bell (1687-1759). Their son Thomas (1722-1806) married Mary Gilespy (1727-1797), and it was their son James (1758-1832) who married Margaret Aitken (1770-1853) and was father of the Alexander Carlyle before mentioned.



CONCLUSION

Those who believe, as I do, in the eternal fitness of things will be intrigued to notice that Bill's four great-grandmothers shared two names: Mary Blair and Mary Steele, Margaret Owens and Margaret Cole. What more appropriate than that his bride should bear both of these hallowed names?