

The Agnewsletter



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Agnews Loyal to the Crown

The Story of John and Stair Agnew

by Allen M. Agnew,
Fresno, California

Allen M. Agnew is a frequent contributor to the Agnewsletter. When he and his wife travel, they devote some of their leisure time to seeking historical information about Agnews they find interesting. Although the Agnews described are not necessarily part of Allen's family lineage, his thorough investigation results in intriguing and thought provoking essays. They may provide a clue to the heritage of some of our members. The Agnew Association is grateful for his contributions. —Ed.

There were many loyalists in the thirteen colonies prior to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, including some Agnews. A William Agnew of Tryon, New York was charged with aiding scouts from Canada; a James Agnew in Virginia and a Samuel Agnew in Georgia were among these loyalists who wished to maintain ties with the British Crown. There were also two other Agnews who threw in their lots with the British; Reverend John Agnew and his son, Stair, of Virginia.

Although we are not related to the John—Stair

branch of the Agnews, their story has always been of interest to me. On a recent trip to the maritime provinces of Canada, we visited the library at the University of Fredericton, New Brunswick. The very helpful librarian in the genealogical

section responded to my questions on the Agnews with a subtle smile and stated: "It would be very difficult to talk about the history of New Brunswick without bringing in Stair Agnew."

The father, Reverend John Agnew (1727—1812) was a native of Virginia. He was well-known in Suffolk County, Virginia

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"Enemy of American Liberty"

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where his church was located. He owned four plantations, other real property, and numerous slaves. There is evidence that his reputation extended far beyond county borders. Both Reverend John and his son Stair were rabid and determined loyalists. John was called "An enemy of American liberty" probably because of his adding editorial comments to his sermons and his proclivity for telling people to leave their pews if they did not wish to hear his political views.

When hostilities began, Reverend Agnew joined the Queen's Rangers as a Chaplain. His son Stair also joined the Rangers and eventually became a Captain. Stair was severely wounded at Brandywine and suffered pain and some disability for the remainder of his life.

Both Agnews were captured on the British ship *Romulus* by the French and were sent to France (via Boston and San Domingo) as prisoners. They were in-

terned at the Castle of St. Malo. Exchanging prisoners was common, so an attempt was made by John and Stair to obtain their freedom. However, General Washington had known John Agnew since 1757 and believed the colonial cause would be better served by keeping the Reverend and his son under lock and key. John also attempted to obtain freedom by appealing to the American Minister to France, Benjamin Franklin. Franklin did not accommodate him.

After hostilities ceased, the Agnews tried living in England but wished to return to the New World. They were, of course, not welcome in Virginia, so they opted for Canada as did thousands of loyalists. They planned to live in Quebec but were convinced that less populated New Brunswick offered more opportunities. They immediately plunged into the economic and political life of New Brunswick. They were granted land and also purchased many more acres. Stair was elected to the legislature in 1792 and

quickly became a leader against "excessive British restrictions" placed on New Brunswick citizens. Stair served in the assembly until his death in 1821. He also served as a lower court judge.

Since the town of Fredericton was near both the Nashwaak and St. John rivers, there was a need for dependable transportation across these waterways. John and Stair obtained the ferriage rights across the rivers leading into Fredericton thereby providing a good transportation facility and a good business to go with their agricultural pursuits. Stair built an estate, "Monkton," which provided a comfortable home for his wife and seven children.

As a legislator, Stair was very active, including working for an unsuccessful proposal which would have allowed ministers of all faiths to perform marriages in the province. In view of his many

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New Brunswick Leader

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re-elections, Stair obviously was regarded as a leader and spokesperson. Yet, he was said to be unpredictable in behavior and quick to change alignments and, as a result, could not be counted upon as a permanent ally by either party. On several occasions, friendships turned into confrontations because of his reversals. He was an early good friend and supporter of Lt. Governor Thomas Carleton, one of the Province's early leaders. This support changed too and Stair became a staunch opponent of Carleton. In one of his few political defeats, Stair charged a sheriff with stuffing the ballot box. He was accused of the same tactic in a later election he won.

Coming originally from a southern state, Stair did not view slavery as did most

Canadians and in one case involving slavery, he challenged a Judge Allen, who ruled against him, to a duel. At Van Horne's tavern one night in 1794, tired of the

which had escheated to the state, drove hard bargains in business transactions and used parliamentary maneuvers in the assembly to bring about desired outcomes.

Known facts about the seven children of Stair and Agnes Agnew

John	1793-1854
Stair B.	1807-1848
Theresa	Married November 3, 1813, to William Charlton
Winnifred Mary	1797-1852 Married January 17, 1821 to Thomas Guy Carleton Jouett
Sophia	Married January 18, 1819 to William H. Earle
Charlotte	Married December 18, 1834 to Christopher Murray; Died August 11, 1861 in New York
Elizabeth Louisa	Died December 1827

Stair's wife, Agnes Sophia Winnifred, died on August 2, 1820, at the age of 52. Stair passed away the next year on October 10, 1821, at Monkton, his residence in York County. He was 63 years of age and still serving in the legislature. He

is buried in Maugerville, a small community down the St. John River a few miles from Fredericton.

Although these conclusions are based on only a two-day search of records on John and Stair Agnew, we believe it can be concluded that Reverend John Agnew made

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struggle to obtain cheap labor and seeing young men conscripted for the military service by the British, Stair advocated New Brunswick's annexation to the United States, which had fewer military needs and much inexpensive labor.

Official documents and printed statements show that Stair was quick to obtain land

Stair Agnew

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himself accountable for what he believed in and put his wealth and future on the line in resisting the cause of liberty put forth by the American colonists.

There were thousands of loyalists who became Canadians during and after the Revolutionary War, but few gave up as much to be on the side of the Mother Country as this man. One source stated that John was the only churchman in Virginia to publicly denounce the originators of the Revolution. John's age and death in 1812 lessened his potential influence on the Province of New Brunswick, but his son Stair carried on for him in a remarkable manner.

From available records, it appears that Stair was quick to fight, some of his methods were suspect, and alliances with him were not always firm. Yet, he was a major contributor to the progress of New Brunswick for thirty years and the records also show that Stair, like his father, was a man of tremendous courage.

1990 Caledonian Club Gathering and Games Update

Ticket Sales

Advance tickets to the Caledonian Club's Gathering and Games in Santa Rosa, California are available.

Two day adult entrance tickets are \$11.00 if purchased in advance. Tickets will be available at the gate for \$11.00 each day, or \$16.00 for both days. Senior (over 65 years) entrance tickets are available for \$5.00, and there are special rates for children, too.

Contact Art Agnew, P.O. Box 691, Petaluma, CA 94953 to purchase advance tickets.

It's Official

Mayor Art Agnos of San Francisco has proclaimed the months of August and September 1990 as Scottish Heritage Months in San Francisco.

Getting There

Pan American World Airways has given the Caledonian Club convention rates for the Gathering. Call 1(800) 635-8470. Quote the Club's special booking number: CVN #30080 for a special 40% coach discount. American Airlines has also extended 40% coach discounts to attendees. Call 1(800) 458-3636 and mention the Gathering and Games.

American Express Travel Service has been named the

official travel agent for the Gathering of Scottish Clans and Families. If you need help with travel arrangements and accommodations, call 1(800)522-AMEX.

Don't forget that we also have at least one travel agent in the family. Dortha Agnew of Midland Travel, Inc. in Midland, Texas would be pleased to assist in your travel arrangements. Her number is 1(800) 356-9435.

The Agnew "Database"

A Report on Computerization from the Historian (with an unexpected discovery on John Wayne and the Agnews)

by Marie Agnew-Marcelli
Agnew Association Historian

The term "database" has been used frequently in referring to our mass of assembled North American Agnew data, but misconceptions about the designation have sometimes led to annoyance or disappointment when members did not receive immediate responses to genealogical questions. The data accumulation with the Archivist & the Historian is indeed a "database". However, the word has taken on a much narrower connotation since the advent of the computer. Increasingly, the unqualified term is being equated in the popular mind with what is, and has been more properly called, "a computerized database."

WHY DON'T WE HAVE A COMPUTERIZED DATABASE?

We all run into blocks in our ancestry searches and each is sure that a quick solution to our problem must lie in that wondrous collection of information. Why then aren't we able to just ring up and get that answer?

Well, computerizing very heterogeneous data is not nearly as simple as the popular press would have you believe. Someone must physically "key" into a computer, mounted with an appropriate computerized database program, all the assembled "strays" (as Pat Alexander has dubbed them) from the Historian's prospective searching plus all the material from family sheets in the Archives. This requires that someone sit for

several months at a keyboard and monitor typing in every scrap of information. Those of you who have complained to Pat or me that you cannot tolerate working at a microfilm reader for more than a half-hour at a time can imagine what 8 - 10 hour days staring at a computer screen for weeks on end would be like. Next, the data input must be checked assiduously for absolute accuracy of transcription. Until that is done there is no feasible way to provide reliable ready answers on individuals.

WHERE DO WE STAND TODAY?

To date, none of the information on hand has been input into a computer. This is not due to lack of diligence, but results from

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Current Status

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the need to find an appropriate microcomputer (i.e., PC) demography program to handle the diverse data. Current commercial genealogy programs evaluated to date, like Personal Ancestral File, Roots, etc., are just that - personal genealogy programs. Each is geared too narrowly to individual descent and finite numbers of individuals. The Association's project must handle random demographic, i.e. population, data effectively and our "population" is all Agnews plus their delineating collaterals, an open-ended group prodigiously larger than any one descent.

CAN THE PROBLEM REALLY BE THAT BIG?

Let's consider how many families each of us is following in 1850. Depending on our generation and family longevity we will be tracking between 8 and 16 - certainly not more than 32 at the outside ex-

treme. In 1850 there were 207 Heads of Households with the last name Agnew or a probable variant of Agnew. The average household size was at least 6 persons and a good many households included one or more married children. Some families are known to be missed or indexed under such garbled names as to be unidentifiable from the index per se. It seems a safe and conservative estimate of United States Agnews to be followed forward from 1850 would number at least 1250. Simultaneously there were numerous Agnews in Canada who themselves, or whose descendants, came into the States. Thus, where you and I would be following, on average, 15 to 20 lines at that date the Association will be dealing with 80 to 100 times as many individuals — only with the surname Agnew. Those 1500 to 2000 will have grown to well over a quarter of a million individuals in the generation of the Association members who are over age 50. This does not account for lines that died-out or "daughters-out" be-

fore the mid-19th century nor for the earlier non-Agnew surname collaterals. Clearly, genealogy programs limited to 59,000 individuals are useless. And, regrettably, the best current program which is correctable and permits extensive cross-linkage is limited to that number of individuals.

The problem is still worse than this would suggest. Agnews followed the same naming traditions as other Scots and Ulster Scots in general. Thus, it is nearly impossible to follow a simple straight-line descent. If you doubt this, try following Agnew/Egnew lines through Ohio from 1800 through 1860. It was a sobering experience for me 2 years ago. I found Pennsylvania pre-Revolution and Pennsylvania post-Revolution, Maryland, Kentucky, Virginia, New York and Canadian Agnews along with contemporary 19th century immigrants from Ulster and Scotland commingled in a Gordian knot of Jameses, Johns, Williams, Davids,

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Immigrants

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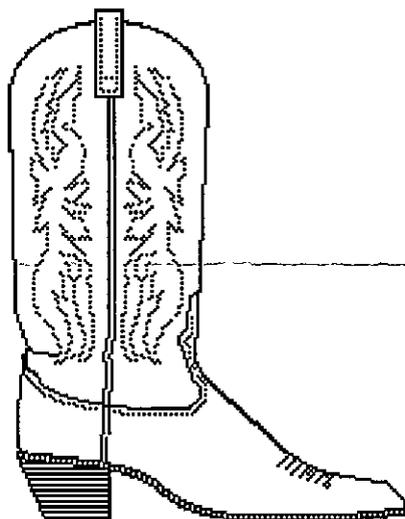
Samuels and Thomases. Only place of birth (if the reporting was accurate, which it was not always) and the fortuitous presence of in-laws in the household or vicinity allowed fairly confident identification of a specific line. It is absolutely crucial to follow collateral and marriage names if we are going to establish connections with reasonable certainty.

One point my census abstracts have demonstrated beyond doubt. The connections assumed in our one relatively early American Agnew genealogy, *The Book of Agnews*, must be verified from hard data sources since the authoress indicates some key reported descents were assigned on the basis of name concordance. The work was a substantial one for its period but in the intervening half century access has been gained to a vast store of primary records. Today, simple name concordance is not an accepted means for establishing de-

scent for Scottish or Irish - Ulster or otherwise - families in the absence of clear supporting documentary evidence. We are all grateful to Mary Virginia Agnew for giving us a great starting point but one major goal for a computerized version of

immigrant Agnew ancestors. Collaterals will be crucial for this purpose.

A still more sobering finding from my 1987-88 searching is illustrated by events in Cherry Fork, Ohio. There descendants of females of the York County pre-Revolutionary line with non-Agnew surnames were joined, a century and a half after their immigrant ancestor came, by a post-Civil War immigrant who was an Agnew descendant that also carried a non-Agnew surname, i.e. Rae! This is a fascinating group of Ulster Scots which I am still investigating. The original settlers of the community included not only the family of our Pennsylvania Agnew lady but the ancestors of Marion Mitchell Morrison. Some



Could this boot fit an Agnew?

our Agnew database will be supplying primary documentary citations to support *The Book of Agnews*. This is the essential first step for untangling descendants of the York County, Pennsylvania, James Agnew from other those of other contemporary Pennsylvania/Maryland

evidence points to a close social, if not blood or marriage, connection between these two early families. Moreover the late coming Agnew descendent is known to have married into the Morrison line. So what, you say? You

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all know Marion Morrison - he 's better known by his stage name, John Wayne. Thus, a number of Agnew descendants from Cherry Fork, now resident in Illinois, are second and third cousins not only to John Wayne but the Minnesota Agnews including our own Secretary, Lois Schieck. Further research is likely to reveal a link to the early Pennsylvania branch.

The Cherry Fork Agnew-Morrison link is also intriguing because my "unattached" late-arriving Northern New York Agnew immigrant ancestor has an unresolved Morrison connection. My father was named Morrison Howard Agnew for his "grandmother's family." Curiously, he bore a strong physical resemblance to John Wayne *and carried the nickname, Duke, 2 decades before Wayne did.*

Only by following female and collateral lines can we hope to discovery and disentangle these and our many other interlinkings.

CAN WE EVER EXPECT A COMPUTERIZED AGNEW DATABASE?

It is probably safe to answer, "yes," although it cannot be soon. The prospect for usable demography software is not hopeless. The National Genealogical Society's Computer Interest Group is following the evolution of just such a program. The prime candidate would be a spin-off from a mainframe database developed for major historical studies at the University of Montreal. A microcomputer version is awaited eagerly by professional genealogists and is expected to revolutionize data handling for genealogical purposes. I plan to investigate progress on demography programs while I am at the NGS convention in June.

At this point some of you may be thinking that this is making an easy project seem unnecessarily complicated. However, computerization

is neither as easy nor as straightforward as it is sometimes made to look. Those who are totally unfamiliar or minimally conversant with word processing aspects are eager for output without the appreciation of the huge investment of time and effort required before quick answers can be drawn from heterogeneous accumulations of information. If this seems unreasonable, consider the billions of dollars and the enormous amount of volunteer time the Mormons have invested. They still cannot call up answers to questions such as "What was the death date of Hannah Agnew who kept a hotel at Emmetsburg, Maryland, around 1840?" by simply punching the factors into a computer. Yet Pat Alexander and I have been confronted frequently with such queries by telephone or letter. Moreover, there is amazement, almost disbelief, when we cannot respond immediately and disappointment when we are

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Hard Work

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unable to invest 2 to 3 weeks of tedious full-time manual searching through the thousands of entries on charts and notes. Regrettably, much as we would enjoy ferreting out such answers, we have to earn our livings. To date everything has been done on a volunteer basis, not just without compensation, but with considerable investment of personal funds and time diverted from income-producing activities. In the absence of independent income there is a finite limit to the time we can literally afford to devote to searches in this mountain of data.

So, please be patient and understanding. You are seeking quick and easy solutions to your lineage blocks. It is a wish we all share. However, your easy answer will require that "someone" make a tremendous contribution in time, energy, and tough intellectual effort. Computerization will come but not as soon as any of us would like.

First, I shall have to retire from my current, demand-

ing professional position - tentatively in late 1992. My computer system will require several several costly additions to handle the volume. Then, the proper pro-

Computerization will come but not as soon as any of us would like.

gram must be available or I shall have to spend 6 to 8 months, full-time, developing one. After that, inputting can start.

Short of winning the lottery, the only fast route requires a benevolent "rich uncle" willing to donate \$200,000 to underwrite the additional equipment and \$50,000 in programmer charges to develop the nec-

essary program plus support me for the next 3 years. Even then, it would be 1992 to 1993 before program "glitches" were rooted out, all raw data entered and the database ready to respond to queries.

Any volunteers?

Please don't be discouraged. Don't stop sending family group sheets and other data! Keep it coming because some connections can always be recognized at sight.

Moreover, periodically members' materials are cross-checked manually against descendants of the early Agnew arrivals I am tracing forward. The John Wayne connection above was recognized this way. Future columns will include other meldings of members lines with material from my prospective searches.



Agnews and Othernews

In memorium

Jeanne Alderton
Watten-Agnew

We were saddened to learn of the passing, in February, of Jeanne Alderton Watten-Agnew, wife of Albert C. Agnew of Oakland, California. Many of the Association members first met Jeanne and Al Agnew, who married in 1988, at the last gathering in Santa Rosa. Mrs. Watten-Agnew was a California Bay Area patron of the arts. Our deepest sympathies to Al Agnew and his family.

Corrections

The last issue contained at least two address errors:

The address of the Agnew Association was incorrectly shown on the first page. Please note for your records, the correct address is P.O. Box 691, Petaluma, California 94953.

On the membership roster, the correct address for Mrs. Dorothy Geanious is 506 E. Cruger, Eureka, IL 61530

Ellis Island Passenger Lists

The year 1892 ended the use of Castle Garden, better known as The Battery, as the Immigration Station for the Port of New York. Ellis Island was then opened in New York, one mile from Manhattan Island. The Ellis Island Restoration Commission has been formed to make available the records of more than sixteen million

immigrants who passed through the Island. The computerized passenger lists will identify the passengers by name so that the ship and date of arrival will no longer need to be known. The anticipated date of availability for this information is 1992.

New Members

We're pleased to announce four new members have joined our association since the last newsletter was published. Please add these names to your membership roster. Brother of member Carolyn Turner of Philadelphia:

- James Agnew Slaughter
500 W. Santa Maria #9
Santa Paula, CA 93060

Mrs. George McFall has

given memberships to:

- Hal Chaffee
Technical Exhibits Corp.
6155 So. Oak Park Ave.
Chicago, IL 60300
- Ms. Linda C. Miller
34 Apt. 1, Chiswick Rd.
Brookline, MA 02746
- Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Chaffee
Box 248
Tryon, NC 28782

Editor's Corner

You may have noticed a few cosmetic changes to the *Agnewsletter*. I hope you like them. The basic three column format is the same, but I have made some modifications to the masthead, changed the typeface, added a few special touches to the feature articles, and am trying to standardize the look of some of the regular features.

Please let me hear from you about any changes you would like to see in the newsletter, both in appearance and content.

Newsletter contributions are eagerly accepted by this editor. I *do* appreciate those members who take the time to share information about themselves, their families, and research they have completed. Without them, we would not have an *Agnewsletter*.

If you use a computer, please send information on a floppy disk, formatted as an ASCII file. I use a Macintosh computer, but can convert IBM formatted information, so don't let the lack of a Mac stop you from sharing information with us.

The Last Word

Convener Art Agnew

The old adage, "time flies," seems appropriate. We are now in the second quarter of 1990 and it will be just a few short months before we gather for the Caledonian Club Games and our own Agnew Association biennial meeting in Santa Rosa, California.

I hope that many of our members will be able to participate. There is still time to decide, so take a few moments to consider joining the celebration. It will be a wonderful opportunity to renew friendships and meet more Agnews. Remember, Sir Crispin Agnew of Scotland, the head of our clan, will be the guest of honor!

Plans are progressing for our reunion. Complete details and the entire schedule of Caledonian Club events will be covered in the next issue of the *Agnewsletter*. Now, I want to fill you in on some of the Agnew only



events planned so far.

Sir Crispin plans to arrive in San Francisco on August 30. The Agnew Gathering will officially

begin the evening of August 31, with a reception for Sir Crispin at my home in Santa Rosa. I want to take this opportunity to extend an invitation to all our members. As with other family gathering events, details will follow in the next issue.

Lois Schieck and Marie Agnew-Marcelli plan to host a cocktail party in their suite at the El Rancho Tropicana Hotel on September 1. We will conduct our biennial meeting on Sunday afternoon, September 2, followed by a family dinner, with Sir Crispin as the guest of honor.

I look forward to meeting many of you over the Labor Day Weekend.

Agnew Association Membership

The Agnew Association of America was established in the United States in April 1984 at the request of Sir Crispin Agnew, Bt. of Lochnaw, Chief of the Family Agnew. The purpose of the Association is to bring together all of the name Agnew or those descended from the name Agnew to promote interest in lineage and exchange of information. An Association newsletter is published quarterly to disseminate items of Agnew interest and assist contacts with other members tracing their Agnew line. The newsletter is available to members only, and back issues are available at \$3.00 each to members and prospective members. Member queries are answered without charge. In order to support the Association, the Board of Directors established annual

dues of \$15.00, and \$6.00 for students. Dues are payable by July 1 of each year. Life membership in the parent Association in Scotland is \$30 in the United States and Canada.

Membership application for both the American and Scottish associations and annual dues should be sent to:

Mrs. Lois Schieck
Apt. 105, 4615 North Park Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Please make checks payable to the Agnew Association of America. For membership in the Agnew Association of Scotland, send a separate check for \$30 payable to the Agnew Association.

Agnew Association Officers

Arthur W. Agnew—Convener
Kenneth H. Agnew—Co-Convener
Lois Schieck—Secretary/Treasurer
Pat Alexander—Archivist
Dr. G. Marie Agnew-Marcelli—
Historian
Magalen Bryant—Director
Jean Schneider—Membership
Carol Agnew Smith—Editor



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Convener Emeritus
Sir Crispin and Lady Susan Agnew
Lady Swanzie Agnew

The Agnewsletter

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