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Dear Cousin,

My ongoing focus on another big project has meant that I have carried out very little family research during the past year, usually only enough to respond to queries. That other interest is likely to keep me busy for the foreseeable future. You can see what I have been up to as secretary of a local educational charity at www.hundredparishes.org.uk. However, I continue to welcome family news and keep my large Teskey family tree updated. This brief Newsletter reflects my lack of recent activity, but I hope you will find something of interest. Sadly, quite a large element is devoted to recent fallen leaves.

Whilst I may have established a bit of a reputation for being a Teskey expert, my accumulation of knowledge has been in large part due to the willing contribution of information by many people over the last 25 years. Hundreds have shared details of their immediate family and a considerable number have shared the results of their own research into the wider family. One who has for many years shared the results of her ongoing Teskey research is Jane Teskey of Petrolia, Ontario. She is the wife of Mark 1958, a descendant of pioneer Hugh 1788. Hardly a month goes by without some new snippet that Jane has discovered, and we regularly exchange ideas about how these “new” Teskeys may fit into the overall picture.

I was delighted to learn that at its 2014 conference the Ontario Genealogical Society formally recognised the work that Jane has done for many years to further family research generally. She was presented with a Citation of Recognition which declared “The Ontario Genealogical Society recognizes Jane Teskey for her demonstrated leadership and valuable contribution to the Ontario Genealogical Society. Her work furthers the cause of genealogy in Ontario.”

Well done, Jane – and please keep sending the snippets and questions! Jane is pictured here with husband Mark and their grandson Christopher 2002 Teskey.





Congratulations are also in order for sculptor Adrienne Alison, a descendant of pioneer William 1787 Teskey and whose grandmother was Mary Isobel Teskey (1894–1980). In Newsletter 38, I mentioned that Adrienne had won a commission to create a new war monument for Ottawa. Her impressive bronze statue of seven figures, titled “Triumph through Diversity”, was unveiled in November 2014. It stands prominently on Parliament Hill and commemorates the War of 1812, a defining episode in Canada’s history.

You can see an image and read a little more about the monument on the Canadian Heritage website www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1415199546053 or view a short video of the inauguration at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFOajW9aXuk>

FALLEN LEAVES

The aftermath of generating a Newsletter is often a sad time for me. The period following the December 2013 edition was no exception as I heard of the passing of more distant cousins who I regarded as old friends because of our exchanges of information or a meeting long ago. Sad, yet I am so pleased to have had the privilege of knowing them. The list that follows includes some people who died in 2013 and several of my old friends.

RUPERT STAINTON TESKEY (1916-2013)

Back in the very early days of my research into the Teskeys of North America, Janice and I took our first vacation in the United States. When we arrived in California, I found Rupe Teskey’s phone number in the local directory. I called him and we went to visit him and his wife Audrey that evening. Next day, he flew us in his Cessna plane from Palm Springs to a tiny airfield called Borrego Springs for breakfast. We were not used to this lifestyle and our brief encounter with Rupe left a lasting impression. Here are Janice and Rupe with his favourite toy.



In his young days, Rupe and a cousin Merlyn Teskey (1914-1994) had worked together in a major Los Angeles trucking business, Teskey Transportation, that had been founded by Merlyn and his father Frank (1885-1967). Frank and Rupe’s father John 1889 had emigrated from Ireland. The cousins went their separate ways and had not met for many years, but when we later met Merlyn we found that both men persistently used the peculiar phrase

“on the deal”, just as some people might involuntarily say “you know” or “actually”. It was quite uncanny. Both were real characters and still had the dynamism that must have driven their successful careers. They were 1st cousins of Vera Shier, nee Teskey, who lives in County Limerick.

Rupe flew his plane two or three times a week until he was 85 – and continued to say “on the deal”.

**GARY LEE TESKEY (1944-2013)**

Gary was Rupe's son. He died just weeks after his father. Gary followed in his father's footsteps in the family trucking business before founding Easy Fuel Inc, a successful mobile fuelling business that operates across northern California.

EARL ARTHUR TESKEY (1916-2013)

Earl was born in Wellington, Ontario, a great great grandson of pioneer William 1787. I met Earl with his brother Keith in Niagara Falls about 15 years ago. Earl was a carpenter by trade. During World War II he served as a corporal in the Royal Canadian Engineers.

NORMAN ACKERS (1934-2013)

Norman lived on Merseyside, England, near where his grandfather Robert Teskey (1875-1956) had settled after he left Ireland. Norman was the son of Irene 1910 Teskey and the great grandson of Solomon 1838, from whom many of my contacts are descended. Norman had worked as a driver. His wife Barbara keeps me informed of the progress of their children and grandchildren.

GEORGE DESMOND FITZGERALD (1932-2014)

There is a good photo of George in Newsletter 33, published in December 2002 and available on www.Teskey.org. It was taken when Janice and I visited him at his home in County Limerick, where we enjoyed being shown around his beautiful garden. Before his retirement, George had been a farmer. He was the son of Robert Fitzgerald and Annie Florence Teskey (1894-1977), known as Florence. Florence used to be in charge of the tea tickets at the Methodist field meetings in Adare. These were outdoor picnics held to commemorate the visits and preaching of John Wesley. We learned in Canada last year that such field meetings were also held there.

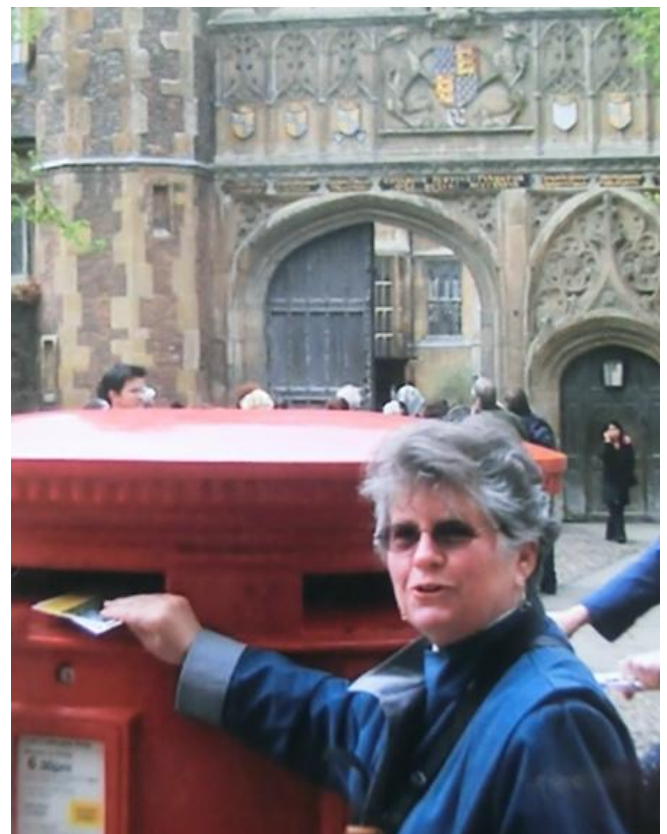
NANCY JANE TESKEY (1942-2013)

Nancy was a Catholic nun, a member of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary for 49 years. She lived in the San Francisco area of California and taught science subjects at Holy Names University. Nancy was fascinated by primates which she studied and researched, working for a year at the California Primate Research Centre. She was the great granddaughter of William 1846 of the Orillia Teskeys. Her grandfather William 1879 moved from Orillia to San Francisco where he became a hotel manager.

Nancy and I corresponded for 20 years. Janice and I enjoyed her company for a day in 2005 when she stayed with us in Stansted. The photo was taken on our outing to nearby Cambridge.

CYNTHIA TESKEY (1929-2014)

Cynthia was the wife of John Adam Teskey (1928-1991), a second cousin of my late mother. Although they lived less than 50 miles away, I sadly never managed to meet up with them. One day I hope to meet their children, who are my third cousins.



NANCY TESKEY (1935-2013)

Just a few weeks after the death of Nancy 1942, Nancy Teskey of Monument, Colorado passed away. She was born in Blue Earth, Minnesota, where she met and married Harland 1932 Teskey. They had two daughters and were married 56 years.

Harland is a retired US Air Force lieutenant colonel. I came across this 1968 photo of him (centre of this group) on the website www.skyraider.org. Harland's grandfather Herman 1877 Teskey was born in Blue Earth of German parents, William and Louise Tesky who had migrated from Prussia in 1855.



POST SCRIPTS FROM THE 2013 ONTARIO TOUR

In Newsletter 38 I recounted some of the Teskey-related events of the 2013 tour of Ontario that was organised by the Ontario Genealogical Society. The latest Journal of the Irish Palatine Association carries a longer article by me on the tour as a whole, together with a great selection of photos taken by a number of the participants. The organisers are to be congratulated on producing a well-written and beautifully illustrated souvenir book of the Tour.

In the last newsletter I mentioned the gravestone of Mary 1777 Teskey and her husband Richard White, which I stumbled across quite by chance during the 2013 Ontario Tour. A few weeks after the Newsletter was added to the website, I was emailed by Holly White in Alberta. Her Google search had found my reference to her ancestor Richard White! The internet is a great ally for family researchers – provided it is used carefully and with caution. I was able to pass on all I knew to Holly and I hope one day she will be able to tell me the results of her research so I can expand the White branch of the Teskey tree.



ANOTHER SOURCE OF UNITED STATES INFORMATION

Whenever I dabble in online family history research I seem to find yet another new source.

<http://sortedbyname.com/mobile/index.html> provides an indexed list of United States information that is publicly available, often linking items together. There are many hundreds of Teskeys here. I have not sought to analyse the quality or usefulness of the information, but it looks like it may be helpful. I was surprised to find how much detail is available from at least some states, such as whether the person voted in specific elections and whether they are registered as supporting a specific political party.

POTENTIAL NEW SOURCE OF IRISH FAMILY HISTORY INFORMATION

Anyone setting out today on a mission to research their family history faces a very different challenge to my experience 25 years ago. In many ways, the advance of online availability makes their task easier – like not having to physically visit record depositories and also benefiting from a great deal of indexation. But there are now new challenges – like a degree of unreliability with indexation, the increased scale of what information is available, and some unpredictability in the robustness of websites.

I clearly remember when Janice and I spent a few days in the Dublin archives more than 20 years ago. A friendly informality pervaded the almost Dickensian environment, with cash and little slips of paper containing vital information exchanging hands. Now, Ireland seems to be striving to be at the forefront of making information available online, apparently unconstrained by the privacy regime that hampers genealogical research in other countries . . . or so it seemed when I drafted this paragraph a few months ago.

www.irishgenealogy.ie, a state-run website, launched an improved look-up service earlier this year. Their online index of civil registrations (civil as opposed to church records) was available free and included births, marriages and deaths from 1864 right up to 2013 and also non-Catholic marriages back to 1845. The index covered the whole of Ireland up to 1922 and thereafter excluded Northern Ireland. This wide-ranging search facility seemed almost too good to be true. And so it has proved! Sadly, when I came to finalise this Newsletter, I found the website carried the message “Civil records search temporarily unavailable – it is hoped to restore certain indexes in the near future”.

Fortunately, I searched for all Teskey entries and saved the results before they ceased to be available – I now have a list of 214 births, 113 marriages and 117 deaths, including useful pieces of information for more recent records, such as name of spouse, age and marital status for deaths, and mother’s maiden name for births. This last point means that many of the births are not Teskeys, helping to explain why there are so many more births than marriages or deaths.

Of the 444 entries, 156 were recorded in the second half of the 1800s, 278 in the 1900s and only 10 in the 2000s. My focus has always been on Rathkeale, yet that registration district accounts for only a third of the records.

I have yet to look in any depth at the detailed results, but one day I hope to check them against my slips of paper from Dublin. I can already see that there are names here that I had not come across before. A researcher’s work is never done; a family tree is never finished!



BEWARE OF INDEXES

I was surprised to hear from Dianne Teskey that she had found a previously-unknown Teskey in the 1901 census for Oldham in her home county of Lancashire in England. I think Dianne came across Sarah Teskey in the index of www.findmypast.co.uk, but my inspection of the census record itself showed that the lady's name was actually Sarah Tookey, not Teskey. By the time I re-checked FindMyPast the indexation had been corrected.

However, I looked for the same census record on www.ancestry.co.uk and here I found a different indexation error. Sarah Tookey's name was correct but her age of 40, clearly visible on the original record, was indexed as 17. I have advised Ancestry, so hopefully this will be corrected. Whilst indices (and family trees) are a great finding aid, we should always refer to the original document and make our own judgement.

ONTARIO PLACE NAMES

I sometimes struggle to find the location of places, especially in Ontario. I came across a good online source of maps from 1880. This reference may help others who struggle with this problem: <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/countyatlas/searchmapframes.php>

TESKEY MEMORABILIA

I continue to acquire occasional items of Teskey memorabilia. I recently purchased a "Dodgers" tee shirt bearing the name TESKEY. I presume this belonged to a supporter of the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball team as I have failed to find any reference to a Teskey playing for them. The shirt hangs very loosely on me, so I presume its original owner is a big fellow. Can anyone tell me whose shirt I now own?



In my ignorance of North American sports, I had assumed the Dodgers were an ice hockey team, but it appears not. I consulted a book on hockey that was kindly given to me by Pat McLeod, nee Teskey, when we met up in London in April. The book "A great Game – the forgotten leafs & the rise of professional hockey" is a detailed history of the early years of hockey in Canada. It was published in 2013 and written by Stephen Harper, Canada's Prime Minister. The significance of Pat's gift was that we first met Stephen and his wife Laureen Teskey at a Teskey reunion at Pat's home in Calgary in 1995.

I am impressed that Stephen Harper is able to pursue two major "projects" at the same time, whilst I can manage only one!

A PRINTER'S TALE

Earlier this year I was contacted by Theresa Yob, a descendant of the Collingwood Teskeys. Her grandfather had told her that his grandfather (who would have been Stephen 1815 Teske, the founder of this Teskey grouping) had been the printer to the King of Prussia. Family legend has it that when he left Prussia in the 1860s, Stephen Teske brought a Guttenberg press all the way to America. Now, Theresa's great grandfather, Stephen's son, Jacob 1858, appears on the Collingwood census of 1891 as a printer. Can anyone from the Collingwood branch add anything to this story?

AN OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT THE ROBERT TESKEY HOME IN APPLETON

This fine stone house was built in the 1860s for mill-owner Robert Teskey (1803-1892). This early photo of croquet being played on the rather overgrown "lawn" was taken around 1875. Robert 1803 is just visible, wearing a top hat and seated beside the third stanchion from the right.

The veranda has since been removed and the house extended and modernised.

The house in Appleton, once called Teskeyville, not far from Ottawa, was open to view in December 2014 as part of an initiative to raise funds for the local Carleton Place and District Memorial Hospital.



At the time of publishing this Newsletter, the house was on the market, on offer for less than a million Canadian Dollars - a low price by English standards. It is advertised on:

<http://www.realtor.ca/PropertyDetails.aspx?PropertyId=14668755>

I apologise if this internet link has ceased to work by the time you try it.

PLEASE KEEP ME UPDATED

Whenever I send out a Newsletter, or an email to advise that there is a new edition on the website, there are always a few that 'bounce' back. Please be sure to tell me if you move or change your email address.



TES KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

A couple of years ago, I introduced the idea of measuring my research progress through some key performance indicators. Sadly, I have nothing to be proud about in the low scores for the year since the last Newsletter . . .

Teskey tree members – up 59 from 10,824 to 10,883.

Number I have met – up 3 to 632.

Number of unlinked Teskey tree branches – down 1 at 24 (one small branch now tied in).

New documents recorded and filed – 12.

Visitors in the year to our website www.teskey.org – 2,182, making almost 30,000 since it was launched. I am most grateful to Tom Upshaw, a great great grandson of Gertrude 1837 Teskey, for continuing to maintain and generously fund this resource.

The number of website visitors is most encouraging. It's always nice to hear from someone new. I try to help them with their enquiry, albeit not always promptly. It's fun to be distracted back to family history for a while.

A FEW REMINDERS

Please:

- If you have email but did not receive a message from me in November or December 2014, please send me a message asking to be added to my Teskey emailing list.**
- Tell me if you move home or if you have a new email address.**
- Advise me of any births, marriages, deaths or other major events in the family. Please don't assume that I will spot it in the newspaper, or that somebody else will tell me.**
- If you have not already done so, please prepare a Personal Profile of a close relative, either living or deceased, or of yourself. This does not have to be very long or detailed. A suggested framework appears on www.teskey.org. When we met Pat McLeod this year she kindly gave me a 2 page personal profile of herself – one she had started in 1998 !**
- Suggest, or even write, an article of general interest for the next Teskey Newsletter.**
- Send me copies of any good old or new family photographs.**
- Don't take offence if I fail to reply as promptly as you would like!**

Very best wishes,

Ken McDonald