



The British Isles Historic Society

Heritage, History, Traditions & Customs



English Colonist Harvest Festival and the American / Canadian Thanksgiving



In 1578, English explorer Martin Frobisher and his crew gave thanks and communion was observed, either on land at Frobisher Bay, in present day Nunavut, or onboard a ship

anchored there. The explorers dined on salt beef, biscuits, and mushy peas and gave thanks through Communion for their safe arrival in then Newfoundland. This is now accepted as the first “Canadian” Thanksgiving, forty-three years before the first “American” Thanksgiving.

The first national Thanksgiving in Canada was celebrated in the Province of Canada in 1859. It was organized at the behest of leaders of the Protestant clergy, who appropriated the holiday of American Thanksgiving, which was first observed in 1777 and established as a national day of “public thanksgiving and prayer” in 1789.

The first Thanksgiving after Confederation was observed on 5 April 1872. A national civic holiday rather than a religious one, it was held to celebrate the recovery of the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) from an illness. Thanksgiving was first observed as an annual event in Canada on 6th of November 1879.

Today Canadian Thanksgiving is held on the second Monday of October



every year, or at least it has been since Canadian Parliament declared it so on January 31, 1957.

Before this, Thanksgiving in Canada had been held sporadically, often coinciding with other major events and anniversaries.

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/thanksgiving-day>



The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth, oil on canvas, by Jennie Augusta Brownscombe, 1914.

Thanksgiving Day, annual national holiday in the United States and Canada celebrating the harvest and other blessings of the past year.

Americans generally believe that their Thanksgiving is modeled on a 1621 harvest feast shared by the English colonists (Pilgrims) of Plymouth and the Wampanoag people.

The American holiday is particularly rich in legend and symbolism, and the traditional fare of the Thanksgiving meal typically includes turkey, bread stuffing, potatoes, cranberries, and pumpkin pie.

Prayers of thanks and special thanksgiving ceremonies are common among almost all religions after harvests and at other times. The Thanksgiving holiday's history in North America is rooted in **English traditions** dating from the Protestant Reformation. It also has aspects of a harvest festival, even though the harvest in New England occurs well

before the late-November date on which the modern Thanksgiving holiday is celebrated.

In the English tradition, days of thanksgiving and special thanksgiving religious services became important during the English Reformation in the reign of Henry VIII and in reaction to the large number of religious holidays on the Catholic calendar. Before 1536 there were 95 Church holidays, plus 52 Sundays, when people were required to attend church and forego work and sometimes pay for expensive celebrations.

The 1536 reforms reduced the number of Church holidays to 27, but some Puritans wished to completely eliminate all Church holidays, including Christmas and Easter. The holidays were to be replaced by specially called Days of Fasting or Days of Thanksgiving, in response to events that the Puritans viewed as acts of special providence.

Unexpected disasters or threats of judgement from on high called for Days of Fasting. Special blessings, viewed as coming from God, called for Days of Thanksgiving. For example, Days of Fasting were called on account of drought in 1611, floods in 1613, and plagues in 1604 and 1622. Days of Thanksgiving were called following the victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588 and following the deliverance of Queen Anne in 1705. An unusual annual Day of Thanksgiving began in 1606 following the failure of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 and developed into Guy Fawkes Day on November 5.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thanksgiving>



Guy Fawkes, also known as Bonfire Night, (Nov. 5th.) is a unique British festival that combines the commemoration of a historic (and somewhat controversial) event with bonfire celebrations that reach

back to the Celtic harvest festival of Samhain.



Thanksgiving Day (Canada) Monday, October 12

As a liturgical festival, Thanksgiving corresponds to the British and continental European harvest festival, with churches decorated with cornucopias, pumpkins, corn, wheat sheaves, and other harvest bounty. British and European harvest hymns are sung on the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend.

While the actual Thanksgiving holiday is on a Monday, Canadians may gather for their Thanksgiving feast on any day during the long weekend; however, Sunday is considered the most common.



Foods traditionally served at Thanksgiving include roasted turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes with gravy, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, sweet corn, various autumn vegetables (mainly various kinds of squashes but also Brussels sprouts), and pumpkin pie. Baked ham and apple pie are also fairly common, and various regional dishes and desserts may also be served, including salmon, wild game, Jiggs dinner with split-pea pudding, butter tarts, and Nanaimo bars

How did "Breaking the Wishbone" start?

The ancient Romans used to pull apart chicken bones hoping for good fortune. The English picked it up in the 16th century, where it was referred to as "merrythought." The term "wishbone" didn't emerge until the 1800's. Each person grabs an end and pulls it apart. It is believed that if you get the bigger piece, your wish will be granted.

Greetings Readers:

I thank all those that not only read the newsletters but write to let me know that the newsletter is part of their family history and heritage. Here are a few of the letters.

Regards

Steve McVittie

The British Isles Historic Society



2020-09-23 3:42 PM

Steve:

Many thanks Steve for attaching both Newsletters. I really enjoyed them both and learned things I didn't know such as what considerations caused the Queen to decide on the name change for this territory. Please keep them coming and thanks again for exceptional, informative writing.

Stay well !

Blake Williams

The Irish Wakers

<http://www.irishwakers.com/>



2020-09-23 10:50 AM

Thanks Steve:

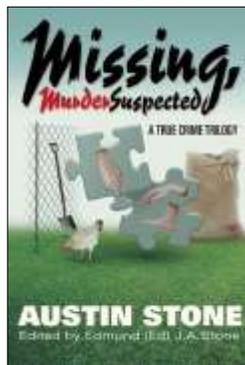
The Irish newsletter issue is most interesting - as are all issues.

I found it interesting that your Great Grandfather lived in Fitzwilliam Square! My 1st cousin Ada Roberta Seeds, daughter of my Great Aunt Ada Le Mottee, was born in 1884 @ #11, Fitzwilliam Square!

Take care - regards Ed @

www.austinstonetruecrime.com

Ed Stone



2020-09-23 3:25 PM

Steve,

I noticed the Union Jack in the article for Northern Ireland, does not have the Saltire cross of St. Patrick on it, as does the Union Jack of the UK. Is that intentional for Northern Ireland? Also three counties of the province of Ulster, belong to Ireland, and are not in Northern Ireland. The term Ulster and Northern Ireland are not interchangeable. The red hand was due to a chieftain cutting off his hand and throwing it across the finish line, from his horse, in a race to see who would win to become the Chief of Ulster.

Regards, John

J.M. Hickson

The Union Jack shown was the one used during the 17, 1800's and called the Union Jack. Represents the grand Union between Scotland and England. Queen Anne's time I think? The Patrick one was added later, and still called the Union Jack, but it was hoped to deal with unrest in Ireland, and also support the Protestants in northern Ireland.

It is interesting that the Church of Ireland, including St. Patrick's cathedral in Dublin, is Anglican, not Catholic. Lots of unrest about not very much.

In addition the original US flag of the original 13 colonies had a Union jack in the corner, and the 13 stripes, before the stars came about. Also Hawaii has a union jack on its state flag and 7 red and white stripes, the 7 main islands of Hawaii. That's to represent Cook, but the Union jack they use, is the later one, not the one that Cook sailed under!

All much ado about nothing, but interesting to think of one's heritage.

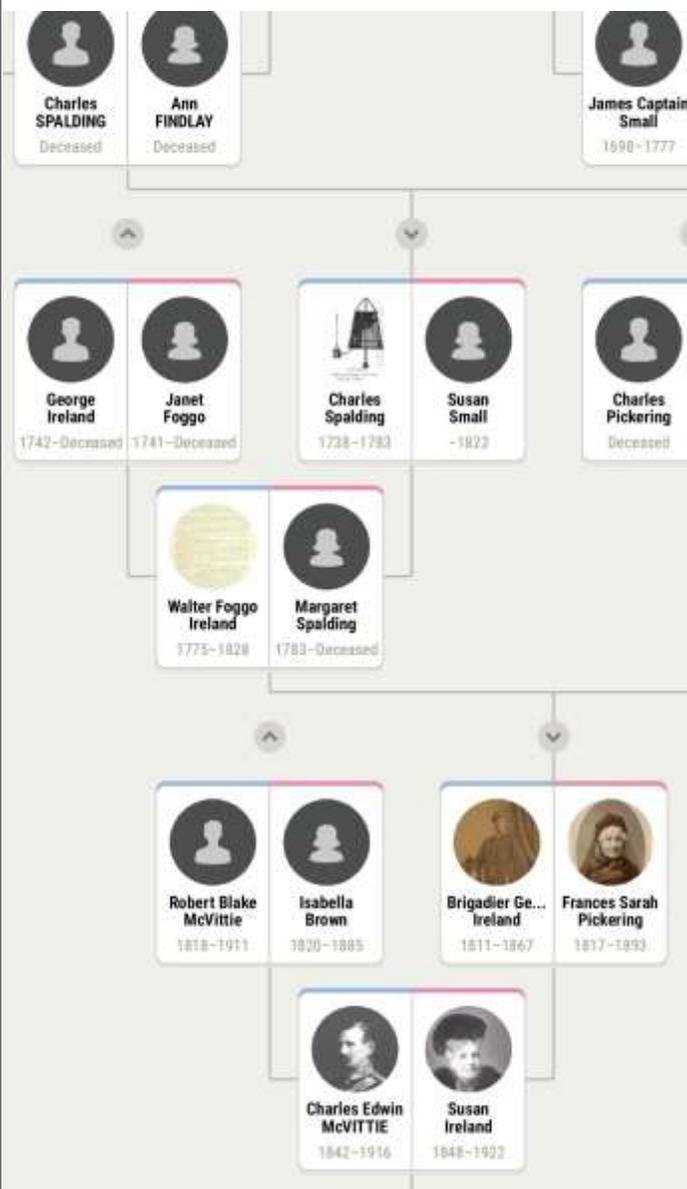
John

British Canadian Social Club

Steve,

Thanks for the newsletters. Just thought I'd share a link to what I thought was a neat little tidbit - regarding Charles Spalding. Probably not too exciting for those without a great interest in genealogy, lol.

***also included a screenshot of where he is in our lineage - I know it's way back there, lol



<https://dawlischronicles.com/2019/07/09/the-salvage-of-hms-royal-george/>

Sheena Carlson



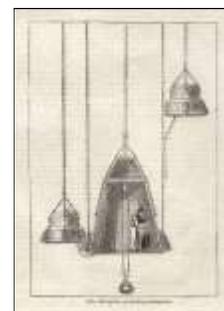
The Salvage of HMS Royal George, 1782 – 1844

HMS Royal George in her glory

The loss, while at anchor at Spithead, off Portsmouth, of the ship-of-the-line HMS Royal George on August 29th 1782 was a disaster that had an impact on British society comparable to the loss of RMS Titanic one hundred and thirty years later. When launched in 1756 the Royal George was the largest warship in the world at some 2000 tons, a length of 180 feet and armed with over a hundred guns. The 28 42-pounders and equal number of 24-pounders she carried gave her massive ship-smashing power. She was to see significant action in the Seven Years War, then commencing, and was to serve during it as flagship for two of the Royal Navy's greatest names, Admirals Anson and Hawke.

The sinking was not however the end of the story and the salvage of HMS Royal George, which was to be completed six decades later, was to be an epic in itself and to make innovative use of new diving technology.

Lying as she was in only sixty-five feet of water, in the middle of a busy anchorage and the approaches to Britain's largest naval base, this enormous vessel, largely intact, represented a major hazard. The sinking had been witnessed by a surgeon on an East Indiaman, Thomas Spalding, whose brother, Charles Spalding (1738 – 1783) had already experience of using diving bells for salvage operations. Charles Spalding's Bell – the two smaller bells seemed to have been used for bringing fresh air supplies to the main bell. Note tube running to it from the small bell on the left.



Personal note: Charles Spalding was one of my ancestors.

Hi Steve (and Lil),

Thanks for this lovely newsletter and Fall message.

As always I do hope you and yours are staying safe and well. It's hard to believe we are still dealing with Covid19!

I have forwarded this to some friends and people I know that might enjoy the read, and too have encouraged them to share and forward to anyone they think might like it. I also reminded them to think of our forefathers when next they are wandering Granville Street or in Queensborough or Stanley Park and elsewhere.

Today it's a rainy day out here so I am thankful we put off our camping tripand instead will just go walk in some puddles....

I spoke to a friend about things to do and she misses our events....so I might see if we can do an inside fish and chips ...I am waiting to hear what's happening with the Executive meeting date and time by Zoom or Skype....because there was some talk about our annual Trafalgar lunch.....with so many of our members being elder or having some health risks I am not sure if a lunch at Cockney Kings would work ...maybe a December eventdo you know is the Kensington Plaza Cockney Kings open?

So stay safe, stay well and relax....I also encouraged my friends to try out the recipes.

Hugs,

Jayne B.

Past President,
The Royal Society of St. George
British Columbia Branch

<https://www.stgeorgebc.ca/>



Meteorological vs Astronomical Seasons

Autumn's first day can fall on two different dates, depending on whether you use the meteorological season or the astronomical season.

The meteorological definition is the simpler of the two. It splits the year into four seasons of three full months each based on the Gregorian calendar, which makes it easier to compare seasonal and monthly statistics.

So every year, autumn lasts from 1 September until 30 November, with winter then kicking off at the beginning of December.

Under the meteorological calendar, spring then always encompasses March to May, with summer lasting from the start of June until the end of August.

The astronomical season isn't quite as straightforward, because it is based on the position of the autumnal equinox, which comes later in the month and doesn't always fall on the same date.

This results in autumn having a different start date than under the meteorological system. This year's autumnal equinox is on Tuesday 22 September – the earliest date it can fall, with the latest being 24 September.

According to the system, autumn gives way to winter on the date of the winter solstice, which this year falls on Monday 21 December.

Astronomically speaking, this year's summer began on Saturday 20 June, the date of the summer solstice.

<https://inews.co.uk/light-relief/offbeat/autumn-2020-when-start-date-first-day-season-484745>





Is It 'Autumn' or 'Fall'?

Why does this season have two vastly different names?

Autumn and fall are used interchangeably as words for the season between summer and winter. Both are used in American and British English but fall occurs more often in American English. Autumn is considered the more formal name for the season.

Both 'autumn' and 'fall' originated in Britain. So why is 'fall' primarily used in America?

The older of the two words is autumn, which first came into English in the 1300s from the Latin word *autumnus*. (Etymologists are not sure where the Latin word came from.) It had extensive use right from its first appearance in English writing, and with good reason: the common name for this intermediary season prior to the arrival of autumn was harvest, which was potentially confusing, since harvest can refer to both the time when harvesting crops usually happens (autumn) as well as the actual harvesting of crops (harvest). The word autumn was, then, a big hit.

Names for the season did not just end with autumn, however. Poets continued to be wowed by the change's autumn brought, and in time, the phrase "the fall of the leaves" came to be associated with the season. This was shortened in the 1600s to fall.

Around this time, England's empire was fast expanding, which meant that the English language was going places. One place it went was to the New

World, and it set up shop in North America in the 1600s. As time went on, the English spoken in America and the English spoken in Britain diverged: there wasn't as much contact between the two groups of English speakers.

Throw into the mix the independence of the United States, and the fact that the type of English spoken in America became part of our early national identity, and the gulf between the two dialects of English widened.

A handful of words got caught in the identity crisis, and fall was one of them. Both autumn and fall were born in Britain, and both emigrated to America. But autumn was, by far, the more popular term for quite a long time. In fact, the "autumn" sense of fall was not even entered into a dictionary until 1755, when Samuel Johnson first entered it in his *Dictionary of the English Language*.

Which do you use Autumn or Fall?

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/autumn-vs-fall>



Hastings Street George Fowler Hastings (1814-1876)

For 50 years, George Hastings was all over the map serving the British Empire as a Naval officer. Appointed to multiple different countries over the span of his lengthy career, Hastings commanded ships in the First Opium War as well as the Crimean War. After a promotion in ranking, in 1866 Hastings became commander-in-chief of the Royal Navy division in Esquimalt, British Columbia.



An essential part of the 'full Irish', the bacon rasher, was invented by **Henry Denny**, (1820) a Waterford butcher. Denny patented several bacon-curing techniques and completely re-invented the process of how to cure bacon.

2020-09-27 2:37 PM

Hi Steve,

I have just sent the Sept and Oct issues which you sent to me, out to all of our members and our friends. Both editions were just so good. Mind, everything you do is "so good". I do not know how you find the time for it all. So thank you for doing it – I am sure you are one of a kind.

We are all so tired of this darn Covid thing. I keep hoping we will hear of a vaccine but nothing yet, although I am optimistic with several companies now in Stage 3 trials.

Wishing you all the best, Betty.

Betty Hubbard
Director, South Vancouver Island
The Royal Society of St. George



It contains a rhymed description of "base-ball" and a woodcut that shows a field set-up somewhat similar to the modern game—though in a triangular rather than diamond configuration, and with posts instead of ground-level bases.



John Newbery Born; 9 July 1713
Waltham St Lawrence, Berkshire,
England (9 July 1713 – 22 December
1767), called "The Father of Children's
Literature", was an English publisher
of books who first made children's
literature a sustainable and profitable part of the
literary market. In recognition of his achievements
the Newbery Medal was named after him in 1922

2020-09-25 2:51 PM

Steve.....

As promised, and welcomed, attached is an article for the Newsletter about Col. R.C. Moody RE arriving in the realm on 25th December 1858.....

Hope that attachment is openable.....

David A. Spence
(on occasion aka Col. R. C. Moody RE 1813-1887)

Royal Commonwealth Society
Vancouver Island

[https://rscs.ca/legacy/
rscs_vancouver_island.html](https://rscs.ca/legacy/rscs_vancouver_island.html)

Editors Note: The article
written on Col. R. C. Moody will appear in the Dec.
2020 Christmas Edition.



1744 The earliest known
reference to baseball is made in a
publication, A Little Pretty Pocket-
Book, by **John Newbery**.



Finlayson Building

Roderick Finlayson

(March 16, 1818 – January 20,
1892) was a Canadian



Hudson's Bay Company officer,
farmer, businessman, and politician
Born in **Loch Alsh (Kyle of Lochalsh),**

Scotland, Finlayson came to North America in 1837.
He moved to Lower Canada into an apprentice clerk
position with the Hudson's Bay Company.

As an HBC clerk, Finlayson worked under
Charles Ross in the building of Fort Victoria in 1843-
1844. Upon Ross's death, which he mentions with
sympathy in his autobiography, Finlayson took
charge of Fort Victoria. After Chief Factor James
Douglas arrived from Fort Vancouver in 1849,
Finlayson was reassigned to second in command.
Also in 1849 he married Sarah Work, one of John
Work's Metis daughters. In 1850 Finlayson was
promoted to the rank of Chief Trader, and in 1859 to
Chief Factor. Finlayson was one of the few to see
Victoria grow from bare ground to the Capital of
British Columbia.