

# *Carswell Connection*

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## **An Introduction to the Carswells of the USA**

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Part V of a continuing account of Carswell family history included some of my preliminary research results on occurrence of the name in the United States [Robbins, T.W. Carswell in USA – A story in black and white. In DeBoo, R.F., and T.W. Robbins. 2008. Carswell family history Part V, Victoria, B.C., 189 pp.] Review of known resources and discussions with active Carswell researchers confirmed that the picture in the USA was not very clear. The purpose of this research, then, was simply to provide an information base with the hope of stimulating sharing of more family history from the United States.

The earliest documented immigrant to the U.S. was Ann Carswell who settled in Maryland in 1679. The most well know Carswell immigrant was Alexander who emigrated to Savannah, Georgia, in 1773 [see Bond, M.M., and G.D. Bond. 1977. Alexander Carswell and Isabella Brown. – their ancestors and descendants. Carswell Foundation, Chipley, FL, 569 pp.] From 1820-1957, records of 463 Carswell immigrants to the USA consisted of 261 Scottish, 172 English and 30 Irish individuals. The most common port of departure for Scots was Glasgow, for English emigrants, Liverpool, and for the Irish, Londonderry.

The 1870 U.S. national census is the first to include black citizens with the Carswell surname. Many of these were former slaves (born before 1865) of the Georgia Carswell planters and farmers. Thus, there is a white Carswell and a black Carswell line of descent in the USA.

Beginning in 1870, with inclusion of blacks in the census, the number of Carswells increased substantially, especially in Georgia; in fact, the black Carswell population was larger than the white Carswell population. It is believed that most of the black Carswells were former slaves. Regarding slavery, the records show that some of the white Carswell line were slaveholders beginning with Alexander Carswell in the late 1700s.

In Georgia, Alexander Carswell (1733-1807) arrived in Savannah during the middle of January 1773, and probably brought with him a grant of land from King George III. It conveyed to Alexander a tract in St. George's Parish [now Burke County, Georgia]. As large landholders, the Georgia Carswell line included mostly farmers or planters. In the United States, a planter was a person who owned 20 or more slaves.

The value of Carswell estates was substantial. It is estimated that the wealth of four Carswell landholders exceeded \$1 million dollars (in year 2000 dollars), with the richest being William E. Carswell of Wilkerson County whose estate was valued at \$6,081,469. And how did the Carswells amass such relative wealth? In the main, it was through their participation in the institution of

slavery. We know that slaves were passed down through their wills.

We know of two Carswell properties that bear the appellation "plantation." These were Hopeful Plantation and Bellvue Plantation. The latter was 250 acres in Burke County, Georgia. Bellevue Plantation was still owned and operated by a member of the Carswell family as of 1977.

By 1860, there were 24 Carswell slaveholders in seven Georgia counties that held 562 slaves. The value of slaves owned by three Carswells (William Edward, John W. and Edward R.) ranged from \$1,915,305 to \$5,859,183, with a total value of more than \$8,000,000. It illustrates how significant the dollar value of slaves related to the dollar value of Carswell estates.

Reconstruction (1863-1877) was the attempt by the federal government of the United States to resolve the issues of the American Civil War after the Confederacy was defeated and slavery ended. Among the impacts of Reconstruction on the Carswell families was the loss of their labor with the end of slavery. By 1870 the fortunes of Carswell families of Georgia were greatly diminished. Especially hard hit was William E. Carswell of Wilkinson County whose estate went from a value of more than \$6 million in 1860 to about \$200,000 in 1870 (in 2000 dollars). The estate of John W. Carswell of Burke County, valued at \$1.2 million in 1860 fell to a value of \$88,000 in 1870. Other Carswell families had similar losses.

The Scotch-Irish in the United States were strong patriots, including the Carswells from the time of the American Revolution through World War I. Alexander Carswell (1727-1803) and his son John Carswell (1760-1817) each served in the Revolutionary War, as did Carswells from Virginia, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania. Some nine Carswell men served in the War of 1812.

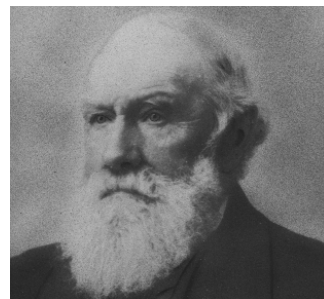
At least 81 members of the Carswell family fought in the Civil War (1861-1865). It included 61 for the Confederate States Army (CSA; South) and 20 for the United States of America, or Union (USA; North). The latter included two black Carswells. Of the total Confederates, some 34 Carswells were from Georgia. In the 24 families of Georgia found in the 1860 U.S. Federal Census, 15 families sent either fathers (8) or sons (7) to the War. All but two families were slaveholders. Records have been found which document Carswell men as prisoners of war, killed in action, died of disease, provided a substitute, deserted, captured or were discharged with a disability.

Some 442 Carswell men have been identified as veterans of World War I. They were both black and white, and they came from 33 states. Most (95%) of the black Carswells were from the Deep South, especially from Georgia. White Carswells came mostly (54%) from the Upper and Deep South, especially North Carolina and Georgia.

We know little of the history of blacks with the surname Carswell. In the 1870 U.S. Federal Census, only 10 of 438 blacks with the Carswell surname were from a state other than Georgia. One was a family of six in which all were born in Delaware and found living there in 1870. Further research is needed to understand the history of the black Carswell families in the United States. An ultimate goal of this project is to begin communication with some black Carswell family members.

# James Carswell's diary, June 1847

Following is the sixth of monthly entries from the diary of James Carswell, Miller, at Dalbeattie, Kircudbrightshire.



## June, 1847

- 1 Tuesday. Fine weather. We had another vessel with bones. They are delivered here at £ 4 / 7 shillings and 6 pennies per ton. We commenced to load them today – rather rough but dry.
- 2 Wednesday. Fine warm weather. Fine weather for the peats and loading bones. Few bones going away.
- 3 Thursday. Still dry. Nothing the worse of a shower to make the turnips come away.
- 4 Friday. Fine day. We finished leading bones today. There('s) about 36 tons in here. They called her the "Emma Lara"
5. Saturday. Fine day. Still few bones going away.
6. Sunday. Fine day. Mr Arthur came home last night and there is sermon today. I was not there. I was watching the bees. There is a fine young hive about Dalbeattie.
7. Monday. Fine morning but rather cold. David Burnet is commenced to cut my peats. It appears to be a shower tonight.
8. Tuesday. Fine morning but no rain. Working at the bones.
9. Wednesday. Fine morning. I was at Dumfries with two bags of meal. London market higher again. I got myself well wet before I got home, but the rain will do good.
10. Thursday. Fine morning. People will get on with their turnips. Turnip seed is selling at 11pennies per lb – both Swedish and yellow bullock.
11. Friday. Fine morning, still through at the bones. This is the night that a few neighbors is going to present Mr Cowden of Park with a watch and a purse of ten sovereigns for his usefulness and thoughtfulness about this place. There were about thirty sat at tea at the King's Arms, Dalbeattie.
12. Saturday. Still a fine morning. Still grinding bones. It came on rain in the afternoon and a very wet night.
13. Sunday. Dry but very dull. I was at church, heard Mr Arthur preach, but a thin attendance.
14. Monday. Dry day. Through grinding bones.
15. Tuesday. Fine growing weather for people getting in their turnips. I am looking for our bees' casting (swarming).
16. Wednesday. Fine warm morning. There is a young woman dead at John Shaw's very suddenly. She came from Workington four days ago, and she was poorly when she came. I (hear) news from Liverpool of a downfall in Indian corn from 60s to 50s & 5 per Quarter
- 17 Thursday. Still fine weather. Through working at the bones. Indian meal reduced one penny from 2/2d to 2/1d. Maxwell Kirkpatrick & Co commenced selling today at 2/1d (2 shillings and one penny) per stone.
- 18 Friday. Fine weather but rather damp for sewing turnips. Indian meal 2 shillings per stone.
- 19 Saturday. Fine warm day. There is news that S. Thomson of Edingham (farm) is going to get an heir. We finished yesterday with the bones till we get some more.
- 20 Sunday. Fine morning but rather cold. This is the day of Buittle sacrament. I was not at church, but a thin attendance.
- 21 Monday. Fine morning. My Father was at Castle Douglas. Sold to Mr Hunter of Leaths (farm) 600 bushels of bones at 2/6 for next year. The "Henry Brougham" is come in with bones. She won't get up till Saturday or Sunday. Delivered here from Mr Leary, Dublin, at £4.0 per ton.
- 22 Tuesday. Rather cold. We are grinding the last of our bones till we get them out of the "Henry Brougham." Indian meal (is) retailing at 1/11d per stone. Mr Leary is expected here today.
- 23 Wednesday. Fine morning. I was at Dumfries. Indian corn still falling. I saw Mr Leary at Dumfries. He won't be out before Monday. The vessel will not be up before that time.

24 Thursday. Grinding oat meal. I think we won't grind any more for some time. Oat meal is retailing at 3 S per stone.

25 Friday. Fine morning, but about eleven o'clock there was a tremendous hail shower. The hail was nearly to size of a small marble, and lasted for nearly an hour.

26 Saturday. Fine morning again. We got a few of the bones out of Palnackie, but they are all ground today.

27 Sunday. Fine morning. I am not at church. I was herding the bees. There was one of the old ones threw up a swarm and Thomas's at the same time. My sister at Kirkland got an addition to her family on Saturday – a little boy. My mother went away today to see her. The drones in the hive was down for five or six weeks before casting. The other killed a few drones about a week ago.

28 Monday. Very warm and dry. We commenced to discharge the "Henry Brougham." They are very clean dry bones.

29 Tuesday. Very warm. This is Kelton Hill fair day. Got the bones all discharged. Mrs Eliot's bees cast today, two of them. They both went into one hive. The hive has been down this four or five weeks. They both killed drones about two weeks ago.

30 Wednesday. Fine warm day. There was 38 tons 8 bushel but 2 Quarter 14 lbs of bones in the "Henry Brougham." My other old hive threw off a swarm today, and there was one came from Mrs Elliott's and lighted on my garden, and mine went in to hers. It was a very small hive. I gave her 5S for it.

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## Bones explained

Many thanks to Archie Heron, John Orrock, Bob Carswell, and John Searle for responding with the following information on "Bones". Also to John Searle for providing additional information and a photo of the diary author, James Carswell and his family.

- Bone meal is a product created from the waste resulting from the slaughter of animals, especially beef cattle, by meat processors. It is a white powder made by grinding either raw or steamed animal bones. This results in a product that contains the same nutrients necessary for the production of, and maintenance of, bone in both humans and animals.
- The grinding of the bones would be used for the same as we use bone dust in our gardens today. We mix it with Blood and you can buy blood and bone for your gardens at most Garden centres.
- Bone meal has been used as fertilizer in the past and I think also in some situations as a supplement in cattle feed. I didn't go back and look at the diary reference to bones, but they were probably obtained from slaughter houses.
- They were used for fertilizer.

Cattle Bones were shipped in from Ireland from the port of Dunkeld. Locally sourced bones were also used. Whale bones also.

The bones were crushed and treated with sulphuric acid, which made them into Super Phosphate.

The picture shows James Carswell and the first traction engine. The fine bunch of ladies would sort the bones, remove the slugs and snails from cattle hooves, before they bagged them, and sent them to the glue factory.

Young Man leaning on the traction engine wheel was William Carswell killed at Gallipoli in 1915 (your Dalbeattie graveyard inscriptions).





**Rosemary, (goldiedog@ntlworld.com) sends the following Carswell information:**

Robert Carswell c.1717 Neilston, Renfrew, Scotland married 30 april 1740 Nether Carswell, Renfrew, Margaret Cockran c.1723 Paisley, Renfrew (his father believed to be John and her father was Thomas)

Thomas Carswell b. 1747 at Neilson, Renfrew and died 31 March 1839 at Torkirra, Dumfries and Galloway married Janet Sloan b.1749 Brownhill, D & G and died 16 April 1841 at Torkirra/ Inscription at the churchyard at Kirkgunzeon In memory of Thomas Carswell who died 31 March 1839 aged 92 years, also his wife Janet Sloan who died 16 August 1841 aged 92 years. Thomas was a farmer.

Robert Carswell 12 August 1779 Brownhill, D & G married (1) Jeannie Jolly and (2) 1817 Susan Dobie 1792-1872. Robert died 19 September 1842 off the Grand Cayman Islands, he was a carpenter.

Robert Carswell 15 Oct 1821 Glencaple, died 23 april 1901 Kilmarnock, Ayrshire married (1) Jessie Mcnaught and (2)3 September 1868 Robina Cowan

Robert Cowan Carswell b. 10 June 1886 at Kilmarnock and married Catherine Love, robert died 1915 Stenhouse Larbet.

Robert had a brother John Cowan Carswell who went to live in Cape Town, South Africa and married a Dulcie Baird.

Robert and Catherine had one son, my dad, Robert Cowan Carswell born 6th august 1915, he served in WW11 as a navigator in the Lancasters,

Inscription on the gravestone in Caerlaverock Churchyard.

Sacred to the memory of Susan, daughter of Robert Carswell, Merchant, who died at Glencaple, 13 February 1868 aged 4 years and 6 months. also Mary Jane his daughter, who died at Dumfries 12 December 1858 aged 6 months. Also Jessie Mcnaught the beloved wife of the above, who died at Glencaple 4 august 1885 aged 63 years. also The above Robert Carswell who died at Kilmarnock 23 April 1901 aged 79 years. Also Robert Carswell who died on the island of Grand Cayman upon the 19 September 1842 aged 66 years. Also Matthew Carswell, his son, who died 8 September 1845 aged 18 years. Also Thomas Carswell died 30 October 1847 aged 22 years. Also Sarah (should read Susan) Dobie spouse of the above, who died at dumfries 12 December 1872 aged 80 years.

Taken from the headstone in Kilmarnock.

Erected in loving memory of Robert Cowan Carswell, Sgt. 2nd Ayrshire RFA beloved husband of Catherine Love, eldest son of Robert Carswell Dumfries, who died at Stenhouse Larbet 24 March 1915 in his 28th year. Also his mother Robina Cowan Carswell who died at Troon 27 September 1916 aged 72, also Margaret Cowan Jamieson daughter of the late cpt. Jamieson, Glencaple, who died 29 November 1915 aged 39 years interned in Elmwood cemetery, Elmwood, Canada.

The above Catherine Love died 1 January 1954.