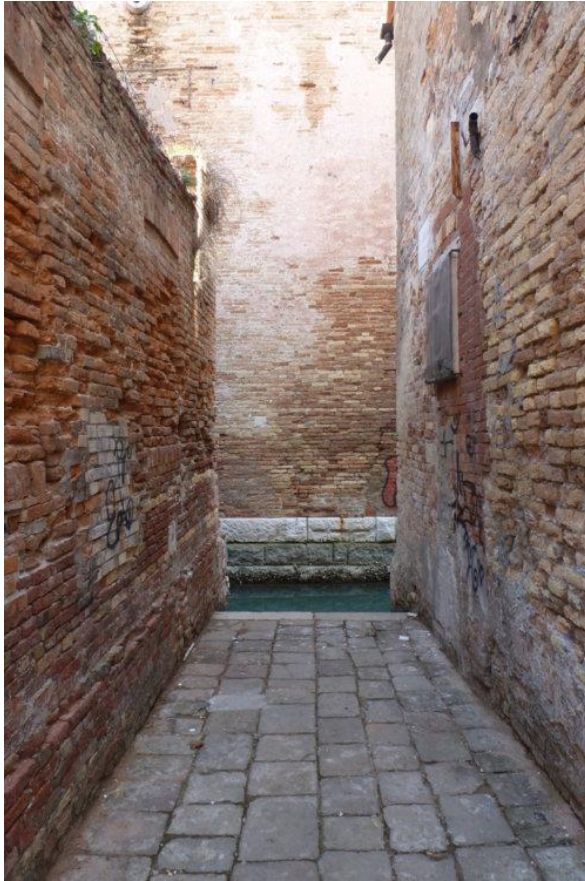




Blind Alleys

Interesting stories of Flack families that caught my attention in the search for my 3X, great, grandfather “William Flack, a soldier”.

By Dr Ted Flack

Interesting stories about Flack families not in our Flack family tree

Introduction.

Most serious family historians will have experienced being side-tracked in their search for their ancestors. Perhaps you have been misled and side-tracked by exciting but inaccurate family stories, incorrect assumptions or by interesting, but not necessarily relevant evidence and sources.

In this research paper I set out some of the more interesting side-tracks that I have wandered down in my search for the ancestors of my great, great, great, grandparents William and Elizabeth Flack.

So that the reader has a clear idea of how I might have been lured onto the side-track, I set out a summary of the information gathered from each of the following:

- A. Denis Carr and Jim Flack's "[Flack Genealogy](#)" One Name Study web site
- B. The Kansas Flacks
- C. The South Carolina Flacks
- D. The Flacks of Flacksville, New York
- E. The Cahans Exodus
- F. Captain William Flack of the 88th Regiment of Foot and the story of the "Forlorn Hope";
- G. Captain William Charles Flack of the Belper Regiment of Militia and the "Flack Coat of Arms";

What do we know about William Flack, "a soldier", Billy Flack's father on which our search is based?

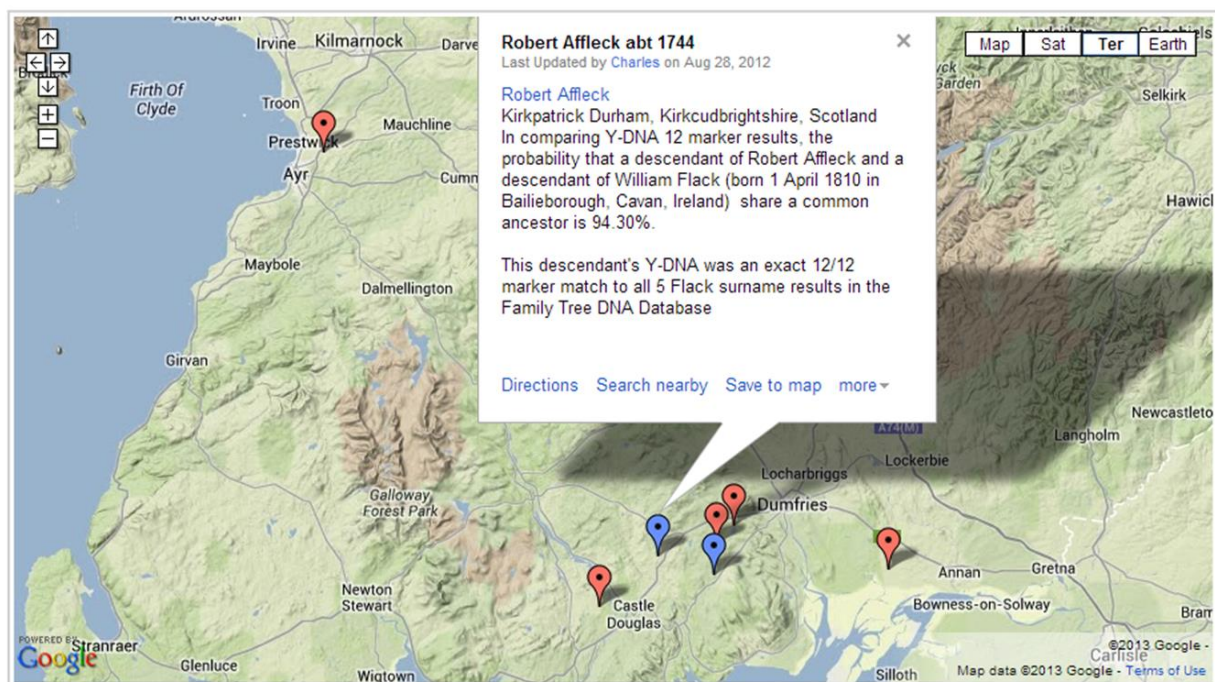
I am looking for the parents of my GG/father, William Flack (known as "Billy" Flack), recorded in his military service documents as born 1 April 1810 in "Parish of Killan in or near the Town of Ballyborough in the County of Cavan". Burnley burial records indicate his mother was Elizabeth who was born in Ireland. Billy Flack married an English widow in India whilst serving with the 63rd Regiment of Foot and later christened his son William Henry Flack in Limerick Presbyterian Church. Later in life he attended Church of Ireland.

The only other lead I have is that on 10 April 1808, a Corporal William Flack, born "Bailboro", Cavan was discharged unfit for service from the Wexford Militia aged 36 (born 1772 + or -1) due to wounds to his hand. The Wexford Militia at the time of his discharge was being disbanded and many of the soldiers were transferred to 63rd Regiment of Foot, the Regiment in which my GGG/father served. This is my most promising lead, but no evidence is available to show that this Corporal William Flack was my Billy Flack's father.

Six other factors may need to be taken into account as follows:

- a. the day on which my William Flack was recruited was Market Day in Bailieborough and it is therefore possible that he travelled some distance to the town;
- b. William Flack's enlistment papers were filled in by the Recruiting Sergeant and signed by William Flack with his "X" mark, which may mean that the Recruiting Sergeant assumed that his recruit was from "Ballyborough".

- c. On 29th May 1865, Elizabeth Flack, William's mother, aged 73 died at the family home in Accrington Road Burnley and was buried in Burnley Cemetery. Her death certificate recorded that she was the "widow of William Flack, Soldier" and that the informant was William Flack also of Accrington Road. It will be noted that Elizabeth Flack, William's mother, was not listed in the 1861 Census as living with her son and family. Searches of the available records in both England and Ireland have failed to find where Elizabeth Flack might have been living in 1861.
- d. That a family story, told by my great Aunt, Lucy Flack, indicated that her father, William Henry Douglas Flack, had claimed that although he was born in Ireland, he was from an English family and that his father had been serving in the army in Ireland when he was born.
- e. That in 2013, following a request from a William Flack, resident in Boston USA, I provided a DNA sample to FTDNA in the United States. The results of the test showed that I shared close Y-DNA (paternal line) matches with persons with the name Flack and Affleck who had previously been tested by FTDNA. The closest match was with a person named Affleck with whom I shared strong Y-DNA similarities. The test findings were that I share a common ancestor within 10 genealogical generations (about 250 years). Based on my date of birth, that would mean that our common ancestor lived in about 1720.



Origins of Afflecks in South West Scotland

According to some authoritative sources, the surname "Flack" or "Fleck" is an Irish shortening of "Affleck", which is a Gaelic word meaning "of the place of the stones" also associated with "Auchinleck". (/ˌpʁɪnˈlɛk/ OKH-in-LEK; Scots: Affleck IPA: [ˈaflek]¹; Scottish Gaelic: Achadh nan Leac) is a village five miles south-east of Mauchline, and two miles north-west of Cumnock in East Ayrshire, Scotland. Auchinleck is situated at the heart of the ancient Kyle district of Scotland. The place-name means 'field of (flat) stones' in Scottish Gaelic, from achadh ('field') and leac ('slab').

¹ <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk>

There are also early references to “Flack” in the Manorial records of Holm Cultram as far back as the 14th Century. Holm Cultram, just south of the western end of the Scotland-England border in Cumbria, not far from Airshire, is famous for Holm Cultram Abbey, a Cistercian Abbey of St. Mary, and the largest monastic house in Cumberland. It was founded by the monks of Melrose in 1150. Attacks by the Scots led to extensive rebuilding in the 14th and 15th centuries. It was at its most prosperous in the 12th and 13th centuries, famous for its salt production and export of wool. It was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1538 and there is a record of stone from the Abbey being sold in 1561. The place then became derelict, except for the nave which continued to serve as a parish church.

The Cistercian Monks established a daughter house at Grey Abbey on the Ards Peninsula in Northern Ireland in 1193. The Ards Peninsula in County Down has historically been home to a significant number of Flack families.

With those facts in mind, the search for “Billy Flack’s father was pursued and the results are set out in my research report entitled “[My Brick Wall](#)”. In this report let me now set out each of the lines of inquiry that were pursued in vain but which are interesting in themselves.

A. Denis Carr and Jim Flack’s “[Flack Genealogy](#)” One Name Study web site

Like most family historians, I started my research with searches of primary records looking for the details of the ancestors of my four grandparents – Flack, Cockshutt, Hayward and Chambers, but in the case of the Flack line, I soon ran into what is known as a “Brick Wall” as a result of not being able to find any primary sources for the birth, baptism, marriage or death of my Great Great Grandfather, William Flack, “a soldier” (born circa 1775).

Looking for potential lines of enquiry in secondary sources, I was alerted to the availability of the free on-line “Flack – One Name Study” developed by Denis Carr and Jim Flack at [Flackgenealogy.com](#). First a search using the name William Flack, then a careful exploration of the site failed to find any obvious connections with my William Flack, but it did provide some interesting avenues for further research.

My exploration of the Flack One Name Study revealed that there were 17,025 persons recorded with the surname Flack in the database, of which 356 were born in Ireland and 32 in Scotland. The great majority of the Flack records reflect family histories in East Anglia in England. Of those born in Ireland, 19 were born in County Cavan, and 26 were born in County Monaghan close by. Given that we know that Billy Flack was born in County Cavan, these are worthy of further exploration.

One interesting aspect of the Irish Flack records in this One Name Study database is that the majority of the Flack families recorded there that originated in Ireland, were Presbyterian and later settled in the United States of America. Perhaps the two Cavan Flack families that are of most potential interest are [Hugh Flack](#) (born 1778 in Bailieborough, Cavan) and [Samuel Flack](#) (born circa 1810 in Bailieborough, Cavan). Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing if or how these two families might be connected to our Billy Flack, although it would seem that there is a good possibility that they are in some way related, given my DNA test results. (See copies of these entries in the Flack Genealogy database below).

The question arises as to whether the presence of these Flack families in Bailieborough at the turn of the 18th century, but the apparent absence in later records of a Flack family to which Billy Flack

is likely to have belonged, suggest that perhaps Billy Flack's family were among those Flack families who migrated to the US?

The findings of the DNA test I did with a William Flack now resident in Boston suggest that this may be so. The DNA test showed that the Boston William Flack and I share a common ancestor within 10 genealogical generations (about 250 years). Unfortunately my Boston cousin has not been unable to trace his William Flack beyond the fact that his William Flack migrated to America from Ireland (County unknown) about 1760. Perhaps my Billy Flack's family left to join relatives already in the US?

The Online Searchable Database
Flack Genealogy

Hugh * FLACK
♂ 1778 -

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Birth	Est 1778	Bailieborough, County Cavan, Ireland P
Gender	Male	
Died	County Cavan, Ireland P	
Person ID	I37139	Tree617J
Last Modified	08 Sep 2012	

Family	Christine (Hester) LINSTER , b. Est 1783, Ireland P , d. Aft 1850, New York, New York, USA. P	
Children	>1. Thomas H FLACK , b. 15 Feb 1817, Bailieborough, Cavan, Ireland P , d. 1 Jun 1912, East Liberty, Logan County, Ohio, USA. P >2. Patrick FLACK , b. 15 Feb 1817, Bailieborough, Cavan, Ireland P , d. 12 Mar 1895, East Liberty, Logan County, Ohio, USA. P	
Family ID	F12546	Group Sheet

Documents	 Tree617J - BIOGRAPHY Flack, Alexander C.: 1858-1948 Status: Located. Extract from "A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans" by William E. Connelley,
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Notes	BIOGRAPHY: Named in the Book "A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans." by William E. Connelley, Secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, copyright 1918 Source : Ancestry.com Extract on my main website. Jim Flack - 1 Feb 2009 TREE: Tree 617J - created 30 Dec 2008
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Samuel * FLACK
♂ 1810 -

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Birth	Abt 1810	pos Cavan, Ireland P
Gender	Male	
Person ID	I87299	Ireland
Last Modified	03 Jan 2017	

Father	UK IRELAND	
Family ID	F14057	Group Sheet

Family	Female UNKNOWN , b. Abt 1812	
Children	>1. Samuel FLACK , b. 1835, Bailieborough, Co Cavan, Ireland P , d. Mar 1915, Walton Park, Lancashire P	
Family ID	F16367	Group Sheet

The family history of the Hugh Flack referred to in the first of these records has some intriguing aspects. I have reproduced the story from the Flack Genealogy website below.

B. The Kansas Flacks

Extract from - A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans.

written and compiled by William E. Connelley, Secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, copyright 1918

Source - The KSGenWeb Project and Ancestry.com

ALEXANDER C. FLACK, M. D. Thirty-one years of practice at Fredonia entitles Dr. Alexander C. Flack to recognition as the second oldest physician and surgeon of the city, whence he came in 1885 shortly after receiving his diploma. He has since been one of the reliable members of the medical fraternity here and a citizen who has done his share in aiding in the city's progress and prosperity. Doctor Flack is a native of the Buckeye state, born at East Liberty, Logan County, Ohio, May 2, 1858, a son of Thomas H. and Agnes (Bell) Flack.

Hugh Flack, the grandfather of Doctor Flack, was born at Bailieborough, County Cavan, Ireland, and was a grandson of people on the paternal side who were born in Scotland. His mother, Christine Linster, was born in Ireland of Scotch descent. Hugh Flack passed his entire life as a farmer and never left the shores of his native Erin, passing away in County Cavan. He was the father of twin sons: Thomas H.; and Patrick, the latter of whom died near East Liberty, Ohio, after a career passed in agricultural pursuits. Walter Bell, the maternal grandfather of Doctor Flack, was born in Ireland, but his parents came from England, while his wife, who bore the maiden name of Nancy Parker, was born in Ireland, but of Scotch parentage.

Thomas H. Flack was born at Bailieborough, County Cavan, Ireland, in 1818, and was twenty-two years of age when he emigrated to the United States. He first located in New York City, where he secured employment in a wholesale house, and worked therein for four years and four months.

In his native land he had been reared on a farm, and he finally answered the call of the soil, going to East Liberty, Ohio, where he settled on a farm. On that property he continued to be engaged in operations during the remainder of his life, and died in 1912, at the remarkable age of ninety-four years. He was a good citizen and an honourable man of business and won the respect and esteem of those with whom he came into contact. In his political views he was a democrat, but politics played only a small part in his life, and he never sought personal preferment at the hands of his party or of his fellow-citizens. His religious faith was that of the Presbyterian Church, and he lived his faith daily.

Mr. Flack married Miss Agnes Bell, who was born February 10, 1827, near the Town of Bailieborough, and died at East Liberty in 1909. They became the parents of the following children: Walter, born June 2, 1849, who died in infancy in New York City; William Henry, born June 11, 1851, who was a prosperous retired farmer and schoolteacher of East Liberty, Ohio, until his death October 19, 1916; Thomas, born June 15, 1853, who died at the age of twelve years; Tillie Jane, born December 9, 1855, who is the wife of J. R. Lynch, of Muncie, Indiana, a machinist and specialist in the work of making special parts in an

automobile factory; Dr. Alexander C., of this notice; Lida, born October 3, 1861, who died August 16, 1866; Lillie Fay, born December 14, 1863, who married Oscar Alexander, a farmer, and resides in one of the most beautiful and modern homes in the country, at Bellefontaine, Ohio; Dr. Orra M., born June 24, 1866, a graduate of the Medical College of Ohio, at Cincinnati, and now a successful practicing physician and surgeon of Boswell, Indiana; and Anna Belle, born December 7, 1868, who is the wife of Pearl J. Humphreys, a lumber merchant and farmer of East Liberty, Ohio.

Alexander C. Flack received his early education in the rural schools near East Liberty, Ohio, and subsequently attended the National Normal University at Lebanon, Ohio, from which he was graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Science in 1881. In the meantime he had taught school for three years in the country and two years at Copley, Ohio, where he was principal of schools, and during this time also studied medicine whenever he could get the leisure. Doctor Flack pursued his medical studies at the Medical College of Ohio, at Cincinnati, from which he was graduated in 1885, with the degree of Doctor of Medicine, and almost immediately thereafter came to Fredonia, where he has continued in a general medical and surgical practice. In point of practice he is the second oldest physician now living at Fredonia.

Doctor Flack maintains well-appointed offices at No. 520 Madison Street, where he has a large and comprehensive medical library and all instruments and appliances for the practice of his calling. In addition to his own modern residence, at No. 303 Eighth Street, he owns 226 acres of fine land on the Verdigris River bottoms in Wilson County.

Doctor Flack is local surgeon for the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad. He belongs to the Wilson County Medical Society, the Kansas State Medical Society and the American Medical Association, and is a respecter of the highest ethics of his profession, among the members of which he bears an excellent reputation. A democrat in politics, he has long taken an active part in civic matters, but is apt to maintain an independent stand in local affairs. He is a member of the school board of Fredonia, and has been for some years, was formerly a member of the city council, and on one occasion was candidate for the office of mayor. Aside from his profession, he has a number of interests, being vice president and a director of the Citizens State Bank, of which he was formerly president for 1 1/2 years; a stockholder in the Fredonia Portland Cement Company; and treasurer, a director, and one of the stockholders of the Excelsior Brick Company, one of the largest concerns of its kind in Kansas, which is manufacturing 27,000,000 brick annually. He has been identified with many movements that have added to Fredonia's prestige as one of the thriving and growing cities of south-eastern Kansas.

Doctor Flack was married first in 1886 to Miss Hattie J. Wells, who died November 18, 1890. The doctor was again married, in the fall of 1892, to Anna Herron, who is also deceased. In 1914 he married his present wife, who was Lena M. Koch. She was for a number of years a teacher in the Fredonia public schools. Doctor Flack has three children: Mary Agnes, who is the wife of Mark O. Wiley, cashier of the Citizens State Bank of Fredonia; Wilma, who took two years of study at Emporia College and now is a junior at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; and Herron, who is a member of the senior class at the Fredonia High School.

The Page extracts from "A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans" ends here.

C. The South Carolina Flacks

Much has been written about the Flacks of Guilford and Rutherford County, South Carolina due to their connection with the infamous "The Forest City Lynching of 1900"². The book by that name by J. Timothy Cole, documents the politics in Rutherford County at the time: the developing textile industry, the growing population, an agricultural crisis and inflamed race relations. Mills Higgins Flack, a leader of the Farmers' Alliance and the county's first Populist in the state House, was allegedly murdered on August 28, 1900, by Avery Mills, an African American. The book documents the murder and the subsequent lynching of Avery Mills. The author (Flack's great-great-grandson) also sets out something of the Flack family history back to 1746 in Northern Ireland. The following is an extract from the book, pages 91-94

The Forest City Lynching of 1900, Populism, Racism, and White Supremacy in Rutherford County, North Carolina –

Lancaster County, PA." Ramsey also linked the Porters of Drumore and Sadsbury townships in Lancaster County, PA, with those in Rowan, stating that they were associated with Porters in Cecil County, MD, as early as 1716.¹⁴⁴

But the Porters were a numerous and complex family, made especially so by the frequent repetition of Christian names. For example, in the Oath of Allegiance lists for Lancaster, taken in 1777 (which include a John "Flick"), one may find Porters with the same first names as those in Rutherford – Robert, James and William." Lancaster wills also include numerous Porters who may be candidates for those who went to Rowan and Tryon/Rutherford or their relatives, again with Christian name correlates: a Robert Porter of Drumore Township, who died in 1745, had sons named Robert and James;" a John Porter of Drumore (will probated 1765) had sons named Thomas and William;" a James Porter who gave his residence as Cecil County, MD, and died in 1785 had sons named William and James;" and another James Porter of Drumore (will probated 1786) had a son named William."

As noted above, John Flack himself died without a will in Rutherford in 1792 (as letters of administration for the estate were issued in October court, 1792). Though the record states that the second wife, Mary, and the children of the first, or their legal guardian, William Flack, "amicably agreed" in the settlement, the estate was complicated by children from two marriages, the legal requirements of the widow's dower, suits over debts owed by and to the estate and other difficulties. The estate was not finally settled until 1797, following "the petition of Andrew Flack [John Flack's eldest son] now of full age."""

² The Forest City Lynching of 1900: Populism, Racism, and White Supremacy in Rutherford County, North Carolina by J. Timothy Cole. McFarland, 6 Aug. 2003 - Social Science - 203 pages

Additional *possible* evidence in support of a Lancaster County connection to the Flacks of North Carolina *maybe* found in the person of James Flack (1746-1835), who apparently came to Guilford County about the time Thomas Flack died (ca. 1780). It was Horace Flack who first suggested a "probable" connection between the Rutherford and Guilford Flacks and this James Flack, a soldier of the Continental line and a native of "Killserl," Ireland (we will say more about this below), who came to the New World, ca. 1768, and "was living in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, when he volunteered for a Private in August 1776...."¹⁵¹ About this same time he married Jean Glenn (ca. 1755-?), daughter of Hugh Glenn (ca. 1730-1807), also residents of Lancaster.¹⁵² After serving several tours of duty in the middle states between 1776-77, James Flack "removed to Guilford County, North Carolina, and served a tour of three months in 1780."¹⁵³

The statement "*removed to Guilford County*" does *not* mean that he came here merely as a journeyman soldier, for this James Flack is the same who in 1780 purchased land near Big Troublesome Creek in present-day Rockingham County (then Guilford).¹⁵⁴ He sold his Rockingham lands in 1803¹⁵⁵ and probably soon thereafter removed to Madison County, Kentucky, joining his father-in-law and other inlaws," for he was enumerated there in the 1810 census." He applied for his pension in March, 1834,¹⁵⁶ and died shortly thereafter.

Withal, however, it must be noted that the decision of James Flack of Lancaster to settle in Guilford/Rockingham may well have been a coincidence, for documentary evidence suggesting a relationship between James Flack and either the Thomas Flack family of Rowan/Guilford or the Flacks of Tryon/Rutherford is lacking. Until such is forthcoming, any suggestion that James Flack of Lancaster/Guilford/Rockingham was the fourth of the Flack "brothers" to come to North Carolina (the "Jefferson" in the Crawford tradition) must be regarded with a healthy skepticism.

James Flack of Rockingham also must not be confused with Thomas Flack's eldest son, James Flack of Guilford (1761-1840)," who during the Revolution served in the Guilford militia with his father," as well as three tours of duty between 1779-1781,¹⁶² and also eventually moved to Kentucky. Land records clearly indicate that he obtained a State grant for lands along the Reedy Fork in 1783, which bordered the line of his mother, the "Widow"

Flack."¹⁶⁴ James Flack of Guilford married Nancy Ross, the daughter of a neighbor, in 1798,¹⁶⁴ sold his Guilford lands in 1812,¹⁶⁵ and moved to Todd County, Kentucky, probably soon thereafter, where he applied for a military pension in 1832.¹⁶⁶

Since the Flacks of Rutherford were associated with the Presbyterian Church at Little Brittain,¹⁶⁷ and Thomas Flack of Guilford was also a Presbyterian, we would first assume that these men were of Scots-Irish heritage and thus that they came first from the Scottish lowlands (where the followers of John Knox originated). This is consistent with the family tradition first recorded by Dudley W. Crawford, and yet apparently confounded by the observation (1978) of the Scottish Tartans Society coordinator of research, Capt. T Stuart Davidson, "that this name is not indigenous to Scotland." Davidson reported that he could "only find five of the name Flack(s) in the Telephone Directories for the whole of Scotland."¹⁶⁸

Consistent with Capt. Davidson, George F. Black (*The Surnames of Scotland*, 1962) also makes no mention of the surname Flack, but he does identify the variant "Fleck" in Scotland. He recorded a Patryk Flek in Inverness in 1559, a minister named Andro Flecke in Dundee in 1650, Flecks in Edinburgh (1605) and Roberoun (1657), a William Fleck in Humble "accused of sorcery in 1659," a Robert Fleck of Dumfries (1679) and a John Fleck of Little Milton, parish of Urr (nd).¹⁶⁹

It is also interesting to note Edward MacLysaght's contention in his *The Surnames of Ireland* that Flack "is a Scottish name fairly numerous in Ulster." He wrote that "[i]t was formerly Affleck, a contraction of Auchinleck."¹⁷⁰ But Black held that the name was English, "perhaps of local origin from Flegg in co. Norfolk." Barber also associated the name with Flegg and Flagg,¹⁷¹ however, Hanks and Hodges believed it was "unlikely" to be a variant of "Flagg."¹⁷² The name may well have continental German, Dutch or even Scandinavian origins¹⁷³ but the surname's origins remain something

of a puzzle.¹⁷⁵

What does seem clear is that, in the British Isles, Flacks are found in certain parts of England in some abundance. For example, in his research some years ago, Charles Z. Flack, Sr., discovered an article by Waldo Chamberlain Sprague (1960) which identified a line of Flacks near Saffron Walden in the County of Essex, England, located just north of London, ca. 1575.¹⁷⁶ The discovery of the English connection led him to muse in a letter to his niece, "I had rather be English than Irish," and so he adopted Cotton Flack of Saffron Walden, who migrated to Boston about 1633,¹⁷⁸ as his first American ancestor.

In fact, many Flacks are indeed still said to be found in Essex,¹⁷⁹ and LDS records do strongly support the concentration of Flacks there as well as in nearby London, Cambridge, Hertford and Suffolk.¹⁸⁰ Hanks and Hodges also reported the name was "found mostly in Cambridgeshire."¹⁸¹ The name's occurrence in Saffron Walden may be antedated, however, by the appearance of a Robert del Flac of County Kent (1276) in the *Hundred Rolls*, identified by Bardsley,¹⁸² as well as Reaney and Wilson.¹⁸¹

But if Flack is an English surname, how came those of North Carolina to be associated with the culture of Scots-Irish Presbyterians? A likely explanation for this apparent Scots Irish-English paradox is the fact of English, as well as lowland Scots, immigration to the province of Ulster. This is well-documented by James G. Leyburn who writes that the colonization of Ulster was stimulated in part by King James' desire to relieve overcrowding in London," and in the beginnings of the Plantation, it was English, not Scottish, participation which was deemed most important.¹⁸⁵ Leyburn observed,

Many Americans who consider their ancestors to have been Scotch Irish are actually descendants of English settlers, especially from the counties between London and Wales and from the

northern counties of England, who migrated to Ulster and there became members of communities where the Scottish influence was predominant. When the movement to America began after 1717, many of these English Ulstermen joined their Scottish friends and neighbors in their removal to the New World.¹⁸⁶

Flacks from England thus could have easily joined in the migration of English and Scots to Ulster in the early 17th century. In the generations which intervened between their settlement of Ulster and later move to America (perhaps 100 to 150 years), they likely were absorbed into the Presbyterian culture of the Scots.

The English origins of the Flacks of the New World are further supported by Leyburn's research on the ethnic make-up of the counties of the province. Leyburn wrote that Lord Chichester's English colony "so prospered that much of Southern Antrim became English in character." Other counties, such as Armagh and Derry were "prevailingly English," and significant English settlement also took place in Fermanagh and Cavan.¹⁸⁸

Other research links the Flacks to some of these same counties of Northern Ireland. Horace E. Flack, for example, noted that a Flack from Pennsylvania, who served in the Revolution, was born in county Antrim in 1750." Dr. Robert Crawford Robertson, Legrand A. Flack and Dr. Charles Foster Glenn, suggested an association between the Flacks of Rutherford and county Kerry. Ralph R. Flack held, however, that county Kerry must be "positively wrong," as the Flacks were Presbyterians from Northern Ireland and county Kerry was in the South. He believed that they rather meant county Derry." Though we do find probates for wills of James (1724) and Thomas Flack (1759) in County Cork,¹⁹¹ as well as a James Flack who was an attorney in Dublin in the mid-18th century," most of the Irish Flacks do seem to be concentrated in Ulster.

Matheson found this to be so as late as 1890, though he did not associate them with any particular county in Northern Ireland." A lineage chart (which

begins in 1777) for a Flack family in the Ulster county of Armagh can be found in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland,"" but Flack roots there may run much deeper, as Hanna identified a Fergus Flack as a tenant on lands of a John Hamilton in that county as early as 1617.¹⁹⁵ Another source has it that many of the Flacks who settled St. Lawrence County, NY, in the early 19th century came from counties Monaghan and Cavan.¹⁹⁶ A Robert Flack who eventually settled in Washington County, Pennsylvania, is also said to have come from county Monaghan,¹⁹⁷ and LDS records associate Flacks with Drumgoon and Bailieborough parishes in Cavan.¹⁹⁸ Other LDS records place Flacks in counties Down and Tyrone.¹⁹⁹ Gravestone records for Dromore First Presbyterian Graveyard in county Down also identify Flacks, including those with the Christian names Thomas and John, both born in the early 19th century.²⁰⁰ All of these counties were part of the province of Ulster.

Perhaps the best clue as to where the Flacks of Guilford/Rutherford *may* have come from is contained in the pension application of James Flack— i.e., if we accept the unproven assumption that he and the other Flacks of Guilford/Rutherford were related. The application explicitly states, "I was born in Killserl Ireland in 1746."¹ James Flack seems to have been illiterate (he signed both his 1803 Rockingham conveyance and the pension application itself with a mark); thus, we must consider this place-name "Killserl" as a *phonetic approximation* to the name of the place where James Flack came from. In a 1967 letter to Ralph Flack, an Ulster-Scot Historical Society researcher suggested that "Killserl" was likely Killysorrell, a town or townland of county Down.²⁰² Again, a correlation with one of the same counties with which Flacks are associated in other research. But then all this is guesswork.

D. The Flacks of Flacksville, New York

In searching for possible leads in the American records for Billy Flack's family, I came across the small town of Flacksville, New York. Flacksville is located in the North of New York State, not fa

from Ogdensburg on the St Lawrence River. It is likely that Flack families have been living in this part of New York State since the late 18th Century. A William J Flack, born in 1810 in Cavan, Ireland, was naturalised in Elizabethtown, New York in 1838.

The American Flack family stories raise a number of interesting issues. Perhaps the most pertinent is – What were the political and social conditions in and around Bailieborough in the late 1700s-early 1800s that might have influenced these families to migrate to America?

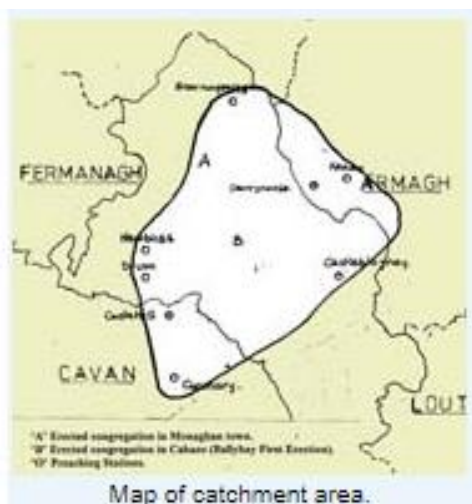
The next section throws some light on those issues. The following section is adapted from various histories of the [Cahans Exodus](#).

E. The Cahans Exodus

Emigrations from Ulster to America of segments of Presbyterian congregations, either led or accompanied by their pastor, occurred with some regularity between 1718 and 1775. (See A History of Ulster by Jonathan Bardon, Blackstaff Press 1992, pages 176–179). These Presbyterians either followed their ministers, or took them along.

In 1748, a Presbyterian Seceder Congregation in the Ballybay area, made up almost exclusively of Scots emigrants, petitioned the Seceder Presbytery of Glasgow that the Reverend Doctor Thomas Clark be sent to them as their regular pastor. On June 27, 1749, Doctor Clark was sent to Ireland with a commission from the Associate Presbytery in Glasgow to preach at Ballybay, Clennaneese (near Dungannon), and elsewhere in Ulster. He accepted the offer of the Seceder congregation at Ballybay to become their minister and was ordained by three ministers from the Burgher Presbytery of Glasgow in the field of William McKinley at Cladaugh, near Cahans, on July 23, 1751.

During the next 15 years the Cahans (Ballybay First Erection) congregation which was made up of Presbyterian families from an extended area from southern Armagh, central Monaghan and northern Cavan, grew and in 1764 a group of about 80 people from among Seceder Presbyterian families, were encouraged to leave Ireland to seek greater religious freedom and sailed on the "John," from Newry, county Down, Ireland, on May 10, 1764, and arrived in New York on July 28, 1764. They sailed under the leadership of their pastor, Reverend Doctor Thomas Clark. By 1767, the majority of the emigrants then settled on farmland acquired for them by Doctor Clark in New Perth (after 1788, the name was changed to Salem), New York.



Among those who sailed with Rev Clark was John "Fleck", an Elder of the congregation.

The emigration from Ballybay is known as "The Cahans Exodus." The story is told in At the Ford of the Birches: The History of Ballybay, its People and Vicinity, by James H. Murnane and Peadar Murnane (Murnane Brothers 1999), at page 174–196. The story of the exodus is told on the Internet at [The Cahans Project](#). In his book, [Full Circle - A Story of Ballybay Presbyterians](#) (Cahans Publications

³ **The Surnames of Scotland** (1946) by George Fraser Black (1866-1948)

1999), the Reverend David Nesbitt devotes Part 2 to Cahans (pages 194–327).

Emigration from Scotland to Ulster after 1690

About 1690 Presbyterians began worshipping at Derryvalley, about a mile outside Ballybay. In those times, it was illegal to have a Presbyterian church within one Irish mile of a town. Toward the end of the decade, a congregation was formed and a minister called. The congregation first met in an old thatched building and, beginning in 1786, in the present meeting house.

In the fifteen years after the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, about fifty thousand Presbyterians emigrated from lowland Scotland to Ulster. In the northern half of county Monaghan, Anglo-Irish landlords, such as Lord Blayney, the Leslies in Glasslough, the Dawsons in Dartry, and the Murray/Clermont estate, encouraged these Protestant Scotsmen to become tenants on property they controlled. They offered these Scots settlers their best land on favorable terms and at low rent.

It is interesting to note that the surname “Fleck” is recorded in Edinburgh, 1605 (Edinb. Marr.), and in 1650 Andro Flecke was minister of Dundee (Lamont, Diary, p. 23). Bessie Fleck in Robertoun, 1657, and eight more of the name (Lanark CR.). William Fleck in Humble was accused of sorcery in 1659 (Dalyell, Darker superstitions, p. 275), and Robert Fleck is recorded in Dumfries, 1679 (Dumfries). John Fleck of Little Milton, parish of Urr (M'Kerlie, V, p. 314)⁴.

*In the early decades of the seventeenth century, intermarriage of the Ulster Irish with the newly arriving Scots, and conversion of the Irish of Ulster to Presbyterianism, seem to have been common. In her book, *The Catholics of Ulster* (Basic Books 2001), Professor Marianne Elliot implies that much of the Catholic gentry disappeared from Ulster, not because they were exiled and dispossessed by their Protestant neighbors, but because they were converted. There were legal pressures to convert to the Church of Ireland. Conversion of the Irish in the 1700s, however, became less frequent, probably because such a conversion led to ostracism of the Catholic. In [The Scotch-Irish—A Social History](#) (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1962), James G. Leyburn says that intermarriage between Catholics and Presbyterians was rare—at least after the first part of the eighteenth century. There is much debate and little agreement on the subject.*

Catholics in Ireland were restricted from owning property, holding office, and voting, during the 1700's. Some of them renounced their religion and converted to the Church of Ireland in order to enjoy such rights, but the advantage of converting to Presbyterianism was not as great. See the Qualification Rolls index 1793-1796, and Convert Rolls 1703-1800 from Irish LDS Microfilms.

A study by G. B. Adams concludes that a significant number of the native Irish population of east Ulster converted to Presbyterianism shortly after the early infiltration by the Scots—even before the plantation of Scots. Adams, in his article Aspects of monoglotism, at page 84, says:

"a considerable part of the old Irish population [in east Ulster] seems to have been absorbed into one or other of the reformed churches, usually into Presbyterianism, which in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century must have had a considerable Irish-speaking membership. The association of Irish language survival with strongly Roman Catholic area belongs to a later period and to central and west Ulster."

⁴ *The Surnames of Scotland* (1946) by George Fraser Black (1866-1948)

Aodh de Blacan, in *The other hidden Ireland*, in *Irish Studies*, xxiii (1934), pages 439–454, supports the same conclusion:

"The schism of the sixteenth century cut geographically across the Gaelic world, Scotland and that part of Ulster which was infiltrated, not planted, became Protestant even before the plantation of Ulster."

The last two citations and quotations are from *The Irish Language in County Down*, by Ciaran Devine (Ciaran O Duibhinn), which is chapter 17 of *Down—History & Society* edited by Lindsay Proudfoot (Geography Publications 1997) (page 438).

Charter schools are an example of efforts made at converting Catholics to Presbyterianism in Ulster. The schools were entirely Protestant in management, and the children were reared as Protestants. [History of the Catholic Church: From the Renaissance to the French Revolution](#) by Rev. James MacCaffrey, S.J., 1914 (volume II, chapter X, The Penal Laws). In 1734, The Incorporated Society in Dublin for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland was established by a charter of George II.

"A century before Carleton's time the [Charter schools](#) were established, and endowed to educate the children of the destitute poor. They were to give industrial as well as literary training, and took religion and learning as their motto". See: [The Irish Charter Schools](#) by Kenneth Milne (Dublin: Four Courts Press 1996).

Other sources indicate that a substantial number of native Irish Catholics in Ulster converted to Presbyterianism. For example, see [Ower the Sheugh](#):

"There is evidence however that a number of 17th century Scots settlers took the Gaelic language with them to Ulster. In his book 'Presbyterians and the Irish Language', Roger Blaney quotes evidence supplied by various historians and states that many of the lowland Scots settlers in Ulster were probably bi-lingual in both Scots and Gaelic.

"The Reverend James Stothers in his unpublished work, 'The Use of the Irish Language by Irish Presbyterians' comments that a significant number of the Presbyterians who settled in Ulster, spoke Gaelic. These Presbyterian immigrants to Ulster would have continued to use their Gaelic language at least for the first generation and possibly longer.

"There was a policy of recruitment and encouragement by the Synod of Ulster of Irish speaking Presbyterian ministers of both native Irish and Scots origin, e.g. Jeremiah O'Quinn and James Wallace. Stothers comments that with the presence of such Ministers and a large number of Gaelic speaking Scots settlers present, the conversion of many Irish Catholics to Presbyterianism is easier to understand.

"There would not have been the same cultural disparity felt between the native Irish and the Scots settlers as there would have been between the native Irish and the English settlers."

The Seceders

There is much literature on the Internet describing the many splinter groups that formed from the original Presbyterians. See [What's in a Name? Presbyterian, Covenanter, Seceder, Mountain Men, Burghers and Anti-Burghers, Old Lights, New Lights, Subscribing, Non-Subscribing](#) by Brian Orr. See also [The Covenanters](#) by Brian Orr.

The congregation of the Reverend Doctor Clark at Ballybay was a Seceder Presbyterian congregation. His aggressiveness in recruiting members of the Ulster Synod of Presbyterians, and his success in doing so, caused friction between himself and the more

traditional Presbyterian ministers. This friction led to the arrest of Dr. Clark in Newbliss on January 23, 1753, described in the following section.

Reverend Doctor Thomas Clark

From about 1745, the seceder Presbyterian congregation at Drumhillery, Ireland, wanted to establish a congregation. A request was sent to the Church of Scotland asking that a minister be sent to Drumhillery. On July 3, 1748 Reverend Doctor Thomas Clark was sent by the associate Synod in Scotland. He preached his first sermon at John Smith's of Dromond, a second sermon at an old rath at John Maxwell's at Tullyglushkaine, and a third on a rock near where the meeting house in Drumhillery now stands. Dr. Clark did not settle in that area, but rather accepted a call from Ballybay. [The Past, Presbyterian Church of Ireland—Congregation of Drumhillery](#).

The Cahans meeting house is located in the townland of Lisnaveane, about five miles west by northwest of the town of Ballybay. The parish to which Doctor Clark administered was extraordinarily large, and included most of county Monaghan and parts of counties Armagh and Cavan. It extended beyond Castleblayney and Keady on the east, Emyvale and Derrynoose on the north, Newbliss and Cootehill on the west, and Corroneary in county Cavan to the south. See the "map of catchment area" on [The Cahans Project](#). Corroneary is a townland in the south-central part of the parish of Enniskeen in county Cavan. [Atlas of Eastern County Cavan](#) (PDF format).

Thomas Clark was a native of Scotland and the third Seceding minister who was ordained to serve a congregation in Ireland. Some biographies say that he had received a diploma as doctor of medicine at the University of Glasgow, but modern research indicates he obtained his medical training elsewhere. In any event, he combined his ministry with administering to the health needs of his congregation.

After Clark's wife died at the end of 1762, he considered emigrating to America. Partly because the Anglican ascendancy in Ireland treated Scots-Presbyterians as second-class citizens, there had been a trickle of Scots Presbyterian immigrants from Ballybay to America for almost fifty years. A call reached Dr. Clark from Volintown, Rhode Island, and a second call came from near Albany, New York. The Albany group petitioned to the Presbytery, who granted the petition and appointed Dr. Clark to go and supply them for one year. At about this time, in the Spring of 1763, Doctor Clark wrote Doctor Harper of King's College, New York, with a list of one hundred families who desired to move to America.

F. The Inspiring Story of Captain William Flack of the Connaught Rangers (88th Regiment of Foot)

One of the first finds in my research of primary sources for our "Billy" Flack's father was the records of Captain William Flack of the 88th Regiment of Foot (otherwise known as the Connaught Rangers). Was he Billy Flack's father? He 'fitted the bill' quite nicely in that he was "a soldier" and his family was from Armagh, just north of Cavan – a plausibly short distance for his son to be in Bailieborough for his son's recruitment into the 63rd Regiment on Market Day 1832.

While I soon discovered that Captain William Flack of the Connaught Rangers was almost certainly NOT my great great grandfather, I am moved to tell his story.

The 1st Battalion of the Connaught Rangers landed in Portugal in March 1809 for service in the Peninsular War. It formed part of the Portuguese forces commanded by General William

Beresford, 1st Viscount Beresford tasked with removing Marshal Jean-de-Dieu Soult from Oporto. It held firm at the top of a Medellin hill at the Battle of Talavera in July 1809. Then, at the Battle of Bussaco in September 1810, the battalion, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel John Wallace, together with a detachment of the 45th Regiment of Foot, made a bayonet charge which sent the French troops reeling. Sir Arthur Wellesley, (later to be known as Lord Wellington) arriving at the scene, said,

“Wallace, I never saw a more gallant charge than that just now made by your regiment.”

The 1st Battalion then retreated for the winter, with the rest of Wellesley's army, to the Lines of Torres Vedras. In the New Year, the battalion, still under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Wallace made another bayonet charge at the Battle of Fuentes de Oñoro in May 1811 and drove the French Army from the village. It went on to fight at the Siege of Ciudad Rodrigo in January 1812 and scaled the walls of the fortress at the Siege of Badajoz in March 1812.

Lt William Flack was twice wounded during the Peninsular War but perhaps I should let an eye-witness, tell the story of the 88th Regiment and the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo in January 1812

It was now five o'clock in the afternoon, and darkness was approaching fast, yet no order had arrived intimating that we were to take a part in the contest about to be decided. We were in this state of suspense when our attention was attracted by the sound of music ; we all stood up, and pressed forward to a ridge, a little in our front, and which separated us from the cause of our movement, but it would be impossible for me to convey an adequate idea of our feelings when we beheld the 43rd Regiment, preceded by their band, going to storm the left breach; they were in the highest spirits, but without the slightest appearance of levity in their demeanour — on the contrary, there was a cast of determined severity thrown over their countenances that expressed in legible characters that they knew the sort of service they were about to perform, and had made up their minds to the issue. They had no knapsacks — their firelocks were slung over their shoulders — their shirt-collars were open, and there was an indescribable something about them that at one and the same moment impressed the lookers-on with admiration and awe. In passing us, each officer and soldier stepped out of the ranks for an instant, as he recognised a friend, to press his hand — many for the last time ; yet, notwithstanding this animating scene, there was no shouting or huzzaing, no boisterous brave doing, no unbecoming language ; in short, everyone seemed to be impressed with the seriousness of the affair entrusted to his charge, and any interchange of words was to this effect: "Well, lads, mind what you're about to-night "; or, " We'll meet in the town by and by"; and other little familiar phrases, all expressive of confidence. The Regiment at length passed us, and we stood gazing after it as long as the rear platoon continued in sight: the music grew fainter every moment, until at last it died away altogether; they had no drums, and there was a melting sweetness in the sounds that touched the heart.

The first syllable uttered after this scene was, "And are we to be left behind?" The interrogatory was scarcely put, when the word "Stand to your arms!" answered it. The order was promptly obeyed, and a breathless silence prevailed when our commanding officer, in a few words, announced to us that Lord Wellington had directed our division to carry the grand breach. The soldiers listened to the communication with silent earnestness, and immediately began to dis- encumber themselves of their knapsacks, which were placed in order by companies and a guard set over them.

Each man then began to arrange himself for the combat in such manner as his fancy or the moment would admit of — some by lowering their cartridge-boxes, others by turning theirs to the front in order that they might the more conveniently make use of them; others unclasping their stocks or opening their shirt-collars, and others oiling their bayonets; and more taking leave of their wives and children.

This last was an affecting sight, but not so much so as might be expected, because the women, from long habit, were accustomed to scenes of danger, and the order for their husbands to march against the enemy was in their eyes tantamount to a victory; and as the soldier seldom returned without plunder of some sort, the painful suspense which his absence caused was made up by the gaiety which his return was certain to be productive of; or if, unfortunately, he happened to fall, his place was sure to be supplied by some one of the company to which he belonged, so that the women of our army had little cause of alarm on this head. The worst that could happen to them was the chance of being in a state of widow- hood for a week.

It was by this time half-past six o'clock, the evening was piercingly cold, and the frost was crisp on the grass; there was keenness in the air that braced our nerves at least as high as concert pitch. We stood quietly to our arms, and told our companies off by files, sections, and sub-divisions; the sergeants called over the rolls — not a man was absent.

It appears it was the wish of General Mackinnon to confer a mark of distinction upon the 88th Regiment, and as it was one of the last acts of his life, I shall mention it. He sent for Major Thompson, who commanded the battalion, and told him it was his wish to have the forlorn hope of the grand breach led on by a subaltern of the 88th Regiment, adding at the same time that, in the event of his surviving, he should be recommended for a company. The Major acknowledged this mark of the General's favour, and left him folding up some letters he had been writing to his friends in England — this was about twenty minutes before the attack of the breaches. Major Thompson, having called his officers together, briefly told them the wishes of their General ; he was about to proceed, when Lieutenant William Mackie (then junior Lieutenant) immediately stepped forward, and dropping his sword said, " Major Thompson, I am ready for that service."

For once in his life poor old Thompson was affected — Mackie was his own townsman, they had fought together for many years, and when he took hold of his hand and pronounced the words, "God bless you, my boy," his eye filled, his lip quivered, and there was a faltering in his voice which was evidently perceptible to himself, for he instantly resumed his former composure, drew himself up, and gave the word, "Gentlemen, fall in," and at this moment Generals Picton and Mackinnon, accompanied by their respective staff's, made their appearance amongst us.

Long harangues are not necessary to British soldiers, and on this occasion but few words were made use of. Picton said something animating to the different regiments as he passed them, and those of my readers who recollect his deliberate and strong utterance will say with me, that his mode of speaking was indeed very impressive. The address to each was nearly the same, but that delivered by him to the 88th was so characteristic of the General, and so applicable to the men he spoke to, that I shall give it word for word ; it was this : —

"Rangers of Connaught! It is not my intention to expend any powder this evening. We'll do this business with the cold iron."

I before said the soldiers were silent — so they were, but the man who could be silent after such an address, made in such a way, and in such a place, had better have stayed at home. It may be asked what did they do.? Why, what would they do, or would any one do, but give the loudest hurrah he was able.

The burst of enthusiasm caused by Picton's address to the Connaught Rangers had scarcely ceased, when the signal-gun announced that the attack was to commence. Generals Picton and Mackinnon dismounted from their horses, and placing themselves at the head of the right brigade, the troops rapidly entered the trenches by sections right in front; the storming party under the command of Major Russell Manners of the 74th heading it, while the forlorn hope, commanded by Lieutenant William Mackie of the 88th, and composed of twenty volunteers from the Connaught Rangers, led the van, followed closely by the 45th, 88th, and 74th British, and the 9th and 21st Portuguese ; the 77th and 83rd British, belonging to the left brigade, brought up the rear and completed the dispositions. While these arrangements were effecting opposite the grand breach, the 5th and 94th, belonging to the left brigade of the 3rd Division, were directed to clear the ramparts and Fausse Braye wall, and the 2nd Regiment of Portuguese Caadores, commanded by an Irish colonel of the name of O'Toole, was to escalate the curtain to the left of the lesser breach, which was attacked by the Light Division under the command of General Robert Craufurd.

It wanted ten minutes to seven o'clock when these dispositions were completed ; the moon occasionally, as the clouds which overcast it passed away, shed a faint ray of light upon the battlements of the fortress, and presented to our view the glittering of the enemy's bayonets as their soldiers stood arrayed upon the ramparts and breach, awaiting our attack ; yet, nevertheless, their batteries were silent, and might warrant the supposition to an unobservant spectator that the defence would be but feeble.

The two divisions got clear of the covered way at the same moment, and each advanced to the attack of their respective points with the utmost regularity. The obstacles which presented themselves to both were nearly the same, but every difficulty, no matter how great, merged into insignificance when placed in the scale of the prize about to be contested. The soldiers were full of ardour, but altogether devoid of that blustering and Brava doing which is truly unworthy of men at such a moment ; and it would be difficult to convey an adequate idea of the enthusiastic bravery which animated the troops. A cloud that had for some time before obscured the moon, which was at its full, disappeared altogether, and the countenances of the soldiers were for the first time, since Picton addressed them, visible — they presented a material change. In place of that joyous animation which his fervid and impressive address called forth, a look of severity, bordering on ferocity, had taken its place ; and although ferocity is by no means one of the characteristics of the British soldier, there was, most unquestionably, a savage expression in the faces of the men that I had never before witnessed. Such is the difference between the storm of a breach and the fighting a pitched battle.

Once clear of the covered way, and fairly on the plain that separated it from the fortress, the enemy had a full view of all that was passing; their batteries, charged to the muzzle with case-shot, opened a murderous fire upon the columns as they advanced, but nothing could shake the intrepid bravery of the troops. The Light Division soon descended the ditch and gained, although not without a serious struggle, the top of the narrow and difficult breach allotted to them ; their gallant General, Robert Craufurd, fell at the head of the 43rd,

and his second in command, General Vandeleur, was severely wounded, but there were not wanting others to supply their place ; yet these losses, trying as they were to the feelings of the soldiers, in no way damped their ardour, and the brave Light Division carried the left breach at the point of the bayonet. Once established upon the ramparts, they made all the dispositions necessary to ensure their own conquest, as also to render every assistance in their power to the 3rd Division in their attack. They cleared the rampart which separated the lesser from the grand breach, and relieved Picton's division from any anxiety it might have as to its safety on its left flank.

The right brigade, consisting of the 45th, 88th, and 74th, forming the van of the 3rd Division, upon reaching the ditch, to its astonishment, found Major Ridge and Colonel Campbell at the head of the 5th and 94th mounting the Fausse Braye wall. These two regiments, after having performed their task of silencing the fire of the French troops upon the ramparts, with a noble emulation resolved to precede their comrades in the attack of the grand breach. Both parties greeted each other with a cheer, only to be understood by those who have been placed in a similar situation ; yet the enemy were in no way daunted by the shout raised by our soldiers — they crowded the breach, and defended it with a bravery that would have made any but troops accustomed to conquer, waver.

But the "fighting division" were not the men to be easily turned from their purpose ; the breach was speedily mounted, yet, nevertheless, a serious affray took place ere it was gained. A considerable mass of infantry crowned its summit, while in the rear and at each side were stationed men, so placed that they could render every assistance to their comrades at the breach without any great risk to themselves ; besides this, two guns of heavy calibre, separated from the breach by a ditch of considerable depth and width, enfiladed it, and as soon as the French infantry were forced from the summit, these guns opened their fire on our troops.

The head of the column had scarcely gained the top, when a discharge of grape cleared the ranks of the three leading battalions, and caused a momentary wavering; at the same instant a frightful explosion near the gun to the left of the breach, which shook the bastion to its foundation, completed the disorder. Mackinnon, at the head of his brigade, was blown into the air. His aide-de-camp. Lieu-tenant Beresford of the 88th, shared the same fate, and every man on the breach at the moment of the explosion perished. This was unavoidable, because those of the advance, being either killed or wounded, were necessarily flung back upon the troops that followed close upon their footsteps, and there was not a sufficient space for the men who were ready to sustain those placed hors de combat to rally. For an instant all was confusion ; the blaze of light caused by the explosion resembled a huge meteor, and presented to our sight the havoc which the enemy's fire had caused in our ranks ; while from afar the astonished Spaniard viewed for an instant, with horror and dismay, the soldiers of the two nations grappling with each other on the top of the rugged breach which trembled beneath their feet, while the fire of the French artillery played upon our columns with irresistible fury, sweeping from the spot the living and the dead.

Amongst the latter were Captain Robert Hardyman and Lieutenant Pearse of the 45th, and many more whose names I cannot recollect. Others were so stunned by the shock, or wounded by the stones which were hurled forth by the explosion, that they were insensible to their situation ; of this number I was one, for being close to the magazine when it blew up, I was quite overpowered, and I owed my life to the Sergeant-Major of my regiment.

Thorp, who saved me from being trampled to death by our soldiers in their advance, ere I could recover strength sufficient to move forward or protect myself.

The French, animated by this accidental success, hastened once more to the breach which they had abandoned, but the leading regiments of Picton's division, which had been disorganised for the moment by the explosion, rallied, and soon regained its summit, when another discharge from the two flank guns swept away the foremost of those battalions.

There was at this time but one officer alive upon the breach (Major Thomson, of the 74th, acting engineer) ; he called out to those next to him to seize the gun to the left, which had been so fatal to his companions — but this was a desperate service. The gun was completely cut off from the breach by a deep trench, and soldiers, encumbered with their firelocks, could not pass it in sufficient time to anticipate the next discharge — yet to deliberate was certain death. The French cannoniers, five in number, stood to, and served their gun with as much sangfroid as if on a parade and the light which their torches threw forth showed to our men the peril they would have to encounter if they dared to attack a gun so defended; but this was of no avail. Men going to storm a breach generally make up their minds that there is no great probability of their ever returning from it to tell their adventures to their friends ; and whether they die at the bottom or top of it, or at the muzzle, or upon the breech of a cannon, is to them pretty nearly the same !

The first who reached the top, after the last discharge, were three of the 88th. Sergeant Pat Brazil — the brave Brazil of the Grenadier company, who saved his captain's life at Busasco — called out to his two companions, Swan and Kelly, to unscrew their bayonets and follow him ; the three men passed the trench in a moment, and engaged the French cannoniers hand to hand; a terrific but short combat was the consequence. Swan was the first, and was met by the two gunners on the right of the gun, but, no way daunted, he engaged them, and plunged his bayonet into the breast of one ; he was about to repeat the blow upon the other, but before he could disentangle the weapon from his bleeding adversary, the second Frenchman closed upon him, and by a coup de sabre severed his left arm from his body a little above the elbow ; he fell from the shock, and was on the eve of being massacred, when Kelly, after having scrambled under the gun, rushed onward to succour his comrade. He bayoneted two Frenchmen on the spot, and at this instant Brazil came up; three of the five gunners lay lifeless, while Swan, resting against an ammunition chest, was bleeding to death. It was now equal numbers, two against two, but Brazil in his over-anxiety to engage was near losing his life at the onset; in making a lunge at the man next to him, his foot slipped upon the bloody platform, and he fell forward against his antagonist, but as both rolled under the gun, Brazil felt the socket of his bayonet strike hard against the buttons of the Frenchman's coat. The remaining gunner, in attempting to escape under the carriage from Kelly, was killed by some soldiers of the 5th, who just now reached the top of the breach, and seeing the serious dispute at the gun, pressed forward to the assistance of the three men of the Connaught Rangers.

While this was taking place on the left, the head of the column remounted the breach, and regardless of the cries of their wounded companions, whom they indiscriminately trampled to death, pressed forward in one irregular but heroic mass, and putting every man to death who opposed their progress, forced the enemy from the ramparts at the bayonet's point. Yet the garrison still rallied, and defended the several streets with the most unflinching bravery; nor was it until the musketry of the Light Division was heard in the direction of the Plaza Mayor, that they gave up the contest! but from this moment all regular resistance

ceased, and they fled in disorder to the Citadel. There were, never-the-less, several minor combats in the streets, and in many instances the inhabitants fired from the windows, but whether their efforts were directed against us or the French is a point that I do not feel myself competent to decide; be this as it may, many lives were lost on both sides by this circumstance, for the Spaniards, firing without much attention to regularity, killed or wounded indiscriminately all who came within their range.

During a contest of such a nature, kept up in the night, as may be supposed, much was of necessity left to the guidance of the subordinate officers, if not to the soldiers themselves. Each affray in the streets was conducted in the best manner the moment would admit of, and decided more by personal valour than discipline, and in some instances officers as well as privates had to combat with the imperial troops.

Those of the garrison who escaped death were made prisoners, and the necessary guards being placed, and every- thing secured, the troops not selected for duty commenced a very diligent search for those articles which they most fancied, and which they considered themselves entitled to by "right of conquest." I believe on a service such as the present, there is a sort of tacit acknowledgment of this "right"; but be this as it may, a good deal of property most indubitably changed owners on the night of the 19th of January 1812. The conduct of the soldiers, too, within the last hour, had undergone a complete change; before, it was all order and regularity, now it was nothing but licentiousness and confusion — subordination was at an end; plunder and blood was the order of the day, and many an officer on this night was compelled to show that he carried a sabre.

Perhaps the following extract from two of William Flack's colleagues which refers to William being seriously wounded in during the siege provides an insight into the man.

While this "shiloo" was carried on throughout the division, the officers had little to do except amuse themselves; the country abounded in game; and those who fancied field sports, had no lack of opportunities to indulge themselves in such pursuits. Taking advantage of this state of things, I rode over to the hospital near La Corrida, with the view of seeing an officer of my regiment, of the name of Flack, who had been desperately wounded by a round

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shot, two days before the storming of the place. The nature of the wound, as well as its cause, was extraordinary; and being greatly interested for the fate of a brother officer, I took an early opportunity. to inquire after him. I found him stretched upon a miserable truss of straw; at his feet lay his faithful little spaniel bitch, Fidèle, beside him stood a huge earthen jar, or, as the Spaniards call it, panella of water, while at his head sat, in a dejected posture, his servant Larry Fegan; he had been, for many years, Flack's bat-man, servant-man, and he might now be termed his right-hand man. He was a perfect prototype of Teague O'Connor, of whose history, as well as his master, Johnny Newcome, there are few, I should hope, of my readers ignorant. The moment I entered the room, Larry put his finger to his nose, and pointing to his master, gave me to understand that I was not to speak to him; but poor Flack was so rejoiced to see me, that he commenced talking, and he would, I believe, have continued while he had a puff of breath left, had I not declared I would leave him if he did not desist.

It was now Larry's turn; and he began to recount, with much minuteness, his master's adventure; and from everything I could learn, it was evident that Flack had exposed himself very foolishly, and to very little purpose. It appeared that a man of his company having been killed while at work in an advanced battery, he wished to pay a just tribute to his gallantry, and going out, accompanied by three soldiers, in front of the works, commenced preparing a grave for this soldier, who, it seems, had much distinguished himself. The enemy no sooner perceived this hardihood of behaviour, than they opened a fire against the arty; their first discharge was sufficient to disperse it, and Lieutenant Flack fell, struck by a round shot in the thigh, which carried away the flesh from nearly the groin to the knee, while, at the same instant, four musket balls passed through different parts of his body. He was carried out of the works in an insensible state, and the surgeons judged it expedient to take the thigh out of the socket, a delicate operation, to which he objected.

The foregoing is the *substance* of Larry Fegan's "detail," I shall give the continuation in his own phraseology.

"The docthur," said Larry, in winding up his narrative, "came here yesterday with his ' God save all here,' and turning to me said, 'Your masther, it's like, isn't dead yet?' 'You may say that with your own ugly mouth,' says I (to myself), for I was aloath to

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offind him, seeing how complately my poor masther's life was in his hands. 'No, sir,' says I, 'he 's as alive as your honour.' Had he much himmorige⁽²⁴⁾ since I saw him?' says he. Now when he got on about the himmorige, I knew what he was at, and that he only wanted to thry iv I gave my masther too much to ate; so says I, quite bould (because I followed his directions about the ateing), 'the devil receave the himmorige he tasted, iv I except the little dhrop iv gruel your honour ordered me to give him;' and upon the same, its what the baste began to laff in my face." Larry was about to continue his narration, when the arrival of the staff-surgeon of the fourth division, accompanied by different surgeons and their assistants, put a stop to any further colloquy.

It was the general opinion amongst the medical officers that he could. not survive the effects of the shock forty-eight hours; he nevertheless made a most rapid recovery, and although he was, by some mistake, reported dead, and gazetted as so, he was in a few months nearly as well as before he was wounded.

The entrance of the medical gentlemen was the signal for my departure. They commenced the operation of unbandaging the mangled thigh of my poor friend, around which there appeared to me to be about as many folds of wrapping as usually envelope the body of an Egyptian mummy; but before I left the hospital altogether, I was assured by one of the medical men, that there was every prospect of Flack's recovery.

Captain William Flack went on to serve another 10 years in the British Army as did his son James Flack who served in the 58th Regiment of Foot until his untimely death in 1841.

In April 2010, the following advertisement appeared in Paul Fraser's Collectibles website.

'Devil's Own' War Medal charges to £9,000

The Peninsula War was a part of the Napoleonic Wars, fought over the Iberian Peninsula between France and the allied forces of Spain, Britain and Portugal from 1807 to 1814.

Amongst the British forces were the 88th Foot Regiment - known as the 'Devil's Own' Connaught Rangers - which first saw action on the Peninsula in 1809. They certainly distinguished themselves, especially from February 1810 onwards under the command of Thomas Picton.

On 27 September 1810, the battalion performed a fierce bayonet charge at Talavera, prompting British commander the Duke of Wellington to tell their commanding officer Lieutenant-Colonel Wallace, "Wallace, I never saw a more gallant charge than that just made by your regiment."

The Regiment followed up this attack with other exceptional military actions, including another ferocious attack in 1811 at Fuentes D'Onor. They were at the forefront of the successful, though very costly, siege of Ciudad Rodrigo in January 1812.

William Flack was commissioned as Ensign in the 88th Foot Regiment in 1805, becoming Lieutenant in May 1806, and was part of their various exploits. He received a life-threatening injury at Ciudad Rodrigo.

Flack survived to be made Captain later that year, and was awarded a pension of £100 per annum from 17 January 1813. He was one of nine officers and two assistant surgeons of the 88th who survived to take the medal clasp for the battle.

At [Dix Noonan Webb's](#) medal auction in London on March 31, 2010, Flack's Military General Service 1793-1814 medal (which has clasps for Talavera, Busaco and Fuentes D'Onor as well as Ciudad Rodrigo) was estimated at £4,000-5,000.



William Flack's Medal with 4 clasps



Bidders quickly pressed past this, however, and the final hammer price was a full £9,000.

It is clear that Captain William Flack of the 88th Regiment of Foot is not our Billy Flack's father. He was serving overseas at the time of Billy Flack's birth and at least the 12 months before. He died in Armagh in 1864. Is it possible that our Billy Flack's family were related to Capt. William Flack of the 63rd? It seems at least possible.

G. Captain William Charles Flack of the Belper Militia

Perhaps the most exciting family story that demands the attention of the family historian is the possible existence of a coat of arms. My father believed that this framed pen and ink picture of the shield on which the name William Charles Flack appears under the motto "Portio Sua Quod Utile" was somehow connected to our Flack family.

The prospect of being entitled "to have a coat of arms" is every family historian's dream since this sets up the prospect of a journey into the wonderful world of heraldry.

Literal translation is "That portion as useful" but often read to mean "Make best use of what you have".

Searches in British College of Arms records revealed that a William Charles Flack "gentleman of Derbyshire" unsuccessfully applied to the College for the registration of the coat of arms shown in the picture in my father's possession in 1812.

William Charles Flack was born in 1772, the son of James Mendlicot Flack (1747-1784) and the Hon. Lady Jane Sarah Fleming. The basis of his application was his mother's family connections with the famous aristocratic family. Unfortunately there was another member of the Fleming family entitled to inherit the arms.

James Mendlicot Flack was a very successful lawyer practicing in London. Interestingly, he was born and educated in Dublin, so perhaps his Flack family has some connection with our Flack family?

James Flack's son, William Charles Flack, Esq. of Shardlow, Parish of Ashton, Derbyshire, is listed in Glover's 1829 Directory as a gentleman farmer and businessman.

William Charles Flack was born in 1774 and his first marriage was to Elizabeth Soresby in July 1799 at Ashton upon Trent. He married a second time to Salona Edwards in 1815. They had at least two children, William and Edward Flack, the latter also becoming a solicitor like his grandfather.

Captain William Charles Flack of the Belper Local Militia served at least 15 years before retiring in 1815. The London Gazette of 15 October 1803 records "William Charles Flack, Gent. to be Lieutenant" in the Aston, Shardlow and Weston Volunteers. Further, on 11 January 1812, the



List of MARRIAGES for the Year 1771.

MARCH CAPT. Brown, to Miss Crof-
by, sister to the lord mayor—
27.
APRIL 1. Lord Greville, son of the Earl
of Warwick, to Miss Peachy, dau. of Sir
James—R. O. Merrick, nephew to the
late Earl of Londonderry, to Miss
Wynne—2. Cha. Howard, jun. Esq; to
Miss Scudamore, sole heiress of the late
Lord Scudamore—Wm. Stewart, of Cas-
tle Stewart, member for Wigton, to Miss
Euphemia M'Kenzie, dau. to the late
Earl of Seaforth—Wm. Lemon, Esq;
member for Penryn, to Miss Butler—
Mr. Martin, to Miss Connolly, with
10,000l.—7. Sir George Osborne, bart.,
member for Boffiney, to Miss Bannister,
Berkley-square—10. Henry Fownes Lüt-
terell, Esq; member for Minehead, to Miss
Bradley of Dunster—13. James Medlicott
Flack, Esq; to the hon. lady Jane Sarah
Fleming—20. Tho. Brand, Esq; cousin
to the duke of Kingston, to Miss Roper,
grand-dau. to the late Lord Teynham.

London Gazette lists Lieutenant William Charles Flack "to be Captain, vice Turton, resigned" in the Belper Regiment of Local Militia. One of the Flack family's business interests was in Soresby and Flack's Fly Boats which provided transport on the Trent, Mersey and Bridgewater canals. William Charles Flack died in 1831.

It might be expected that a gentleman-farmer, married to the daughter of a Peer and an officer in the Militia, such as Captain William Charles Flack might affect a coat of arms, despite the heraldry not being registered with the College of Arms.

How this shield came to be associated with our Flack family is unknown.

The story of the Soresby and Flack, J and W Soresby, the canal boat transport business, is interesting. The following history was prepared by the Belper Historical Society.

The Soresby family moved to Cavendish Bridge from Eyam in Derbyshire sometime after 1758. James, with his wife Sarah and his recently widowed mother Elizabeth, may have come to join Edward Soresby and his family. Edward built the last ferry to operate at Wilden before Cavendish Bridge was opened in 1760.

The earliest reference is in the Derby Mercury 5th July 1771:

"Yesterday pm, accident in Derby - John Wright waggoner to Mr Soresby of Cavendish Bridge - in loading some red lead near St Marys Bridge, a barrel rolled back out of the wagon and falling upon his breast killed him on the spot."

The family moved to Shardlow on the news of the proposal for the canal, buying a large plot of land given to Richard Attenborough at the Enclosure award in 1760. The canal bisected the land providing the Soresby's with two areas for wharfs and warehouses, (marked 21 and 29 on the 1852 plan). In the 1770's they built the family home, now the Lady in Grey Inn and raised two children, James (1766 - 1837) who took over the business on his father's death in 1790 and Elizabeth (1771 - 1806) who married James' partner, William Charles Flack in 1799. On their marriage Elizabeth and William lived in The Firs.

James and Elizabeth (nee Stevenson) had six children, two of whom died in their teens. The two remaining sons inherited the business (W C Flack had died in 1831) which runs from 1837 as J[ames Stevenson] and W[illiam Charles] Soresby. The daughters Elizabeth (1807 - 1886) and Jeannette (1815 - 1886) lived with James (1804 - 1870) who never married, at the family home until their deaths. William (1811 - 1868) married Rebecca Holbrook and moved to Nunsfield House, Alvaston, Derby.

In the declining years of the carrying business, the family was also involved in the cotton mill at Great Wilne and built a steam corn mill in 1860 on Millfield which was burnt down in the 1890's. The granary, office, stable block remain, all very much altered.

The last entry we have found for the carrying company is 1860, and in the same year Joshua Fellows bought 10 of James Soresby's boats according to Soresby family records.

The following is an extract from "Canal Boat People 1840-1970 by Wendy Jane Freer.

Fly-boats were lightly loaded with not more than ten or fourteen tons and departed regularly according to a fixed timetable, whether fully loaded or not. They were crewed by a team of four men who worked day and night in shifts. To speed their passage, the horse was changed every thirty five miles or less and they were given priority over other boats whilst

underway. Because of the long distances and more valuable cargoes involved, extensive wharves and warehousing premises were required in various parts of the country. In order to maintain regularity and speed of service a large number of boats and an even larger number of horses would have to be bought and maintained and with light loading, sometimes run at a loss.

A large workforce of agents and clerks was needed to deal with the daily running of the business. The administration of long-distance canal boat carrying was notoriously complicated as each canal company, with its own rate of tolls and special discounts, had to be dealt with separately. Frederick Morton complained to the Select Committee on canals in 1883 that:

“so long a time is spent in correspondence [with the canal companies] that the traffic has passed before a rate has been arranged for it”.

Legislation had existed since 1844 enabling canal companies to fix through tolls, but it was not until the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1888 that traders were given the right to obtain a through rate. Even then, the right of appeal to the Board of Trade and the Railway and Canal Commissioners was so cumbersome and expensive that it did little to help.

Although the businesses operating the Fly boats were soon the victims of the rapid expansion of the railways in the 19th century, slower canal boats carrying bulk supplies or lesser value cargoes continued to operate until the late 1930s.

It seems clear that Captain William Flack of the Belper Regiment of Local Militia and Shardlow in Derbyshire were not close relatives of our William Flack, although, since James Mendlicot Flack was from a Dublin family, it remains possible that they shared a common ancestor.

An original of the Coat of Arms was obtained from a book plate collection in the United States. It appears that books in William Charles library were sold following his death in 1831 and at least one made its way to the United States where the book plate reproduced below was recorded in a private collection and later donated to the University of Delaware.



Descriptive data

Wm. Chas. Flack.

Portio Sua Quod Utile

Bookplates

[1820]

Armorial/Heraldic

Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library /
Newark, Delaware 19717-5267

GRA 115

Coat of arms.; Shields.; Stars.

UD Library: William Augustus Brewer Bookplate Collection

4133

<http://www.lib.udel.edu/cgi-bin/purl?gra0115>

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