



THE Marjoribanks LETTER

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American Kin

Almost every day we learn of kinsmen in America. Angus M. Marchbanks of Bakersfield California, a retired hospital administrator, has made a detailed study of his ancestry.

Like many American Marchbankses, he is a direct descendant of George Marjoribanks, who was captured while fighting with the Jacobite forces against the English at Preston in 1715.

He was forcibly transported aboard the vessel Elizabeth and Ann, sailing from Liverpool to York, Virginia. On arriving in the colonies in 1716, he changed the spelling of his name from Marjoribanks to Marchbanks, a style followed by many of his descendants. The spellings Marchbank and Marshbanks are also not uncommon in the United States.

George Marchbanks was pardoned by an act of Parliament in 1717.

He and his wife Ann had four sons and three daughters. Like many Virginian gentlemen of his day, he acquired a plantation which he managed with the help of two Negro slaves, Peter and Hannah. George Marchbanks died in 1740, leaving an estate valued at 83 pounds, two shillings and threepence. Peter and Hannah, who became the property of his widow, were valued at 30 pounds.

William Jackson of McLean, Virginia, who attended the Family meeting in Edinburgh in 1988, is also related to George Marchbanks, through the female line.

Robert Marchbanks, of Early, South Carolina, reports that there is an annual meeting of Marchbankses and Marshbankses, on the second Sunday in April, at Travellers Rest SC. About 40 members of the family met there in 1989, "just for an informal get-together, enjoying a time of fellowship and good eating."

There is another, larger gathering held each year on the second Sunday in October at Mars Hill, North Carolina, attended by members of the family from many parts of the U.S. They meet in the local elementary school, and everybody brings a picnic lunch.

In Mars Hill College there is a Marshbanks Hall, named after a family who helped found the institution. The college annually offers a scholarship to a member of the family who is a faithful Christian, a good scholar, and active in the community.

Peg-Leg Marchbank

Readers have written to say that Peg-Leg Jack Marchbank, the wealthy horse-breeder and race-track-owner mentioned in The Marjoribanks Letter No. 3, lived and plied his trade near San Francisco, not Los Angeles.

Alec C. Marchbank of Bergenfield N.J. sends a clipping from a California newspaper which indicates that Peg-Leg Jack Marchbank was born on Canada's Prince Edward Island. According to the newspaper report, he lost his leg in a mining accident in Idaho, before setting out for the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896, where he made his fortune, not digging for gold, but running a string of gambling halls.

FAMILY WILL MEET AGAIN NEAR EDINBURGH IN JUNE

The second general meeting of The Marjoribanks Family will be held on Saturday, June 9, 1990, at The Marchbanks Hotel in Balerno, Midlothian, just outside Edinburgh.

Andrew Marjoribanks, Younger of that ilk, who has been mainly responsible for the arrangements, says the plan is to hold our meeting at the hotel on Saturday morning, have lunch together, and then to visit some historic sites in the area that are of special interest to The Family.

It is hoped that we might visit the original Marjoribanks lands in Lochmaben Parish in Annandale and, if it can be arranged, to call on the Earl of Annandale and Hartfell, the head of the Johnstone Clan, whose family at one time occupied the lands.

The Marchbanks Hotel is quite small, and has limited accommodation, so that most people likely will make sleeping arrangements in Edinburgh.

A formal notice will be going out to everyone as soon as all the arrangements are complete, and you will be asked to indicate whether you and your family plan to attend.

Those attending will be invited to consider the terms of a constitution which would formally bring The Marjoribanks Family into being, and would regulate such matters as the election of officers, annual fees, and other housekeeping arrangements.

In the meantime, mark Saturday June 9, 1990, on your calendar. Members of The Family who are travelling from distant places may want to begin making their travel arrangements.

If you arrive in Scotland a week before the meeting, on June 2, you will have a chance to take part in the annual parade in Bathgate, in West Lothian, which celebrates the wedding in 1315 of Walter Stewart and Lady Marjorie Bruce, who gave her name to the Marjoribanks lands and the Marjoribanks Family.

"Ishbel and the Empire"

There is a new book about Ishbel Marjoribanks, Lady Aberdeen, who was the wife of the Governor-General of Canada at the turn of the century.

It is "Ishbel and the Empire", by Canadian author Doris French, and is published by the Dundurn Press of Toronto and Reading, England. It deals mainly with the Aberdeens' experiences in Canada, and provides an interesting insight into Ishbel's behind-the-scenes manipulation of Canadian politics.

Ms. French says about her subject:

"Quite the opposite of the prototype Victorian lady, she dominated, energized, antagonized, battled and won over whole battalions of Canadians who remember her today in some awe as 'Canada's Governess-General'."

If you go to see Walt Disney's new animated feature "The Little Mermaid," look for the family name in the screen credits.

One of the leading characters in the film, Sebastian, a calypso-singing crab, was created by Duncan Marjoribanks, a Canadian, and one of the directing animators.

Duncan was born in Toronto and lived for a time in Ottawa, before going to Hollywood in 1978, where he now lives with his wife Karen, and their young son Iain.

The family name cropped up recently in another entertainment — in Rumpole of the Bailey, the popular British television series that is seen in North America on the Public Broadcasting System.

Horace Rumpole is a doughty British barrister who plies his trade at The Old Bailey, London's famous criminal court, defending likeable crooks and twisters.

In a recent episode, Rumpole is registering at a provincial inn, and the clerk asks him how he spells his name.

Rumpole, in some irritation, spells it out loudly and clearly: "R-U-M-P-O-L-E!"

And then he adds: "That's pronounced Mar-jo-ree-banks!"

Historical records compiled by the late Rev. Thomas Marjoribanks of that ilk show that there has been at least one poet in the family.

Captain John Marjoribanks published a four-volume collection of poems at Edinburgh in 1798, called "Trifles in Verse".

Dr. Marjoribanks, who himself had an admirable facility with the language, did not have a high opinion of his kinsman's verses.

He wrote:

"Except for an occasional happy turn of phrase, they are of distinctly mediocre quality, and exhibit more of polemic vigour than of poetic merit."

Some of the objects of Captain Marjoribanks' polemic vigour were, "the slave trade, experiments on live animals, and the bigotry and persecution of the Church of Rome — against all of which he directs a somewhat heavy fire."

If any young members of the family need an idea for a school project, they could follow the lead of Katie Marjoribanks of Greenock.

When she was a few years younger she wrote a booklet called, "Some Historical Events in the 20th Century as Experienced by my Family."

She wrote about a grandfather and a great-great grandfather who served in India, in the days of the Empire, another grandfather who served in the Sudan, others relations who took part in the Boer War and in the two World Wars, or were involved in historical events since that time.

A reader says that, in a travel book about Iran, he came across a brief reference to "the statue of Marjoribanks and his cloak" which stood in the northern city of Tabriz.

The book was written in the 1930s and the statue has since disappeared, but he wonders if anyone knows who this briefly famous Marjoribanks was, and what was so remarkable about his cloak.

Roger Marjoribanks of Guilford, Surrey, has turned up an interesting memoir written by Charles Marjoribanks in 1833.

Charles was the son of Sir John Marjoribanks, the first baronet, and a cousin of Roger's great-great grandfather Edward Marjoribanks, who was born in 1776 and died in 1868 at the age of 92.

Roger found the manuscript in the Signet Library in Edinburgh. He says Charles was evidently "a sensitive and observant soul, who travelled widely."

"He saw, with a kind of awed fascination, Napoleon in exile on St. Helena, and inspected and admired the industrial village and factory system constructed at New Lanark by Robert Owen, who has been called 'the father of socialism.'"

Charles Marjoribanks was in Edinburgh in 1822 for the visit of George IV and was appalled by the "pseudo-highland" trappings — all tartans and reels and wild strathspeys — which had been devised and insisted upon by Sir Walter Scott to impress the visiting monarch.

"His health was ruined by his employment with the East India Company on the China station," Roger says, "but even more by the appalling medical practice of the day. He was subjected to a regime of arsenic and calomel 'sufficient to have killed an ox.'

He was elected Member of Parliament for Berwick in 1833, but died a few months later at the age of 39.

Roger teaches history and is a member of the Guildford Borough Council. During the last few years he has been studying the records of his own family, which moved from Annandale to Lees, near Coldstream, in the 16th century.

He is planning to write a book about the Marjoribankses when he retires in 1993. He is a member of The Marjoribanks Family genealogical research committee and would be delighted to hear from readers who would like to exchange information about the Lees branch of the family, or any other aspects of family history.

If you would like to write to him, his address is:

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NOTE

If you have information or observations that you think might interest other members of the family, we would be delighted to hear from you. If you know of Marjoribankses — or Marchbankses or Marshbankses — who would like to receive The Letter, please send their complete postal addresses (printed in block letters). Until the proposed constitution is approved and annual fees have been established, The Letter will continue to be privately financed. The cost of printing and postage amounts to about \$2.00 a copy in Canadian funds. If you would like to share this expense, your contributions will be gratefully received. Cheques or money orders should be made payable to The Marjoribanks Letter and sent to:

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