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The Genealogy of Gerald Lee Gibson



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The Gerald Lee Gibson Family Genealogy

Gibson Origins

The Genealogy of my family, of which I am but a humble speck, is part of a much greater genealogy: the Gibsons—whose historical beginnings would require an entire volume to untangle. As a matter of historical accuracy, we're not originally from Scotland, and yet, as a matter of record and tradition, the roots of the Gibson surname and family first appear in the Lowlands of Scotland. The invading Scotti, Picts, and Anglo Saxons made Scotland their home. In this mix of Indo-European peoples, the Lowland Scot developed. After living as vassals (septs) to the great clans, the Gibsons also became, at least for my own family line, Englishmen, living in Lancashire and also in London and then, according to my research, as Scotch-Irish, residing in Tyrone County, Ireland, until traveling to the New World. Originally, however, we were invaders, like the Scotti from Ireland and, in the Highlands, the Vikings, who, after wars with the Picts and Norsemen, settled down to become farmers and merchants.

The transformation to a united Scotland took several centuries. After the collapse of the Roman Empire, the Anglo-Saxons arrived in England during the fifth and sixth centuries and, after conquering the native population spread north into the Scottish Lowlands. After centuries of intermingling with the Picts and Celts, the Gibsons became Englishmen and Scots, as did countless other Anglo-Saxon families, aligning themselves with both Scottish and English overlords. While a few Gibson families became successful vassals of the crown, most of the original family offshoots melted into the surrounding population, requiring the greatest scrutiny from genealogists to find information in the records. The European connection for all of the Anglo-Saxon families became diluted and irrelevant, as they adopted the culture and language of the natives. Except for general history of the Scottish peoples, which is beyond the scope of this introduction, it seems significant to point out a great irony in the movement of my ancestors, who after adopting Scottish and English culture, return, at one point in their odyssey, to the land where Scottish culture originated: Ireland.

Interestingly enough, while my ancestors were migrants—moving from Europe to the Lowlands, back to England, and then Ireland before sailing to the New World, the Scots, themselves, were, as I indicated, also migrants, called by the late Romans, Scotti. Scotland, in fact, was originally inhabited by the Picts, an Iron Age people linguistically related to Celts, but culturally unrelated to the Scottish people. Neither Rome nor the Britons could tame them. They remained an unconquered people, until A.D. 400 when the Scotti people of Ireland invaded Pictland. The Scotti often cooperated with but more fought against the native Picts for the next few centuries, until finally they were unified into a single kingdom and one people under Cináed (Kenneth) MacAlpin, King of the Picts. After that milestone in Scottish history, the Pict language disappeared, along with its symbol stones and other archaeological traits that had distinguished them from the Scotti.

Not long after the Western Roman Empire's outpost in Britannia was abandoned, not only did the Scotti invade Pictland and threaten Britannia, but the native British were left to face wild men from Europe: the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. From these tribes, came the Anglo-Saxons, who would transform most of "Angle-land" into a collection of petty medieval kingdoms, until King Alfred, the Great, united England into one nation. Separate from England at this time, however, were the two divisions of Scotland: the Lowlands, which were inhabited by the Scots and Anglo-Saxons and the Highlands, which included the purest remnant of the

Scotti people with a smidgen of Viking blood, after the ninth century Viking raids. Because most Gibsons, including my own branch, were confined to the Lowlands and Northern England, my account is limited to this area. Suffice it to say at this point, we have, apart from our ancestral roots in Jutland, arrived at the second origin of the Gibson family and surname: the Scottish Lowlands and the Buchanan Clan.

The Gibsons were, as many other Lowland families, associated with this great clan, whose origins lie in the 1225 grant of lands on the eastern shore of Loch Lomond to Sir Absalon of Buchanan by the Earl of Lennox. Unfortunately, except for the history of the Buchanan Clan, itself, there is not a great amount of information on the Gibson/Buchanan connection, except for ancient records of treaties and clan lists. Because the Buchanan Clan was based upon territorial identity, it was simply a vast collection of Lowlanders under a great Laird (Lord), which included septs (smaller, vassal clans) such as the Gibsons and many other common Anglo Saxon and Scottish names now found today in Ireland, the British Isles, Canada, Australia, and the United States. The Buchanan and Gibson Family crests have many variations, which makes it difficult to decide which one was the first or at least closest to the original crests. I have picked the family crests (also called coat of arms), which is shown on the introductory page, that was passed down in my family, but as the previous links indicate, there are many variations of crests for both the Gibson and its parent clan.

There is a diverse and confusing amount of information on what is the correct crest representing the clan and the color and pattern of the tartan worn. I wonder how many amateur genealogists have studied the history of Scotland and their own clans and septs. The tartan, as is the case with many Scottish customs, was used primarily by the Highlander, the purest group calling themselves Scots. As I pointed out earlier as stated by historians, the Scottish Lowlanders, which included the Buchanan septs, originated from the same stock as the English and were, therefore, mostly Anglo-Saxons. After hundreds of years of intermingling between the Anglo-Saxon, Picts and Celtic peoples, however, both the English and Lowland Scots shared a common gene pool and language, though they were often at odds over Scottish nationalism. Ironically, it was not from the fierce Highlanders as Hollywood often depicts, but Sir William Wallace, a Scottish Lowlander and Robert Bruce, King of Scotland, who united the Lowlands and Highlands against their English overlords. For the record, the movie Braveheart's depiction of Wallace and the forces of Robert Bruce, a dramatization of Scotland's battle for independence, is typical Hollywood nonsense. Wallace was not a Highlander (he was Lowlander) and neither he nor his men painted their faces blue and raced madly forward like Vikings, as depicted in the movie. The soldiers fighting for Robert Bruce, were mostly Lowlanders, who didn't wear kilts. The armies of the Scottish King fought in military formations and were as civilized as their English foes. Several other errors in this and other movie as well as website portrayals of this period of time in Scottish history are purest fiction. Unfortunately, many people who are building their genealogies believe these stereotypes. I've read a few blogs in which Gibson descendents simply don't understand the difference between the Highlanders and Lowlanders. The differences are significant. It is in the Lowlands that Protestantism was given new vitality after the Reformation and were the Industrial Revolution began. This area is one of the most dynamic portions of the Great Britain. The Highlanders, far more conservative and stand-offish, remained mainly Catholics during the Reformation and English Civil War and clung much more faithfully to Scottish tradition.

The Gibsons were, in fact, but a small sept in the great Buchanan Clan, in a great melting pot of Anglo Saxon, Pict, and Celtic peoples. The Buchanans, as an actual clan, and not merely

a territory, derive from the land granted to Sir Absalon of Buchanan by the Earl of Lennox, as explained earlier. The septs of Clan Buchanan derive from the first family member (Auselan) to use the surname Buchanan, whose father Sir Absalon had obtained the Buchanan lands. Apart from its territorial base and origin, the surname Gibson, itself, is derived from Old English (Anglo-Saxon), dating back to 1379. It is a patronymic form of the common mediaeval personal name Gib, which is a short form of Gilbert, a popular name in England in the Middle Ages, which was derived from the surname Giselbert, introduced into England by the Normans. This name is composed of the Germanic elements gisil (“pledge”, “hostage”, “noble youth”) and berht (“bright”, “famous”)—hardly a Gaelic name. Because of the mixture of Anglo Saxon, Pict, and Scottish elements in the Buchanan septs and the Lowlands in general, it might seem difficult, considering our roots, to even call ourselves Scots, but the record seems clear. Though the tale passed down from my great grandfather might not have been correct, the original Gibsons thought of themselves as Scots. The list of septs below is filled with Scottish, English, and Norman-sounding names—all part of the same super clan. In the list, you will, of course, find the name Gibson, as well descendents of the original sept, Auselan (MacAuselan = son of Auselan). (Note in the list that the Mac, like the Mc, which are historically interchangeable in Scotland due to the common ancestry of the Irish and Scots, is equivalent to the –son on the original name Gib, Gibb, or Gilbert.) It remains unclear to me how our Anglo-Saxon families (the Gibsons, Gibb, Gibbon, Gilbert, and Gilbertons) and the other non-Celtic peoples became a sept of this great clan. Aside from the Laird Auselan, Sir Absalon’s son, the clan chief, there are many divergent groups on this list, and yet today the International Buchanan Society considers the Gibsons and other septs to be Buchanans, not merely septs, a fact even my father recognized when he passed on to me the family tree. Incidentally, the Buchanan clan has the oldest clan castles in Scotland.

Buchanan Septs

Calman, Colman, Cormack, Cousland, Dewar, Dove, Dow, Gibb, Gibbon, Gibson, Gilbert, Gilbertson, Harper, Harperson, Leavy, Lennie, Lenny, MacAldonich, MacAlman, MacAslan, MacAslin, MacAuselan, MacAuslan, MacAusland, MacAuslane, MacAlman, MacAlmont, MacAmmond, MacAsland, MacChruiter, MacCalman, MacColman, MacCormack, MacCubbin, MacCubbing, MacCubin, MacGeorge, MacGibbon, MacGreuisich, MacGubbin, MacInally, MacIndeor, MacIndoe, MacKinlay, MacKinley, MacMaster, MacMaurice, MacMurchie, MacMurchy, MacNeur, MacNuir, MacNuyer, MacQuattie, MacWattie, MacWhirter, Masters, Masterson, MacCaslin, Morrice, Morris, Morrison, Murchie, Murchison, Richardson, Risk, Rusk, Ruskin, Spittal, Spittel, Walter, Walters, Wason, Waters, Watson, Watt, Watters, Weir, Yuill, Yool, Yule, and Zuill.

The above list, with its common-sounding and less common assortment of names, demonstrates how diverse the Buchanan septs were, which is true for all Lowlanders in Scotland. I was told and shown records that allegedly prove I came from Scottish roots—not a bold or egocentric claim. I never expected much. But when I began serious research online, I found out I was not the descendant of a wild Scottish highlander, like Rob Roy MacGregor. My ancestors were originally from Jutland in Northern Europe (precursors of the Anglo Saxons). Though we have a Scottish family crest, my family therefore bears little resemblance to the family tree in the Gibson Family Bible. It is a long story, that begins, not in Scotland as I was told, but in the

invading Angles, Saxon, and Jutes who conquered much of the British Isles, including the Scottish Lowlands, subjugating and mingling with the native Celts and Picts and eventually becoming Englishmen, who, in turn, after absorbing the culture of the Highlanders, fought the Great battles of Scottish independence against Britain. It is from the murky history of the Lowlands that the Gibsons, like the other families, become distinguished as separate Buchanan septs. If a few of the genealogies online are to be believed, many Gibsons became great barons under King James IV. A questionable example is seen in Thomas Knowlton Gibson's genealogy, which offers no concrete corroboration for its claims. The lineage of most Lowlanders, including my own, is much less clear, partly because of the turmoil, following England's invasion of the Lowland and partly because of the inherent problems of public documentation at this period and the constant movement of peoples. Following the subjugation of the Highlands and Lowlands and Ireland, however, the English attempted to transform all of Scotland—both its religion and culture into an English model. The Scots were forbidden to wear kilts and practice their traditions, rulings that affected the more traditional Highlanders the most, since the custom had been abandoned in most of the Lowlands. To breakdown Irish culture in occupied Ulster (Northern Ireland), the Irish of Ulster were given the same treatment that the Highlanders received. In the years following this subjugation, English settlers invaded Scotland and, in Ireland, plantations (farms) sprouted up in the Northern Irish countryside, and ultimately—in a group heavily comprised of Englishmen—the Scotch-Irish were born.

From the very beginning, the Scotch-Irish, which eventually included my own family, were an artificial group created by necessity, and yet, as the Anglo Saxons, Picts, and original Celts had done in the Lowlands in becoming 'Scots,' the migrants settled down, at least for awhile, to become Irish or Scotch-Irish in name if not fact. It is at this point, at an ill-defined point in our history, that my own line of Gibsons, decided that their fortunes lay in England, not Scotland. The record is far too meager to generalize, but from Thomas Gibson to William Gibson II, they moved first to Lancashire, then London, and then Ulster to seek their fortunes. They were, in fact, when the record clears, more English than Scottish or Scotch-Irish, and yet, like the Welsh, Cornish, and Midlanders, would, because of economic and religious reasons, be drawn to Northern Ireland, and ultimately the New World.

In addition to the political aims of James I in encouraging migration to Ulster, which offered economic betterment for Lowlanders and English, was a religious reason for the migrants, most of whom were Presbyterians. Because England was Episcopalian, the migrants had been persecuted in the British Isles. Though William I Gibson became an early founder of the Quaker Church, it's unclear to me whether or not Thomas Gibson, my earliest recorded ancestor, his son Robert Gibson, or grandson John Gibson were, prior to William's conversion, Presbyterians seeking religious freedom. There is no record of their religious affiliation. What will become clear in my family tree is that they followed the same pattern of many likeminded Lowlanders in Scotland: from members of septs they immigrated south into England for economic betterment, and, for the same reason, were attracted by the plantation system in Northern Ireland before joining thousands of migrants in Pennsylvania—a point of entry leading to the peopling of the colonies and wilderness beyond.

Movement of Ancestors

Thomas Gibson was born in Caton, in Lancashire England in 1540. That is all I know about him. His son Robert was also born in Caton (1558), marrying Margaret Dorothy Rafté (born in 1557) in Mill Hill, Middlesex England on February 2, 1608. Margaret died in August 9, 1617 in Caton, Lancashire England or, as one genealogy indicates in 1625. That same genealogy claims that Robert died in 1615, while another source lists his death as 1625, the same year as Margaret's death. Because of such discrepancies, I remain skeptical of the earliest chronology for my family. Nevertheless, most sources agree that they had seven children—all born in Caton, including another direct ancestor, John Gibson: William was christened 1 Nov 1585; Dorothy was christened September 14, 1586; Elizabeth was christened 17 Mar 1588; Bryan was christened March 28, 1591; Thomas was christened June 2, 1592; *John Gibson was christened October 17, 1595; and then came Agnes Gibson (date of christening unknown). I'm fairly certain that John Gibson, like his father and grandfather lived in Caton, Lancashire England. He was born on his christening day (October 17, 1595) and died sometime in 1681. His wife was listed simply as Lady Gibson. Whether this implied royalty or was merely a polite way of giving her an anonymous name I might never know. It's not until my genealogy reaches William Gibson Sr. that documented evidence becomes strong.

The Quaker Connection

William Gibson Sr., the most famous of my Gibson ancestors, was, as his father, grandfather, and great grandfather born (and christened) in Caton, Lancashire, England on April 25, 1629. He was therefore at this stage in our genealogy, like his immediate ancestors, an Englishman. After marrying Elizabeth Thompson (b. 1630) from Crossmore in Lancashire June 22, 1662, he and his wife moved to London. Elizabeth died in London May 29, 1666 and William died there December 20, 1684. According to gibsonfamilyhistory.com, William and Elizabeth had six children, one of whom was William II listed below. Because the record shows William dying on Lombard St in London, an inference might be made that he was a merchant or businessmen. After all, London's merchant, banking, and insurance businesses on Lombard St dates back to medieval times. What is clearly known during this period was that William was much more than merely a merchant or businessman.

According to Augustus Charles Bickley, William Gibson was an important Quaker in this period and one of the pillars of this church (History). During the period of the biographical sketch shown for him, he began his religious life as a Puritan, a reform movement within the Episcopalians (Church of England) who were dissatisfied with the limited extent of the English Reformation and the Church of England's tolerance of practices which they associated with the Catholic Church. Like many young men in England, he joined the parliamentary forces in rebellion against the English King. Briefly stated, the English Civil War between the King and parliament was a political conflict between an overbearing monarchy that believed it ruled by divine right and a parliament that had enough of his rule. Though Oliver Cromwell, as its chief leader and ultimate prime minister, believed in religious toleration of Protestants, certain sects, such as the Quakers, were persecuted by Puritans and Anglicans alike. At first, William Gibson, a zealous Puritan and veteran of Cromwell's campaign, was among the Englishmen persecuting the Society of Friends (Quakers) founded by George Fox. While stationed at a military garrison at Carlisle, William charged into a Quaker meeting to harass its congregation. Instead of

disrupting the sermon, however, he listened to Reverend Thomas Holmes message and was immediately converted to the Quaker faith. Because of the Quaker's rejection of war and non-support of the conflict, William quit Cromwell's army and began attending more Society of Friends meetings. As a member of the persecuted sect now, he was thrown in jail for giving testimony of his faith, and in 1655 and 1656 he was imprisoned several times for his religious belief. During this period, he was finally recognized as a Quaker minister. Because of his refusal in 1660 to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy rejected by the Society of Friends, he was again imprisoned at Lancaster for a few months, then in 1661 at Shrewsbury, and during the same year, was seized with other Quakers on the road to a meeting in Denbighshire by soldiers and once more thrown into jail. When the others were liberated in court, William was kept in prison and tortured by his jailers. In one instance, they threw him down a flight of stone stairs. It took six months for him to recover from his injuries. When he was released, he settled down temporarily to a more peaceful life.

After marrying Elizabeth Thompson (b. 1630) from Crossmore in Lancashire June 22, 1662, William Gibson and his wife settled down in Warrington in Lancashire where he engaged in trade. Afterwards they moved permanently to London. Though William continued to live in London with his family, he remained active as a Quaker leader and remained antagonistic to the established order. After the restoration of the English monarchy in 1660, William and his Quaker congregation were discharged from the king's bench under a general proclamation of Charles II. During 1676 and 1677, while residing on Fenchurch Street in London, his goods were several times confiscated because of his failure to pay tithes. Based upon a letter protesting the eviction of Quakers from Danzig Augusts 8, 1679, it appears as if he was engaged in missionary work in Holland during that year. He was a key associate of William Penn in planning the Quaker migration to America. Because of his service to the church and his suffering for the Society of Friends church, William Penn gave him the first land grant in Pennsylvania. When William Gibson died in London, aged 55 (November 23. 1684), he was commemorated in White Hart Court and buried at the Society of Friends' cemetery, near Bunhill Fields. His funeral was attended by thousands of Quakers.

William Gibson's published writings, which can still be purchased online, include the following works: (1) "A Salutation of the Father's Love unto the Young Men and Virgins, who are in the Openings of the Prophecies in Visions and in Revelations," published in 1663 and written in 1661 in Shrewsbury Jail; (2) "The Everlasting Rule bore witness unto in words, which is to try all people that do profess God and Christ in words," published in 1667; (3) "Universal Love, being an Epistle given forth by the Spirit of God through His Suffering Servant," published in 1671 and republished in 1672 and written in Maidstone Jail); (4) Tythes ended by Christ with the Levitical Priesthood..., a defense against paying tithes, published in 1673, written in part by Thomas Rudyard and George Watt; (5) "A False Witness examined and rebuked...", published in 1674; (6) "The Life of God which is the Light and Salvatiion of Men Exalted: or an Answer to six Books or particular Treatises given forth by John Cheyney," published in 1677; (7) Election and Reprobation Scripturallly and Experimentally Witnessed," published in 1679, written in part by Thomas Rudyard; and (9) A General Epistle given forth in obedience to the God of Peace, published in 1682.

The Scotch-Irish Connection

It's not known whether or not **William Gibson II** shared his father's Quaker faith. He was baptized as an infant February 2, 1668 in St Leonard, Shoreditch, London in Middlesex England. He married Jane Thomas (1684 –1703), a fourteen years old girl in Brewers Hall, in London on December 2, 1698. Strangely enough, William and Jane died in London in 1703, the same year. One record shows them having eight children, including William III (Andrew, David, James, John, Margaret, Robert, and George). I can't explain this list, but it seems quite impossible. Poor Jane was only fourteen when William II married her and yet she died in 1703 at the age of nineteen, the same year reported for William's death. Though there were only five childbearing years for her and the same number of years for William to sire that many children, this outrageous claim is carried on in two other databases (Brown County Genealogy and Genealogy.com). According to Gibsonfamilyhistory.com, at least two of their children were born in Ulster (Northern Ireland), so it is likely that William and Jane lived in Ireland for parts of their lives. The Scotch-Irish connection, in fact, begins in earnest with **William Gibson III**, who was born 1705 in Tyrone, Tyrone County, Ireland. Gibsonfamilyhistory.com has him migrating to America and settling with his brother George in Pennsylvania, a sibling cited in the genealogy databases/ dubious lists. What seems clear is that William III died January 1, 1771 in Newton, Cumberland, Pennsylvania. According to gibsonfamilyhistory.com, William III's wife is lost to history but he and his wife had a son named John and they were in Virginia for his birth.

The Ulster Interlude

The **Ulster Scots** are an ethnic group in Ireland, found mostly in the Ulster region and to a lesser extent in the rest of Ireland. Their counterparts, the Scotch-Irish, who are essentially from the same groups of migrants to Ireland, are, like my ancestors, those immigrants coming to the United States. The ancestors of both the Ulster Scots and Scotch-Irish were mostly Protestant Lowlanders but also English settlers, many originating from the "Border Reivers" culture, who were Scottish and English that raided the border country of Ireland from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, when such action became legal by the Scottish and English kings. The legal migrants then came to Ireland in large numbers both as a result of the government-sanctioned Plantation of Ulster. The plantation was a planned process of colonization to large farms (plantations) owned by wealthy men, which took place under the support of James VI of Scotland and James I of England on land confiscated from members of the Gaelic nobility of Ireland who fled Ulster. The centers of greatest colonization were Tyrone, where my ancestors arrived, as well as Tyrconnell, Fermanagh, Cavan, Coleraine, and Armagh. The purpose of the plantation system was to anglicize the Irish, but it also served the migrants, themselves, who were not only bettering their economic condition by working on the plantations but, in many cases, were escaping religious persecution at home. The Ulster Scots are largely descended from colonists from Galloway, Ayrshire, and the Scottish Borders Country, although some descended from people further north in the Scottish Lowlands and the Highlands. The record shows that our Gibson line originated in Galloway, but my Gibson line came to Ulster directly from Lancashire and London, England. In addition to migrating as Scotch-Irish to the United States, Ulster Scots, emigrated in significant numbers to all corners of the then worldwide British Empire: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the British West Indies.

It appeared that the Gibsons experience as tenant farmers in Ulster was short-lived since, as I have shown, William III and his brother George both soon traveled to the New World. From 1710 to 1775, over 200,000 people, in fact, emigrated from Ulster to the original thirteen American colonies. Most of them, as my ancestors, came to Pennsylvania first before peopling the remaining colonies. Because William's son John was born in Hanover, Virginia, it is obvious that William brought his family there, too.

The New World

Though **John Gibson** was born in 1725 in Hanover, Virginia, he resided in Cople, in Westmoreland County, Virginia before marrying Mary Duncan (1725-1807) in Caswell, North Carolina on March 12, 1747. During their marriage, Mary Duncan resided briefly in Fredericksburg Virginia where Joel, the eldest son was born. After Joel's birth, they returned to Caswell to live out the remainder of their lives. John Gibson died August 9, 1776 in Caswell, North Carolina and was buried in Rowan County, North Carolina. John and Mary had a total of eleven children, according to gibsonfamilyhistory.com (*Joel, Susannah, Neoma, William, Susanna Neoma, John, James, Richard, Julius, Lucretia, and Hannah), but according to genealogy.com they had only ten. While many of their children stayed in Caswell, North Carolina, several of their children, including Joel moved to Kentucky.

With the arrival of **Joel Gibson**, my genealogy and other family offshoots I have recorded become much more clear. From this point, I have linked descendents to separate genealogy databases, whenever possible. Because of his participation in the Revolutionary war, which records his movement, Joel's burial record, and the monument left in his honor, makes him a particularly important link among my ancestors.

Joel Gibson was born in 1749 in Frederick County Virginia. His wife Eleanor was born in Caswell, North Carolina in 1753. After marrying Eleanor in 1770 in Pittsylvania, Virginia, Joel and his growing family lived in Wilkes, North Carolina (1790), Ashe and then Henderson North Carolina (from 1765 to 1787). After 1790, Joel and his wife Eleanor moved to Henderson, Kentucky, Joel dying there in 1830 and Eleanor in 1818. Joel and Eleanor had eight children: Burgess, *Greenberry, Robert, Margaret Elizabeth, Bailey, Berryman, Tilghman, Nancy Peggy, Vacey (or Vicky). During his lifetime, Joel Gibson's movements, other than his service as a Minuteman in the American Revolution explained below, are restricted to this short biography. (Joel Gibson's biography, grave, and memorial.)

In a nutshell the American Revolution, in which my ancestor Joel Gibson took part, was directly created, as all conflicts, by events, not philosophy or lofty aims, escalating without resolution, until a point of ignition was reached, often from one single event. From such ignition points flowed, historical volumes, political and philosophical treatises, and documents changing world history. Examples of such ignition points can be seen in the Civil War (The Attack on Fort Sumter); World War I (The murder of Archduke Ferdinand); America's entry into World War II (Pearl Harbor); The Korean War (North Korea's invasion of South Korea); and The War on Terror (The Bombing of the Twin Towers). In the case of the Revolutionary War, it was Britain's punitive acts against Massachusetts (Intolerable Acts) that precipitated the Boston Tea Party, which historians see as the *tinder* and the dumping of tea into the Boston Harbor as the *ignition point* leading to war.

Against the backdrop of the war for independence, Joel, an illiterate farmer entered our war for independence, as a private in the First North Carolina Regiment commanded by Colonel

James Moore in Captain Henry Dixon's company. Aside from the list of battles fought by the First North Carolina Regiment in which Joel was a participant, which are beyond the scope of this discussion, a single document (Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Roster) records Joel's service as a Minuteman in the Continental Army. Below is a segment of this document:

To the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Henderson County On the 26 the day of July 1824, I Joel Gibson aged seventy-five years, resident in the County of Henderson, and district of Kentucky, who being first duly sworn according to law and on his oath, declare that I served in the Revolutionary War... I entered as a private soldier and left it with an honorable discharge. I served in the 1st North Carolina Regiment commanded by Colonel James Moore and in Captain Henry Dixon's company on the continental line, and I do solemnly swear that (during the conflict) I was a resident citizen of the United States...

It was essential that veterans prove their loyalty as patriots as the first step in receiving a government pension. Joel had apparently fallen on hard times in the early nineteenth century and needed his pension. As other veterans he also had to show that he had no property or valuables in order to be illegible for a government pension. In his own words, probably recorded by a clerk "...My occupation has been the tilling of ground, but through old age bodily infirmities, I have been rendered totally incapable of following agricultural pursuits. Because I have no wife and my children are married and have moved away, I am obliged to depend on my son Bailey Gibson, who has a large family and small children to support." He then listed all the property he owned, "Three pewter plates and some old knives and forks," before making his X on the bottom of the document.

Greenberry Gibson, Joel's second son, left little for the biographer. He was one of Joel's children who moved away. Born in 1778 somewhere in Virginia, he married a woman named Charlotte and later died in St. Francois County, Missouri. Despite the scarcity of information, his burial site in the Gibson Cemetery in Elvins, St Francois County has been located. Greenberry and Charlotte's children were Ellender, Lewis, Sarah, Lucinda, and *William Riley.

William Riley Gibson, Greenberry's last child, was born in 1824 in Henderson County Kentucky, which implies that Greenberry and Charlotte lived there, too, at least briefly, before moving to St Francois County, Missouri. He married Sarah Ellen Williams here on July 19, 1855. Sarah was the daughter of John Williams and Mary Ann Smith. At the outbreak of the Civil War, William remained loyal to the union, enlisting in the 15th Missouri Infantry. (Breakdown of Regiment, Supplemental History, and Flag. Refer also to St Francois Archive.) William died on September 22, 1900 in Elvins Missouri and, as his father Greenberry, was buried in the Gibson Cemetery. In addition to William Riley Gibson, two other Riley Gibsons are also reported for the 39th and 49th Kentucky Regiments in the Union Army (Refer to the National Park Service). The children of William Riley and Sarah Ellen were * George Riley Gibson, Mary Elizabeth, Adeline, Sarah Catherine, Amanda, (Ref. Amanda's Husband), Alexander D., Joseph Coleman, and Phillip H.

George Riley Gibson, the oldest child of William Riley Gibson and my great grandfather, was born in April 9, 1857 in St Francois County, Missouri. Although, like his grandfather, he left us little information about himself, his name appears in two separate accounts of his life: my own, of course, and a poorly thought out account that is filled with genealogical errors. (Refer to my discussion, "Problems with Many Genealogies.") My account is based upon historical record and other mutually corroborating family trees. In my account George Riley

Gibson marries Sarah Jane Owens, the daughter of James and Kitty Owens in Francois County, Missouri. Sarah was born October 29, 1858. George died on June 2, 1928 and is buried in the Herod Cemetery in Dislodge, Missouri. His thirteen children by Sarah were: William Marion, Ida Elizabeth, James Zeno, * Dennis Willard, Benona, Sara Catherine Ceura, John Atlee, Alfred Olen, Alice Edith, Maud Ellen, Bryan Dewey, and Lillie Ruth.

Dennis Willard Gibson, the fourth child of George Riley Gibson, was born in Cantrell, Missouri February 28, 1885 and Married Myrtle Madge Mitchell there. Because a cousin emptied out grandma's garage, the records of the Gibson family in Missouri disappeared with him. What I have found out about their past is limited to what they told me in snatches as I grew up. Like many families caught in the Depression and the Dust Bowl, Dennis left Cantrell, Missouri with his family for California in search of work. One can imagine an old ramshackle vehicle piled with all their worldly goods, reminiscent of the motion picture Tobacco Road, but the truth was grandpa immediately found work with grandma's brother Buford Mitchell moving houses. During one project, one of the houses slipped and injured grandpa's leg, but other than this setback, he and his family didn't do that badly in Los Angeles during the Depression.

I have fond memories of my grandparents, especially my grandma. Grandpa, whom grandma, called Den, made moonshine in his garage in Los Angeles and then in his Whittier garage brewed his own beer. He once gave my cousin Sharon and me a can of his homemade beer, which we drank with relish. My parents, of course, were very upset with him. Grandma was always scolding him about his manners. After sitting down for dinner, he rarely waited for the blessing, and began eating the closest dish to his plate. When asked to say the blessing, himself, he once replied, "Bless the beans and bless the bread. Turn up your plates and go ahead." Though illiterate, he could play a tune on any instrument, after a few tries, and made up silly tunes, adding verses to such classics as Old Dan Tucker. Unfortunately, grandpa didn't live as long as grandma. Two of his bad habits, grandma told me about, drinking water from rusty nails, to get his iron, and taking any medicine in sight to feel better might have been his undoing. He dropped dead in his living room in Whittier, California, suddenly July 21, 1955.

Grandma (October 3, 1894 – July 27, 1984) was one of the most important persons in my life. Her home was a haven for me during my childhood. Like many grandmothers, she spoiled me with cookies, cakes, and candies she whipped up in her kitchen. Her backyard in Whittier, California, was filled with countless varieties of berries and fruit trees, including apricot, peach, and plum. Unlike grandpa, grandma was literate, constantly reading her bible and other religious tracts. She never talked much about their struggles on the farm but shared anecdotes about relatives, such as Aunt Ida and Uncle Zeno Gibson. I wished I had paid more attention back then and asked her more questions. Though she had little education, she was clever and sharp witted, but in the words of Oscar Wilde, didn't 'suffer fools.' One time, perhaps in jest, as we stood in her front lawn, she looked up as a plane flew overhead, and remarked, "It's not natural. Men were never meant to fly." She died, shut away in an old folks home. When she passed away, almost all of the relatives were there with words of praise, but it seemed as though she was forgotten at the end.

There were mysteries surround my grandparents' children. I discovered in my research that they had five children, not four as I had thought: Willard, Orville George, Jean (adopted), Mildred (adopted), and someone named Cora. Why hadn't my Dad ever told me he had a sister named Cora? Did she die in infancy? Infant mortality rates were high on farms during the Depression. Except for the recognition of her as being one of Dennis Willard and Myrtle's children, there is no record of her. For that matter there is no record of my Uncle Willard,

although he had a big family, was a successful fireman, and lived into his sixties before dying of a heart attack. Because Jean and Mildred were adopted, a subject never discussed, all I know about them is that they were my aunts, good-natured souls who treated grandma much better than her biological sons.

Orville George Gibson, my father, and Dennis' second son, was born November 26, 1910 in Cantrell, Missouri. After marrying my mother, June Eldretta Gibson, who was born June 15, 1922, he and his wife lived in Los Angeles, in a white, turn-of-the-century, house. (Note: my mother's father Norman A. Fisher, an inventor, created the bubble machine used in Lawrence Welk's champagne music.) To be closer the Union Pacific Railroad, where he worked as a machinist, my father moved his family to company and government housing in East Los Angeles—caboose size domiciles, greatly inferior to our previous home. The projects, as they were called, were close enough for my father to walk to the Railroad, but they were dreadfully small. To preserve our food, we used primitive iceboxes, which required blocks of ice from the iceman. There was a huge, almost medieval furnace, in the center of the projects, where everyone burned their trash. On laundry day, there were rows after rows of clothes and sheets on the clotheslines in one quarter of the compound. I remember several friendly families there, including Italian, Jewish, and Gypsies, who befriended us. I was too young to remember every detail, but I have snatches of memory, that include my brother Ron and I drinking wine from the Marino's table when they weren't looking, watching a neighborhood kid catch on fire from the furnace, and the Gypsies who lived in the vacant lot next store.

Because my father worked in an industry necessary for the war effort, he escaped the draft. Apparently, his brother Willard, a fireman, had the same excuse, but my uncles Ray was an air force mechanic in World War II and my uncle Eddy was an army veteran, who fought in Iwo Jima during the war. When we moved to Whittier, our family followed the patterns of many other families. My Dad was a boy scoutmaster and my mother a girl scoutmaster. My Dad was also a chess master, who played and defeated many opponents through the mail. He was a gifted poet and woodcarver. My parents raised chickens for a while, until the neighborhood filled up with houses. For a long time, our home sat isolated on our block. I could walk across the vacant lot, through the walnut trees, straight to grandma's house. When the neighborhood began to grow, my parents got rid of the chickens and replaced them with dogs. Our lives grew more complicated, as their children passed from elementary, junior high, and then high school. After I graduated from high school, I joined the Navy and later went to college...but that's in another generation.

My parents' lives changed when their children married and moved away: my sister and brother to Oregon and my wife Donna and I to Anaheim California. To stay close to my siblings, my Dad and Mom moved up to Eugene Oregon, where, after a full life, enjoying their grandchildren and tending a huge vegetable garden, they passed away. My father died December 12, 1982 and mother died January 25, 1987. Orville George and June Eldretta's children were Ronald Orville, Judith June, and myself.

Gerald Lee Gibson—myself, was born April 7, 1942 in Los Angeles. Since my generation is an ongoing project, I will keep it brief. It would take a volume to cover my life so far. My early childhood, as well, as my siblings, is covered in my Dad's biography. My wife and I have raised three wonderful children, Jennifer Irene, Matthew Lee, and Kerri Ann, who will write their own genealogies. Currently my wife Donna and I live in Fort Worth, Texas, and my daughter Kerri's family lives in neighboring Southlake with our two twin grandsons, Jakob

and Clayton. Jennifer lives in Colorado with my granddaughter Megan, and Matthew, a teacher, lives with his wife Aki and my three granddaughters, Mira, Kira, and Sara, in Hokkaido, Japan.

Epilogue

I have attempted to show that the Gibsons, like many of the Buchanan Septs, were Anglo Saxons, not even Scots, and, like the Picts, Scotti, and invading Anglo, Saxon, and Jutes, settled down in the Lowlands and eventually identified themselves with the clansmen there. From the Lowlands, for both economic and religious reasons, they migrated to England and Northern Ireland and eventually to the New World. In the coming months, as all conscientious amateur genealogists, I might update my family's genealogy. I was overwhelmed with how interconnected several other Gibson family genealogists are with my own. I have tried to be accurate with my information, but I will continue to update it when it seems appropriate and hopefully extend my family line beyond my earliest ancestor, Thomas Gibson. Ultimately, of course, all the Gibsons share the same ancestor. If we claim Scottish ancestry, we are, in the final analysis, Buchanans, but I have found that it is much more complicated than that.

From illiterate farmers to English barons, from Lowland clansmen to Revolutionary and Civil War soldiers, and, far back in time, from Anglo Saxon invaders to a long list of men and women carrying the Gibson name, the Gibsons have spread around the globe, from England and Ulster to America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and even South America. With interest mounting for personal genealogies, many linking to each other because of a common ancestors and the online services available, some of whom promise helpful information but often provide unrealistic results, I wonder if someone out there might fill in a few of my own gaps. In turn, I hope my genealogy will help others link up to their ancestors. We Gibsons, after all, are one big, super-family. We have served clan chiefs, kings, and, according to a few genealogists, presidents, and have fought in every major battle, from Bannockburn to Afghanistan. In our ranks are Medal of Honor winners (Eric G. Gibson), actors, writers, athletes, scientists, inventors, and representatives in countless other fields. The following incomplete list is a sampling of notable people with the surname Gibson.

Notable People With The Surname Gibson

[Aaron Gibson](#) (born 1977), American football player
[Adam Gibson](#) (born 1986), Australian basketball player
[Adrian Gibson](#) (born 1935), Australian politician
[Alec Gibson](#) (born 1963), American football player
[Aleena Gibson](#) (born 1968), Swedish songwriter
[Alex Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Alexander Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Alfred Gibson](#) (died 1874), Australian explorer
[Althea Gibson](#) (1927–2003), African-American tennis player
[Amy Gibson](#) (born 1960), American actress and businesswoman
[Andrea Gibson](#) (born 1975), American poet
[Andrew Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Anne Gibson, Baroness Gibson of Market Rasen](#) (b. 1940), British trade unionist
[Antonio Gibson](#) (born 1962), American football player

[Ashley Gibson](#) (born 1986), English rugby league player
[Aubrey Gibson](#) (1901–1973), Australian businessman and patron of the arts
[Ben Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Bob Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Brian Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Bryan Gibson](#) (born 1947), Canadian boxer
[Carleton B. Gibson](#) (1863–1927), 1st President [Rochester Institute of Technology](#)
[Catherine Gibson](#) (1931–2013), Scottish swimmer
[Charles Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Chris Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Clifford Gibson](#) (1901–1963), American blues singer and guitarist
[Colin Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Craig Gibson](#), American college baseball coach
[Daniel Gibson](#), American basketball coach and university professor
[Darron Gibson](#) (born 1987), Irish footballer
[Darryl Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Daniel Gibson](#) (born 1986), American professional basketball player
[David Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Deborah Gibson](#) (born 1970), singer, performer, and former teen idol
[Dennis Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Donald Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), or Don Gibson, multiple people
[Doug Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Edmund Gibson](#) (1669–1748), English divine and jurist
[Edward Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Eleanor J Gibson](#) (1910–2002) eminent American psychologist
[Elsbeth Gibson](#) (born 1963), British fashion designer
[Ernest Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Fred Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Gary Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[George Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Gordon Gibson](#) (born 1937), Canadian political columnist, author, and politician
[Greg Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple mapeople
[Guy Gibson](#) (1918–1944), RAF officer & commander of Dambusters' squadron.
[Herbert Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Hilda Gibson](#) (1925–2013), member of the Women's Land Army in World War II
[Henry Gibson](#) (born 1935), American comedic actor, film & television.
[Hoot Gibson](#) (1892–1962), rodeo champ, cowboy film actor, director, & producer
[Hugh Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Hutton Gibson](#) (born 1918), father of actor Mel Gibson and a writer on religion
[Ian Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[J. J. Gibson](#) (1904–1979), American psychologis in field of visual perception
[Jack Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Jackie Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[James Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Jill Gibson](#) (born 1942), singer and artist who sang in The Mamas & the Papas
[John Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people

[Jon Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Josh Gibson](#) (1911–1947), Hall of Fame member in the baseball Negro Leagues
[Josh Gibson \(footballer\)](#) (born 1984), Australian rules footballer
[Keith Gibson](#) (born 1977), American author
[Kelly Gibson](#) (born 1964), American professional golfer
[Kenny Gibson](#) (born 1961), Scottish politician
[Kenneth Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Kirk Gibson](#) (born 1957), American baseball slugger
[Lawrence R. Gibson](#) (1912-2004), American politician
[Marcus Gibson](#) (born 1973), Australian author
[Margaret Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Mel Gibson](#) (born 1956), American-Australian film actor, director, and producer
[Michael Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), or Mike Gibson, multiple people
[Neil Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Orville Gibson](#) (1856–1918), Founder of [Gibson Guitar Corporation](#)
[Pandora Gibson](#), Bahamian comedienne and storyteller
[Pat Gibson](#) (born 1961), Irish quiz player
[Patrick Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Paul Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Rachel Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Ralph Gibson](#) (born 1939), American awarded photographer
[Randall L. Gibson](#) (1832–1892), U.S. Congressman and Senator from Louisiana
[Richard Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Robert Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Robin Gibson](#) gallery curator & art historian
[Sally Gibson](#), Canadian writer and historian
[Sam Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Shane Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Sharon Gibson](#) (born 1961), English javelin thrower
[Steve Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Thomas Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Tom Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Tony Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Tyrese Gibson](#) (born 1978), American R&B, hip hop singer, songwriter, & actor,
[Violet Gibson](#) (1876–1956), Irish would-be assassin of Benito Mussolini
[Virginia Gibson](#) (1925–2013), American dancer, singer and actress
[Walter Gibson \(disambiguation\)](#), multiple people
[Wilfred Wilson Gibson](#) (1878–1962), British poet

The Problems With Many Genealogies

I have discovered several Gibson genealogies that reflect inadequate research. At least a few are absolute nonsense. Many well-meaning descendents have simply passed down the legends of their ancestors as I once did, until taking the time to find out the real truth. Unfortunately, as Pilot once said, “What is truth?” Since many folks take the word of agencies, bloggers, and genealogy webmasters as the God’s honest truth, without digging for information,

themselves, and without comparing their own discoveries with what many of genealogy scam artists claim to be the facts, they post their family trees and—Voila!—leave it at that. Grandpa said it, Dad said, and Ancestry.com said—so it must be the truth. Although this may be true in some cases, ancestral roots, especially remote ancestors, are sometimes simply not there. For example, I was surprised to find many candidates for “generation one” on my family tree. I tried four different genealogy agencies and got three different possibilities, one being a duplicate error. I won’t cite who they were. Perhaps they meant well, and were tossing out enticing tidbits in order to lure me in, but they were wrong. You wouldn’t believe how many Thomas Gibsons were born in the sixteenth century. What perpetuates the family myths of many genealogists is the nonsense Hollywood has shown in movies about how the Lowland Scot looked and acted. Too often family tree geeks incorporate these myths, also taking at face value the claims made in blogs and other genealogical websites, who made the same stereotypical mistakes. As I will attempt to demonstrate, these pervasive stereotypes in family genealogies that are encouraged by the genealogy industries have cheapened the value of family histories, giving serious genealogists a bad name. Serious amateur genealogists are, in a very real sense, historians. The facts must fit the tree. I’ve noticed that many family trees are, in fact, nothing more than a showcase for beating one’s chest and outshining viewers, who have lesser pedigrees. Overlooking the Industrial Revolution, countless great Scotch-Irishmen, and John Knox’s reformation—all of which sprang from the Lowlands, those claiming Highland ancestry appear to believe Hollywood’s fiction. They have failed to understand that William Wallace, the great Scottish patriot was a Lowlander, himself. William Wallace had nothing in common with the legendary Rob Mac Roy, who is the archetypical Scotsman, and yet he was probably the greatest Scottish patriot of them all. Ironically, the vast majority of those individuals claiming to have Scottish ancestry are, in fact, Lowlanders, with sept, not clan descent. Worse than even than Highland snobs, who look down on this majority, are those Gibson family trees that make unfounded, sweeping claims. One webmaster I found on the web had the audacity to boast that all Gibsons descended from his one ancestor. Obviously, he has done little research or he would know how misguided that statement was.

There are countless examples of genealogies, difficult to follow, poorly written, and filled with errors, but the worst perpetrators are those slick, streamlined, websites that can’t back up their pedigrees. They simply regurgitate what their father and grandfather told them. The most incredible example of genealogical fraud is a statement in one of the most flamboyant of these chest-beating sites. This pseudo-genealogist claims descent from several Scottish Lords, Mayflower passengers, Revolutionary and Civil War generals, and countless famous men. One single quote, sums up the absurdity of his claims: “Our Gibson ancestors descended from the ninth century Kenneth I MacAlpin, Eochaid King of the Picts...” There is no corroboration of this preposterous claim, only links to Wikipedia articles on the words used in this declaration. The claim lumps MacAlpin and a semi-legendary figure named Echoaid together as ancestors of the Gibsons, an impossible situation given the fact that the Gibsons were, like many Lowlanders, originally Anglo-Saxons, who came from Jutland. This same person alleges that his family is connected to 750,000 people of European Royalty.

I will go so far to say now that a good genealogist must be an amateur historian.
Historians deal in facts!

My own Gibson line is sullied with misconception and falsity, not as serious as the previous examples, but just as irritating. William Riley Gibson, as I pointed out, is found in the Civil War archives and there are corroborating genealogies from other family trees to prove his

biography and military record, and yet I found another version of he and his descendants that lists him as George Riley Gibson Sr., an Irishman no less, married to Sarah Hildebrand, not Sarah Ellen Williams shown in the record. This, of course, is wrong. George Riley's father was William Riley, not George Riley Sr. A claim is also made that Riley's wife, Sarah, was the sister of notorious murderer Sam Hildebrand—the second error in the alternate genealogy. There is no record of either relationship. I have, in fact, found that one of Sam's accomplices in his murderous spree was a man with the surname Gibson, which was common in Missouri and other states. I suspect that the person who passed this legend down in this family tree might have wanted to highlight the rebel side of our family tree, but the fact is most of the Gibsons of Missouri, where Sam's actions occurred, were union sympathizers. All of my ancestors sided with the North. I found two additional Riley Gibsons from this state listed in the union army ranks, serving in the 39th and 49th Kentucky Regiments. Even the misnamed George Riley Sr. in the alternate account was cited as fighting for the union army. Nevertheless, there is a legend passed down to my father of a Gibson girl marrying an outlaw named Sam Hildebrand. According to my Dad, the doctor treating him wrote a book about his life. After much research, I have come to the conclusion that this story is no more accurate than the lines I found in the alternate genealogy. Not only is there no information about this alleged book, it appears that my Dad's version, unlike the account I read online, overlooks Sam Hildebrand's background as a murderous rebel who killed union sympathizers. My Dad, like many folks, who relate their family histories, has made the mistake of not checking his facts. Many Missourians like my grandfather and Dad thought Jesse James was modern day Robin Hood; they were wrong about that too.

I can't blame my Dad for accepting the Gibson myths. In his day, there were no computers that make it easy to verify facts. Family tree builders of today, who accept at face value information passed down from their parents and grandparents without investigating the truth of such claims, have no such excuse. Often, the bigger the website and family tree, the bigger the lie. A classic mistake, in fact, seen in the tree in our family Bible, and an even more serious error, is the starting point that tree builders use to start their family trees in the first place—that character referred to as generation one. The wrong ancestor can, of course, get them completely off track. This obviously happened to the alternate Gibson genealogy I found online. One of the descendants started the story off with George Riley Sr., instead of William Riley Gibson, and at least they got his service record right. As I pointed out, however, she claimed he was from Ireland and had him marrying a different woman. These stories have obviously been in circulation for a long time. Unfortunately, as myths, which lack foundation they change through the prism of time. My own father told me that George Riley Gibson was Scottish from Northern Ireland—a half-truth. Both my Dad and the aforementioned family tree builder, failed to provide a reliable generation one ancestor. Considering the Scotch-Irish connection I discussed earlier, it's easy to see how both the blogger and my father went astray. It's true that my ancestors went to Ireland before sailing to the New World and prior to that they lived in England for awhile, but beyond these basic claims, there is a stream of mounting fiction. To my Dad's credit, he never really embellished the family tree. It was always the story that Dennis Willard, his father told him. My Dad never mentioned George Riley's father, William Riley, or a Civil War connection, but told me that he arrived in 1857 in the United States, which, of course, was when George Riley (son of William Riley) was born. That one genealogist started his first generation off with the King of Picts staggers the imagination!

In addition to the major errors in the alternate genealogy and the myths passed down by my Dad, are several other errors in the online alternate account, such as the record of the death of my grandfather Dennis Willard Gibson (son of George Riley) and the final destination of my grandmother Myrtle Gibson. The alternate genealogy claims my grandfather, a house-mover in Los Angeles, was crushed to death by a house. The fact was he was injured during a house-moving job with his brother-in-law Buford Mitchell, but he died of heart attack in his own living room in 1955 (another instance of a half-truth). This error is an example of how information passed down by word-of-mouth changes with time. The blogger at least had the name and occupation right, but she failed, because of lack of research, to get her story straight. She also had my grandmother moving to Washington to live with her adopted daughter Jean, when, in fact, Myrtle died in a rest home in Whittier, California. All of these mistakes have been made because of careless record keeping but also because of family pride. After the investigation I made into the alternate Gibson genealogy, I discovered that this website doesn't even have an email for readers to allow feedback. This is also true for many of the genealogies online. It is, like many similar websites, a place closed to comment, and purposely so. From the most amateurish and "bare bones" trees to ones that make outlandish links to medieval ancestors and even kings, investigators, even professionals on behalf of their clients, boldly proclaim the greatness of their ancestors to the world, without finding out if any of it is true. Truth, because it's defined differently by many amateurs and professional genealogist, has, in many ways, lost its validity. Now, on the genealogical tree, it's what fits that appears to matter.

The problems I discovered in tracing my own line back into time are the same problems most researchers encounter: (1) lack of evidence, (2) gaps in the record, and (3) bogus genealogies that supposedly fill in the gaps and supply the missing evidence. As a matter of personal policy, I won't mention those agencies claiming to give seekers genealogies based upon DNA nor will I cite examples of conflicting genealogies for Gibson family trees that used their services. But I will say one thing to folks starting out in their genealogy research. DNA works in forensic science; it doesn't work for family trees, especially for those remote ancestors like Charlemagne and the King of the Picts. To ascribe relationships for individuals in relation to entire groups of people in the world based upon DNA in order to make fantastic claims is the purest folly. If you don't believe me, type into the Google search box the name of the most popular genealogy service, followed by the word *customer reviews* or better yet go to the Complaints Board and type in the agency in question. There are countless complaints about the most popular genealogy services, ranging from issues on misleading the client to outright inaccuracy. There are, in fact, numerous warnings about such agencies from experts in the United States and Great Britain, even specials on CBS and the general media showing that they are scams, and yet genealogy services rake in billions in manufacturing genealogies. The root problem for genealogy errors is not merely those fantastic claims; it is the credulity of individuals searching for ancestors. The basic law of supply and demand is at work here. The gaps in their family trees drive seekers crazy. They must fill them—the sooner the better. Many people want to believe that the genealogy gaps can be filled with famous people, such as Charlemagne, William the Conqueror or other remote historical figures. Because a genealogy service might verify such a lineage, they will have boasting rights. I am struck speechless by the claims of many amateur genealogists about their lineage. For example, there are thousands of folks with different surnames that claim to have ancestors on the Mayflower without solid evidence, based merely on the say so of parents, relatives or similar genealogies online. Mayflower logs are easily found on the web, and yet their fathers or grandfathers told them, and,

once again, it's the God's honest truth—forget historical facts! Well, my father passed down to me my family tree, and I have discovered that he got it wrong. I don't blame him, because his father told him, and it is essentially a family legend. Perhaps if he had a computer back then he might not have made such errors. In our modern age of computer technology and instant access to data, there is no excuse! I've come across some of the most exaggerated and overblown family trees online that lead me to believe that the chronicler's genealogy, like the alternate Gibson Family tree chronicler, are based upon errors passed down the line. Of course, many folks, like myself, don't expect that much in their trees. Some folks are merely curious. (I didn't start a tree until being prodded by my wife.) Other folks, however, may be filling a void in their life or want to make them seem more important by attaching themselves to famous ancestors. There are several examples of this. Elizabeth Warren, a recent Senator from Massachusetts claimed to have Cherokee ancestry, perhaps to boost her political chances. In spite of admitting that she had been led to believe this falsity, she included this information in a book, "A Fighting Chance." Who Do You Think You Are?, a program showcasing celebrity genealogy disclosed that a certain actress and model was a direct descendant of Charlemagne. Charlemagne had countless children, however. After twelve centuries after this emperor's reign, through the mists of time, can you imagine how many people can claim that they descended from this king?

The DNA Scam

To worsen the chicanery offered by genealogical services is the use of DNA for building family trees. So called DNA professionals, after a client send in a swab of saliva, match the saliva to a massive database of like-minded seekers, and come up with the most dubious relationships. If you go far enough back we're all related. There are untold thousands of Gibsons in the world mixed in with the general populations of their adopted homelands, thousands with the same or similar names, many of whom lived in the same period of time. The only reliable evidence of my ancestors is what I find in the record. If there is doubt in the details, as in the case of Thomas Gibson, the first ancestor (generation one) on my family tree, a question mark is added, as in the case of the date of his death. Everything else (family, residence, etc) must be left blank. In fact, if I discovered that Thomas Gibson wasn't really my ancestor, generation one would drop to the next (verified) member on the tree. It is at such a point, of course, that many seekers have DNA genealogist fill in the blanks, a process of upward mobility based on DNA criteria, not solid facts, that will likely lead to misrepresentations of data and downright fiction.

Without accurate records traced from a single line of descent, the seeker is on shaky ground. Now DNA profiles have added a new dimension of error to the genealogical process. As I explained earlier, I was told and shown records that prove I came from Scottish roots—not a bold or egocentric claim. I never expected much. But when I began serious research online, I found out I was not the descendant of a wild Scottish highlander. My ancestors were from Northern Europe, very likely Jutland. (But not to worry! Perhaps with a swab of saliva, I might be connected to Alfred the Great!) Using my own upwardly unfinished tree as an example, try to comprehend how many generations led up to the point in my own tree and then multiply this problem by the movement and intermingling of bloodlines through the centuries. My family bears little resemblance to the family tree in the family Bible. It is a long story that begins, not in Scotland as I was told; nor does the Gibson family, as a whole, have a right to claim Celtic ancestry.... We come from the same stock as most Englishmen: Anglo Saxons, who are

Germanic relatives of Franks, from whom came Emperor Charlemagne.... Does that mean we might be kin?

An article appearing in a London-based internet publication reads as follows: "Online DNA testing services which promise to unlock the secrets of your ancestors are a waste of money." Simon Easteal, an expert in human evolution with the Australian National University in Canberra, also claims that "It's a complete waste of money." Companies, such as 23andMe, boast they can go much deeper than a simple family tree to provide information that describes your genetic heritage." According to the London and Australian watchdog groups, such tests provide such vague information, the results are hardly better than horoscopes. According to Jonathan Marks of the University of North Carolina, "It sure looks like science. Well, it is science. It's done by scientists, and it's done on DNA samples. And it produces real data. That's the beauty of this scam. The companies aren't scamming you. They're not giving you fraudulent information. They are giving you data, real data, and allowing you to scam yourself." (Live Science.com.) Dr. Deborah Bolnick, an anthropologist from the University of Texas at Austin, had monitored the claims and testing methodologies associated with the many internet-based companies that have moved into capitalize on DNA technology. She and other scientists are urging academic associations to issue policy statements urging limitations on what these companies should be allowed to claim to unsuspecting consumers. In some extreme cases of pseudo-science, companies have encouraged law enforcement agencies to utilize their data in their criminal investigations, which implies that they actually believe their outlandish claims. Rather than focus upon traditional, rational approaches to identify suspects, detectives could be enticed into the dangerous practice of phenotypic profiling - all as a consequence of the irresponsible claims of DNA researchers.... Once more, I ask the question, what is truth? Over a million DNA ancestry tests have been purchased by Americans since this quack science began. The following list of articles attacking the DNA ancestry business underscores my own concern for the misconceptions, errors, and fiction rampant in online genealogies: A Case of Mistaken Ancestry; The Hopes and Limitations of Genetic Genealogy (CBS 60-Minutes); DNA ancestry tests are meaningless; Can DNA help me find my roots?; Look into the mirror rather than your DNA; African ancestry DNA fraud; and The Bogedness of DNA for genealogy research.