

**SEARCHES INTO THE ORIGINS AND HISTORY
OF OUR BRANCH OF THE ROSS FAMILY.**

The earliest family record that has come down in our family regarding our Ross ancestors is a letter of reference given to Thomas Ross and his wife Isabel, which is copied below:

These Are Certifying to all concerned that the bearer hereof Thomas Ross with his wife Isabel Ross were born in the Parish of Kincardin and lived therein all their time soberly and inoffensively free from public scandal or Church censure known to us. So that at their Removal from this place at the date hereof we know nothing to hinder the said Thomas Ross with his wife and family to be received and admitted into any Christian Society where Providence may order their lot. Given at Kincardin this twenty third day of June one thousand seven hundred and seventy two years in name of the Kirk Session,

The above is alleged by

Alex'r Ross elder

Gilbert Robertson minister

Simon Ross J.P.

William Smith Sess. Clk.

1772

A second document which has been handed down in our family is a discharge from the British army following the American War of Independence for Thomas Ross Taylor, a copy of which is shown below:

His Majesty's PROVINCIAL REGIMENT, called the King's Royal Regiment of New-York Second Battalion whereof, Sir John Johnson, Knight and Baronet, is Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant.

THESE are to certify, that the Bearer hereof, Thomas Ross Taylor Private Soldier...in Capt. James McDonell Company, of the aforesaid Regiment, born in the

Parish of _____ in the ~~County~~ Shair of Ross Aged Fifty Eight hath served Three Years; and in consequence of His Majesty's Order for Disbanding the said Regiment, he is hereby discharged, and is intituled, by His Majesty's late order, to the Portion of Land allotted to each Private soldier of His Provincial Corps who wishes to become a settler in this Province. He having first received all just demands of Pay, Cloathing, etc. from his entry into the said Regiment, to the date of his Discharge, as appears by his Receipt on the back hereof,

Given under my Hand and Seal at arms, at Montreal this 24th __Day of June, 1784.

John Johnson
(signature)

I do certify that Thos... served in the above Rgt. from the 19th June 1776 until the 24th June 1784.

Walter Sutherland (signature)
Sgt., Rgt New York

On the reverse side of this document is the following certificate:

I Thomas Ross Taylor do acknowledge that I have received all my Cloathing, Arrears of Pay, and all demands whatsoever, from the time of my Inlisting in the Regiment and Company mentioned on the other side, to this present Day of my discharge, as Witness my Hand this 24th day of June _____ 1784.

his
Thomas X Ross
mark

A third document which has been handed down in our family is a letter written from the Office of American Claims, Montreal. When the British forces were defeated in the American Revolutionary War men who served on the British side could not return to their homes in the American Colonies. As a result they lost any property that they could not carry away with them..The British Government set up a Commission to examine these losses and to compensate the veterans to some degree. It was from the Montreal office that this letter came, in reply, apparently, to an application which Thomas Ross Taylor had made previously. The letter is copied below:

Office of American Claims,
Montreal, 20th June 1787.

Sir,

I am directed by the Commissioners, to require your attendance, with the Witnesses you intend to produce, in Support of your Claim at their Office in Montreal any time after the 30th Oct. next during the ensuing winter when your Case will be taken into Consideration.

I am Sir,

Your humble servant
Peter Hunter Sec.

Mr. Thomas Ross Taylor
Township No.1.
Catarauqui

The above letter is folded to form its own envelope and sealed with wax, and addressed as follows:

Mr. Thomas Ross
Taylor
Township No.1,
Catarauqui.

American
office

These three documents, and a considerable number of family memories and traditions, are the information which we bring to the search for our family history.

The search takes us first to Lancaster, Glengarry County, Ontario, from where our family moved in 1850, settling in North East Hope Township near Stratford, Ontario. The letter from the Office of American Claims is addressed to Township No. 1, which was later to be known as Lancaster township, so a link with the earliest days of settlement at Lancaster is established.

Taking a cue from the above letter, we wondered if our ancestor had applied for compensation for losses in the war, and wrote to the Public Archives at Ottawa, They sent back photocopies of two applications for compensation for losses in the recent war which had been made out by Thomas Ross Taylor, one by Thomas Bane Ross and one by Thomas Ross of Drunvoich. Also, they sent me photocopies of two

petitions, one to the Governor-in- Council, and the other to the Commission on land grants and surveys, in which the veterans complain about the delay in surveying the land which had been granted to them, and urging that the survey be speeded up. The names of two Rosses, one a Thomas Taylor Ross, appear on both of these documents. When we visited Lancaster in October, 1978, we found a gravestone in the Old South Cemetery in Lancaster with the names of Thomas Ross and his wife, Isabella, The inscription on the stone read as follows:

In memory of Thomas Ross of Lancaster, a native of Kincardine, Rosshire, Scotland, who departed this life the 22 July, 1794, aged 78 years, and Isabella, His wife who departed this life the 24 Sept 1817, aged 74 years.

This stone is erected by their affectionate sons , Donald, Alex., John and George Ross.

Just a few feet to the south of this stone we found one with the names of Alexander Ross and Mary McLean on it. We had found a link with the latter in baptismal records which had been sent to us by the Glengarry Genealogical Society at Lancaster, which had been copied from the baptismal register of St. Andrews Church, Williamstown. Children named William, Thomas, Allan, Duncan, and Barbara were certified to be the offspring of Alexander Ross and Mary McLean. Traditions which have come down in our family tell us that there were a Thomas, Allan, and Barbara, brothers and sister of our great grandfather, Alexander Ross.

At this point we think we have found conclusive documentation to show that Alexander Ross and his wife, Mary McLean, are ancestors of our branch of the Ross family.

A second problem has been solved. There are two children by the name of William. but no Alexander, but we note that the birth date of one William coincides with that of Alexander, our great grandfather, 1804. From another source, we learn that Alexander Ross, husband of Sarah Fraser, was known to his in-laws as William Ross. Clearly, he was known by both names , but in later life he used the name Alexander.

It seems natural to look upon the gravestone nearby with the names of Thomas Ross and Isabella Ross on it as the parents of Alexander Ross husband of Mary McLean, which in fact our family did years ago. But here we run into a contradiction. Alexander, whose name appears on the stone as one of four brothers who had erected

the stone in their parents' memories, is claimed to be Alexander of Charlottenburgh. (Charlottenburgh is the township which lies immediately to the west of Lancaster Township and the town of Lancaster lies astride the boundary between them.) He married a Munro, and is the ancestor of Rev. Dr. Hugh Dobson, who was a well-known minister of the United Church until his death, some years ago. In spite of this puzzling problem we come back again and again to the conviction that there is a connection between the two families, though we do not know what it is up to this time.

This conclusion was supported in a surprising way when I sent a copy of the above letter of reference to Thomas Ross and his wife Isabel to Mrs. Rhoda Ross, secretary of the Glengarry Genealogical Society. She sent back a copy of a similar letter which had been handed down in either the Thomas Taylor Ross or the Thomas Bane Ross families and it was word for word the same. (Mrs. Rhoda Ross's husband is a descendant of Thomas Taylor Ross.) It seems most unlikely that two couples with identical names would receive letters of reference on the same date and in the same place.

Uncle John Ross of Richdale, Alberta, later of Chilliwack, B.C., told me that his family used to say that our ancestor was a boy when he came to Glengarry, or perhaps, to America. Using available dates we calculate that Alexander of Lancaster was nineteen when the family came to Glengarry. He would have been, by this calculation, eleven years old when they came to the Johnson estate in New York. This might support a hypothesis that he was the son of Thomas Taylor Ross by an earlier marriage. Perhaps he had been brought up by a neighboring family.

We have made some effort to find information about our family prior to their coming to America but have found the effort to be fruitless. Enquiries to the General Register Office for Scotland reveal that there are no statistical records available for the Parish of Kincardine prior to 1804, thirty years after Thomas and Isabel Ross had migrated to New York. In this enquiry, I enquired about the location of the Parish of Greigh, Sutherlandshire, from which a number of Glengarry pioneers have come. They replied that they could find no record of such a parish. We had made this enquiry because we had noticed on the map of Scotland that there is a place called Creich, just across the Dornoch Firth from Kincardine, only a mile or so away. I think Greigh and Creich are the same place. If this is so the people of Kincardine and the people of Creich were neighbors, would know each other, and would probably be intermarried. The Register Office said that there are no births recorded before 1785, and no marriages before 1809 for the Parish of Creich.

“The name 'Ross' which in Old Gaelic is the equivalent of 'promontory' was

originally applied to the eastern portion of the modern county, jutting out into the North Sea, and bounded on the south by the Cromarty Firth and on the north by the Dornoch Firth, and stretching inland to the central watershed.” (The Clan Ross, Johnson's Clan Histories)

Thomas Ross and his wife Isabel came from a country that had suffered a long and turbulent struggle. Clan rivalries, the constant pressure from the English kings for the control of Scotland, the struggle of the Stuarts, with the help of France, to regain the throne of Scotland, the Industrial Revolution in the late years of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century, all contributed to the suffering and destitution of the people of the Highlands. The Cause of Jacobites, the supporters of the Stuarts, was finally suppressed by the Duke of Cumberland and his army in 1746 when he defeated the army of Prince Charles Edward Stuart at Culloden Moor near Inverness. The introduction of steam power in the manufacture of woollen yarns and clothing made sheep raising extremely profitable, and the land owners began forcing their tenants off the land to make room for sheep pasture.

“Some fifteen years after the 1745 Jacobite Rising there began in Ross the period of improvements” inaugurated by the new lairds of Balnagown. Some of these were of lasting benefit to the people, but the others such as the introduction of sheep and the consolidation of holdings into large sheep farms, caused untold hardships to the inhabitants of Ross. Sir James Lockhart Ross of Balnagown set the example of shamelessly clearing off his tenants to make room for sheep. In 1792 the people attempted to drive the sheep out of the districts altogether but the military stopped them. The 'Clearances' went on until after the middle of the nineteenth century and the people had to shift some to the cities, and others overseas. " (The Clan Ross, by Donald McKinnon, Johnson's Clan Histories, p28, 1957.)

It was out of these oppressive conditions that Thomas Ross and his wife, Isabel, left Scotland in 1772 or 1773 for the New World. The Ross family may have crossed the Atlantic to New York on board a ship which was used to take lumber to "Britain on the return trip. A lucrative lumber trade was being carried on between Britain and the colonies. Cargoes of passengers were often taken on board for the westward journey to provide 'ballast'. In 1773 The Pearl sailed from Inverness. Thomas and Isabel Ross and their family just might have been among the passengers .

The land to which they came was the estate of Sir William Johnson, located west of Albany in upper state New York. William Johnson, an Irishman, had served with great distinction in dealing with the Indians and in repulsing the French armies from

Quebec. In recognition of his services to the British Government he was made a baronet and granted 100,000 acres of land on the north side of the Mohawk River Valley. As the wars with the French and the northern Indians quieted down Johnson began to organize his estate in the style of an old country barony. At this time large numbers of Scottish Highlanders were settling in the area and many of them became his tenants. A parish was organized with its common and church, surrounded by the farms and homes of the tenants. A very old cemetery from colonial days still remains to mark the site of the common, and a lovely park is maintained to retain its historic significance. Though aspiring to be an old world parish, it was still the frontier, with Indians and Scots living side by side, and it was known locally as 'Johnson's Bush'

In order to get a picture of life in Johnson's Bush in the 1770's we must push ahead in our story. The War of Independence would soon break up their quiet life and many of them would find new homes on the St. Lawrence River to the north. These Loyalists lost everything that they owned but what they could carry with them. Recognizing their losses, the British government set up a commission to examine their losses and compensate them to some degree. Veterans applied for compensation, listing their losses farm stock, grain and household effects. These lists are very valuable, and help us to reconstruct their way of life on Johnson's estate. We have a copy of the application made by Thomas Ross Taylor, which lists a house, barn and stable, a horse, a plough and a harrow. He had milk cows, pigs and sheep. In his fields he grew Indian corn, wheat, rye, peas, oats, flax, hemp and potatoes. They had gathered maple sap and boiled down 100 pounds of maple sugar, which is no mean task. Among their prized tools was a grindstone for sharpening their axes and knives. They had a little money, 11½ dollars which would be Spanish coins, because the local currency was in New York pounds. Thomas Taylor Ross occupied a tenant farm under the Kingsborough Patent and had "19 acres in the said Patent under good improvements and well enclosed."

The name, 'Kingsborough' still exists as the name of a road which runs from the south east into Gloversville and near the site of the old common. Note from a brochure: Old Kingsborough, A part of Gloversville since 1890, this is a typical New England common with homes, a church and a cemetery surrounding a lovely green. The Ross homestead must have been somewhere in the vicinity of the common.

The town of Gloversville gets its name from an early industry and is still famous for its glove manufacturing. "The beginning of the industry can be traced back to 1760

when a group of glove makers were brought from Perth shire, Scotland, and settled in the country by Sir William Johnson. "Encyclopedia Americana. A few miles to the south is the town of Johnstown where Johnson built his baronial mansion and court house, which is still in use today.

The Mohawk Valley and the high rolling hills which reach back from it must have attracted the Scottish settlers for it would remind them of their native heath, a lovely rural land, with tiny farms in the midst of the forest and to the north lakes and streams, and the highlands of the Adirondack Mountains. Here Scot and Indian lived side by side, but soon their lives were to be still more closely interlocked as the War of Independence broke into open conflict. The senior Johnson died on July 11, 1774 and his son, Sir John, became lord of the manor. The Johnsons had received their lands from the British Government, and they were to remain loyal to the British cause throughout the conflict and they recruited a great number of the Scottish settlers to serve with them.

As we have seen, Thomas Ross and his family were not to have long to live in peace. Revolution broke into open warfare in the spring of 1776, just 3 to 4 years after they had arrived from Scotland.

That spring, Sir John Johnson took about 200 hundred of his Highland tenants and other Highlanders from the Albany area and went north to Canada. Traveling up the Sacandaga River they arrived at St. Regis on the south bank of the St. Lawrence River after 19 days in the wilderness. From there Johnson went to Montreal and received a commission as a colonel in the British forces to raise two regiments to fight the rebels. The names of two Thomas Rosses appear in the muster rolls of the King's Royal Regiment of New York., of which Johnson was now the commanding officer. Both were enlisted on the same day, June 19th, 1776, one in Captain Watt's Company " and the other in Captain John Munro's Company . The name of Munro appears in connection with Thomas Taylor Ross's family. A Hugh Munro was a neighbor at Johnstown, New York and witnessed for him in his application for reparations to the Office of American Claims at Montreal. Also, Alexander Ross of Charlottenburgh and his two brothers, Donald and John, married Munros. It is probable, then that Thomas Taylor Ross was mustered into Capt. John Munro's company on June 19th, 1776.

There is a link with this mustering-in date in our family document, the discharge of

Thomas Ross Taylor from the second battalion of the K.R.R.N.Y.. At the bottom of this document there is a handwritten note signed by Walter Sutherland, Sgt., Rgt. New York, stating that Thos. had served from June 19th,1776 until the 24th June 1784.

There is some evidence to show that the families of those who followed Johnson to the St. Lawrence were left behind. Some years ago the late Rev. Dr. Hugh Dobson, a descendant of Alexander Ross of Charlottenburgh, sent me a copy of material which he had gathered regarding the Ross history, in which there was a copy of a petition made by the members of the King's Royal Regiment of New York to their commanding officer, Sir John Johnson, requesting that permission be secured to bring their families to Canada from the counties of Tryon and Albany. The petition and the names of the petitioners are copied below.

To The Honorable Sir John Johnson, Lieut. Colonel Commander of Kings Royal Regiment of New York:

The humble petition of sundry soldiers of said regiment showeth- That your humble petitioners whose names are hereunto subscribed have families in different places in counties of Albany and Tryon, who have been and are daily being ill treated by the enemies of the government. Therefore we do humbly pray that your Honor would be pleased to procure permission for them to come to Canada. And your petitioners will ever pray.

John McClenny	Alex Ferguson
Thomas Ross	Thos. Taylor
Alexander Cameron	William Cameron
Frederick Goose	George Murdhop
Wm. Urghad	William Chissem
Duncan McIntire	John Christy
Andrew Milcross	Daniel Campbell
Donald McCarter	Donald Ross
Allan Grant	Donald Chissem
Hugh Chisholm	Roderick McDonald
Angus Grant	Alexander Grant
John McDonald	

A second part of the petition names the petitioners and lists the number in each family. No date is given so we cannot connect them with a definite year. Elsewhere we read that these families were moved north under the protection of friendly Indians.

At this writing we have exhausted our information about the life of Thomas Ross and his family in Tryon (Fulton) County, Province of New York . We now turn to the story of their move to what was then known as part of the Province of Quebec, which extended westward to Lake Huron. Much information of a general nature exists about the exodus of the Loyalists or Tories from the American colonies during and after the War of Independence.

Much information of a general nature exists about the exodus of the Loyalists or Tories from the American colonies. during and after the War of Independence.

"While hostilities ceased in 1781, the fate of the Loyalists was not determined until the Treaty of Paris of 1782. The treaty provisions relating to boundaries and to the Loyalists were of peculiar importance to Canada. The Loyalists regarded the provisions of the treaty as utterly inadequate for their protection." The Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol. VI, p .185-187.

As early as 1774 Loyalists from the western frontier began to make their appearance as the British posts on the Richelieu. The measures of repression taken against those who manifested Tory leanings during 1775 and 1776 sent many to Canada, and from these refugees the militia units which participated in border warfare were largely recruited. The reverse to the British cause at Saratoga in 1777 started fresh movements northward. By the autumn of 1778, at least 3000 Loyalists had gone to Canada." C. H. B. E. p.191.

Grace Campbell, in her book, Highland Heritage, speaks of the Highlanders who had settled on the Johnson lands on pp.121-122.

" At the close of the war they were offered grants of land in the British territory to the north, and as the United Empire Loyalists they made their painful way through the wilderness, with their wives and children, to the north shore of the St. Lawrence River, just east of the " present city of Cornwall in Ontario. They settled there in that rich wooded area, cut down the huge trees and made homes for themselves in what is now the County of Glengarry."

A.R.M. Lower, in his book, Colony To Nation, has this to say,

“It was these 'Johnsonians' and their associates who formed the camp at Sorel in the winter of 1783-84. Others of the old province, who in one way or another had been caught up in the losing tide, were also there, Hessian mercenaries adrift from their regiments, ordinary New York farmers, Germans and Hudson Valley Dutchmen.

They formed the largest group of Loyalists to come to the Province of Quebec and their varied origins suggest that those of English speech and Anglo-Saxon origin may actually have been in the minority among them..When they were distributed to the lands along the upper St. Lawrence care was taken that the people of the different groups should be kept together .We can picture the procession of barges that set out in the spring of 1784; settlers, animals, supplies, tools, all piled together, for the attack on the wilderness in the new townships surveyed between the last French settlement and the Bay of Quinte. The convoy would move slowly along, sailing, poling, rowing and as it came to the spots decided upon, some of the barges would drop off, leaving their occupants to face the woods that henceforth were to be their home. Highland Catholics were the first to land, adjacent to their co-religionists. Next came their Presbyterian brethren, so that all the Scots could be together in what was to be their county of Glengarry. Then the Germans, also Protestants, were assigned their sites in Stormont County, where German names and Lutheran Churches still abound. Lastly came the miscellaneous Dutch and English, along the river up to Kingston and the Bay of Quinte .”

Colony to Nation -A. R. M.. Lower, pp.115-117

Another writer, Edwin C. Guillet, discusses the Glengarry Highlanders in his book, *Pioneer Settlements In Upper Canada*.

“During the Revolutionary war most of the Scots in New York State remained staunch Loyalists, large numbers of them taking up arms against the rebels. As a result they were ill-treated during the last years of the struggle and sought permission to come to Canada where they would remain under the British flag. It was not, however, until the Revolutionary war was over, in 1783, that it was possible to disband the King's Royal Regiment of New York (usually known as the Royal Yorkers) and the Royal Highland Emigrant Regiment. The officers and men of the First Battalion of the former unit, with their families, had been stationed at the close of the war at Isle Aux Noix and Carleton Island. These Highlanders, 1462 in number, settled in 1784 in the first five townships west of the Quebec boundary -Lancaster, Charlottenburg, Cornwall, Osnabruck and Williamsburg. This unit was Sir John Johnson's corps, and most of its members had been his dependents and retainers in the Mohawk Valley. Most of the Second Battalion of the same regiment settled farther west in Lennox and Prince Edward Counties.”’Williamstown was the centre of the settlement along the front of Glengarry, and New Johnstown (Cornwall) in Stormont, was the main government depot for the whole district ”....

“The generous land grants which were made to these Loyalists were based upon the rank that each man had held in the army. Each private soldier received one hundred acres on the river front and two hundred acres remote; fifty acres were allowed in addition to his wife and to each child, while each son and daughter upon coming of age was to receive an additional two hundred acres, Officers' grants were considerably larger, as much as five thousand acres being given to field officers. The settlement of Glengarry County was probably military to a greater extent than that of

any other section of the province. Each township was assigned to a corps, the lots were then numbered and placed in a hat and each soldier in turn drew his , grant and went immediately to his future home. Occasionally, some of the settlers afterwards exchanged lots in order that old comrades might be alongside one another .."

"For three years they were supplied with most of the necessaries of life -food, clothes, seed, farm animals and implements. Coarse cloth suitable for trousers was supplied and Indian blankets for coats; boots were made out of skin or heavy cloth. In addition to a hoe, a mattock, and a spade, an axe was given to each settler, and a cross-cut saw and a whip saw to every two families, or, in some cases, to every four. It was intended to give a cow to each two families but the supply was insufficient. Each group of families received a set of tools, and a 'firelock' or musket; muskets were later given to every family.

"A few ploughs were brought into the settlement soon afterwards, and agents were sent even to the United States to obtain supplies of seed-wheat for distribution. Portable corn-mills, run by hand, were given out, and efforts made to erect saw-mills and grist-mills as soon as possible. Some settlers were allowed to borrow military tents for temporary purposes and boats were provided at convenient points along the river for their use.

The Imperial Government ordered a reduction in the rations soon after the beginning of the settlement along the river, but Governor Frederick Haldemand disobeyed the instructions and continued the supplies in full."

"Pioneer life was similar along the St. Lawrence to that in all early settlements. The inhabitants met in 'bees' to help one another in the erection of rough log shanties, which were plastered inside and out with clay. An ample hearth made of flat stones was always prominent, and as no boards to make a door were available at first, a blanket suspended from the inside frequently took its place. After a time four small panes of glass were fitted into a rough sash for the one small window, and the shanty was complete. The staple food was pork and wolves were then so numerous that it was unsafe to smoke the meat outside during the night."

Pioneer Settlements In Upper Canada, Chap. I,
by Edwin C. Guillet,(1933- U.of T.)

Turning from a general view of the settlement of Glengarry County, we will now examine available records and documentation about Thomas Ross Taylor, his wife and family.

The name of Thomas T. Ross appears on McNiff's map a survey map indicating the lots in Lancaster Township on Lot #28, 1st Concession on the water front, about a mile east of the present town of Lancaster.

On a list of settlers from the Ontario Crown Lands Department, numbered MG9 D4 Volume 9, the name of Thomas Ross Taylor appears, stating that big residence is Lancaster, and that he had a wife, and three children. The name of Thomas Taylor

Ross appears on a victualing list of Township #1 Loyalists who received their provisions at New Johnstown(Cornwall) Aug. 25-31,1786. Those of his family listed were:

1 female, 3 males over 10 years, total, 5 persons.

Highland Heritage, Vol.2, No. 1.

A note in the family records at Seaforth, Ontario, reads as follows:
Lancaster, September 12,1887.

Thomas died July 22, 1794,
a native of Rosshire, Parish of Kincardin, aged 78 years.

Isabell Ross Sept.24,1811.
A native of Sutherlandshire, Parish of Kinross.

The above record was written in the year that great grandfather, Alexander Ross, a son of Alexander Ross and Mary McLean, passed away. One may assume that such information would be fresh in their minds, and could be verified at that time. One notes that this information is substantially similar to the inscription on the stone in the Old South Cemetery, Lancaster described in Alex W. Fraser's Gravestones of Glengarry as gravestone #86, which we quote below:

Gravestone #86: "In memory of Thomas Ross of Lancaster, a native of Kincardine, Rosshire, Scotland, who died/departed this life the 22 July, 1794, aged 78 years and Isabella Ross his wife who departed this life the 24 Sept. 1817, aged 74 years. This stone is erected by their affectionate sons Donald, Alex, John, and George.

Just to south of the above stone is located #87

"In memory of Alex. Ross a native of Rosshire, Scotland, who died March 15,1852 aged 88 years and Mary McLean his wife, a native of Greigh, Sutherland Shire, Scotland, who died March 12,1877, aged 88 years."

Note: On a visit to the Old South Cemetery in October,1978 we examined stone #87. We found that the name of Alex. Ross is quite clear, but that the inscription below his name has eroded beyond deciphering. The name of Mary McLean is clear but the name of her birthplace could not be read. However, the date of her death is clear and unmistakable, March 15,1855, not 1877, as given in Gravestones or Glengarry. We

are particularly concerned about this because the date March 12, 1855 fits in with other family information while the 1877 date does not. Mrs. Rhoda Ross, secretary of the Glengarry Genealogical Society at Lancaster has sent me records from their files taken from

the church register of the St. Andrews Church at Williamstown which give birth dates and names of children of Alexander Ross and his wife Mary McLean. The oldest of these children is Thomas, born in 1796. If Mary McLean was 88 years of age in 1877 she would have been 11 years old in 1796, but if she was 88 in 1855 she would have been 33 years old. This also seems a little improbable for the mother of five children but still possible.

The data received from the gravestone of Alex Ross and Mary McLean and the baptismal records from the register of St. Andrews Church, Williamstown, along with our own family traditions fit together very well. Our family tradition tells us that great grandfather, Alex Ross had brothers Thomas and Allan and a sister, Barbara. It is more than coincidence that the family of Alex Ross and Mary McLean included Thomas, Allan, and Barbara. The baptismal records from St. Andrews Church also include two baptized William, which is puzzling, and also Duncan.

I think we have solved the problem of the first William. We now know that my great grandfather, Alex Ross, was known as William to his in-laws, the family of Sarah Fraser, his wife, as William Ross. We know nothing of the second William, or Duncan. Perhaps, as often happened, they died in childhood. We confirm, also, that Alexander Ross of Lancaster had a son Alexander as well as a son, Allan. (See Reid's Sons and Daughters or American Loyalists, page 262.) Apparently, this Alexander was baptized William. (An interesting side note to this is that my father's name was William Alexander Ross, and he always used his second name Alex. He was said to be his grandfather's, favorite, perhaps because he had been called after him.) Up to now I get the feeling that the name William has some significance in the background of the family, and that Alexander Ross husband of Mary McLean may have been known as William Ross also.

Almost unconsciously we have slipped away from recording the story of Thomas Taylor Ross (or Thomas Ross Taylor) to discovering connections between our family and Alexander Ross, his wife, Mary McLean, and Thomas Ross and his wife, Isabella Ross of the gravestone in the Old South Cemetery at Lancaster. Now we must retrace our steps somewhat. In the Fall of 1978 my wife and I visited Johnstown and

Gloversville, New York, the place to which our Ross ancestors came just before the American War of Independence. We had an interesting meeting with two young ladies who were acting as guides at the Johnson mansion at Johnstown. They directed us to the local library where we were given a card index of material on the Loyalists to examine. In it we discovered that there is a rentals roll in the mansion from the days of Sir William Johnson. It is a huge leather bound volume which, apparently, had been prepared to record the rentals of tenants on the Johnson Estate, but it had never been used. At the top of each two pages, as the book lay open, the name of a tenant had been inscribed in large, flourishing letters. The name of Thomas Ross appears in one section with the word "taylor" beside it in much smaller lettering. The visual affect may be reproduced by typing THOMAS ROSS in capital letters and taylor beside the name in small type. In no way could one construe that taylor is intended to be part of the man's name. We looked for a descriptive word beside other names but found only one. The name was McDonnell, and the word beside his name was his title or place of origin. We think that in the beginning taylor referred to a trade or craft. Perhaps Thomas Ross was in some way involved in the glovers' trade of the community. Or perhaps, because of this vocation, he was given the nickname of "Taylor", a custom which was so common among Highland people. It is interesting to speculate on how Thomas Ross of Rosshire, Scotland, became Thomas Ross taylor, then Thomas Ross Taylor, then Thomas Taylor Ross, and finally, on his grave stone, Thomas Ross again.

We take up the story of the veterans of the King's Royal Rifles of New York as they settled down on their grants of land along the St. Lawrence. The government was slow in getting the land surveyed, and problems arose when the claims of the younger members of their families had to be met as they came of age. The problem was complicated when new settlers from Scotland began to occupy the back concessions, which the veterans had regarded as the future grants to their sons and daughters. Two petitions were~prepared and sent to the Governor-in-Council, and to the Commissioners in charge of land grants and surveys.

Lancaster 31st March 1790

To the Honorable Board of Commissioners appointed for granting Land to Loyalists
The Mult Petition of the Inhabitants of Lancaster Township Sheweth

That wee had the 1st Concession run by Mr. Kotte in the year 1784. The 2nd
..Concession and the third as far as lot No.14 by Mr. Patrick McNiff. That on Mr.
McDonnell's being Appointed to run the other Two Concessions he was By his
Instructions to begin where Mr. McNiff left off .We are very sorry he did not follow

such Instructions. The Township is still unsurveyed And as most part of our fronts are so low, that wee are under the necessity of ---going unto our back Concessions to raise our bread if said Concession lines were run -.Wee therefore pray The Honorable Board will take our present distressed Situation unto Consideration Wee have wrote Twice to the Honorable John Collins Esq; the year 1788. His answer will be laid before you (by Captain Walter Sutherland) which is all the Satisfactions wee rec'd. Your Honors will judge if those above promises will support our families. (please turn, over)

All we request is that the Line dividing 2nd and 3rd con- cession would be run without loss of time. Of course there will be a Division line between us and the late Emigrants which (Wee are certain) will prevent a great deal of trouble and inconvenience to both parties. Resting assured that Your Honors will do everything in your powers to redress these grievances. Your Petitioners will as duty bound for ever pray –

Thos X Taylor Ross	William Faulkner
Thos. Bain Ross	Walter Sutherland
Luke Bowman	Alex'r Grant
David Ceas	Duncan Murchison
John Flynn	John Cameron
John Leman	John McDougald
Ross Williams .	Wm. Koble
R...Fountaine	David Gun
John M ...	Geo. Sutherland X mark
	Jacob X Snyder
James Hare	Alex'r X Manson
	Ralph Falkner
(Some names are not legible)	John Snyder
	James Young
	Augustes Silly
	John X Curry
	Alex'r Campbell
	Allan Campbell
	James X Seley

<p>Data on the cover:</p> <p>The Petition of the Inhabitants of Lancaster, Lancaster Township to The Honble Board of Commissioners for Land Board granting land to Loyalists 31 March 90</p>	<p>Approved s. please copy it makes the Inclosed addition W. Suthnd. Send it immediately to Mr. John McDonnell</p>
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No.2 Ccopy

Presented and approved by the Land Board 31st March 90

The second petition is as follows:

To His Excellency..... (not legible..... Canada etc..... etc.
The Petition of the Inhabitants of Lancaster Township most humbly sheweth
-That your petitioners have always been loyal Subjects, and were the first who joined Sir John Johnson Bart the year 1775 and followed him to Canada the 1776 and served in his Regt all the time of the late Rebellion, that your Petitioners were amongst the first who settled on his Majesty's lands, the year 1784, notwithstanding our repeated application to have our land surveyed it is still undone for the most part -your Excellency will soon discover by the Inclosed that wee have taken every step wee could in order to have the land on which we rec'd Certificate.....
Wee humbly pray your Excellency will be pleased to order the said Township to be surveyed, and to give Directions that the surveyor will begin at Lot No.14 3rd Concession, where Mr. Patrick McNiffleft off, Than, to run the 4th Concession line, which will make the Division line between us and the late Emigrants on that side and at the same time to run our family land in the 9th Concession, at which time it will appear whether or not the Emigrants have been placed on our land or not. Resting Satisfied that Your Excellency will be pleased to grant our request, when your Excellency will have been pleased to peruse the within which will Shew our Situation and how wee have been dealt with -your Petitioners will as duty bound forever pray

William Falconer x Falconer John McDougald David Gun Thos X Ross Thos x Ross Alex'r Ross Geo.x Ross Dond X Ross James Young David See Jacob Snyder Jony X Snyder Jas. X Silly Augustus X Silly	Geo. Sutherland Jos. Sutherland Jno. X Curry Ross X Williams Babit X Peard Geo. X Curry Geo. X StroudDe lage Robert De Lage John Grant Jas. Grant Allan Campbell Alex'r. Campbell Luke Bowman
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SB Four of the inhabitants will assist the Surveying Party.

Data on the cover:

ZI No. 75 Petition of the Inhabitants of Lancaster Township. 23 June 179-.

Rec'd June 28th

No.32

Referred by His Excellency the Gov.

in Council 17 VW 92

to the Surveyor General to report thereon. Reported on 28th Oct.90.

There are a number of things in these petitions that tell us about the life of Thomas Taylor Ross and his neighbors. New immigrants were crowding in to the north and taking over land which had been promised to the veterans' sons and daughters, They were not happy with the delay in getting surveys made so that they knew where their land was located. They were mostly illiterate men because nearly all of them had signed the petition with a mark including, Thos. Taylor Ross. We also note the name of Capt. Walter Sutherland as their representative before the Honble Board of Commissioners. There are indications that, while the offers of land to the veterans of the Revolutionary War had been generous, it was not going to be possible for all of them to get what had been promised and it was going to lead to considerable strife and litigation in the township. Also, they were finding that much of the land near the waterfront was swampy and unsuitable for growing cereal crops.

We have written this monograph so far with the assumption that Thomas Taylor Ross is our ancestor, but there are still many doubts and questions that we have not been able to answer. There are conflicts in dates, documentation and many other things so that we do not know what the relationship between Alexander Ross of Lancaster and Thomas Ross who was a native of the Parish of Kincardine, Ross Shire really is. . A note which might throw some light on the Ross relationships is found in the Ross papers in possession of Ethel Dennis of Seaforth, Ontario, which states that Isabell Ross was a native of Sutherland Shire, Parish of Kinross. This note is dated Lancaster, September 12,1887.

John A. Ross