

NEIL HAMILTON COEUR-BARRON (1925-1999)

Dr.Coeur-Barron was a distant cousin of mine. Frederick Whitlock who married Charlotte Oliver in St.Mary's, Ontario in 1868 were GreatGrandparents to both of us.

Neil was born Frederick Herbert Hamilton Coeur-Barron on Jul.3,1925 in Los Angeles, California but was always known to us as Neil. He was born at the White Memorial Hospital in Los Angeles which was to be an important place in his early life. His father, Herbert was an intern there and he was to spend his senior year of medical school and two years of residency there. It was also the place he was to meet his wife Mary Jean Graham.

The Modesto Bee calls Dr. Coeur-Barron the "patients' champion" for all the work he did on behalf of cancer patients at the local medical centre. Neil specialized in hematology and oncology was the first hematologist in Modesto when he set up practice there in 1968.

Neil and Jean were always interested in the family research, although in Neil's family the Whitlocks were somewhat lowly compared to the Cour-Barrons of Jersey and the Hamiltons who were landed gentry in Ireland. Visits were always full of family stories.

His grandmother was Charlotte Agnes Whitlock, sister to my grandfather. As both lived to be 99 they brought stories of the 1880's alive for us as children. Grandfather was a witness to the Riel Rebellion in 1885 and Aunt Aggie remembered travelling from St.Mary's, Ontario to Scratching River, North West Territories (now Morris, Manitoba) by covered wagon. They were the only non-native family in the area in the 1870's and the children knew as much Cree as English.

Several years ago Neil and Jean took their grandchildren on a cruise to Alaska and we had a couple of days together as the ship left from Vancouver. We drove out to Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge to tour the area his family had settled on reaching B.C. about 1919. The house is now gone as is the school that was behind it but the Museum has lots of pictures and we have an oil painting of the house my brother-in-law did some years ago. It was a beautiful day and there is nothing quite like walking through a place your ancestors once lived to bring them alive for you.

Our thanks to Jean for keeping the contact alive and for sharing. I will miss Neil and the extra reason to stop at Modesto on California trips. Families become more distant each generation and I appreciate we have kept the contact an extra couple of generations. Hopefully Neil's children and grandchildren will keep some interest in their distant Whitlock cousins.