

I'll just call it 'serendipity'

We have all encountered coincidences.

Whether they be delightfully positive or cruelly negative, there are events and occurrences in everyone's life that can only be called coincidence. No one likes a cruel, negative coincidence, but the positive ones are most welcome.

Actually I prefer to call them serendipity.

The dictionary defines serendipity as 1. an aptitude for making desirable discoveries by accident, or 2. good fortune; good luck.

Last Saturday, I would say that definition pretty much described the way things went.

I was at the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Limehouse, which turned out to be a raging success. Part way through the day's activities, I was approached by a woman.

"Hi Ted, my name is Marianne Brown," she said, "Some of the people here pointed you out to me, so I thought I'd introduce myself."

"The reason I wanted to talk to you," she continued, "Is that I believe you are related to my husband Hugh."

I asked how we were related, and she said, "through James Brown".

Now I should explain something here. In my family tree, during the late 1700s and 1800s, the Browns were partial to using the names of fathers, grandfathers, eldest brothers— you name it— over and over through each generation.

The names James, John, Alexander and David are so common, popping up in the Brown family tree, that I usually refer to them as 'James-1799' adding his year of birth, just to keep it straight.

So when Marianne Brown said we were related through 'James,' I needed her to be a bit more precise.

"Well, my husband Hugh is inside, and he'll tell you exactly which one we're talking about."

Enter Hugh Brown.

Now I'm average height, and don't as a rule feel 'small.' That was until I met Hugh Brown. He's a tall 'un.

After a quick intro, we established that we

Ted Brown



shared great-great-grandfather, James Brown-1799— the same one who purchased the Brown farm in April 1826, (the farm where I reside) who also built the farmhouse I live in today, and built one of the two barns at home as well.

And, logically, Hugh's great-grandfather Alexander also lived on the Brown home farm as a boy, before seeking his fortune up north.

Pretty neat stuff. Now this is where the coincidence becomes serendipity.

I just naturally assumed Hugh and Marianne were there as a result of the Limehouse 150th.

Nope, it was simply a lucky break. That morning in their Mount Hope home, Marianne suggested to Hugh over breakfast that 'today is a nice day, let's go find that cemetery in Limehouse, where your great-great-grandfather is buried.'

They happened upon the 150th celebration when they drove through Limehouse on their way to the cemetery. Hugh knew enough to ask for me, since another of our mutual cousins in Fonthill had given him my name— but knowing I'd be attending the 150th was simply a fluke.

So now Hugh Brown and I have met, and as a result, we will trade info on the Brown family connections. In doing so, we'll maintain the Brown history to pass down through the ages.

It was certainly an unplanned meeting, but I'll never call it a coincidence.

It was simply serendipity.

(Ted Brown can be reached at tbrown@independentfreepress.com)



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