

My Old Dutch



by Reg Green

Harvard is setting aside \$100 million to help future black students repair some of the wrongs done to their ancestors. Good for them. Meanwhile I, irredeemably white, am still waiting for a comparable windfall for the wrongs done to mine.

In what has been called “the second cruellest episode in Scottish history,” my mother’s family, the McKays, and their neighbors, whose ancestors had lived in Sutherland in the extreme north of Scotland for hundreds of years, were kicked off their land in the 18th and early 19th century by their lord, the Duke of Sutherland, to make way for the much more profitable sheep farming that required only a fraction of the labor.

The clans scattered around the world, mainly to England, Canada and the US where, facing completely different

conditions from those they had ever known, some fell on hard times, others prospered and the average did about average. One-part thrifty Scot though I am, it never crossed my mind until recently that I might have been able to squeeze a fabulously expensive education out of a cowardly and cynical group of academics wanting to buy popularity with someone else's money.

To the contrary. My local pub when I lived in London was the Duchess of Sutherland. I never went there without raising my glass to her, knowing that without her family I might still be living in the extreme north of Scotland.