The English Ancestry Committee

of

THE WILLIAM STROTHER SOCIETY, INC.

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Prepared May 2008 for the July 17, 2008 Board Meeting

THE ENGLISH ANCESTRY COMMITTEE
The William Strother Society, Inc.

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This is the fifth report to the Board of Directors by the English Ancestry Committee which was formed in 1999 to make an organized, sustained search for the ancestry of William Strother, the immigrant to Virginia in the mid-1600s. The text of the report is in four parts:

1. Struthers -Major development concerning the Struthers family.
2. Origins
3. Other developments.
4. Details of Struthers investigation.
5. Plans for future testing and research.

1 **Struthers** - Since our last report, there has been a significant development. We have determined that our Strother family and one of the Struthers families in Britain are biologically related. We do not know whether the Struthers family is an off-shoot of our Strother line or whether our Strother family is an off-shoot of the Struthers family. An estimate by Family Tree DNA, our testing laboratory, is that there is a 92% probability that our Strother family and the Struthers family have a common ancestor sometime since 1600. As our William Strother made a purchase of land in Virginia in 1669 and it is very unlikely there would have been a common ancestor with a Struthers family in Britain after William was in America, the time period for the most recent common ancestor would be between 1600 and 1669. We must bear in mind, however, that what Family Tree DNA has given us is an "estimate of a probability" so the most recent common ancestor could be earlier than 1600.

Some of the Strutherses believe that the family is of Scottish origin and that when some of the family migrated into England, the name became Strothers. It is a short leap from Strothers to Strother. We tested eighteen Strother men from four different countries and did not find a relationship. We have found relationships in two of the three Struthers men tested. Therefore, we are inclined to think that our Strother family is an off-shoot of the Struthers family instead of the other way around.

2 **Origins** - When DNA testing determined that our William was not from the Strother line prominent in Northumberland as had been thought, this raised a question not only as to William's ancestry but also his place of origin. Our professional genealogist in England suggested William might not be of English origin. With the determination of a kinship to the Struthers family, we now have some evidence of William's origins. The Strutherses claim they originated in Scotland. Indeed, the ancestry lines of the Strutherses we have seen lead to Scotland. So, based upon what we now know - which, admittedly, is not a lot - our William's family probably originated in Scotland. However, some of the family may have migrated to England before William came to America.

One Struthers family has said that the Strutherses were not originally from Scotland but came to Scotland as Flemish weavers and that the name was originally Streutters. This is possible as there were many Flemish people engaged in the wool trade in Scotland early on, particularly in the Scottish Borders and the town of Berwick. But until we know more, this is just a family story.

3 **Other Developments** - In our last report we mentioned several things we intended to do. One was to test other descendants of our William so that we had a representative from each of the sons of William tested and the results in the Family Tree DNA database. This was to make certain we had a good base line of results to compare with others. We have done that.

Another thing to do was to establish a Strother Surname Project in Family Tree DNA Others could join to be tested at a discount at their own expense and compare their results with ours. We have done that. There are now seventeen tested members of the Strother Surname Project. Five members of the Surname Project are not of the Strother or Struthers surname and have joined at their own expense. Three of these presumably had doubts about their surname ancestry and joined the Strother Surname Project to see if they might be Strothers. They were not.

Two others, both cousins with the surname Butler, joined after they were tested as the results showed an almost perfect match to the Strother DNA. Unfortunately, their documented ancestry is very limited which makes it difficult to sort this out.

They are working on their documented ancestry in an effort to find where the Strother/Butler biological connection occurred. Calculations indicate there is a 95% chance of a common ancestor within eight generations or since about 1800. As this is not likely to have anything to do with our William's ancestry, we are not actively pursuing this Strother/Butler connection but are following it.

Also, two members of the Society joined the Strother Surname Project to confirm their descent from William. The test results of one determined that his branch is not biologically related to either William or the Northumberland Strothers. However, he did find a match with another surname. He is now pursing his relationship with that surname. The testing of the other Society member confirmed that his branch descended from William.

4 **Details of Struthers investigation** - For those interested in how we found the relationship to the Struthers, it was somewhat serendipitous. In March 2001, we sent out a letter soliciting a donation of a DNA sample for testing to each of the Strother men whose address we could find who lived outside the US. We included a few Struthers men in the mailing in the off-chance there could be a connection. We had no response from any of the Struthers men. Then, in March 2007, six years later, we received a letter from Derek Struthers of Wigan, England, near Manchester, in response to our March 2001 letter. Derek had misplaced our letter and had just found it while packing for a move to Wigan. He said he would like to give a DNA sample if the project was still active. We replied that the project was still active and we had Family Tree DNA send him a DNA sample collection kit. Over the next seven months we had to repeatedly urge Derek to return the kit with a DNA sample. We had to replace the kit once as he lost the first kit. We considered giving up on Derek but, fortunately, we persisted and began the testing of his sample in October 2007.

When we got the results of Derek's test we were surprised and elated as Derek matched Richard Strother on 62 out of 67 markers tested. Of particular interest was an exact match with Edward L. Strother on the first 12 markers tested. This was the first such match we had found in all of our testing. Even so, we were doubtful. So we searched the Internet and found a Struthers researcher who was eager to give a DNA sample. He was Robert Andrew Struthers of Canada who had traced his ancestry to Scotland near Glasgow. Unfortunately, his test results showed he was

not biologically related to us or to Derek Struthers within a genealogical time frame.

We next sent out solicitation letters to about thirty Struthers men in Britain. We received four responses. We selected Stephen Struthers of Oxford, England, for testing. We later found that Stephen's brother, fortunately for us, had done some genealogy on the family. The test results for Stephen were closer to ours than Derek's were and were closer to ours than they were to Derek's. Stephen was an exact match to Richard on the first 12 markers.

5 **Plans for future testing and research** - While two matches with Struthers men could be considered conclusive as to a relationship, this is such a significant matter we think more testing is advisable. We have already sent a DNA specimen collection kit to a Struthers man in Southampton and are awaiting its return. He has told us there are at least two unrelated Struthers families in Britain. We also have two other Struthers men who have volunteered to help us. We are also considering trying to find a Strothers man or two to test in an effort to further narrow the search.

We intend to accumulate as much ancestral data as possible from those Struthers men whose test results indicate a relationship with us. We will review that data and try to substantiate the lineages. This will include comparing the lineages with each other and to available evidence. Such evidence may include United Kingdom census records and other records available through Internet resources.

It will be necessary to engage a professional genealogist to determine the link between the Strother and Struthers lines. If the research concludes that a Scottish family is the direction to look, as we suspect, then the Committee will probably seek a Scottish research firm for assistance. The Struthers lineages with available supporting documentation that has been gathered would be submitted to the research firm to aid them in their efforts.

A copy of this report and of each of the other reports to the Board are on the Web site of the Society. If there are any questions about the report or the project, please let us know.

Committee Members: Nolan B. Hensarling, Chairman; Edward L. Strother, Treasurer.

Respectfully submitted,

Nolan B. Hensarling, Chairman

ATTACHMENT:
Committee Treasurer's Report

The English Ancestry Committee

The William Strother Society, Inc.

Treasurer's Report

June 1, 2006 through May 31, 2008

Cash balance at June 1, 2006	**$ 1,180.00**
Receipts	
Donations received from officers and Board members	$ 1,217.00
Donations received from other Society members (38)	1,680.00
Received from The William Strother Society, Inc.	3,000.00
Total receipts	**5,897.00**
Total available funds	**7,077.00**
Disbursements	
Research	100.00
Genetic testing	2,002.00
Postage and telephone	129.82
Total disbursements	**2,231.82**
Cash balance at May 31, 2008	**$ 4,845.18**