

## RETALLACK SURNAME July 20, 2013

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### Abstract

**Retallack is a name endemic to Cornwall, and traceable in that southwestern English county back to 1497. The name is probably derived from Talek, recorded back to 1349, by addition of a demonstrative pronoun (those Taleks!). Talek in turn is most likely from the old Cornish talawg meaning "high forehead". The comparable Welsh name Tallwch and Pictish Talorc can be traced back to the 6th century.**

**There are numerous other ideas concerning the origin of the Retallack surname from Cornish place names, Cornish saints, mine workings and Norse and Greek gods, and these are all reviewed here.**

**Retallacks in Cornwall were largely miners, farmers and farm laborers. Many left Cornwall for Australia and the United States during the potato blight and mining slump of the 1850's, so that there are now more Retallacks overseas than in Cornwall.**

### Introduction

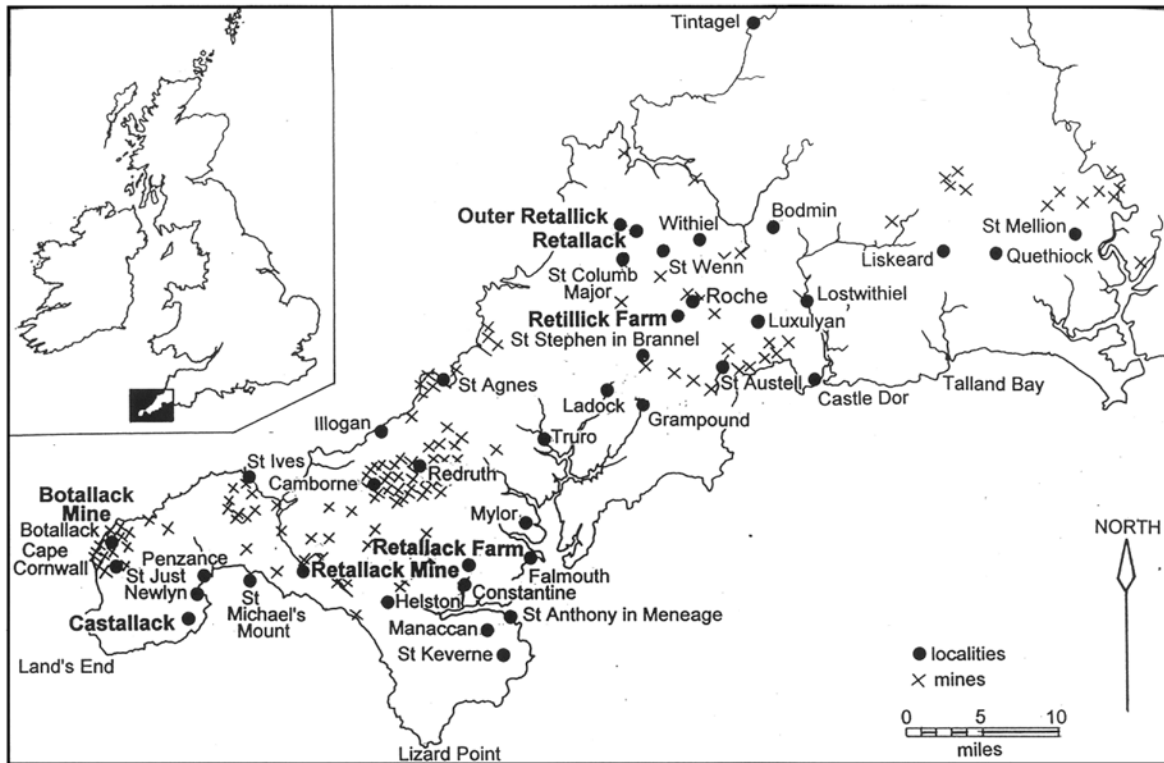
The Retallack name is unusual and often requires careful spelling out. Pronunciation is also a challenge (correct is r'-TAL-lack, rhymes with metallic). Retallack is endemic to Cornwall, England (Fig. 1), where it has been a common name back to the 15th century (Table 1). Since the 19th century there has been a global Retallack diaspora (Table 2) so that there are now more Retallacks in Australia and the U.S. than in Cornwall. A computer search<sup>1</sup> revealed 294 Retallacks in Australia, 173 in the United States, 151 in Great Britain, 48 in Canada and 2 in South Africa.

### Meaning of the name

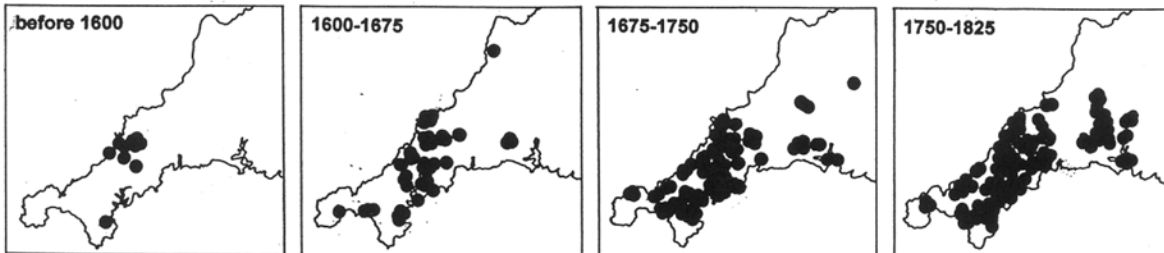
Most surnames are either physical descriptions (eg. Longfellow), occupations (eg. Smith) or localities (eg. London). For Retallack a case has been made for each from Cornish language and geography. All of these conflicting claims will be discussed here, but I will also make plain my preferences.

The search for meaning can be guided by a chronology of first appearance of variants of the name (Table 3). The extant surname Retallick<sup>2</sup> first appears as Retallicke in 1609, and was presumably derived from antecedent Retallack. The Retallack spelling is traceable back<sup>3</sup> to 1497, and is likely to have been derived from the surname Talek<sup>4</sup> recorded as far back as 1349. Early variants such as Rettelehc of ca. 1250 are also likely to have been predated by Talek, incorporated in such place names as Botalec of 1262, because of the much wider distribution of Talek than Retallack in Cornwall before 1600<sup>2</sup>. Comparable names such as Tallwch and Talorc can be traced back to ca. 550 AD<sup>5</sup>.

Thus the *re* part of the name is probably a prefix., and in my opinion is most likely a demonstrative pronoun meaning "the ones", "those" or "some". The *re* prefix is commonly used in swearing oaths such as "Re Míhal" ("By St Michael!<sup>6</sup>). This would imply some Taleks or Tallacks of greater fame or notoriety than others, such as Richard Talek on trial in 1349 for



Distribution of Retallick and similar names



Distribution of Tallack and similar names



Figure 1. Retallick and similar sounding localities (boldface), and distribution of mines and Retallick and Tallack families in Cornwall<sup>2,7</sup>.

beating his mine labourers<sup>4</sup>, Ralph Retallick, a prime agitator in the tax rebellion<sup>3</sup> of 1497, 1941), or the church warden Marke Retallicke<sup>2</sup> of 1589. The prefix could also be from the Cornish *re* or *rid*, meaning free, clear<sup>14</sup>. Other ideas based largely on the idea of Retallick as a place name are that the *re* prefix comes from Cornish *ryd*, *rit*, or *res* meaning ford, or *rydh* or *ruth* meaning red<sup>14-17</sup>. Each of these place names will be discussed in due course, but the earliest

**Table 1. Partial reconstruction of author's Retallock ancestors in Cornwall<sup>2,8-9</sup>**

Earliest known ancestor	Children of Ezekiel and Patience Retallock at St Columb Major	Children of Ezekiel and Anne Retallock at St Columb Major	Children of William and Mary Retallick at St Columb Major	Children of William and Ann Retallick at St Enoder, then Ladock
Ezekial (Ezethill, Ezekiell) b. 1655, m. 6 Oct 1690 Patience Brewer, d. 10 Dec 1697	Ezekiel b. 1695, c. 24 Jul 1969, m. 24 Sep 1720 Anne Williams, d. 24 Feb 1758	Patience, c. 22 Jul 1721, m. 24 Oct 1747 Nicholas Reed  Anne 17 Aug 1723  Ezekiel c. 19 Feb 1725  William c. 13 Jan 1727; m 21 Sept 1751 Mary Rowe  Elizabeth c.17 Jun 1731; d. 2 Jun 1740  Samuel c. 3 Feb 1734, d. 7 Feb 1734  Rose c. 28 Feb 1735	William c.19 Nov, 1760, d. 1 Aug 1761  John (stillborn?), d. 1 Aug. 1761  William b. 1770, c. 21 Feb 1770, m. 3 May 1795 Ann Sobey,	Mary c. 10 Apr 1796, m. 11 May 1822 to William Curtis; d. Jun 1868  Ann c.4 Jan 1800  Thomas c. 9 May 1802  Jennifer c. 9 May 1804  Grace c.21 Jun 1807; m. 14 May 1831 to Richard Gay  Elizabeth b. 1810  John b. 1812 Ladock, d. 8 Aug 1980 Adelaide South Australia

spellings of each are more like the surname than spellings compounded from *res*, *rid*, or *ruth* (Table 3). Neither is the *re* prefix likely to be a corruption of *bos* (Cornish for dwelling), as in the ancient Cornish place name Botallock, nor of *castel* (Cornish for castle) as in the place name Castallock. These are more likely the "dwelling of Talek" and "little castle", respectively<sup>17</sup>. It has also been argued<sup>18</sup> that *re* is abbreviated from *tre*, Old Cornish for farmhouse, village or town<sup>17</sup>. Many Cornish names begin with Tre, Pol or Pen, which signify a town, a top, and a head: and so comes the common rhyme: "By Tre, Pol, and Pen, Ye shall know the Cornishmen"<sup>19</sup>.

Although Tretallock, Trevallacke and Tretallock are recorded back into the 16th century (Table 3), I think such names were unlikely to be corrupted to Retallock as there is no other known comparable corruption of a tre-name<sup>18</sup>. The meaning of the *tre* syllable is widely recognized in Cornish names such as Trevithick and Trelawney<sup>17</sup>. Tretallock, Trevallacke and Tretallock are more likely extinct names for places and people derived from Tallock or Tallock independently and after origin of the surname Retallock (Table 3).

The precursor surname Tallock or Talek<sup>4</sup>, is traceable back to Stannary Court records of 1349, and in the place name Botalec<sup>22</sup>, back to 1262. Talek in turn may be related to 6th century Welsh name Tallwch and Pictish name Talorc<sup>5</sup>. This would imply that the *ack* suffix is archaic and predates old Saxon *ac* meaning oak<sup>23</sup>. My favorite explanation is that Talek is from the Old Cornish *talawg*, meaning one having a large forehead<sup>14-15,17,23</sup>. This explanation is appealing because the forehead is a distinguishing feature of both myself, my father, my grandfather, and my great grandfather (Fig. 2). The transmission of such traits down so many generations of genetic dilution is known also from the famous Habsburg jaw of Austro-Hungarian royalty<sup>24</sup>. Retallock men have a classical Cornish physique - olive and swarthy complexion, medium height, big bones, straight noses, single eyebrow, and strong beard and body hair<sup>25</sup>. In addition, Retallocks of my paternal lineage tend to have larger than usual heads for their bodies, unusually strong jaws, and high subrectangular foreheads accentuated by receding hairlines in middle age.

The similar Welsh name Tallwch and Pictish name Talorc go back well into the 6th century<sup>5</sup>, and probably also mean high forehead. Irish, Manx and Gaelic (northern or highland Scottish) are known as Goidelic Celtic languages, whereas Welsh, Breton and Cornish are Brythonic Celtic languages<sup>26</sup>. Pictish (southern or lowland Scottish) is little known, but probably allied with Welsh<sup>5</sup>. As predicted by this linguistic grouping, tal means forehead in Cornish<sup>14-17</sup>,

**Table 2. Retallacks in Australia and U.S.A.**<sup>10-13</sup>

Emigration of John from Cornwall to South Australia	Children of John and Caroline in South Australia	Children of Charles and Margaret in Mitchell, Queensland	Children of Leslie John and Elsie Ruth in Queensland	Children of Kenneth John and Moira Wynn in Tasmania and N.S.W.	Children of Gregory John and Diane Alice in U.S.A.
John Retallack b.1812, farmer and carrier, transported from Ladock, Cornwall to Moreton Bay 1 Sept. 1850 on "Bangalore": d.8 Aug 1890 Adelaide, S.A. at age 69; m.7 Nov 1853 in Mitcham, S.A., Caroline	Seth, b.17 Jul 1854, Mitcham, S.A., farmer, d.9 Jul 1939, Korunye, S.A. John ("Jack") b.19 Apr 1857, Angaston, S.A., farmer, d.17 Sep 1928, Adelaide, S.A. William b.20 Aug 1858, Angaston, S.A., farmer, d.27 Aug 1934, Mitcham, S.A. Thomas b.18 May 18-60, Angaston, S.A., d.15 Aug 1863, Angas Park, S.A. Charles b.3 Jul 1862, Angaston, S.A., d.10 Nov 1863, Angas Park, S.A.	Olive Maud b.23 Jan 1897, d.25 May 1954, Toowong, Qld Ruby Caroline b.16 Sep 1898 Brisbane, Qld, d.28 Sep 1974 Eric Thomas Charles b.25 Apr 1900, Brisbane, Qld, newspaper worker, d.1976 Leslie John b.31 Dec 1901 at "Cocaigne", Mitchell, Qld; newspaper printer; d.7 Jun 1965 at Sydney; m.Elsie Ruth Ireton b.in Brisbane Qld; after divorce remarried Neridah Blanch Fletcher with no issue Cyril Rashleigh b.29 Dec 1903, newspaper worker, d.1977 Roy Mitchell b.11 Dec 1905, Brisbane, d.1978 Sylvia May b.17 Dec 1907 Ilma Jessie b.23 Jan 1910, d.1942 Maurice Francis b.16 Feb 1912, Brisbane, Qld; bank inspector; d.1990	Betty Sylvia b.1923 Brisbane, Qld; d.5 Oct 1923 Kenneth John b.12 Aug 1926 at Brisbane, Qld, d.27 Jan 1969 at Sydney, N.S.W.; Moira Wynn ("Wendy") Dean, b.8 Nov 1928 Evangdale; widow Bruce Gollan, with no issue	Gregory John b. 8 Nov 1951 at Hobart, Tas., emigrated to U.S.A. 1977; m. 30 May 1981 Diane Alice Johnson in Joliet IL, U.S.A.; b.12 Dec 1952 at La Salle, IL, U.S.A. Michael Leslie b. 1 Jul 1954, Arncliffe, Sydney, N.S.W.; m. Bridget Clare Mabbutt, b. 25 Oct 1957, one daughter, Jemina Clare, b. 29 May 1988 Christopher Charles b. 2 Sep 1956, Arncliffe, Sydney, N.S.W.; m. Maria Nikitaris, b. 16 May 1966, two sons, Jack Kenneth b. 11 Oct 1985; Adam Michael b. 15 Sep 1988.	Nicholas John b.13 Jun 1986 Jeremy Douglas b.29 Jan 1988
Rashleigh who was b. 9 Feb 1832 at St Keverne, Cornwall, and emigrated to South Australia 1852 on "Caucasian" to join a sister, d.5 Aug 1896, Forster, S.A.	Elizabeth b.4 Apr 1864, Angaston, S.A., d.17 Nov 1948, Karrakatta, W.A. Thomas b.14 Jul 18-66, Steinau, S.A., builder, d.17 Feb 1934, Fremantle. Charles b.25 May 1868, Steinau, S.A., d. 18 Jan 1964; m.1896 in Brisbane, Qld, Margaret Jane Dobbin, b.1871 near Goulburn N.S.W. James Williams b.13 Sep 1870, Point Gawler, S.A., d.12 Dec 1957, Karrakatta W.F. b.20 Nov 1872, d.21 Feb 1872 Francis Rowe b.13 Jan 1873, River Light S.A., d.15 Feb 1873				

Breton<sup>27-29</sup> and Welsh<sup>30-32</sup>, but not in Irish<sup>33-34</sup>, Gaelic<sup>35-36</sup>, or in other northwestern European languages (Table 4).

In Welsh myths of "Ystoria Trystan"<sup>37</sup> and Welsh triads<sup>38</sup>, the hero Tristan (also Trystan, Drystan, Drustan, Drustanus, Drust) is referred to as the son of Tallwch. These 6th century poems also mention King Arthur as a raider of his swine, his lord March ap Meirchiawn (later Mark), and the lady Essylt (later Issota, Isolde, and Iseult). The more familiar myth of Tristan and Isolde places the star-crossed lovers in Cornwall with King Mark at Castle Dor, near Fowey, but these are 12th century versions of the earlier Welsh myths of Drystan and Essylt. A 6th century stone found at Castle Dor bears the inscription *Drustaus hic iacit cunomori filius* ("Drust lies here, son of Cunomorus"). Although Quonomorius or Cunomar was equated with King Mark in the Latin *Vita Sanctus Paulus Aurelianus* ("Life of St Paul Aurelianus") by the Breton monk Wronomoc in 884 AD, this Drustan is probably unrelated to the Drustan of legend who was a nephew (not son) of Mark. The Welsh myth of the 6th century is more likely a composite of stories from classical antiquity, such as those of Theseus and Hippolytus, using the name of one of the "Kings of the North" of Welsh myth. Drust son of Talorc was a Pictish king of the Strathclyde region of Scotland who died in 780 AD, too late to be a contemporary of King Arthur (ca. 550 AD), but both Drust and Talorc were common Pictish names. The names Loonois and Morrois of the classical 12th century romance of Tristan and Isolde, could thus be the Lothian and Moray regions of Scotland, respectively<sup>5</sup>.

**Table 3. Chronology of first appearance of names similar to Retallack**<sup>2-5, 20-21</sup>

Similar names in antiquity	Variants of Tallack	Variants of Retallack	Variants of Retallick	Other variants (including place names)
Tammuz ca.1800 BC	Talek 1349	Retallack 1497	Retallicke 1609	Rettelehc ca.1250
Talus ca.1450 BC	Talkard 1379	Retallacke 1567	Retallicker 1619	Botalec 1262
Telmen ca.1400 BC	Tallocke 1542	Retellacke 1575	Rhetallick 1637	Reshelec ca. 1270
Pallas ca.800 BC	Tallacke 1588	Retalake 1611	Rhitallick 1637	Retelek 1284
Atlas ca.800 BC	Tallack 1593	Rettallacke 1612	Retallick 1640	Rekadrek 1296
Tantalus ca.700 BC	Talacke 1600	Retalack 1613	Retallicke 1678	Retalec 1309
Queen Tailltiu ca.350 BC	Tallock 1628	Rhetallacke 1624	Retalick 1700	Rettelek 1311
Tallwch ca.550 AD	Talack 1636	Retallac 1624	Rettallick 1727	Restalek 1316
Taliesin ca.550 AD	Tallett 1661	Retallacke 1624	Retallick 1728	Rettalek 1318
St Dallan 598 AD	Tallak 1668	Rhetallace 1640	Retalik 1752	Rystallet 1327
Talorc 780 AD	Talleck 1674	Ratallacke 1641	Rettalick 1770	Ristaloc 1327
Thorlack ca 1000 AD	Tallecke 1674	Retallaks 1657	Rettallick 1800	Restallick 1334
St Tallan 1452 AD	Tallach 1684	Rettallack 1661	Retillick 1805	Restelek 1370
	Talluk 1690	Ritallack 1670	Retablick 1806	Reystalek 1390
	Talleuk 1692	Retallak 1674	Retellick 1827	Reystallick 1396
	Tallick 1706	Rettalack 1678	Retollick 1841	Retalek 1522
	Tellick 1714	Retallaffe 1685	Retallick 1850	Retaleke 1535
	Tallake 1728	Retallark 1701	Retattick 1857	Retallick 1543
	Talick 1787	Rettack 1705	Retullick 1860	Retallock 1565
	Tullack 1832	Rettallack 1717	Retelick 1890	Retalleck 1573
		Retallach 1718		Retallecke 1573
		Retalback 1724		Botolag 1580
		Ratalack 1726		Trevallacke 1580
		Retsallack 1750		Retellecke 1580
		Restallack 1758		Botallock 1584
		Retellack 1776		Tretallock 1584
		Ridallack 1826		Retaller 1594
		Retullack 1837		Botallack 1602
		Rotallack 1834		Retalecke 1606
		Retaback 1844		Retalock 1607
		Rettalack 1868		Rhetallecke 1635
				Tretallack 1640
				Retalleck 1641
				Retaleck 1676
				Retallyck 1710
				Retania 1711
				Retallick 1845

The *tal* syllable turns up again in the famous Welsh bard Taliesin (ca. 550 AD). His name can be translated fair forehead or radiant brow<sup>39-40</sup>. Taliesin was the son of Saint Henwg of Caerlleon upon Usk, and was resident bard at the courts of King Gwyddno Garanhir of the Welsh Lowland Hundred (an archaic administrative unit of land occupied by about a hundred families), of King Uriens of Wales and of King Arthur of Caerlleon. Several long poems in the Welsh *Mabinogion* (a Celtic bardic canon) are attributed to Taliesin<sup>39</sup>. In *Vita Merlini* ("Life of Merlin") written about 1150 AD by Geoffrey of Monmouth, Telgesinus (Taliesin) is a student of Merlin, former bard and prince of Dyfed, Wales, while Merlin is a hermit in the Celyddon Forest (Calidon or Caledonian forest around Hart Fell). Merlin (Myrddin) escaped to the forest and was driven mad by the defeat and massacre of comrades and his pagan patron, King Gwenddolau ab Ceido, by the Christian King Rhydderch Hael (Rederech, Rodericus) of Alcut (Dumbarton) at Arderydd (Arthuret Knowes) in 573 AD<sup>41</sup>. Merlin also plays a part in the birth, rise to power, and death of King Arthur in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regium Britanniae* (History of the Kings of Britain) written in 1136 AD. Geoffrey himself dated the death of Arthur at 542 AD, and attributed supernatural longevity to Merlin for his later patronage by Gwenddolau and tutelage of Taliesin. Others maintain there were at least two distinct Merlins: Merlin Ambrosius (Myrddin Emrys) and Merlin Silvester (Myrddin Wyllt<sup>40</sup>). There were probably several men and myths conflated with Taliesin and Merlin, who represented an ancient bardic school of Celtic religion and magic. Taliesin has been mythologised as an avatar of the Celtic sun god Lug and Merlin as



Figure 2. Four generations of Retallacks Kenneth John, Leslie John, Charles, and Gregory John (left to right) in Brisbane, 1963.

the stag god Cernunnos<sup>40-41</sup>. The name Taliesin was also used for the Wisconsin farm and an Arizona institute of the North American architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1869-1959)<sup>42</sup>.

Robert Graves<sup>20</sup> notes the Cornish-Welsh meaning of *tal* as forehead, but also offers another meaning of "one who dares to suffer". Graves goes so far as to identify *tal* with the pre-Classical dying god, consort of an archaic Great Goddess. Similar names include the ancient Cretan hero-god Talus, Greek Tantalus, Atlas Telemon and Pallas (epithet of Athene), Syrian Telmen and Sumerian Tammuz. An widespread ritual in pre-Indoeuropean Celtic and Middle Eastern religions was sacrifice of kings and priests to the Great Goddess (Celtic Ceridwen, Roman Venus-Juno; Greek Demeter-Hera; Phrygian Cybele, Canaanite Ashtoreth, Babylonian

**Table 4. Words similar to Retallack in western European languages**

Cornish	Breton	Welsh	Irish	Gaelic	Icelandic	Norse	English
tal	tal	tal, talcen	bair	bathais	enni	panne	forehead
attal	attred,mengleuz	leflydd	mianac	aite meinne	verks um merki	bergverk	mine workings
heloc, helygen	haleg	helygen	raneog	seileach	pilvidur	pil	willow
ros, tallick	lanneg	rhos	frdoc	fraoch	lynghedi	hei	heath
talhoc, talek	talareg	torgoch	talog	talag	vatnafiskur	mort	roach (fish)
sor, crothak	soroc'hal	achwyngar	talac	talach	mogli	mukking	grumbling
nedha	nedim	neddau	tal	tal	skaroxi	bile	(cooper's) adze
areth	lavar	araith	oraid	oraid	tala	tale	(public) speech
cerig	karreg	cerrig	dallan	clach	stein stolpi	steindysse	standing stone



*Figure 3. The slate spine, in my opinion most likely to be the Hore Stone ("ram stone"), along the coast trail at Hore Stone Head, from Talland Bay, looking toward St George's Island (photo courtesy of David Knockton).*

Ishtar, Egyptian Isis, Sumerian Ninnah). Sacrifice of the priest-king was seen as a ritual essential for the continued bounty of Mother Nature<sup>43</sup>.

Other names vaguely similar to Retallack, but probably unrelated, are the church of Tallan (founded ca. 1205) and Talland Bay, both near Polperro, Cornwall. There may be a very early (1296) record<sup>44</sup> of a disgruntled Retallack at this church (Table 4). The church was at first dedicated to St Catherine, an early Christian martyr of 4th century Alexandria, but in 1452 it was dedicated to St Talland<sup>23</sup>. Catherine of Alexandria is in some ways comparable to a Great Goddess as a protectress of the dying and patroness of young girls, nurses and craftsmen<sup>45</sup>. Steadfast in her claim to be the bride of Christ and refusing marriage with Emperor Maxentius, her torture on the wheel failed as the machine collapsed, injuring bystanders. She was eventually beheaded. Her cult was widespread in the west of England, with 62 churches dedicated to her. Considering the mythic aspects of her life and cult, there are doubts that she existed as real person<sup>46</sup>. Perhaps the similarity of her cult to worship of the pre-Christian Great Goddess led to rededication of the church to Saint Talland in 1452. Although male (Sanctus Tallandus), he is unlisted even in very comprehensive compilations of saints<sup>47-48</sup>. One unlikely possibility<sup>49</sup> is that St Talland is a corruption of St Teilo (566 AD), a Welsh saint who was an associate and fellow pilgrim to Jerusalem with St David. Most of St Teilo's ministry was in Llandeilo, Wales, but he did visit both Cornwall and Brittany in order to avoid the yellow plague<sup>50</sup>. There is a chapel and well dedicated to him at St Buryan, Cornwall, but his name there is spelled St Dillo<sup>48</sup>, which seems a more likely corruption of his name than Tallan or Talland. Another candidate is Saint Dallan Forghail (of Cluan Dallain, died 598 AD), chief poet of Ireland. His most celebrated



Figure 4. Tallan Church and the sea stack now labelled the Hore Stone by the Ordnance Survey (sea level in distance), viewed from Polperro and Talland Bay to the west.

poem concerned Colmcille's success in dissuading King Aedh Mac Ainmire from dissolving the ancient bardic order, on the grounds that they protected important ancient knowledge. St Dallan was killed by pirates who broke into the island monastery of Inniskeel, in Donegal, where he is buried<sup>51-52</sup>. A dallan also is an upright standing stone of pre-Christian Britain, like the phallic stone on Tara Hill, Ireland<sup>34,53</sup>. There is a natural rock formation of this sort near "the summit of Talland Head, or Hore Stone Head, as it is usually called, from a great vertical fang of slate that rises from the lower part of the seaward face, invisible from the summit, but a conspicuous object from the sea"<sup>54</sup>. This 2 m rock spine of Early Devonian, Meadfoot Beds<sup>55</sup> is a prominent landmark surrounded by grassy slopes (Fig. 3). The Ordnance Survey<sup>56</sup> and a guidebook<sup>57</sup> mark a different 3 m high, flat-topped, sea stack as the Hore Stone, but this is no more prominent than a dozen others like it along this shore (Fig. 4). Because of this and the dark color of the sea stack it has been suggested that the name is a corruption of "Ore Stone"<sup>57</sup>, but this is a sedimentary rock without ore<sup>55</sup>. I prefer to regard the slate spine as the Hore Stone, with its old Cornish meaning of "ram stone"<sup>54</sup>. Ancient names for Talland Bay<sup>22</sup> include Portatlant of the Domesday Book in 1026, Por Tallant 1699, and Portalla 1865. The slate spine or dallan may long have been an important landmark lending its name to this cove used by mariners. A case has also been made<sup>23</sup> that Tallan is from the Old Cornish *tal* for brow of a hill and *lan* for church or temple

#### Table 4. Early record (1296) of Rekadrek (Retallack?) at Tallan Church<sup>44</sup>

Latin Original	English Translation
Et de 6s. de decena de Rekadrek' et Thoma de Wodesouese quia non venit, pro fatuo hutesio, falso clamore, quia non prosecutus, prolencia concordandi et trans. Et 6s. 8d. de Adam vicario de Tallan pro trans' contra pacem	And 6 shillings is proper from Rekadrek and Thomas of Wodesouese who did not come, for foolish shouting, false claiming, which was not cut off, for lack of agreement, and more. And 6 shillings and 8 pence from Adam the vicar of Tallan for more against the peace



*Figure 5. St Michaels Mount and the causeway exposed at low tide from Marazion (hand tinted photography of 1890-1900 from Library of Congress, USA, in Wikimedia commons).*

site, which agrees well with the location of the church protected from winds off the ocean behind Tallan Head (Fig. 4). However, invention of a saint from such a place name seems unlikely<sup>58-59</sup>. Tallan does not have the demonstrated antiquity of Talland Bay<sup>22</sup>: Tallan 1205, ca. 1250, 1264, 1284, 1291, 1296, 1302, 1342, 1347, 1533; Tallant 1440, 1699; Tallane 1440; S. Tallanus 1452; Tallande 1584. Officially St. Talland may have been thought to be St Dallan of Ireland, but similarity to the pre-existing name of Talland Bay and to pre-Christian phallic stones (dallan) may have aided local approval of the 15th century rededication and continued use of the name. Polperro and Tallan are rich in fairy mythology, including tales of "piskies" (pixies or elves), the "devil and his dandy dogs" (Bucca) and witchcraft. The Reverend Richard Dodge, vicar of Tallan (died 13 Jan 1746 at age 93) was a local authority on witchcraft and an acclaimed exorcist<sup>58-59</sup>.

Another remote possibility is derivation of Retallack from alluvial tin mines widely called *attal*<sup>16</sup>. Retallacks or Taleks could thus be offspring (Old Cornish *ach*) of the workings. In the time of Norman rule (1066-1154), mines of Cornwall were said to be owned by Jews, who took possession of them as securities to loans by the Duke of Cornwall<sup>60</sup>. One mine was named by them *Attall Sarazin*, meaning leavings of the Saracens<sup>19,61</sup>. The name may be an allusion to Crusader's stories of fabulous booty from their Muslim (Saracen) foes. Mine names commonly embrace such flights of fancy. By Elizabethan times (1558-1603) the term was corrupted to *attal sarsen* and applied to virtually any ancient alluvial tin mines with the meaning of heathen

workings<sup>62</sup>. Pre-Christian interest in Cornish tin mines was widespread throughout the Mediterranean region. They are mentioned by both the Greek Herodotus (written ca. 450 BC) and the Sicilian Diodorus Siculus (written ca. 8 BC), who referred to Cornwall as the Cassiterides, from Greek for tin isles. Diodorus refers to civilized people on a trading island of Iktis, connected to the mainland only at low tide, like the modern Cornish St Michaels Mount (Figs. 5). This may have been an outpost of Phoenician, Cretan, or Greek traders comparable to the Dutch colony of Deshima in Nagasaki Harbour, Japan (1630-1854) or the British colony of Hong Kong off mainland China (1842-1997). Perhaps such early trading contacts or Jewish bankers were the source of the often-noted swarthy and olive complexion of many Cornish, including the Retallacks, distinct from fair, florid or freckled Celtic skin<sup>25</sup>. Early Romanization of Britain (43-150 AD) did not extend west of Exeter, but there was subsequent limited Romanization<sup>26</sup>, and also a record of trade directly with Alexandria, Egypt, in 616 AD<sup>4</sup>. After this time Mediterranean-Cornish trade was much less common than the official tin trade through Anglo-Saxon ports of Southampton and London. Cornish folklore has it that the swarthy olive complexion is from shipwrecked sailors or the sacking of Penzance by the Spanish Armada of 1588, but even in the early nineteenth century this trait was too widespread among the Cornish for that to be a convincing explanation<sup>25</sup>. Another myth has it that Jesus of Nazareth learned of Druid religion when he visited Cornwall with his tin-trading, wealthy uncle, Joseph of Arimathea<sup>63</sup>. Other myths are that the Cornish are descendents of a lost tribe of Israel, or of Noah and Japhet, or of the Trojan Brutus, grandson of Aeneas, said to have given his name to Britain. These myths are unsubstantiated by literary or archeological evidence<sup>5,26,64</sup>.

Even less similar to Retallack is the Tailltean (now Teltown) Games of Ireland, which have been thought to be named after a similarly named agricultural hero-god<sup>20</sup>, but are more likely named for Tailltiu, queen of Eochaiach Mac Erc, last king of the Firbolgs. The name Firbolgs means Men of Bag from a time of forced labor when they carried bags of soil to the uplands to make them productive. Similarly, Tailltiu was said to have died of exhaustion after preparing the land for cultivation. Her festival and a games comparable to the Olympic Games were on July 31 (Lughnasad in the Celtic calendar), and were in honor of alliances of marriage and friendship. The Firbolgs were dark and small in stature, one of the legendary early indigenous peoples of Ireland, later displaced by Tuatha de Danaan (Children of Danu), who dominate Irish mythology, and then the later Celtic Milesians (Spanish people led by Milesius<sup>65</sup>).

Less similar again to Retallack is the Old Norse name Thorlack or Torlacr, presumably related to the god of thunder, Thor<sup>18</sup>. In the Icelandic Saga of *Olaf Helga* ("Olaf the Holy"), Thorlack had two sons, Sigurd and Thord, and a brother Thrand. Thord was nicknamed "Thord the Low; for all that he was the highest of men"(an example of Viking humour<sup>66</sup>). This family lived on the Faeroe Islands in the mid-Atlantic, and thwarted King Olaf by murdering Thoralf as this ally of King Olaf was returning to the king. Presumably they were trying to silence this witness to illegal trading or other activities. King Olaf (956-1030 AD) never fully avenged this murder as he was caught up in war with the Danes that eventually lead to his death in battle. For bringing Christianity to Norway as king in 1016 AD and because of miracles associated with his burial, King Olaf became Saint Olaf in 1164 AD. A.V. Retallick<sup>18</sup> makes a case that Thorlack is a predecessor to the Norwegian name Tallak. There are several place names including Tallak in Norway: Tallacksrud (Tallak's farm) in Akerhus, Tallakshavn (Tallak's harbor) in Jarlsberg and Tallaksbru (Tallak's bridge) in Telemark. I think it unlikely that such a familiar and important god as Thor or Tor could be corrupted to Tal. *Tala* in Icelandic<sup>67-69</sup> and *tale* in Norwegian<sup>70-71</sup>



*Figure 6. View down the broad marshy valley from the headwaters of a tiny stream above Retallack, near St Columb Major from Bryn Cottage. The valley bottom has been converted to fishing ponds, and the buildings on the distant slope to the right are Montana Pines and Retallack House.*

mean a speech, poetry reading or other public discourse (Table 4). Thus it is more likely that the Norwegian name Tallak reflects a bardic ancestry, than alliance to Thor, and is independent of Cornish Taleks or Tallacks. Norse ancestry is also unlikely because Australian Retallacks were neither tall, nor fair, nor blond.

### **Retallack and similar place names**

The surname Retallack could have been derived from Cornish place names<sup>17,72-73</sup>, but for reasons outlined below, I think it is more likely that these places were named for Retallacks, Tallocks or Taleks. There are or were a Retallack near Saint Columb Major, Constantine and St Hilary, a Retillick near Roche, a Botallack near St Just, and a Castallack near Penzance, all in Cornwall (Fig. 1). My observations on all of these localities are from a trip in April 1999.

Retallack (N50.456421° W4.913737°; SW 934658 on Ordnance Survey<sup>74-77</sup> near Saint Columb Major is now commercialized as a 100 acre "Spirit of the West" American theme park and Retallack Coarse Waters Fishery currently run by Mr M.S. Warriner (Fig. 6). The old 17th century farmhouse<sup>19</sup> was probably on the same site as Warriner's house "Montana Pines" built in



*Figure 7. Menalhyl River and St Columb Major from the St Eval road.*

1990. Retallack Cottage, now owned by Peter Baisley, 100 m to the northwest is an impressive stone house with a metal label on the door "J. Hicks 1812 Retallick", indicating its builder, age and an alternative spelling of the locality probably current at the time the buildings at Outer Retallick were constructed. Outer Retallick (SW927654 on Ordnance Survey 1997a) is 1 km to the northwest past the highway roundabout that used to be the village of Winnard's Perch. Retallack has been translated as ford at the base of a short steep slope from Old Cornish *rit*, *ret* or *res* (ford) and *talek* (high forehead or hill<sup>72</sup>), as ford of willows (*heloc*<sup>17</sup>) or as ford of Talek (surname<sup>73</sup>). These ford explanations are not appropriate to this locality now. It has a tiny stream only 1 m wide in an broad, open, headwater valley. The coarse fishery of introduced roach, rudd, tench, carp, bream, perch and pike is within a series of artificial lakes created by damming in the 1980's. Before these modifications the small stream within extensive boggy willow carr would have been an unsuitable ford or overland route, compared with 1 km to the southwest lower in the valley or 2 km to the north along the ancient ridge-line route to Wadebridge that passes Retallack Barrow (an ancient tumulus grave) and The Nine Maidens (an ancient row of standing stones). The Nine Maidens have been interpreted as sepulchral stones and as megalithic monuments, and according to later Christian myth, were created from young women who danced on Sunday<sup>78</sup>. Drawing from these ancient monuments, one local history<sup>78</sup> offers a translation of Retallack as "too much buckler or target", implying that this was the site of an ancient battle. This flight of fancy is unsupported by either archeological or historical records. Ancient records



Figure 8. View west of Tregoss Moor, with ancient conical clay tailings to the left and Roche church and village to the right, from the ancient hermitage of Roche rock. Retillick Farm is on the southern (left) margin of Tregoss Moor behind the hillock and power pylons.

of the name from Assize and Pipe Rolls<sup>22</sup> include Rettelehc ca. 1250, Reshelec ca. 1270, Restalek 1327, 1443, and Restallek 1334. On the map by John Norden<sup>19,79</sup>, this farmstead in the Pyder Hundred is labelled Tretallock, and the occupant "Jno Tretallock". Tretallock also is shown in ancient maps<sup>80</sup> of 1607, 1611, 1645, 1646 and 1722. In Old Cornish the prefix *tre* means village or farmstead. Curiously there is no Tretallock or Tallock in St Columb Major parish records at this time<sup>2</sup>. Presumably Norden<sup>19</sup>, who was copied by many subsequent mapmakers, misunderstood a local reference to the farm of John Retallock, who is in the St Columb Major parish records<sup>2</sup>, burying his wife Jane in 1607. The name Retallock was long associated with the church at St Columb Major (Fig. 7), where it is recorded as far back<sup>2</sup> as 1546, with Retalick recorded back to 1662 and Tallack back to 1731. This locality was labelled Retallick on a 1784 map<sup>81</sup> and Retalak on a 1813 map<sup>82</sup>. The commercial map-maker John Bartholomew<sup>83-85</sup> labelled this place Retallick in 1931, 1934, and 1959, but in 1974, 1992, 1997 the Ordnance Survey<sup>74-77</sup> spell it Retallock. The most ancient spelling Rettelehc is more like the surname that a descriptive name based on willow ford (*res heloc*) or ford by the hill (*res talek*), though these puns or malapropisms are clear in some ancient spellings.

Retillick Farm is on the southeast margin of Tregoss Moor, 2 km southeast of Roche (N50.403391° W4.859542°; SW 974593 on Ordnance Survey<sup>76</sup>). An ancient farmhouse is now in ruins, but there is an old mill house and another farmhouse on the site. Improved pastures of the farm extend into Tregoss Moor, which is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest as little-disturbed moorland vegetation (Fig. 8). Retillick Cottage is a separate building on the road to St Dennis on the southern margin of a farm plan dating from early this century, in which the core farm houses are labelled "Retillick (Retallick)". Explanations offered for this name are ford with willows from the Cornish *ret* (ford) and *heloc* (willows<sup>17</sup>), or ford near a high hill (Cornish *talek*<sup>25</sup>), or ford near the heath (Cornish *tallick*<sup>15</sup>). These meanings make no more sense than for Retallock to the north near St Columb Major, where boggy willow carr would have required very



Figure 9. Retallick Farm north of Constantine.

similar farming techniques. The upper reaches of the River Fal here are only 1 m wide and coffee-coloured in extensive willow carr. Overland routes to Roche would have kept to the ridgeline south and westwards through Whitemoor. The largest hills here now are the huge waste piles of English China Clay Pty Ltd, of St Austell, which currently owns Retallick Farm. There is a problem with the word *tallick*, given only by an authority<sup>15</sup> considered unreliable<sup>16</sup>. *Ros* is Cornish for heath in other dictionaries<sup>14,16</sup>. Ancient records of this locality<sup>22</sup> include Retelek 1284, 1304; Rettelek 1311; Restallek 1334 and Restelek 1370. Roche church records<sup>2</sup> indicate Retallicks in the area since 1743 and Retallicks since 1772, but this is not far from St Columb Major where Retallicks go back at least to 1546. The farm complex is labelled "Retallick" and Roche as Roach (which is more like the way it is pronounced) on maps of the first Ordnance Survey<sup>82</sup> of 1813, but in 1997 they label it Retallick<sup>76</sup>. Again, the most ancient (1284) version of the name is Retelek, like the surname with the sleek spelling of an illiterate oral informant, but spellings of the place involving puns with *res heloc* or *res talek* also are found early.

Retallick Farm, 1 km north of Constantine (Fig. 9; N50.130125° W5.172489°; SW 733304 on Ordnance Survey<sup>86-87</sup>), is just uphill from a 16th century tin stamping mill that has been studied in detail by industrial archaeologists<sup>88-90</sup>. The old farmhouse of massive granite blocks includes both rounded arches of Norman design (1066-1189) and pointed arches of early Gothic design (1189-1307). A case has been made that Retallick Farm is named "roach ford" from the Old Cornish terms for ford *res* and for the roach fish *talhoc*<sup>23</sup>, or perhaps ford near the tower, from *tallick* meaning tower or garret<sup>14,25</sup>, or a very high place with pits, from very *re* and high place *tallic* or many pits *tollic*<sup>15</sup> or ford near a high slope, from ford *res* and high slope *talek*<sup>21</sup>. The roach (*Rutilus rutilus*: Cypriniformes) can reach almost 2 kg (3-4 lbs) and is a fish of slow, muddy, fresh water, occasionally found in brackish water<sup>91</sup>, and inappropriate for the



*Figure 10. The engine-pump-house of Retallack Mine (left foreground) and view down the River Hayle near St Hilary. Retallack Mill is in the tributary valley to the southwest (left) behind the mine.*

whitewater stream near Constantine. The closest ancient tower would be Pendennis Castle at Falmouth about 10 km northeast, so this derivation is also unlikely. Polwheveral Stream is crossed by the ancient trail from Merthen Hole up past Retallack Farm to Rame via the steep hill of Maen Rock<sup>21</sup>, but the stream is only 1 m wide and covered in places by blocks from the steep western hill, now largely quarried by Bosahan Quarry of Trevone Quarries Pty Ltd of Falmouth. The stream is no wider and the slopes are less steep at the present bridge for the Tremorna-Brill-Gweek road near here. These were probably never fords in the sense of real water obstacles. The crossing of the stream near the ancient tin stamping mill includes an ancient bridge 2 m wide of enormous (1 m) and deeply weathered granite blocks. The extensive tin milling and blowing house at the site also makes it plausible that there were many pits for alluvial tin workings around here in the past. But these plausible meanings of the word Retallack are given only by and authority<sup>15</sup> who has proven an unreliable<sup>16</sup>. The following spellings of the name can be found in old documents<sup>21</sup>: Retalec (1309), Restalek (1316), Reystallek (1396) and Rettallack (1661). His parish history reveals that the farm has not owned by Retallacks or Taleks since the 16th century. In 1506 the farm's occupant was Nicholas Pentacost, a tenant of the Manor of Merthen. About 1623 it passed to Christopher Walker and to Thom's and Randall. In 1649 the estate was held by Christopher Walker (½), Richard Gerreys (¼) and John Thom's (¼). It was later purchased in entirety by the Trefusis family and added to the Manor of Treworval. By 1842 Lord Clinton was the owner. The spelling appears to have been corrected to a more standard spelling of the surname Retallack by the 17th century. The oldest records of Retallack in Constantine church<sup>2</sup> go back to 1705, Retallick to 1718 and Tallack to 1743. Once again the oldest spelling (Retalec of 1309) has a sleek phonetic spelling that may indicate oral informants, and is more like the 14th century surname Talek than variants incorporating Old Cornish *res* (Restalek, Reystallek) that appeared later in the 14th century.

Retallack Mine (N50.133384° W5.398755°; WS573314 on Ordnance Survey<sup>86-87</sup> and Retallack Mill 1 km to the south, are 2 km east of St Hilary along rough farm roads 1 km north of Trescowe (Fig. 10). There is little left of the mill but for a large millstone and rock discs and pillars like those used to keep vermin out of elevated grainstores. These latter are deeply weathered, like gravestones dating back to the 17th century. Many other old stones have been incorporated into a house and outbuildings built by William Knott in 1971. The large stone engine house and chimney to the underground mine are 1 km to the north near where the mill stream enters the River Hayle. The underground mine was worked from 1830-1858, briefly reworked in 1912, and with neighboring mines Croft and Halmanning yielded 23,429 tons of copper<sup>92</sup>. In view of the suggested etymology of the other Retallack locations outlined above, there is no heath, no high hill and only whitewater streams unsuitable for roach. Willow is present, but not so abundant as near St Columb Major and Roche. The mill stream is only 1 m wide, but the River Hayle is 3 m wide and would have been an important obstacle to north-south routes, though now obscured by dams which have created a series of coarse fishing ponds administered by Polwhellan Farm. An ancient path northward to the River Hayle at this point is shown on the 1602 map of Kirrier Hundred by Nordern<sup>19</sup>, but no crossing, mill or dwelling is indicated. This likely ancient ford is 1 km north of Retallack Mill. Here an ancient "ford of Talek" is indicated by the most ancient known spelling of this locality<sup>22</sup>: Restalek 1311, Rystallet 1327, Ristaloc 1327. The name Retallick is in St Hilary church records<sup>2</sup> only as far back as 1824, Taleks however preceded them in western Cornwall by several centuries, as at Botallack (Fig. 1).

Botallack village (N50.13638° W5.136938°; SW368328 of Ordnance Survey<sup>74</sup>), Botallack Head (N59.140333° W5.692692°; SW363338) and Botallack mine (N50.140823° W690177°; SW365334) near St Just can be translated as Talek's dwelling (Old Cornish *bos Talek*<sup>17</sup>). An alternative etymology would be "dwelling near the cliffs or deep browed place" (Old Cornish *bos talek*), but most other Cornish place names prefixed with *bod* or *bos* are formed from surnames<sup>17</sup>. Parts of Botallack mine (Fig. 11), particularly the old Counthouse, are now reconstructed by the National Trust. This whole area around Botallack Head includes numerous engine houses, chimneys and arsenic labythinths and is being considered as a World Heritage Site. A variety of independent shaft mines, beginning in 1721 were consolidated into the Botallack mine by the end of the 18th century. A combination of flooding and low copper and tin prices forced closing of the mine in 1895. It was reopened in 1907 but by 1914 had stopped production<sup>7,61,93</sup>. Botallack village is a Victorian mining settlement, but at its core is a farm with 17th century buildings<sup>94</sup>. A cluster of farmhouses are labelled at Botallack in Norden's map of 1602 for Carew<sup>19</sup>.

There is also a Castallack village, south of Penzance (N50.072740° W5.562809°; SW453253 on Ordnance Survey<sup>77</sup>). Castallack Carn is on a commanding ridgetop 1 km northeast of the village<sup>95</sup>. The Carn is a megalithic monument including a massive reclining stone 3 m thick, 5 m long and tapering from 3 to 2 m wide (Fig. 12). There are other large stones around it, formerly in circular arrangement, and from 1867 to 1907 there was also a small cave, called Vow Cave. The former "Castallack Round" is now disrupted by incorporation of stones in farm walls and the cave is now buried. Such monuments like Stonehenge are generally dated to 2000-1500 BC. A megalithic tunnel (fogou) of the type found in the Iron Age or early Roman period (600 BC to 50 AD), also was excavated from the yards of Castallack Farm 200 m to the southwest. Such tunnels have been regarded as food storages, or human refuges, but a case can also be made that they were sacred to a Great Goddess and aligned to receive the light of the midsummer sun<sup>96</sup>. The name Castallack may be compounded from Middle Cornish *castelek* for "little castle"



*Figure 11. Botallack Mine and Botallack Head, looking south over Cape Cornwall (photo courtesy of Derek Hawkins)*

or *castelack* for "castle place"<sup>15-17,23</sup>. Ancient spellings of this locality<sup>22</sup> include Castallak 1284, Castelak 1284, Castalack 1356, Castallaf 1460, Castellek ca. 1540, Chastalaffe 1541 and Castallaffe 1541. The earliest Penzance church records<sup>2</sup> of Retallack is in 1812, Retallick in 1812 and Tallack in 1824. It seems unlikely that Castallack has any relation to Retallack or similar surnames.

### **Religious and political life of Cornish Retallacks**

Little can be gleaned of the religious and political leanings of Cornish Retallacks. Ralph Retallack of St Columb Major was one of the leading conspirators in the Cornish rebellion of 1497 against the heavy taxation of Henry VII to finance war against the Scots pretender Perkin Warbeck. The rebels numbering about 15,000 were defeated by 25,000 royal troops at Blackheath near London, with 2,000 slain on the rebel side and 300 of the troops<sup>3,26</sup>.

Marke Retallacke was a church warden at St Columb Major in 1589, a job also held by Nicholas Retallock in 1641. Thomas Retallock in 1727 and Robert Retallock in 1732 were Overseers of the Poor, presumably also a church office, at St Columb Major<sup>2</sup>. In 1606 the Retallack family forfeited their property at St Columb Major to King James I for illegally clinging to the Catholicism (probably primitive Celtic Catholic), following the lead of the local



*Figure 12. Overgrown megalith at the summit of Castallack Carn, near Castallack village.*

lord of the manor John Arundell, who also was fined heavily but not evicted<sup>3</sup>.

The westward migration of Retallacks from Saint Columb Major (Fig. 1) coincides in time with the westward retreat of the Cornish language<sup>17</sup>. Wesleyan Methodism was a very popular religion in Cornwall after the visit of John Wesley to St Ives in 1743, because it appealed to the working class in its abhorrence of idleness and sloth, and elevation of all forms of purposeful activity, especially self improvement<sup>97</sup>. Two Camborne Methodists, George Smith (1800-1868) and Charles Thomas (1798-1868) were self-made men of letters, publishing to urge preservation of Cornish antiquities and language. Methodism became intertwined with Cornish nationalism, and also offered implicit condemnation of both the gentry and the indigent. At the same time it subdued with puritanism the wild ways of many Cornish tin miners<sup>60</sup>.

Ernest George Retallack Hooper (Fig. 13) from St Agnes was Grand Bard (Barth Mur) of the Cornish Gorsedd from 1959-1965 using the bardic name Talek. A prolific writer and journal editor, he was a leading revivalist of Cornish language and culture<sup>26</sup>. He translated two bible gospels into Cornish and taught the Cornish language at the Mount Pleasant House School. By 1820, Helston was one of the few remaining towns in Cornwall with a pre-Christian festival on May 8, which is near Beltane in the Celtic Calendar<sup>98</sup>. It is locally known as The Furry, derived from the old Cornish word *fer* (fair) and Latin *feria* (feast day). The Furry is not, as sometimes supposed, derived from the Ancient Roman goddess Flora<sup>25</sup>, but the alternative term Flora Day has nevertheless proved irresistible<sup>61</sup>. Another term for it is Faddy Day, perhaps from an ancient English dance called "The Fading"<sup>99</sup>. The fair begins early as revelers with drums and kettles try to disrupt the regular work day of the town. Young people then gather in the town squares to beg coins and tokens, before fading into the countryside. They return garlanded with flowers and oak boughs for an afternoon of celebration and dancing. At the end of the day a select group of ladies



*Figure 13. Ernest George Rertallack Hopper Grand Bard (1959-1964) of the Gorseth of Cornwall in civilian (left) and official dress (right). (From Gorseth Kernow 2003 website [www.gorsethkernow.org.uk](http://www.gorsethkernow.org.uk) accessed July 11, 2013)*

and gentlemen parade through the town in floral costume for an evening bal<sup>98</sup>. In the early twentieth century The Furry attracted local carnivals with sideshows<sup>100</sup>. It still draws thousands of tourists<sup>101</sup>, but it is now a relatively sedate and genteel series of parades and dances<sup>99</sup>.

### **Occupations of Cornish Retallacks**

The oldest recorded occupations of Retallacks are as tin miners<sup>2</sup> in the Tinnens Muster Roll of 1535, which records a Robert Retalek in St Columb Major and a Robert Retaleke in St Hilary, a Richard Retalek in St Hilary and another of the same name in Constantine. The distribution of Retallacks seldom deviates far from Cornish mines (Fig. 1), so that Retallacks are sparse near Launceston and northeastern Cornwall. The likely precursor name Tallack was already scattered throughout southern Cornwall before 1600, and also filled in the intervening mining districts by 1825 (Fig. 1).

Men with similar names are recorded as mine owners. In a Stannary Court at Truro in 1349 Peter Beavyle left employment of the Tywarnhaile tin mines of Richard Talek, because he was beaten<sup>4</sup>. The Tywarnhaile Stannary of alluvial mines covered a large triangular area outlined by St Agnes, Truro and Redruth<sup>102</sup>. Another court record of 1379 tells of a gang driving off the mine laborers of William Talkard<sup>4</sup>. In those days the mines were largely alluvial surface workings.

The Botallack Mine near St Just and Cape Cornwall (Fig. 11) is one of the deepest underground mines in Cornwall, extending out under the sea to 1200 feet below high water<sup>60,61</sup>.

It was begun as an underground tin mine in 1721, during the mining boom of the 1720's. This was stimulated largely by increased demand for copper, which remained strong until the mining recession of the 1790's due to flooding of the market with ore from Anglesey. Mining in Cornwall was rescued after 1790 by contract with the East India Company to export tin to China<sup>7</sup>. The pewter table service made from Botallack tin and used for dinner after mine meetings was so clean and burnished that it was frequently mistaken for silver<sup>59</sup>. By 1815 the Botallack mine was producing mainly copper, with less tin and iron<sup>60</sup>. The great tin boom of 1870-1872 saw expanded activity, and was stimulated by disruption of tin supplies from Malaysia beginning in 1867 because of civil war arising from competition between two Chinese secret societies (Hai San and Ghee Hin) for control of mine laborers. Botallack like most other Cornish mines then declined in production as Australian tin entered the world market in 1873, followed by Malaysian tin again available in 1883, Bolivian copper in 1896 and Nigerian copper in 1905. By 1914, Botallack mine was uneconomical, and was maintained for instructional purposes by the Penzance School of Mines<sup>7,93</sup>. Mining has always been a boom and bust industry.

By comparison, underground workings at the Retallack Mine near St Hilary (Fig. 10) were short lived<sup>92</sup>. It was active from 1830 to 1858, and briefly reopened in 1912. It was opened at a time when Britain was competing with Holland, with its East Indian holdings, for control of the global tin trade. Despite political accommodations, such as abolition of the archaic system of coinage in 1938, Retallack Mine foundered in the economic depression and famine of the late 1850's<sup>7</sup>.

Tin miners had their own subculture. Because of the high value of tin for pewter tableware and church paraphernalia and for bronze jewelry and cannons, tin miners operated independently and in a quasi-capitalist system by royal charter since King John (1201) and Edward I (1305). Tinnners were thus exempt from military service and from market tolls. They also had broad rights of prospecting and the use of streams and fuel. They also had their own parliaments and courts. They were taxed a corner chiseled off each ingot, assayed and weighed by officers of the Duchy of Cornwall<sup>7</sup>. This was done in designated coinage towns (from French *coin* for corner): originally Bodmin, Lostwithiel, Liskeard, Truro and Helston, and then with loss of mining near the first two, including Penzance. There were never any tinner's organizations that restricted membership and production like other medieval guilds. Any adventurer could stake a claim and become his own master. According to Cornish proverbs "a tinner has nothing to loose" and he is "never broke till his neck's broke"<sup>62</sup>. Tin miners were notorious for smuggling and for scavenging shipwrecks for useful goods. Tinnners were rowdy, individualistic and entrepreneurial. Tinnners traditionally disdained the drudgery and low wages of agricultural work and all forms of authority<sup>62,103</sup>.

Some Retallacks were church wardens (1589, 1641), and Overseers to the Poor (1727, 1732) in St Columb Major, where Retallacks were land holders<sup>2,3</sup> until 1606. The Retallacks were probably never large land-holders. They are not listed in Burke's peerage<sup>104</sup> or other lists of Cornish nobles<sup>98</sup>. Tretallock near St Columb Major on the 1602 Norden map<sup>19</sup> features the prefix *tre* which is Cornish for farm and common in landholder's names such as Trevithick and Trelawney<sup>17</sup>. This is probably the farm of John Retallack listed in St Columb Major parish records of the time<sup>2</sup>. Other records of farming Retallacks include the family of my ancestor John on Black Moor tenancy near Ladock (Tables 1-2).

Some Cornish Retallacks may have been merchants, although the oldest record of a shopkeeper is Lionel Tallick at Minard Cross in 1839. St Columb Major is a market town<sup>105</sup>

### **Table 5. Charles Retallack's account of his pioneering overland haul of 1894**

To the editor

Dear sir,

I the undersigned would be pleased to hear from anyone who has had a similar experience since 1894 travelling across country with Bullock teams from Orroroo South Australia to Mitchell in Queensland loaded with farm implements about 1200 mls. Crossing S A Border at Cockburn border of N.S.W. Broken Hill, Wilcannia, Paroo, Warrogo & Cuttaburra Rivers. Crossed Barrongun border into Queensland through stations across to Fernlee, via Bolland & up the Maranoa River to Mitchell. Landed to see an eight years drought. During that time I saw the greatest cyclone ever witnessed in Mitchell wrecking the whole town. An accident worth recording on the Journey on Fernlee Station was our saddle Horses including young ones, rushed out of the dam excepting one with bell on which never came out. I rushed down to see what was wrong & all I could see was one leg above the water & then disappeared. I called the brother down but no horse appeared. We went back to the waggons and had dinner & then went back to pull him away, but he had never come to the top, so there was nothing for us to do, but to leave him where he was and go on our way. He came to the top later as a carrier was sent to pull him out in the scrub. The previous Diary of the above has been lost.

C. Retallack

which was given the privilege of a Thursday market by Edward III in 1333. Helston also was granted the privilege of a Saturday market<sup>100</sup> by Edward III (1327-1377). Retallacks diversified into a variety of trades with the declining fortunes of farming and mining in the late 19th century: mason, boiler-maker, shipwright and police constable for the men and for the women, domestic servant, cook, druggist, dressmaker, charwoman, governess, school mistress and district nurse<sup>2</sup>. Few Retallacks appear to have been in especially prestigious or prosperous occupations, and the lure of emigration must have been strong.

One exception was Richard Retallick of Liskeard, a watchmaker and ironmonger, who prospered with early 19th century canal building. He was on the original committee of management of the Liskeard-Looe Canal, subscribed and authorised by an act of Parliament in 1825 and opened in 1828. The canal had 24 locks in 6 miles, each lock rising 6 feet. The engineer was J. Green of Exeter, but the work was completed by R. Coad. Richard Retallick was Clerk of the Canal until the 1850's, administering freight charges and upkeep<sup>106</sup>. In 1829, Richard Retallick issued a prospectus for another canal from Saint Columb Bridge to Mawgan Porth, and other works to make Mawgan Porth a secure summer harbour. This project however, did not come to fruition<sup>105</sup>.

Another Richard Retallick had a distinguished career in the British navy: lieutenant in 1779, commander by 1794, and captain by 1799. He commanded the "Defiance" in the fleet of Lord Nelson at the victorious Battle of Copenhagen (1801). A Captain Class naval frigate was launched October 9 1943 as HMS Retallick in his honor<sup>2</sup>.

### **Emigration to Australia and North America**

My ancestor John Retallack was transported to Moreton Bay Australia in 1851 as part of a 7 year sentence for larceny<sup>13</sup>. He was on the last convict ship to Brisbane, and under an arrangement where he was set free on arrival, so technically he was an exile rather than convict in the usual Australian sense. He married Caroline Rashleigh in 1853 at Mitcham, South Australia. John was a carrier with his mother inlaw Phyllis Kinsman Mitcham (1856), then later at Angaston (1863) and Gawler (1869). His son Charles was a carpenter and carriage builder, and in 1894, drove his cattle and household overland to resettle in Mitchell, Queensland. A charming account of what may have been a droving route pioneered by his father was written for the newspaper by Charles at the urging of James William Retallack and Blanche Cummings (third daughter of William Retallack) ca. 1920 (Table 5), but not published. Charles' son, Leslie

John was a newspaper printer. Leslie John Retallack was father to my father, Kenneth John, who founded his own printing-engraving company in Sydney (Standard Engraving Pty Ltd). My brother Michael is a chemical engineer and yachtsman<sup>107</sup>. My brother Christopher is an artist. I am a university professor of geology<sup>108-110</sup>. My own emigration to the U.S.A. was not stimulated by wide political movements. I came after writing my PhD thesis in 1977 on a quest for postdoctoral experience and adventure, not to settle. When the time came to find a job, nothing was available in Australia and I was offered a position in Eugene, Oregon. Our small branch of the New World Retallacks has been here since 1981, and is independent of the many Cornish Retallacks that emigrated to North America in the 19th century<sup>111</sup>.

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