



Robert Gourlay - statue in Toronto

## Robert Gourlay - A Public Disagreement with the President

### To the Members of the Wiltshire Agricultural Society

DEPTFORD FARM, July 14, 1814.

GENTLEMEN!

In the month of March last I was put to the disagreeable necessity of defending myself, through means of a formal affidavit in the Salisbury Journal against a publication of your President in that newspaper.

An antipathy to strong measures, together with a hope that time and reflection might dictate an apology, as well to you in a body as to me individually, has induced me to forbear till the last moment.

Seeing, however, your Anniversary is advertised for the 20th instant, I have now to acquaint you that I shall order a printed statement of the case to be delivered to such of you as will take the trouble either to call or send to the Bull Inn, Fisherton Wednesday next, or to the Bear Inn, Devizes, on the morning of Wednesday. I shall also submit the matter to you when assembled that day; and I trust so important and delicate a matter will ensure a full attendance, most particularly of those Gentlemen who joined me in the requisition which proved the innocent cause of this unpleasant investigation.

I am, GENTLEMEN, yours faithfully,

ROBERT GOURLAY

Salisbury and Winchester Journal, Monday, 18 July 1814

**OPC Note:**

Robert Fleming Gourlay, was born in Craighrothie Ceres, Fife, Scotlnd on 22nd March 1778 and died on the 1st August 1863, in Edinburgh. He lived at Deptford Farm, Wylie from 1810- 181. He later emigrated to Canada, and returned again to Britain.

He was a pamphleteer, and proponent of the reform of Agriculture and of the poor laws. His suggestion to alleviate poverty in parishes of under 1000 inhabitants was to use tithe land to share communally as cow pasture and to allocate land to families.

A plaque to him in Toronto bears the following inscription:

Robert Gourlay championed reform ahead of his time.

In Scotland – a vote for every man who could read and write

In England – a living wage for workers

In Canada – fair land distribution

Robert Fleming Gourlay

