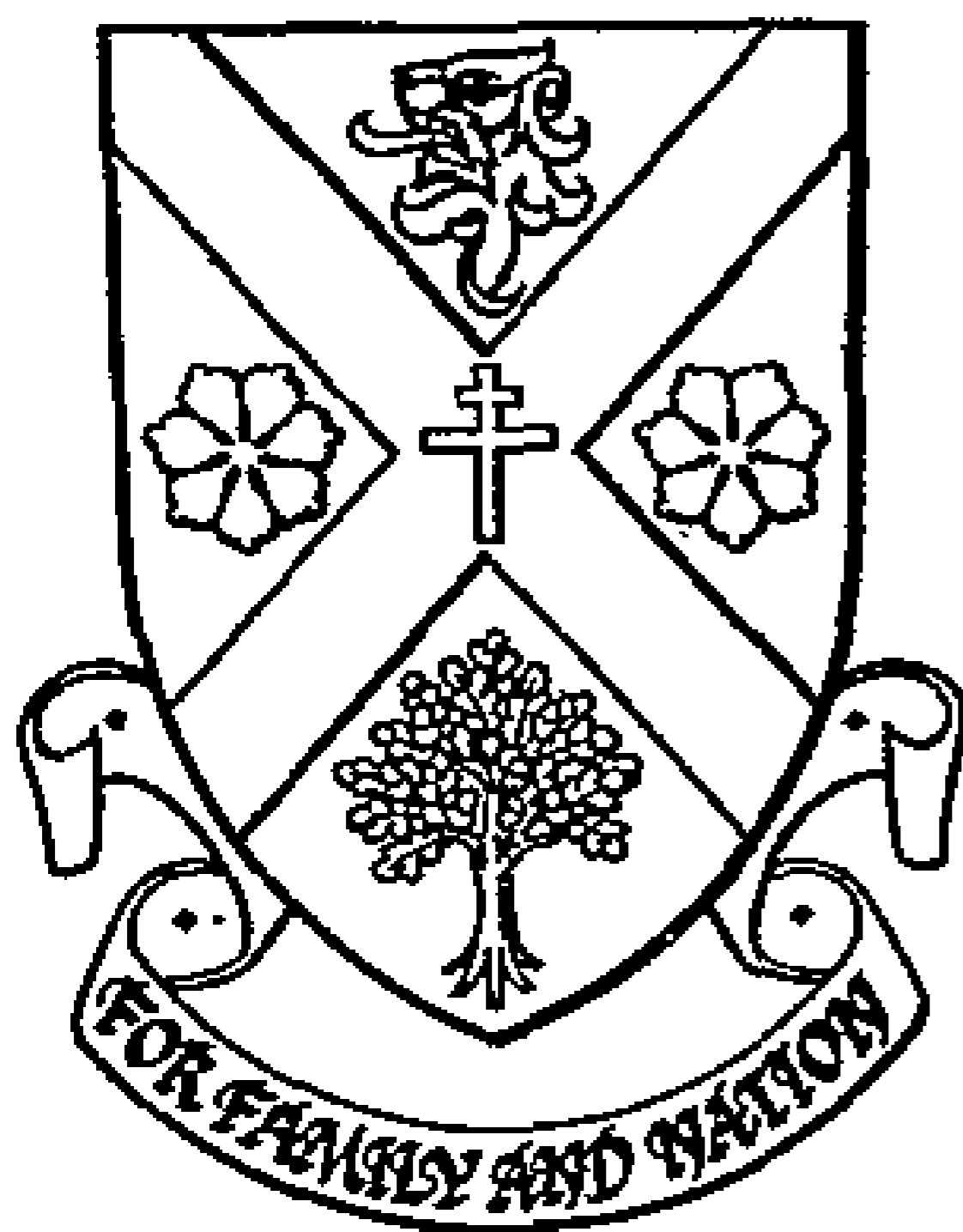


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A PRIVATE SOLDIER IN A SCOTTISH FENCIBLE REGIMENT OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS

Professor H.C. BOLTON

INTRODUCTION

The two world wars of the twentieth century drew many men and women into the armed services; there cannot be many families in Europe which have not contributed to the archives of their countries through the service records of their members. It was the same in the Napoleonic wars which went on for much longer than the two recent wars and which drew men into navies and successive armies. Anyone taking a family history back into the eighteenth century will probably be faced with the need for searching service records.

The records of British army officers are usually relatively easy to obtain; the annual army list of officers is printed. Ordinary soldiers and non-commissioned officers are less well recorded. The present story is about a Scots soldier, Peter Campbell, in the Napoleonic wars. The information about Peter Campbell that was known was the record¹

‘30th November 1797 Peter Campbell Soldier in the 3rd Battalion of Breadalbane Fencibles and Jean McKay daughter of Alexander McKay gave up their names for marriage’.

In trying to trace his military career there emerged aspects of the story that were of general interest: the records are largely in the Public Record Office, London, but concern the British Army as a whole with a specific reference to a Scottish Regiment.

HISTORY OF THE REGIMENT

The war with France began in 1793 and the armies of the allies ringed France; because Britain had to supply regular troops to the continent there had to be other forces for its security². The regular army regiments were destined for the Netherlands and the Fencibles were raised for the defence of Scotland³. England had Militia which were local troops, to be used only locally. Scotland then had no Militia and Fencible regiments were raised. The word Fencible meant defending and such regiments were of regular troops enlisted for home service for the duration of the war. The troops could be used anywhere in the Kingdom but could not be asked to serve abroad unless the men volunteered. There had been a few Scottish Fencible regiments raised in the Seven Years’ War and the American War of Independence but there had to be a big expansion. The clan system in Scotland, though weakened after 1745 was still strong enough for a local laird to have great authority over the men of his clan and the Scottish Fencible regiments seem to have been raised very quickly. It is possible that added to the patriotic feeling of service to the country a laird saw the army discipline as a way of emphasizing his own authority in the clan and clansmen of showing loyalty to both clan chief and country. have been raised very quickly. It is possible that added to the patriotic feeling of service to the country a laird saw the army discipline as a way of emphasizing his own authority in the clan and clansmen of showing loyalty to both clan chief and country.

As we shall see later, the strict army discipline of that time and Scottish honour were sometimes at variance with each other and led to tragic clashes. The Fencible regiments were raised in all three kingdoms and eventually the country had the three arms, the Regular Army, the Fencibles and the Militia all competing for recruits.

In 1794 the members of all the Scottish Fencibles were invited to extend their service to Ireland with a bounty of £5 for each man. There was a good response to this invitation and from 1794 all Fencibles were raised to serve in Great Britain and Ireland and the Isles adjacent⁴. In 1799 the force was required either to extend its service to Europe or be reduced; many Fencible regiments were disbanded. Most of the Fencibles were disbanded in May 1801. All Fencible regiments in existence were reduced in 1802 and a Scots Militia established.

On the outbreak of hostilities with France, John, the Fourth Earl of Breadalbane whose seat was Taymouth Castle on Loch Tay, Perthshire, was one of the first Lairds to volunteer to raise Fencibles⁵. Within a few days approval had been given for two battalions, each of about 1000 men, which were recruited from Perthshire or the immediate neighbourhood. The Earl was the Colonel. An undertaking was given not to draft the men for overseas service. If the Regiment served out of Scotland, it had to be marched back for disbandment. The Earl chose the officers; many of them came from Argyllshire where the Earl had large estates. The quotas for recruitment were for a captain, 35, for a lieutenant, 8, and for an ensign, 6. The Earl promised a bounty at his own expense for every man above the quota enlisted by any officer. The standard of height for recruits was fixed at five foot three inches and the age limit between 15 and 45. The headquarters were at Perth and within a month the regiment was nearly complete. From then on, the standard of height was raised to five foot four inches and the age limit reduced to 36. The Regiment was first called the Perthshire Regiment of Fencible Men but on 1st August, 1793 the official title was changed to the Breadalbane Fencibles. The three Battalions of the Breadalbane Fencible Regiment were raised on 2nd March 1793 (First Battalion of eight companies), 8th March 1793 (Second Battalion, eight companies) and 9th December 1794 (Third Battalion, ten companies). The Third was an infantry Battalion and existed in 1801.

Like the other Highland Fencibles of that time, the full dress uniform of the Breadalbane Fencibles was the belted plaid. Nearly all the tartan for the Army was woven in and around Stirling⁶. Off duty the philabeg, or little kilt, was worn. The jackets were scarlet with yellow facings. There are some extant medals of the Regiment⁷, probably those in the photographs in Tullibardine⁸. It is supposed that the men wore flat bonnets. The uniform of the Highland soldier, during the Napoleonic period, was as follows; belted plaid, the little kilt, 2 pairs cloth hose, 1 purse and strap, 1 pair of garters, jacket, waistcoat, bonnet, 2 pairs shoes, foraging cap or humble bonnet and 1 pair of gaiters. He was also supposed to have, and keep up, one pair of fatigue trousers made of any cloth⁶.

On the 27th May 1793 the 1st and 2nd Battalions of Breadalbane Fencibles were inspected at Perth, but troops were required on the coast and on 12th June 1793, the 1st Battalion marched to Dundee and Montrose, four companies to each town.

The 3rd was called the Glenorchy or Glenurchy Battalion and was raised in December 1794 on the extended terms of service. From May 1795 it was stationed in Ireland until its disbandment in 1802 and must have seen much of Ireland's strife of those years. During its embodiment its headquarters were at Ayr; its establishment was fixed at 10 companies.

It is important for the family historian to know that from 500 to 700 men were allowed to exchange at a bounty from the first two battalions of the Regiment into the new one. In a letter of the 25th November 1794⁹ to the Earl of Breadalbane, Henry Dundas, Secretary of State for War, approved the Earl's proposal for the transfer of men to the 3rd Battalion as long as neither of the first two was reduced below 500. We will see that knowing this helped to trace our man. The 3rd Battalion drilled at Ayr and was inspected on 24th April 1795; all the recruits passed. On the day after the inspection the 3rd began to march towards the coast for embarkation and by 26th May it was in Arklow, Ireland. In August 1795 it assisted in the suppression of a possible mutiny amongst regular troops in Dublin. It was in Dublin in October 1795 and at Kells on 20th February 1796 for the succeeding summer and autumn. In November 1796 it was in winter quarters at Blaris Camp. In March 1797 it helped to carry out a general disarmament of the population in the Counties of Down and Antrim. During the summer of 1797 some of the Battalion were at Blaris Camp. In January 1798 the Regiment was at Enniskillen and at Armagh in July 1798. By the end of August 1798 it had returned to Enniskillen and during the brief French campaign, some 300 officers and men went to Sligo. In September 1798 the 3rd Battalion marched to Londonderry and was joined by Lord Breadalbane and the 2nd Battalion.

On 22nd December 1798 the non-commissioned officers and men of the 3rd Battalion presented a "memorial" to their Colonel offering to extend their services to any country in Europe¹⁰. It embodied the spirit of the Regiment and is worth repeating.

"Unto the Right Honorable the Earl of Breadalbane Colonel of the 3rd Battalion of the Breadalbane Fencibles.

The memorial of the Non-Commissioned Officers and Private Men of the said Battalion Humbly Sheweth.

That at the present Crisis, the Memorialists conceive that an extension of their services beyond the original stipulation contained in the letters of Service for raising the Battalion, may be acceptable to His Majesty and render in some Degree a benefit to the Country. The Memorialists therefore beg leave to express their attachment to their King and Constitution and your Lordship and that they are determined to support the present Government to the utmost of their power.

The Memorialists Therefore request your Lordship to signify to his Majesty or the Lord Lieutenant that they will with pleasure and willingness serve in any country in Europe where his Majesty may think proper to order them.

They only beg leave to mention to your Lordship That they expect that the original agreement on Enlisting shall not be broke in upon in regard

to Drafting, or being disbanded anywhere but in Scotland. That such of them as are married shall be allowed to carry their wives and children with them if they choose it and that they shall be accompanied by all the officers of the Battalion who are now doing Duty in it.

Londonderry. 22nd December 1798. Peter McDougall Sergeant Major for himself and the rest of the non-Commissioned Officers and Privates of the Battalion."

The Earl wrote immediately to the Marquis Cornwallis in charge of the Army as follows.¹¹

Londonderry 23rd December 1798

"My Lord,

I have the honor to inclose to your Excellency the inclosed memorial received from the non-commissioned officers and privates of the 3rd Battalion of my Regiment who have unanimously offered to extend their Services. I have the satisfaction to mention to your Excellency that it is a spontaneous act originating with themselves their loyalty and spirit requiring no influence or argument to induce them to make this voluntary offer.

I have the honor to inform your Excellency that I have sent a duplicate of the enclosed memorial to his Royal Highness the Duke of York and

I have the honor to be Your Excellency's Most obedient and faithful Humble Servant, Breadalbane Col. 4th Reg."

It is not known if the offer was considered in the logistics of the Army, but many Fencible Regiments were disbanded in 1799 and the 3rd Battalion survived until 1802. It is possible that it was not used because of the mutiny that occurred in the Regiment in 1794 and to which we will refer later. In May 1799 the 3rd Battalion left Londonderry for Strabane where it remained for three years. In the summer of 1799, Lord Breadalbane resigned command of the Regiment and the new Colonel was Archibald Campbell, a younger brother of Lieutenant-Colonel John Campbell of Achalader. The new Colonel died in November 1799 and Alexander Nairne was promoted in his stead. The recruiting service of the Breadalbane Fencibles terminated on 24th December 1801¹².

After the Peace of Amiens in March 1802 the Breadalbane Fencibles received orders for disbandment and in May and June 1802 left Strabane for Scotland. Strabane is on the River Foyle in Co. Tyrone, some 15 miles SSW of Londonderry. In their Regimental Pay Lists¹³ it was stated that Captain Moncur's Company had marched to Omagh Co. Tyrone, some 20 miles SSE of Strabane for the protection of the Town. The Company returned to Strabane on the 18th June. There were two routes for the disbandment march; number 1, on which 27 NCO's and men started on 26th May from Strabane to Dublin and thence to Belfast, and number 2, on which were 545 NCO's and men and which started on 8th June and went directly from Strabane to Belfast. Number 1 route was also taken by Captain Moncur's Company. The sea crossing was to Stranraer. The Pay List returns up to the 24th June refer to the men being "Billeted on Innkeepers". The Regiment marched in two divisions (by route number 1) from Stranraer to Ayr. The Companies 12 days on the march composed the first division having halted on

Sunday; the second division was composed of those who took 11 days on the march, having no halting day. The Regiment was disbanded at Ayr on 28th July 1802. As an example, Captain Torrance's Company had 59 NCO's and men on disbandment; 49 were discharged in Scotland, 5 in England, 4 in Ireland and 1 "Recommended". This last entry probably refers to a recommendation for an old soldier to enter either Chelsea Hospital in London or Kilmainham Hospital, the equivalent in Dublin. On the Fencible discharge certificates¹⁴ a discharged soldier, after noting his army service is "recommended as a proper object of His Majesty's Royal Bounty of Chelsea Hospital". The discharge certificate is useful genealogically as it gives the man's age, birth place and military service. Some of the certificates, from their folds, must have been with the soldiers at Chelsea or Kilmainham.

As a small human commentary to the Pay Lists for 24th July 1802, it was stated that the allowance for keeping the Adjutant's horse was 2 shillings per day, but the Paymaster must have queried this because Lt.-Col. Alexander Nairne had to add a note which read; "I hereby certify that the Horse kept by the Adjutant of the Breadalbane Regiment is his own property and necessarily kept for Regimental duty and that it has been so during the period of this account". Gillies¹⁵ states that when the Fencibles returned to Breadalbane, the Earl treated them "with great consideration. Many of the men were granted crofts free of rent for life in different parts of the district. Others were provided with employment".

THE MUTINY IN THE BREADALBANE FENCIBLE REGIMENT

An important event in the life of the Regiment occurred on the 1st December 1794. On that day Hugh Robertson, a private of the light infantry company, was imprisoned for some military offence. The men mutinied, fearing that he would receive corporal punishment. The official report of the trial¹⁶ shows that many of the men spoke Gaelic. Many of the officers could speak both Gaelic and English, but the NCO's would occasionally have to interpret orders given in English. A full discussion of the mutiny and its aftermath is given by Prebble¹⁷. The men had that long-sense of tradition and honour depending on their clan loyalties and strengthened by the use of Gaelic, their own language. The honour of the Scot in a clan and a local regiment was not the same as that of an Englishman in a regiment. To the Scot, the concept of personal chastisement was anathema unless expressed through the clan and the clan chief. This point is brought out in the court martial after the mutiny in the testimony of Captain Colin Campbell which is quoted later. In addition, the Earl of Breadalbane, the Colonel of the Regiment, did not do very much active service with it. Captain Campbell, of Glenfalloch and of the 1st Battalion, was a full, descriptive witness. He had been the officer-in-charge of the prisoners' march to Edinburgh before the court martial. He spoke to the mutineers "in their own language (Gaelic) and told them what a shame it was for soldiers to behave in a manner so contrary to law and to the duty which they owed to their king and country, and entreated them to fall back, and allow the prisoner to be tried by the Court: To which they answered that they would not, and were determined to have the prisoner released: That they knew some who had been unjustly punished before, and were determined that this man should be released: That what they complained of was that the soldiers were punished in the guardhouse and not as they ought to have been in front of the regiment"¹⁸. Regarding the punishments, Prebble states¹⁹

that in July 1794 the Regiment was paraded in a hollow square to watch the flogging of a soldier; this had a profound effect on the men and John Malloch is reported as saying that before another Breadalbane man was so foully treated "we shall see the officers' guts about their heels". There were also "levelling societies" spreading ideas through the ranks as could be expected so soon after the French Revolution²⁰; the word "levelling" is a link with Cromwellian times.

Later during the mutiny, Captain Campbell advised Major McLean to comply with the mutineers' demand and release the prisoner, Robertson, in order to prevent bloodshed. As another example of the men's attitude Lieutenant Alexander Campbell said at the court martial that he had heard the men say that Breadalbane men ought not to be brought to punishment as they were volunteers²¹.

The consequences of the mutiny were that there were 7 men court-martialled for mutiny at Edinburgh Castle between 6th and 24th January 1795; their names were Donald MacCallum, John Scrymgeour, John Malloch, Ludovick MacNaughton, Duncan Stewart, John MacMartin (tried separately²²), and Alexander Sutherland (tried separately²³). Malloch, MacNaughton, Stewart and MacMartin had volunteered to stand trial on behalf of all the mutineers.

During the march to Edinburgh there occurred one of the most extraordinary episodes that reveals the intensity and quality of the honour of the Scotsman. The story is told by Stewart of Garth²⁴. One of the prisoners, John MacMartin, wishing to settle his affairs before his trial, which he felt might lead to his death, asked permission of the officer-in-charge, Captain Colin Campbell, to leave the march. MacMartin said he would rejoin the party before it reached Edinburgh Castle. Captain Campbell had known MacMartin since childhood and granted his request. MacMartin returned to Glasgow, completed his business and hastened to catch up the prisoners' party. He was held up by taking a circuitous route to avoid being seen and arrested as a deserter. Captain Campbell had delayed his approach to the Castle as long as he could and was delivering his prisoners but had not yet submitted his report when MacMartin rushed in, breathless, amongst his fellow prisoners. Had there been any need to reveal the sharp sense of honour of the Highlander it was this action of MacMartin. Stewart says, "Officers who have violated the laws by killing an antagonist in a duel are allowed the plea of honour as a sufficient defence; therefore when soldiers act from a principle of honour, why should not the same excuse be extended to them? By thus admitting them within the pale of honour, would not additional security for their future be obtained?" Referring to John MacMartin's story, Stewart goes on to say, "Are these people to be treated as malefactors without regard to their feelings and principles and might not a discipline somewhat different from the usual mode be, with advantage, applied to them?"

From the court martial report it would seem²⁵ that John MacMartin spoke Gaelic; Gaelic was the language spoken at the mutiny and one of the officers did not understand this language²⁵. The Reverend Mr. Joseph Robertson MacGregor, Minister of the Gaelic Chapel in Edinburgh, was sworn as interpreter and the charge to "such of the prisoners as did not understand English"²⁶. At MacMartin's trial, Captain Colin Campbell spoke up as best he could²⁷. He said that the prisoner was of his Company and to the question "What character did he bear?" answered, "A very good character; he was orderly and obedient to command." Captain Campbell was also asked at the trial of the first 5 men, how the prisoners behaved from Glasgow to Edinburgh and he answered "Remarkably well"²⁸. The sentence was 1000 lashes but "on account of certain alleviating circumstances in his case the Court recommended the said John MacMartin to mercy".

At the court martial of Alexander Sutherland it was stated²⁹, "As it had been alleged upon the part of the prisoner that he never heard the articles of war read, which inferred a culpability upon the part of the officers of this regiment that required

explanation, the Court . . . "inquired from the Adjutant "whether the articles of war had been regularly read in this regiment agreeably to his Majesty's orders". The answer was "They were most regularly read and oftener than the mutiny act required. Indeed from the particular situation of the regiment they were for some time read every day and explained, paragraph by paragraph, in Gaelic that none might be ignorant of the contents".

Reading the sentence of the court martial we can only be filled with sadness at the consequences of so much misunderstanding. MacCallum, Malloch and Stewart were condemned to death but Stewart was recommended to mercy on account of his youth. MacNaughton was given 1500 lashes and Scrymgeour and MacMartin 1000 each. Sutherland was condemned to death on 12th January 1795 and was the only one to die of the four so condemned. The executions of the four guilty men were ordered for Tuesday 27th January 1795 on Musselburgh Sands³⁰. The regiment was paraded and the verdict of the Court and the decision of the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Adam Gordon, in North Britain read to them. The Reverend Mr. MacGregor whispered a translation to two of the men who spoke little English. At the end came the surprising news that three sentences, of Malloch, MacCallum and Stewart, were suspended; Sutherland was quickly shot. We can see a cat-and-mouse game being played with the 3 men subsequently. The Earl of Breadalbane wrote a letter pointing out that carrying out the executions would affect the recruiting drive in his lands for the 3rd Battalion and it is not difficult to think that granted the harsh military discipline of the time, the men could have had better leadership if their Colonel had taken an active part in the life of the Regiment. On 9th February 1795 the King pardoned the 6 offenders provided that the first 3 enlisted into a regiment serving in the West Indies. The conditions of service in the West Indies were known to be so bad that three of the prisoners, thought to be MacCallum, Malloch and Stewart³¹, attempted to endure the punishment by the lash. After part of the sentence, they accepted the pardon and on 18th May 1795 all six marched to Leith and embarked for Canada.³¹

We will see that the Peter Campbell for whom we have been searching, was in the 1st Battalion at the time of the mutiny, though probably not at the time of the court martial and execution.

THE MILITARY RECORD OF PETER CAMPBELL

As already noted, the information available about Peter Campbell was that he gave up his name for marriage in the Canongate on 30th November 1797 and he was in the 3rd Battalion. The Breadalbane Fencible Discharge Certificates¹⁴ were searched without success, but since we knew Peter's further career was as a tailor in Edinburgh, the chance of his discharge certificate being preserved in official records is small because it would be likely to stay with the family.

The first record obtained was in the Muster Roll from 1st October 1797 to 31st March 1798³². The returns are given monthly and there was only one man with the name Peter Campbell; he was in Captain Carfrae's company. Beside his name under the heading "Cause if Absent" were the words "Command. From Corporal 21st January 1798". It is not clear from the Muster Roll where Peter was serving. His name remained in the company under Captain Carfrae without comment, getting his 1 shilling per day,

until November 1799 when the company was called a "vacant company" and in December 1799 it became Captain Torrance's company. Peter remained in the company until April 1800 when under "Remarks" was the word "Sick" which continued to July 1800. On 10 July 1800 he was paid 10 shillings and under "Remarks" there were the words "Discharged Volunteered".

We now needed to find Peter Campbell's military service earlier than the date of his marriage. We have two points to remember; firstly, many men joined the 3rd Battalion from the 1st and 2nd Battalions and secondly the names Peter and Patrick were at this time used synonymously³³. In the Muster Roll of the 3rd Battalion³² from 9th December 1794 to 24th April 1795 there was no Peter Campbell but there was, amongst the corporals, a Patrick Campbell whose date of attestation was 25th December 1794. Patrick was rare as a given name; thus, none of the 668 men, 3 of the 50 corporals, none of the 22 drummers and 2 of the 40 sergeants had the given name Patrick, which has therefore an overall percentage of 0.64%. In the Roll for 24th April to 30th May 1795 under Corporals appeared Corporal Peter Campbell and under "Cause, if absent" was written "Gouray," a town in Wexford, Ireland. In the Roll for 31st May to 30th September 1795 there appeared Corporal Peter Campbell and under "Cause, if absent" was written "Detached". This last entry looks as if "Patk" had been written first and "Peter" superposed, a pleasing confirmation of the Peter/Patrick synonym. There was no Peter Campbell recorded under Men. A Captain Peter Campbell, who had been a possibility, resigned from the 3rd Battalion on 30th April 1796; we can reject him as a possibility. In the Muster Roll of 1st October 1796 to 31st March 1797, Peter Campbell appeared as Supernumerary Corporal with "Sick" under "Cause, if Absent". There was no Peter or Patrick Campbell under Full Corporals or under Men. The total number of men in the 3rd Battalion was now 523.

Peter Campbell retained his position as Supernumerary Corporal in the Roll from 1st April to 30th September 1797 and there was no Patrick Campbell amongst the 525 men, 42 corporals and 35 sergeants. In the Muster Roll of 1st October 1797 to 31st March 1798 Peter Campbell was noted as "Reduced. 20th January 1798". From 1st April 1798 onwards the Muster Rolls are replaced by Pay Lists.

The confirmation that Peter Campbell had enlisted in the 1st Battalion was obtained by finding him in the Muster Rolls of the 1st Battalion³⁴ as Peter Campbell with date of attestation 15th April 1793; there were several Campbells recorded as was expected since the 1st Battalion was recruited from the Earl of Breadalbane's lands round Loch Tay. In the Muster Roll for 25th December 1793 to 24th June 1794 there were 514 men of whom 29 had the surname Campbell; there was only one Peter Campbell and no Patrick Campbell. The given name Peter was unusual; in the Muster Roll for 25 December 1793 to 24 June 1794 there were 514 men of whom 20 or 4% had the given name Peter compared to 120 or 23% with the given name John. The final piece of information was the word "discharged" against Peter Campbell's name on 24 December 1794 in the Roll of the 1st Battalion; this date was after the mutiny. The word "discharged" was against the large number of 245 names of the 600 men of the 1st Battalion. The names were given of the prisoners taken at the mutiny and against Alexander Sutherland's name for 27 January 1795 stands the word "dead".

A search was made of the Muster Rolls of the 2nd Battalion³⁵. There was only one Peter Campbell whose date of attestation was 1st April 1796 and whose record in the 2nd Battalion was complete until 18th April 1799 when that Battalion was disbanded. This was rejected as being the man sought.

Peter/Patrick Campbell's military service can be summarized as follows:

Attestation in 1st Battalion	15th April 1793
Discharged from 1st Battalion	24th December 1794
Attestation as Corporal in 3rd Battalion	25th December 1794
Reduced to the Ranks	20th January 1798
Sick	April 1800
Discharged Volunteered	10th July 1800

His future career was as a tailor in Edinburgh. It would seem highly likely that Peter Campbell's birth place would be in the Loch Tay area, the central recruiting ground of the Earl of Breadalbane's recruiting sergeants, but this remains to be found.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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33. Scots Ancestry Research Society; Letter of 16th June 1977, Reference B/29, 177.
34. PRO; WO/13/3810.
35. PRO; WO/13/3811.

THE ISLAND IN THE CURRENT

David G. C. Burns

It is now some time since I first beheld Stroma from the crest of a ridge above John O' Groats. The island lay in panoramic splendour with the Orkneys forming a superb backdrop. My reason for travelling so far north; direct ancestral links with the island. After twice being foiled through inclement weather, a telephone call from a friend in John O' Groats, to the island's owner, provided both the opportunity and the means of transport.

On a dark, misty morning a small boat slipped out from Huna, one of countless thousands to make this journey down through the centuries. I was tremendously thrilled at the prospect of setting foot on land trodden by my ancestors some 200 years ago, with their ancestry, in turn, reaching back, through Viking incursions, to Scandinavian origins. This journey commenced in the early 1960's when my interest in genealogy began to stir. Since then, research into my progenitors has led me to many interesting places throughout the length and breadth of Scotland.

On the 13th February 1758, Donald Warse and Helen Kennedy registered their marriage on Stroma. In July the following year the first child, Donald, my fifth great grandfather, was baptised, and still living on the island when the 1841 Census was taken. Residing with his married son and grandson, both also named Donald Warse, this record presents a fine example, in sociology terms, of the extended family situation.

Stroma, a small picturesque-looking island, is located some 2 miles offshore from John O' Groats. Its name is derived from the Old Norse "Straumsey" meaning the island in the current. It remains unique among Pentland Firth islands in that it does not belong to the Orkney archipelago but comes under the jurisdiction of Canisbay Parish on the mainland. Legend has it that the Earls of Orkney and Caithness were in dispute over control of the island. Instead of the usual physical combat, it was agreed to abide by a decision reached through an experiment in natural history. Some venomous animals lived on the island and a number were transported to Orkney and Caithness. Finding an agreeable habitat on the mainland, the Caithness migrants survived while those placed on Orkney sickened and died. Off the island's northern shore there is a whirlpool named the "Swelchie of Stroma": its story is told in an old Norse legend. Particularly dangerous during a storm, sailors and small boats have been sucked down and lost. At one time, a rather curious situation arose when a family called Kennedy built a vault on the sea-edge. Coffins were laid on stools above ground but rapid tides continually produced salt-laden air; the bodies were converted into a mummified form. The Kennedys of Stroma, sometimes known as the Kennedys of Carmunks, appear in the list of Caithness proprietors as far back as 1687. A hotbed for pirates and wreckers, and the more normal smuggling activities, Stroma presents a chequered history, vacillating between relative tranquillity and periods matching the "Stormy Pentland".

According to Calder, the inhabitants, in the middle of last century, were apparently of pure Norwegian descent and well-imbued with the navigational and boating skills of their ancestors. The community depended heavily on the sea for their livelihood, although crofting and piloting activities supplemented incomes. At the height of its powers, early this century, the island supported up to 300 people. The numbers gradually diminished as the big combines from Aberdeen, Grimsby and Hull fished up both ends of the Firth. The young men who came back from two World Wars had been exposed to more attractive living conditions on the mainland and some quickly left the island. The position became so serious that Caithness County Council, in the 1950's, decided to spend £30,000

on a new harbour, in a laudable attempt to revive the island's fishing industry. The project failed to arrest the population drift and with the subsequent closing down of certain essential services, the few remaining survivors finally departed.

Until recently, Stroma had the somewhat dubious title of being Britain's latest desert island. During the intervening years, an American television company attempted to buy it to give away as a TV prize and rumours circulated that a nudist colony might be established. Having experienced certain aspects of Stroma weather I am not surprised that this idea finally petered out. Various foreign interests were said to be making enquiries before it was sold to a Caithness farmer.

As I stood alone on the harbour, the weather had cleared considerably. Some time was spent rummaging around the harbour area and a lobster-pot inspected for functional design. I had not moved too far into the interior when I was greeted by two friendly voices, art students opting for the serenity of desert island life over the summer months. In the ensuing conversation it transpired they were resident in the schoolhouse, living off natural produce of the island, having forsaken the offer of provisions, at regular intervals, from the owner. They were in good spirits and fine physical condition. I envied them their Shangri-la existence. Farewells were exchanged and I proceeded to the old burial ground situated a peculiarity with island and fishing communities-by the sea. Overgrown with weeds, a number of stones still standing and legible, a few prostrate on the ground, a quietness filling the air as my thoughts turned back to my ancestors, somewhere resting there; now devoid of any stone or marker to offer a clue.

Derelict cottages punctuated the landscape, in varying stages of dilapidation. Within the confines of one cottage, my first impressions were of rugged furniture and fittings, and tiny rooms. The black grate, lacking the warmth of a welcoming fire, lay forbiddingly cold in the kitchen. It did not require too liberal an imagination to put life into the surroundings. A blazing fire, a woman's presence, the smell of cooking and baking, the chatter of children. The former general store and sub-post office, with its attached living quarters, accommodated many interesting items. A box-bed (complete with mattress), crockery, furniture, fashion catalogues, Sunday School book prizes - probably awarded for one year's perfect attendance—old photographs, and a variety of personal effects. One picture of a venerably "old salt" intrigued me intensely as I could very well have been staring at some distant relative. But the whole scene was like something out of Dennis Wheatley's novel *THE ISLAND WHERE TIME STANDS STILL*.

I found myself standing on top of stark cliffs on the western shore, Atlantic rollers pounding remorselessly below. The grim battle between cliff and sea is impressive anywhere. As I looked over the island from this vantage point, Calder's quotation from *TEMPEST* came to mind, "Here's neither bush nor shrub to bear off any weather at all". A small island, formed, over long periods of time, by those relentless twin sculptors, weather and sea — spectator to ships of many nations down through the centuries: Vikings in their dreaded long-boats, hapless Spaniards on the run from Drake's vengeance and, more recently, the menacing forms of enemy submarines.

Next day I surveyed the island from the mainland. It lay so still and peaceful bathed in the morning sun. I wondered if the last departing inhabitants had shed some tears, as did the St. Kildans in 1930. I hesitate to use the word inspired, but I genuinely felt moved to put pen to paper.

Stroma! Of islands there are many;
You hold my heart captive
Through timeless bonds of progeny.
I salute, through you I live.

Tiny island of northern latitude,
Through earth and sea did support
Unknown generations, my gratitude;
Now sheep, and cottage derelict.

Stroma revisited

The speed-boat (courtesy of the Hotel's Proprietor) breezed out from the harbour at John O' Groats and within minutes my wife, Betty, and myself were waving farewell to the vessel's occupants. A call into the island home of James and Lena Simpson was made before journeying on to the lighthouse at the northern extremity. Lighthouses and the attendant outbuildings always impress with their immaculate appearance. Stroma is no exception. The lighthouse was originally built to replace the "peerie light", a lantern set on a pole.

I assisted my wife through a window at the back of one of the better preserved cottages, in deference to the owner's wishes not to enter via the more normal route. Wandering animals can easily be trapped in unused buildings where doors have not been secured properly. It was a struggle but we managed, and found ourselves surrounded by distempered walls. A stone hot-water bottle was found in one of the cupboards. Perhaps a sole survivor, from the manufacturer Lindsay & Co of Thurso and Golspie, it served as a reminder of bygone nights prior to the widespread use of electric blankets. A discarded washing-board, complete with an elongated bar of soap, lay forlornly in the corner of the living room. The ladies, nowadays, don't know they are living, with their sophisticated washing machines and tumble driers. Then appeared THE PIECE DE RESISTANCE, a manually operated gramophone together with a variety of 78's. We danced to an original version of Al-Jolson's "April Showers".

Enter into the scene Charles George Rae Simpson, brother-german to the island's owner. Introductions were made; shaking hands with Charlie is a rather bone-crushing experience, and he suggested a Grand Tour of the island. It was to be one of those rare events in life. Charlie, a son of Stroma, knows and loves the island intimately.

Distraught parents screeched ominously above as we approached the nesting area. It was as if we were taking part in an Alfred Hitchcock thriller. Nests lay scattered on the open ground. Some young birds, already hatched, were enjoying the warmth of a brilliant cloudless day, while others were poking away eagerly into this bright new world. The miracle of emergent, untried life held us spellbound.

A magnificent blow-hole confronted us. Sheer cliff-face dominated this natural structure, but, in sharp contrast, one side, a steep slope, remained covered with grass. Lying 150 yards inland, there is a small cave at the bottom. A passage ran directly to the seashore and a two-foot ledge made it possible for a human being to proceed along its entire length. Known locally as "The Gloup", because of the peculiar noise emanating from the abyss when the tide runs in and swirls around, it appears hand-made by nature for the express purpose of smuggling activities.

Filled with some misgiving, I followed Charlie along a very narrow ledge at the top of cliffs on the western shore. Fortunately, I soon became absorbed in the antics of sea-gulls flying in and out of nests and hang-gliding in the air, but remained aware of jagged rocks far below. I nearly overbalanced, however, with the discovery that my good wife had followed us onto the ledge. Greater faith than this hath no man. I breathed a sigh

of relief when our feet touched a larger acreage of mother earth and an even larger sigh with the realization that my wife would not be collecting the insurance this time.

Travelling along the western shoreline, we came upon a small cove. Charlie pointed out a slab of rock below and mentioned his uncle had encountered a mermaid at that particular spot. He conveyed the story so eloquently that almost we believed him.

We found ourselves back at the old manse now converted by Mr. and Mrs. Simpson, into a very comfortable home, complete with all mod cons. Refreshments were served, a guitar appeared, and, along with Malcolm Green of John O' Groats, we joined in singing heartily and nostalgically. The kindness and hospitality of Caithness folk is outstanding. Charlie, in fine voice, concluded this most enjoyable episode with his own composition "Stroma Isle For Me".

After declining an invitation for an early return to the other side, Betty and I made our way to the old burial ground in the south-east corner. We slowly drank in the whole scene, with the Pentland Firth, for once as smooth as glass, at least in appearance, stretched before us.

A boat edged its way out of Stroma harbour and slowly moved along the southern shore. The voices of Malcolm and Charlie, singing merrily, oblivious of the cares of the world, drifted within hearing range, before the small craft took a meandering course back to John O' Groats. We conveyed some disappointment at not having taken up their kind invitation.

The savage side of nature manifested itself through the pitiful remains of a young lamb. Victim of a black-backed gull or skua and ably assisted, no doubt, by the hooded crow, who has been known to actually pick out the eyes of lambs during the birth process.

The schoolhouse stood silent and lifeless. How impotent it looked lacking the life-giving presence of teacher and pupil. Yet, within its walls, generations of children had been taught the three R's.

Several hundred sheep, some gathered in small clusters, others just plain loners, dotted the rural scene. A few cattle, not enjoying the same freedom, gazed at us in their own particular bovine manner. A rusty chain-plough, legacy of yester-year, lay by the roadside, abandoned to the elements. Fields, freshly ploughed by mechanised methods, signified further human endeavour. The fine balance between nature and man has not been disturbed and the island home and farm is a tribute to the Simpson family's foresight and industry. The island remains a paradise, especially for the ornithologist.

In Margaret Aitken's STROMA two delightful pieces of Stroman folklore are brought to our attention. The Orkney floating shops "Star of Hope" and "Endeavour" calling in, on alternate weeks, earlier this century, with the islanders waiting their turn at the pier to be ferried out to barter with the merchants aboard. I looked in vain for the tipped sails of a Dutch smuggler on the horizon and recalled the story of the young boy boarding one Dutchman and finding the crew the 'prettiest' men, with their brightly coloured shirts and striped pants. The shelves of shiny bottles of brandy and perfume and boxes of tobacco: his prize for the night's adventure, a bottle of eau de Cologne.

The Pentland Firth naturally dominated the islanders' activities, and it is a particular quirk in human logic that some of its most dangerous waters are known by such indulgent titles as 'The Farra Coo', 'The Merry Men of Mey' and 'the Swelchie'; to name but a few.

I began this tale from a genealogy viewpoint and recognize when individuals can trace their ancestry back to a small geographical area, especially to an island community, it is almost inevitable they will find direct ancestral connections. And this is the case with James and Charlie Simpson and myself.

Genealogy Chart No. 1

I met Dr. Robert Anderson, an American Psychiatrist from San Francisco, early last summer in Edinburgh. He had just returned from a trip to Orkney and successfully carried out genealogical research in South Ronaldshay and Burray. Further investigation revealed family connections with Stroma and Chart No. 2 will show our common ancestry.

Genealogy Chart No. 2

It would be appropriate to bring this article to a conclusion with Charlie Simpson's song 'Stroma Isle For Me', although words on paper will not do it real justice. Note the reference to Huna, traditional link with the mainland. To some it may appear pure nostalgia. My reply — Nostalgia is part of the essence of life. But for me, personally, it is something more than sentiment. It is a harking back to happy days of childhood and youth, coupled with a realisation that what once was can never be again.

STROMA ISLE FOR ME

There's an island in the Firth,
It's the land that gave me birth,
Surrounded by such treacherous sea,
Stroma Isle for me.

CHORUS

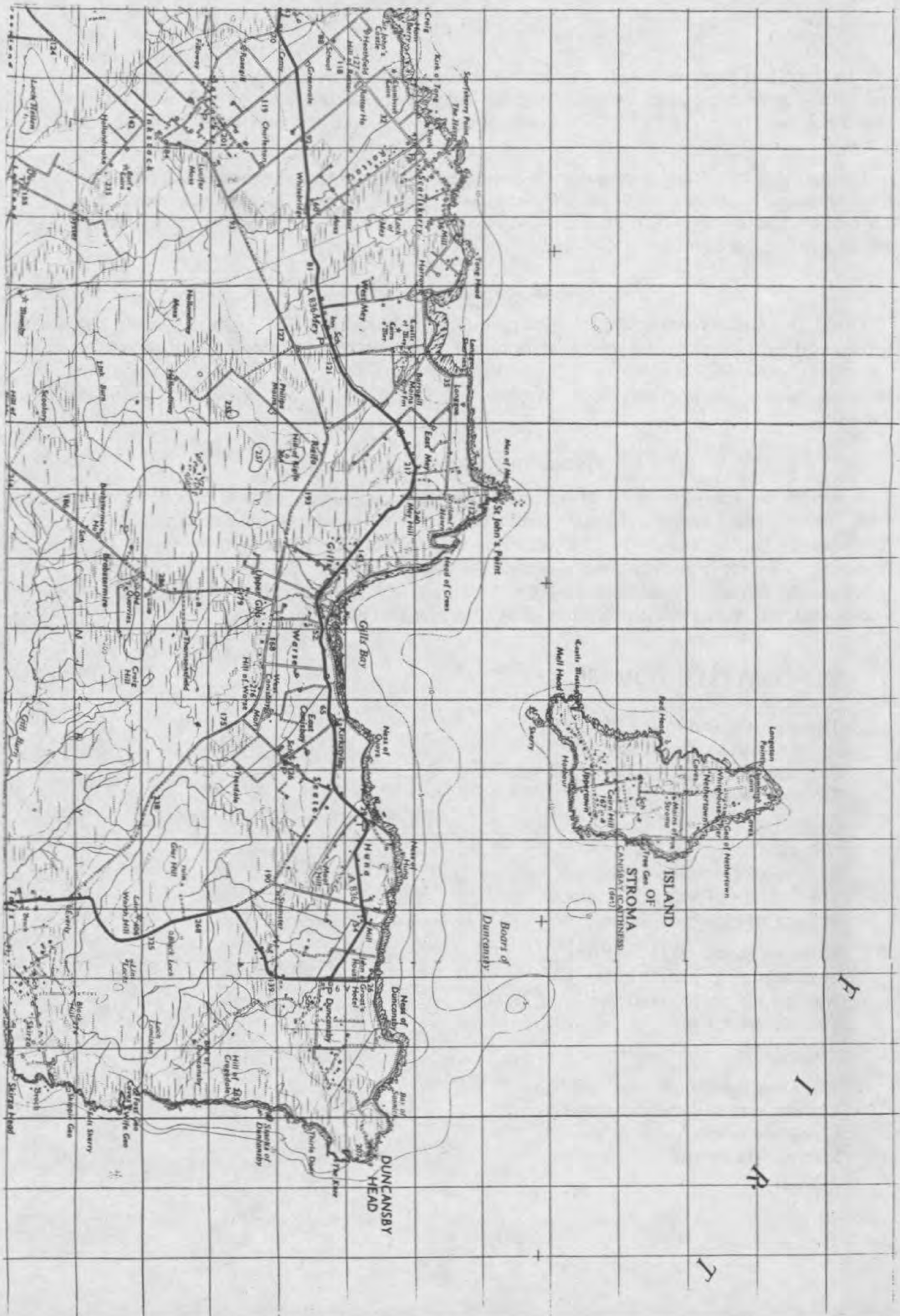
Not so long ago,
Small boats crossing to and fro,
The Pentland Firth is ill to know,
Stroma Isle for me.

While we stood on Huna Pier,
Stroma men in fishing gear,
Was the life we lo'ed so dear,
Stroma Isle for me.

CHORUS

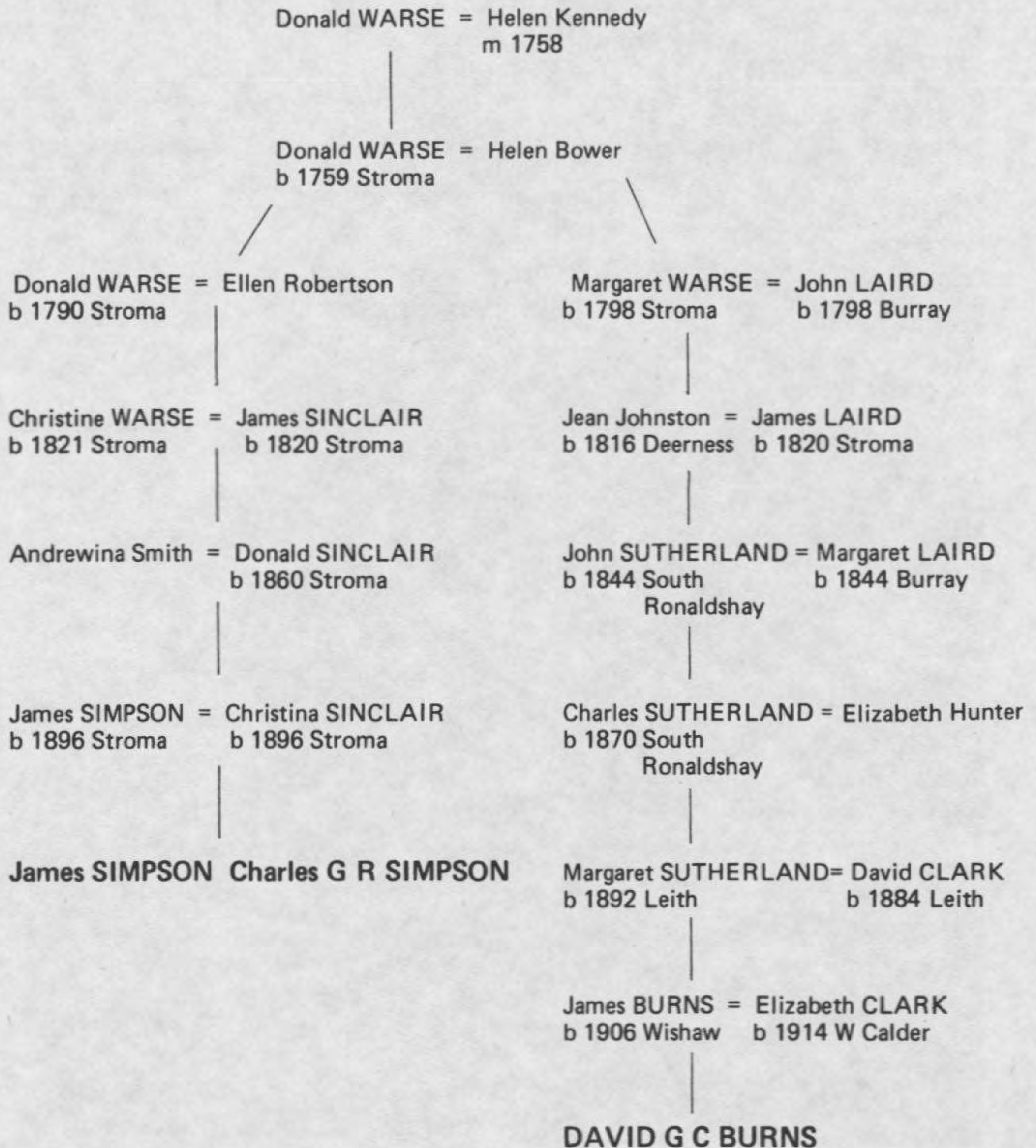
While the lighthouse sheds its light,
keeping watch throughout the night,
Guide me safely home to thee,
Stroma Isle for me.

CHORUS





Genealogy Chart No. 1



Genealogy Chart No. 2

Andrew LAIRD = Jean Stephen
m 1751 Stroma

James LAIRD = Margaret Warse
m 1789 Stroma

Jean LAIRD = Donald BANKS
b 1793 Stroma b 1789 W Canisbay

Jessie Matches = James BANKS
b 1827 b 1814 Stroma

Minnie J Aherne = Robert A BANKS
b 1881 Ireland b 1869 Burray

Fred W ANDERSON = Jessie J BANKS
b 1893 UAS b 1905 USA

Robert W ANDERSON = Nancy Hyde

Donald Warse = Helen Kennedy
m 1758 Stroma

Donald Warse = Helen Bower
m 1784 Stroma

John LAIRD = Margaret Warse
b 1798 Burray b 1798 Stroma

James LAIRD = Jean Johnston
b 1820 Stroma b 1816 Deerness

Margaret LAIRD = John SUTHERLAND
b 1844 Burray b 1844 South
Ronaldshay

Elizabeth Hunter = Charles SUTHERLAND
b 1870 South
Ronaldshay

David CLARK = Margaret L SUTHERLAND
b 1884 Leith b 1892 Leith

Elizabeth H CLARK = James BURNS
b 1914 W Calder b 1906 Wishaw

Elizabeth McCulloch = David G C BURNS

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The author acknowledges his indebtedness to James and Lena Simpson, and Charlie, and to other friends in John O' Groats, for their kindness and hospitality over the years. To James T. Calder's HISTORY OF CAITHNESS for the historical background on Stroma. He is also indebted to the Proprietor of Caithness Books, Thurso for permission to include Margaret Aitken's two pieces of folklore. To the Simpson Family and Dr. Anderson for the inclusion of the two skeletonised Genealogy Charts, and Charlie Simpson's consent to publish "Stroma Isle for me", my gratitude.

REVIEW

A Narrative of the Rise and Progress of Emigration from the Counties of Lanark and Renfrew — Canada

Heritage Publications — \$ 5.50

This is a facsimile reprint of a book published in 1821. It comprises the proceedings of the Glasgow Committee for the relief of the Industrious Poor who assisted those wishing to emigrate to the New Settlements in Upper Canada on a Government Grant. The Committee received applications and Chartered ships for the voyage to Quebec, giving the emigrants good advice as to what they should take with them and warning them of conditions in the place they were going to.

The first half of the book consists of Minutes of the Committee and the correspondence in chartering ships and provisioning them. There are fascinating plates of the type of house or wigwam the settlers should build, and also a sketch map of the Townships of Upper Canada from Montreal on the St. Lawrence to Lake Ontario.

The second half is of letters from settlers telling either of their journey to Canada or of their first few months of settling on the plot of 100 acres allotted to them. Surmounting the rigours of 48 days at sea, with a lengthy overland journey after that to the new Townships, the emigrants appear to have quickly settled down to the new way of life — often expressing the wish that they had taken the decision to emigrate earlier and urging their friends and relatives to join them. "A farmer here is as independent a man as is to be found anywhere" — is a recurring theme, and the £3 per head provided to each adult on arrival at their place of settlement by the Committee seems to have been adequate to set them up for the first three months of their life in their new abode. As befitted such moral settlers, their letters deplore that "the people are remarkably addicted to drinking spirits" and regret the lack of ministers of religion to preach the Word in the beautiful land so resembling Scotland.

It is a most interesting record of courage and adventure, and one is sadly reminded that there was a time when beef could be bought at 6d per lb and potatoes at 2/6d per bushel. The price of the book is more in accord with current money's worth, however, and is obtainable from the publishers at P.O. Box 3794 Station C, Ottawa Canada, K1Y 4J8.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Handbook of British Family History: A Guide to Methods and Sources, edited by Noel Curren-Briggs. Flitwick: Family History Services, 1979. 78 pp £1.50. ISBN 0 906701 007.

This work was published to co-incide with the recent T.V. series about Family History, presented by Gordon Honeycombe. The contributors are Brian C. G. Brooks, Peter de V. B. Dewar, Royston F. Gambier, Francis Leeson, Isobel Mordy and Donald J. Steel.

There is a good deal of information about various classes of records kept in England, and it is useful to have an up-to-date indication of the division of P.R.O. material between the repositories at Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, and Chancery Lane, London.

Beginners will find the methods described very helpful. Perhaps rather less detail about English sources, and more regarding Scottish, Welsh and Irish records, would have given better balance to a book dealing with 'British' family history. The parts relating to Jewish sources and to Adopted and Illegitimate Children and the Law, are especially valuable. There is a list of addresses of libraries and record offices.

Copies may be obtained post free from Noel Curren-Briggs, Flint Cottage, Wendens Ambo, Saffron Walden, Essex, or from Royston F. Gambier, 1 Briar Close, Ampthill, Beds.

DONALD WHYTE

Monumental Inscriptions (pre-1855) in the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire, by Sheila A. Scott. Edinburgh: Scottish Genealogy Society, 1977. Unbound parts, 406 pp. £4 (members of the Society, £3.50). By parcel post in U.K. add 86p. Overseas postage 80p, special printed rate, surface mail. Orders to The Librarian, 9 Union Street, Edinburgh EH1 3LT.

Miss Scott has compiled a work of lasting value, in the same format as the county books previously put together by Mr. and Mrs. John F. Mitchell, whose help with this publication is acknowledged in the Preface.

The burial grounds covered are Biggar St. Mary's; Carluke Old Churchyard and Mauldslee Private Burial Ground; Carmichael Churchyard and Kirkhill Private Burial Ground; Carnwath Churchyard and Westsidewood Private Burial Ground; Carstairs Churchyard; Coulter Churchyard; Covington Churchyard and Thankerton St. Johns; Crawford Old Churchyard, with Leadhills Cemetery, Navvies' Burial Ground and Troloss Private Burial Ground; Dolphinton Churchyard; St. Bride's, Douglas; Dunsyre Churchyard and a Covenanter's Grave; Laminton Churchyard and Laminton Episcopal Burial Ground; Lanark Cemetery and New Lanark Burial Ground; Lesmahagow Churchyard, with Blackwood Burial Ground and Corehouse Mausoleum; Libberton Churchyard and Quothquan Burial Ground; Pettinian Churchyard; Symington Churchyard and Major Telfer's Tomb; Walston Churchyard; Wiston Churchyard and Robertson Burial Ground.

There are useful notes about local sources at the end of each burial ground section, and at the end of the volume a list of SERVICES OF HEIRS for the area, together with a list of TESTAMENTS to 1800.

SENNACHIE

Pre-1855 Gravestone Inscriptions on Speyside, edited by Alison Mitchell.

Edinburgh: Scottish Genealogy Society, 1977. iii + 137 + xviii pp.

£3.50p (members of the Society, £3). By parcel post in the U.K. add 54p. Overseas postage 43p, special printed rate, surface mail. Orders to The Librarian, 9 Union Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3LT.

This excellent compilation contains abbreviated monumental inscriptions from Strathspey; part of the Laigh of Moray being included. Thus burial grounds are recorded from the source of the River Spey to the North Sea, covering the old clan territories of the MacPhersons, Grants, Shaws and Cummings, and part of the lands of Clan MacIntosh and of the Dukes of Gordon.

There is a surname index at the end of each burial ground section, and sketch ground plans of the churchyards, together with a general map of the area, are appended. Not much has been recorded for Highland burial grounds, and it is hoped this work will encourage members and other interested parties to extend the urgent work of saving inscriptions from crumbling gravestones for posterity.

DONALD WHYTE

Introducing Scottish Genealogical Research, by Donald Whyte:

Edinburgh: Scottish Genealogy Society, 1979. 2nd edition, revised and enlarged. iv + 20 pp. 75p. Obtainable by post in the U.K. for 90p. Overseas orders for single copies will be sent AIR-MAIL only (USA and Canada, inclusive price £1.08; Australia and New Zealand, £1.15; Europe, £1.05; in open envelope. Orders to Donald Whyte, 4 Carmel Road, Kirkliston, West Lothian, EH29 9DD (payable to "Donald Whyte."), or to Robert M. Strathdee, Hon. Librarian, Scottish Genealogy Society, 9 Union Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3LT (payable to "Scottish Genealogy Society.")

Many members will know of Donald Whyte's booklet: INTRODUCING SCOTTISH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH, which is an excellent and inexpensive guide for beginners and others seeking a handy reference to records and printed sources. A second edition has now been published. As with the first edition, the novice is guided from records found at home, through civil registration, the census returns and parochial registers, to such sources as the registers of deeds, testaments and sasines. Other avenues of research which are clearly and briefly outlined are estate and family records, hearth and poll-tax returns, and the services of heirs.

The second edition sees the addition of sections on Scottish newspaper, monumental inscriptions and service records. The latter includes a survey of existing manuscript and printed sources. One of the most useful sections that has been enlarged is the concluding list of FUNDAMENTAL REFERENCE BOOKS, which although selective, will be helpful both to those with some knowledge of Scottish printed sources, and to the complete beginner. Two books which might have been added are Gerald Hamilton-Edward's IN SEARCH OF ARMY ANCESTRY (London: Phillimore, 1977), and James Grant's THE OLD SCOTS NAVY, 1689-1710 (London: Navy Records Society, 1914), which has a valuable introduction to a much neglected area of pre-Union Scottish History.

SUSAN MOORE

The Fatal Mistake — by Dr. John Dunmore Lang — Library of Australia History — ~~£~~ A.10

The Library of Australia History have printed, or reprinted, a number of books which deal with Australia in the last century, and this limited edition of controversial pamphlets written by the Rev. Dr. John Dunmore Lang is published to celebrate the centenary of his death in August 1878.

Dr. Lang was born at Greenock, graduated at Glasgow University, and after being called to the Ministry followed his brother to Sydney in 1821. Around this time Australia was evolving into a number of prosperous self-governing colonies and great political controversies were being fought out. The main part of this book is concerned with immigration and whether land in Australia should be sold and the proceeds used to encourage immigrants of the right sort — married mechanics and unmarried females of the good morals, who were in the greatest requisition at the time. This was thought by Dr. Lang to be better than "the importation of Hill Coolies from India, of Chinamen from Canton and Shanghai, of South Sea Islanders from the Pacific Ocean and of expiring convicts from the Van Diemen's Land". This latter "heartless and iniquitous proceeding on the part of our colonial authorities" was condemned as a "Grand National Sin", which Divine Providence had already punished by "lowering the prestige of New South Wales till it was regarded merely as the humble and obscure appendage of the great colony of Victoria and scarcely equal in public estimation even to Queensland".

The author's eloquence makes good reading, and it is interesting to find out the long-forgotten causes which could inspire such feeling.

This and other equally interesting reprints can be obtained from the Library at 17 Mitchell Street, North Sydney, N.S.W. 2060.

A 'STRAYS' FILE.

The Society is receiving some lists of Monumental Inscriptions for Scots who are buried outside of Scotland and it has been decided to maintain a File of such Inscriptions in the Society's Library at 9 Union Street, Edinburgh. Further donations will be welcomed.

Scottish members are asked to reciprocate by sending any Inscriptions found in local graveyards, relating to persons from outwith Scotland, to the Genealogical or Local History Society in the town or area named.

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS

As a result of the demand for copies of Monumental Inscriptions these are now out of print except for a few remaining copies of Speyside and the Upper Ward of Lanark. It is hoped to reprint very shortly the Monumental Inscriptions of Renfrewshire.

Macneils (Barra) and McNeills (Gigha) 1030 AD to 1530 AD

This essay seeks to clarify early relationships, if any, between these two main divisions of the Macneills. Logically —

- (1) Gigha could be a cadet of Barra,
- (2) Barra, initially, could have been a cadet of Gigha,
- (3) Both could be cadets of earlier Macneills,
- (4) Each could be descended from different stock.

There is a tradition of descent from two brothers. Such brothers lack identification.

The slaughter of Gigha McNeills by Macleans in 1530 AD must have damaged both their traditions and records. Barra retained its land and separate identity from a date before 1400 AD (possibly considerably before) and by 1587 AD became the home of the Clan Chiefs, even if it had not been so before.

A complication is that any son or grandson of a Neil could fittingly become a Macneill. Macneills have appeared, for example, among Mackays and MacSweens. It has also been suggested that both Gigha and Barra families became Macneills by name changes. This will be considered later.

(I) The Barra Tradition

This tradition links Macneils in Scotland in unbroken succession from Nial of the Nine Hostages, High King of Ireland, 379 AD. In 1030 AD a Neil arrived in Barra, began to build Kisimul Castle and became the first Chief of Barra, 21st of the name.

About 1350 AD a Neil, brother of Muirceartach (27th of the name), inherited land in Kintyre given to his father by a grateful Robert the Bruce after Bannockburn (1314 AD). All other Macneil septs outside Barra, e.g. Gigha and Taynish, are descended from this Neil.

Difficulties in the tradition will appear, but one should be noted at the outset. The arrival of Neil, brother of Muirceartach, around 1350 AD is too late to explain earlier mainland names and the size of the Gigha branch by, for example, 1440 AD (see below).

The Barra tradition is enthusiastically, if tendentiously, set forth in "The Clan Macneil" (1923) and "Castle in the Sea" (1964) by Robert Lister Macneil, 45th Chief, whose dedication revived the Clan tradition and who restored Kisimul Castle, a truly remarkable achievement.

The genealogy of the tradition can be found in Burke's Landed Gentry (1952), pages 1659 to 1661

The earliest written evidence of Macneils in Barra seems to occur in the "Fragment of a Manuscript History of the Macdonalds" (probably written in the reign of Charles II) in Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis (1839). John, Lord of the Isles, gave Hebridean lands to his son, Godfrey. Godfrey, who died 1391 AD gave Boisdale in South Uist to MacNeill OF BARRA, probably between 1385 and 1390 AD.

The reference to Clan Neil in Skene's well known Gaelic MS of 1450 does not specify Barra, rather implying Knapdale, in Skene's mind.

(II) Was Barra originally a cadet of Gigha?

Skene's (Highlanders of Scotland, 2nd Ed. p250) gives the principal seat of the Macneills as "Knapdale afterwards Barra".

In the Scottish Genealogist Vol. VI No. 1 (Jan 1959) "Notes on the Macneills of Sir Iain Moncreiffe of that Ilk writes "This house of MacRuari presumably had a daughter who brought Barra to a MacNeill (OF THE GIGHA LINE) towards the end of the fourteenth century"

Most historians believe that in 1221 AD Alexander II put down a rebellion in mainland Argyll and took "ruinous action" against all the adherents of Somerled (grandson of the celebrated Lord of the Isles) "except such as the McNeills who consented to hold their lands in chief of the Crown" (Browne's History of the Highlands and Clans Vol IV p 451).

Skene (Highlanders p 205) puts "the ancestor of the MacNeills" in Knapdale at this time. Before 1262 the MacSweens were the dominant family, but troubles with the Earl of Menteith and, later, opposition to Robert the Bruce led to the loss of their constabulary of Castle Sween and of their lands. Between 1262 and 1289 AD (the death of Donald) the MacNeills of Lennox were brought by Donald, Lord of the Isles, "to expel Gillies out of Kintyre". (Collectanea p 289).

It seems possible that some Sweens changed their name to McNeill during or after their troubles with Menteith and Bruce. In 1518 a deed of manrent shows Dunslaves (descendants of Sweens) and McNeills to be closely linked and probably related. (Duke Niall of Argyll, Celtic Review, Vol VI p 191). About 1325 AD Castle Sween was in the hands of Roderick MacAlan, High Chief of Lorn, who was forfeited. Before Bruce died (1329 AD) the McNeills of Argyllshire were installed as constables of Castle Sween (written as Scraburg, probably a mistake for Sweenburg, see Celtic Review Vol. VI pp 57/58, the Rev. A. M. Sinclair). The McNeills remained as constables for over two hundred years. Sir John McNeill's matriculation of arms in 1840 AD refers to paternal ancestors who "for several generations were keepers of Castle Sween and proprietors of Gigha". Support is quoted from charters going back nearly to 1400 AD.

In 1472 AD Malcolm son of Neil was laird of Gigha and the first McNeill to own the island (according to Mr. Sinclair), presumably following the forfeitures of the Lord of the Isles.

We are on very sure ground with certain charters given by Herbert Campbell (The Genealogist N.S. XXXVI pp 121-3).

On June 24th 1440 Alexander, Lord of the Isles granted a charter to Torquill MacNeill of

The whole island of Gigha,
The island of Dannay,
The lands of Barbreck, Barbeck,
Barlockan, Barnaskally and Ardnachage,
The constabulary of Castle Sween,
The admiralty of Knapdale (From the Mull of Kintyre to Crinan).

In 1455 AD – similar charter to Niall McTorquil Ve Neill.

From 1509 to 1553 AD there were ten charters and sasines from the Earl of Argyll to successive Nial McNeills, covering parts of Kintyre, Knapdale and Islay.

Thirteenth Century evidence is limited but after 1314 AD McNeills of Kintyre and Galloway (see below) were rewarded by Robert Bruce and by 1440 AD the Gigha branch was thriving and numerous, surely beyond the possibility of having been founded by a Barra Neil around 1350 AD? Indeed, about that date Donald Morgan (Mackay) married a daughter of a McNeill of Gigha (W. Anderson, *The Scottish Nation*, Vol.III p 5).

(III) How did Macneils reach Barra?

(a) The Barra tradition set out under (I) is held very strongly by some. More "hard" evidence would be welcome. (The Macneil of Barra has kindly indicated sources which are being investigated by the writer)".

(b) The Barra tradition states, when the Macneils arrived, the Norse were happy to abandon their Barra forts. This would harmonize better with 1263 AD (King Hakon's defeat) than 1030 AD. Between 1099 AD (when Magnus Barelegs made Kintyre one of the Isles) and 1263 AD, McNeills could have intermarried with the Norse. If so, some might have preferred distant Barra to the mainland, when Scottish power was re-asserted at the Battle of Largs and many Norsemen were departing for home.

(c) Sir Iain Moncreiffe believes that a MacRuari heiress brought Barra to a Gigha McNeill around 1380 AD. Skene (*Highlanders* pp 249/50) refers to marriage with a Maclean heiress as the source of the acquisition. This apparent contradiction is possibly resolved in Sir Iain Moncreiffe's "*The Highland Clans*" (p 82). "The (1427) Charter implies that the Macneil right to this territory had come through Gilleonan Macneil's mother, the daughter of Feachar Maclean, and so it may reasonably be suggested that HER mother was an heiress of the MacRuaries, descended from Ruari, whose father was Ranaid, King of the Isles (1164—1207)".

(d) The Rev. A. Maclean Sinclair put forward a totally different explanation in the *Celtic Review*. Briefly, he believed Clan Gilladamnan changed its name to Macneil around 1400 AD. This will be considered under (VII).

(IV) Bannockburn

Some writers believe Robert Bruce gave Barra to a Macneill family in gratitude for help at Bannockburn (1314 AD). However, evidence for this is lacking, while the gift of lands in Kintyre to Nigellus (Neil) Og, is more certain. The Barra view is that Neil, son of Neil Og, inherited these lands and founded the Gigha line. This idea must at least be wrongly dated. In 1329 Bruce confirmed John McNeill in lands in Galloway (Black's "*Surnames of Scotland*").

Between 1325 and 1329 AD Bruce installed McNeills of Argyllshire as constables of Castle Scraburg (almost certainly Sweenburg) and we know that a century later the Clan was widely spread in mainland Argyll, Gigh and Islay.

(V) Chief of the Name

The Barra tradition believes that Chiefship of the name resided unbroken at Barra from 1030 to 1838 AD and since 1937 AD.

Skene (*Highlanders* p 249) refers to disputes over Clan and name chiefship between Gigha and Barra, as also does William Anderson in his *Biographical History*, "*The Scottish Nation*".

In 1530 AD Torkill of Gigha is referred to by the Privy Council as chief of the name, although Sir Thomas Innes, late Lord Lyon, believed he was only chief-wardatour during imprisonment of one Gilleonan of Barra.

Skene (Highlanders p 249 wrote "it is probably that the chiefs of the Macneills possessed the hereditary office of keeper of Castle Swen, IN WHICH CAPACITY THE FIRST CHIEF OF THE CLAN APPEARS". Alexander MacBain, editor of Skene's Highlanders (2nd Edition, 1902, p 412) adds "If there was any chiefship, then Gigha family had it — for this chief Torkil in 1530, by the same document, is gifted with the non-entry of Gigha".

Certainly, after the slaughter of Gigha McNeills by Macleans in 1530 AD and the growing influence of Campbells after the second forfeiture of the Lord of the Isles (1493 AD), the chiefship of the name must have passed to Barra. Only Barra is mentioned in connection with Macneills on a Scottish Act of Parliament in 1587 AD.

W. H. Murray (The Companion Guide to the West Highlands of Scotland — 1968 — p 94) refers to Conall, fifth King of Dalriada, PROGENITOR OF CLAN NEIL and kinsman of St. Columba". This link between Clan Neil and Scottish Dalriada favours mainland seniority over Barra and, probably, Gigha. The same author (pp 89—90) records that in the 11th Century Kieils Chapel near Loch na Cille in Knapdale, there was in fairly recent years an old coffin lid (probably now weather defaced) inscribed "McNeill caused me to be made". He adds "The MacNeils of Gigha formerly held this land under Donald Kings and Lords of the Isles". The reference to "Kings" (if not careless) gives a possible 12th Century date for McNeill residents of Knapdale.

Dean Monro of the Isles (1549 AD) records that the Council of the Isles included McNeill of Gigha and Macneil of Barra, in that order.

In the next section, a McNeill genealogy argues for Gigha being "always considered the head of the Clan".

(VI) Other Traditions

Burke's Landed Gentry (1900) contains the lineage of Major General James Graham Robert Douglas MacNeill of Wolfelee, Hawick, N.B. and records the belief that a son or grandson of Nial of the Nine Hostages came to Argyll with Fergus Mor who founded the Dalriadic Kingdom in 506 AD. They landed at Macrihanish Bay in Kintyre and the district is still called Tearfergus, the territory of Fergus. This would give "McNeills" plenty of time to multiply by 1440 AD.

The Wolfelee genealogy states that Gigha and Barra had little in common, except in fighting one another. Gigha was "always considered the head of the Clan". In 1289 AD a MacNele witnessed a land deed in Galloway (Black's "Surnames of Scotland"). The Rev. A. Maclean Sinclair suggested that the McNeills of Argyllshire descended (with a name change) from Macleans, but Duke Niall of Argyll, out of vast knowledge of Argyll, flatly contradicted this. (Celtic Review Vol. IX p 347). Skene's Gaelic MS 1450 clearly links Clan Lachlan and Clan Neill in common descent from Anrothan who settled in Cowall and Knapdale in the 11th Century.

(VII) The Possibility of Separate Origins.

Donald Gregory (History of the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland, 1838 p 80) was led to believe that Gigha and Barra were entirely separate families.

Their armorial bearings are different and (perhaps the most important factor) the only Christian name used by both is Neil, although the war cry (Buaidh no bas) and the badge (the sea plant dryas) are the same, the crest was shared before 1824 AD and the mottoes are similar — Vincere vel Mori (Barra) and Vincere aut Mori (Gigha). Tartans are similar but this does not help the study of early history.

The late Duke Niall of Argyll links the well-known clans of Cowall and Knapdale of Irish descent with the McNeills of Kintyre " but not (with) the Barra family, who appear to have sprung from a totally different stock" (Celtic Review Vol. VII. p 273).

The Rev. A. Maclean Sinclair's view now follows, beginning with a comparison of two genealogical lists —

DATES	REV. A. M. SINCLAIR	45th CHIEF OF BARRA
KNOWN EST	(Clan Gilladamnan, later Macneil)	(Clan Macneil)
1030		Neil 21st Aodh the Splendid Donald
1120		
1105	Airbertach Cormac	
b.1140	Gilladamnan	
b.1170	Nicail	
b.1200	Duncan Un-named	
b.1260	Murdoch	Muircear tach (Murdoch)
?1314	Un-named	Neil
b.1320	Neil (Macgilladamnan)	Neil Og
b.1350	Murdoch	Muirceartach (Murdoch)
m.1409 b.1380 [♂]	Roderick (Ruari)	Roderick
d.1427	Gilleonan	Gilleonan the Champion
1433		
1484	Roderick	Roderick
1495	Gilleonan	Gilleonan
1517	Roderick	Gilleonan
1545	Gilleonan	Gilleonan
1579		
1594	Rory Og Roderick	Roderick Og Roderick
1634	Neil	Neil Og
m.1653	Gilleonan	Gilleonan

[♂] Became first Macneil

Mr. Sinclairs mathematics are historically sounder.

Reasonable harmony begins with Murdoch (b. ca. 1260 AD) but in the 12th and 13th Centuries there are five unexplained gaps in the Barra list. Mr. Sinclair states that Clan Gilladamnan, in the person of Roderick (son of Murdoch son of Neil) changed the clan name to Macneil. As grandson of Neil he could legitimately choose to do this. Furthermore, from the 1350 AD Murdoch followed seven generations in which the eldest son's name alternated between Roderick (Ruari) and Gilleonan (anglicized form of Gilladamnan).

The appearance of the first Ruari is used as evidence of marriage to a macRuari heiress. The appearance and repetition of Gilleonan could equally be a compensation for the loss of Gilladamnan as a clan name.

There could have been a Gilladamnan — Ruari marriage arranged with a legitimate new surname and an agreement to preserve both clan names as Christian names.

Both clans or septs were part of Clan Donald and the 1427 Charter may have depended on the family agreement being kept. The Gilladamnan (b. ca 1140) looks like a younger cousin of the famous Somerled, whose grandfather was named Gilladamnan.

For the last century of the rule of the Lord of the Isles, both the McNeill of Gigha and the McNeill of Barra were members of the Council of the Isles, which may explain the similarities in badge, war-cry, etc.

(VIII) SUMMARY

Apart from Skene's reference to an 11th century descent of Clan Niell from Anrothan of Cowall and Knapdale, we have found 13th Century McNeills in Lennox and Kintyre; also in Galloway (where 8th Century ancestors may have been driven by the Picts — W. J. Watson, History of the Celtic Place Names of Scotland, 171). The Wolfelee family looks back to a 5th/6th Century Neil (son or grandson of Niall of the Nine Hostages) coming to Scottish Dalriada. W. H. Murray writes of the 6th Century king Conall (of Cowall) as progenitor of the Clan Neil in Scotland. Either or both would pre-date Barra Macneils. The Barra idea of a Neil becoming progenitor of mainland McNeills around 1350 AD seems impossible. The date of Macneil arrival in Barra is uncertain. 1263 AD is an interesting possibility but at present beyond proof.

The idea of Clan Gilladamnan changing its name to Macneil around 1400 AD is supported by the regular appearance thereafter of the name Gilleonan.

More information and evidence about the gifts of Robert Bruce after 1314 AD would be valuable.

The difference in armorial bearings and almost entire difference in Christian names between Gigha and Barra favour separate origins.

In connection with the Machinnons, Skene pointed out that the histories of vassal clans during the dominance of the Lords of the Isles are very obscure. Indeed, our question of Clan Chief of the name may not have arisen at that time. Sir Iain Moncreiffe once warned — "It should perhaps be remembered that most modern Highland Clans were not established as distinct kindreds until well on in the Middle Ages".

In Gigha's case the 1530 AD tragedy and in Barra's case simple geography have added to the difficulties.

However, the weight of available evidence seems to point to earlier Gigha seniority over Barra, with a real possibility of separate origins.

Criticisms, corrections, information and, above all, EVIDENCE would be welcomed by the writer.

QUERIES

- 63 READ, Katherine, 1723—1778, portrait painter. Whereabouts sought of her correspondence and pictures.

I would also be interested in locating any letters of other members of her family, namely:

Capt. Alexander Read of Logie, 1716—1789; Capt. John Read of Cairney, 1718—1772; Thomas Read of Montpelier and late of Jamaica, died c. 1795; Capt. David Read of Drumgeith died 1812; Dr. William Read of Drumgeith, died c. 1814; Col. Alexander Read died 1804 of the Madras Army; Alexander Read, 1779—1849 collector in the Canara District of India.

I am trying to trace the descendants of Rev. Augustus Kerr Bozzi Granville and Ellen Elizabeth Read, married c. 1830 and John Charles Robson and Laura Harriet Read, married c. 1830.

Richard Torrance, 76 Findhorn Place, Edinburgh, EH9 2NW

- 64 MacGILLIVRAY, William R. MacGillivray b. 15th September 1803 at Evanton, Kiltarn, Ross and Cromarty, son of James MacGillivray and Ellen Rogers; lived at or near Dunmaglas, married Christian McKay (b. 2nd June 1801 to William McKay and Jean Urquhart at Clair, Kiltarn, and died 31st October 1871) at Kiltarn on 31st March, 1826. He died May 1890 at Chatsworth, Grey County, Ontario. Birthplace and dates of James MacGillivray and Ellen Rogers sought, and birth registration and date of emigration of William R. MacGillivray by Mrs. Wm. MacGillivray Andrew, 7160 N.W. Somerset Drive, Corvallis, Oregon 97330.

- 65 McDOUGALL: Data is needed on McDougall families of Argyll, mid—18th Century mainly those in joint parishes of Kilmore and Kilbride (Oban area) and Kilchrenan and Dalavich, both in Lorne district; and Lochgoilhead and Kilmorich in Cowal district (Holy Loch and Drymsynie Beg area). Parochial registers have been searched but are incomplete or begin a few years too late. Vague traditions and surviving 19th Century letters suggest a John McDougall was father of Donald and Dougal McDougall of Montreal, Canada; Daniel McDougall of Palatine, New York; and John, Duncan and Alexander McDougall, all of Schenectady, New York, these supposed brothers born likely in 1740's. The asserted date of emigration to Canada is 1768, but Canadian records of period lack data on non-French residents and many Province of New York records were accidentally burned in 1911.

John Dorrance Morrell, 187 Hicks Street, Apt. 7—B, Brooklyn, New York, 11201, U.S.A.

- 66 PATTISON John, (miner/ag labourer, protestant) bc 1808 Dumfriesshire, Scotland (sister Janet b 1805 Kirkconnel, Dumfriesshire) parents — William Pattison and Agnes Black. Married c 1835 Jane McNaught (place unknown), issue (each b. Kirkconnel, and m Auchinleck, Ayrshire) — Agnes (b. 1836, m. 1853 Agnes McKenzie, Mary (b. 1838, m. 1883 Matthew Roxburgh), John (b. 1841, m. 1870 Agnes Johnston), William (b. 1844, m. Alice), Elizabeth (b. 1845, m. 1867 Andrew Wilson), d. 1879, Auchinleck. Information required by John Pattison, 2 Almond Court, Vale Park, Adelaide, Australia, 5081.

- 67 Seeking correspondence with anyone having information regarding Robert BRANKSTON

b. ca 1768

d. ?

m. Mary Hodge, June, 1799 in S. Leith, Scotland

b. ca 1777 (James Hodge Wright, her father)

d. ?

also: Robert PATCHETT, glassmaker of Alloa b. ca. 1776, father of my ancestor Ellen PATCHETT

Mrs. Jane B. Thomas, Fairwood, Route 1, Box 165—C, Como, Mississippi 38619, U.S.A.

- 68 In the early part of this century James Pittendrigh Macgillivray, Ravelston Elms, Murrayfield Road, Edinburgh made inquiries of a genealogical nature of several members of my family in the Parish of Tyrie, Aberdeenshire. It seemed obvious that he had a family history in mind. He died in Edinburgh 29th April, 1938, and in his will, instructed his daughter Ehrna Macgillivray to dispose of his private papers by consulting his friends. If anyone may know of the existence of any family history notes, letters or manuscripts, I would be most interested in hearing from you.

Robert L. Pittendrigh, 19 Merlin Crescent, Regina, Sask., CANADA S4R 3E1.

- 69 HAIG (TWO LINES): Thomas B. born 1806—07 in Berwickshire; brother James born 1822. Came to Ontario 1836. Possibly related to Thos. Allan, born 1794, Berwickshire, or W.H. Scott, b. 1835. Other connections, Watson, Boyce, Boyd, Bale? Thos. Haig, m. Margaret Buchanan, 1841 in Ontario. Issue: Samuel, John, Thos. Allan, William, Peter, James, David, Isabella, Margaret. (Names given in order of birth) Seek names of parents and place of residence.

- 70 HAIG, John, born c. 1780, came to Colborne, Ont., 1833. Nine children, known names: David, Joseph, Thomas, James, Christina? Others, Samuel, Alex., John Peter? Related to: Allan, Russel, Boyd, Cockburn, Col. families who possibly came from PRESTON, Berwickshire, Scotland.

Information about these two families appreciated by Mrs. L.G. Peppler, Highway 8, Rte 3, Beamsville, Ont. LOR 1B0

- 71 BUCHANAN, Samuel, born February 6th, 1793, m. Isabella. Issue: Margaret, John, Peter, Andrew. (Margaret Buchanan m. Thos. B. Haig) Was Samuel born in Scotland or Canada, who might have been the son of Samuel Buchanan, soldier who served 1780—1783, in 3rd Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers, and came to Ontario sometime after 1783.

- 72 CASSIE — Alexander, born 1815, Auchmaleddie, Aberdeenshire, son of Alexander and Elspet. Married Isobel Gordon and had five children. Also seek information on his sons Alexander 1840, James 1842, George 1855.

Any information gratefully received. Contact GEORGE M. CASSIE, BOX 2163, HUNTSVILLE, POA IKO, ONTARIO, CANADA.

- 73 LIVINGSTONE, Catherine (Kate), born 1786 in Argyllshire. Died and buried in Lucknow, Ontario, 16/10/1874. Married Duncan Graham circa 1812. Children: Mary, born 1815, married in Scotland to Allen McConnell.
Kate, born 1815, married in Scotland to John McLeod.
Alex, born 1819, married in Scotland to Anne Tolmie.
Donald, born 1821, Lochhead, S. Knapdale, married in Canada to Anne Smith.
Duncan, born 1823, married in Scotland to Elizabeth Brown.
Christie, born 1829, married James McVicar.
All families emigrated to Canada as did the widowed Kate GRAHAM in 1846. Searching place of her birth, marriage, and her parents. Were they Neil Livingstone and Mary Morrison?

MRS. DONALDA J. BENOIT, 5020 W. RIVER ROAD, MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN, 49445 USA.

ANSWER

HASTIE— The Scottish Genealogist — March 1979, vol. XXVI No. 1 Query 48, p24
The inscription quoted is in Whitburn Churchyard (1). There is a farm HEADS in that parish. There is also a nearby tombstone to William Hastie died 23 March aged 61, by sons John & Alexander.

In the Sheriff Court of West Lothian Register of Deeds (2) there is a settlement dated 2 April 1830 by John Hastie tenant in Heads in favour of Margaret Brown his spouse, and of James his youngest son "residing in family with me these two having been unprovided for". There follows a list of "my children who have already received from me portions suitable to my circumstances":— John at Gateside (3), Peter wright in Carluke (4), Margaret spouse of James Henderson porter in Leith, Janet spouse of John McDuff gardener to Colonel Beaton at Balfour, Fife Isobell spouse of Clement Johnston wright Glasgow, Marrion spouse of John Douggall labourer Livingstone.

- NOTES:
- (1) Monumental Inscriptions in West Lothian — J. F. & S. Mitchell — p. 174 inscriptions nos. 213, 214.
 - (2) Scottish Record Office ref. SC41/68/24 folios 109-111.
 - (3) There is a GATESIDE in Whitburn.
 - (4) M.Is. in Upper Ward of Lanarkshire — S.A. Scott — p. 46 nos. 234, 235. Carluke Old Churchyard.
 - (5) M.Is. East Fife — Mitchell — p. 28 no. 9. Milton of Balgonie Churchyard (parish of Markinch).

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