

McPHERSON FAMILY

of

Dunedin, New Zealand

with the

Perthshire Ancestry

of

John McPHERSON

1865 - 1947

by

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John and Elizabeth McPHERSON of Dunedin

McPHERSON FAMILY

This family history follows the direct line ancestry on my mother's side of the family, from the McPHERSONS of Fortingall, Perthshire to Dunedin, New Zealand. I have not had any family notes to use as a basis for this story, and very little verbal information, both of which were an advantage when writing about my father's side of our story. There may be diaries of ship-board experiences and early ancestral days, but I have not had access to any, so it has not been easy to create an understanding of the style of life they led, the conditions under which they lived and employment related experiences. For that information I have had to rely heavily on The Statistical Accounts of Scotland which were written by the parish ministers of the day and from one or two booklets which discussed the social conditions in the County of Perthshire, which also contained background information on various areas.

I have not been able to trace wills for any of our very early ancestors which usually confirmed land ownership or a placing of value on what they had to leave to their offspring. Wills can be helpful in pinpointing areas of residence and placing family members in the right sequence, but it is known that few Scots left wills. The nearest I could come to this was the finding of an Inventory for John McPHERSON who died in 1859, where he named places of residence for family members.

Fifteen years separated the New Zealand arrival of our great grandparents **Robert and Elizabeth McPHERSON** and our grand-mother **Elizabeth Bain MUNRO's** family from Wick, Caithness, and another fifteen years before she married **John McPHERSON, Robert's** son who was born in Dunedin.

The brutal and insensitive catastrophe of the Clearances in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries prompted the emigration of Scots to Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America. We are not sure what part the Highland clearances played in the lives of our ancestors, but somewhere along the line their meagre existence in the Highlands was no doubt under threat.

The Highland counties were over-populated, with the great majority who lived there having no paid employment, and their landowners were very conscious of their urgent need of money. There was very little money to be made from the land and in time it became evident that a poor Highland estate could be made richer by the introduction of sheep. Sheep had been bred that could graze the northern uplands, but it was evident that there was no room for sheep and human beings and so these lands would have to be cleared of their inefficient and wasteful inhabitants.

Sir John SINCLAIR of Caithness was prepared to put forward plans for the gradual introduction of these new breeds without dislodging the inhabitants, but his advice was ignored and many proprietors were greedy to be rich quickly. Tenants were persuaded or compelled to leave the land where their ancestors had lived and in their place a few Lowland shepherds tended two or three thousand Cheviot sheep.

There were some proprietors who helped their neighbours to emigrate by paying their passageway, but there were others who raised their rents to a figure that the tenant could not afford and an agent acting for an absentee landlord had no conscience about evicting the poor farmer. Some were driven from their homes with violence, others had their meagre hovels burnt around them. These evicted families were forced to head for the over-crowded cities where at least there was the possibility of employment. And so through the tragedy of the clearances, Scotland was dispossessed of men, women, children, tradition and soul. The colonies were to gain as a result of these happenings.

This may help us to understand our ancestors' decision to leave the security of their homelands, if it can be called that, for the unknown life in far away New Zealand. As far as I can ascertain, our **McPHERSONS** appear to have paid their own passage out.

The Clan McPHERSON originated from the head of the Spey Valley at Newtonmore in Invernesshire where the clan museum is. Although Blairgowrie, over 50 miles south in Perthshire, was always spoken of in the family as the home of our own **McPHERSON** great-grandfather, research has proved even this to be incorrect. This misconception has arisen because the marriage place of our ancestors who emigrated to New Zealand was Blairgowrie. The places of residence given on the marriage certificate were not far away, in fact within 10 miles of Blairgowrie with their birth places not much further afield. In the 1861 census taken two years later the bride's parents were found living in Blairgowrie. And just two weeks after this 1859 marriage of **Robert McPHERSON** and **Elizabeth KEAY**, our two ancestors left their native Scotland for their new home in Dunedin, New Zealand. But before we follow their journey, we must go back to the 1700s for the earliest traceable ancestry in Perthshire, Scotland.

Our great-grandfather **Robert McPHERSON**'s death certificate gave his birth place as Kenmuir, Perthshire, Scotland, but after being unable to find a Kenmuir, it was decided that possibly Kenmore, Perthshire was what was correct. The informant to the undertaker may have been unclear of the exact place name or the writer perhaps was a bad speller. **John McPHERSON** and **Christina McGREGOR** were named in **Robert**'s Dunedin death certificate as his parents. Searches were made for **Robert** and his parents in the Blairgowrie 1851 census, but without success. The Kenmore Parish Register was searched, McPHERSONS were found, but no sighting of a birth for a **Robert** around the 1820s to 1830s.

It was when looking at other parish 1851 census entries on this same film that the Fortingall Parish nearby revealed some McPHERSON families and there amongst them was a **Robert**, unmarried at the age of 25, a joiner, living in the village of Croftgarbh on a hamlet called 'Culdarbeg', with his parents, **John** and **Christina McPHERSON**.

Fortingall

In Alexander STEWART's 'The History of Fortingall' (pub. 1927) he comments on early social conditions:

In 1754 the country was impassable. There were no roads or bridges.....The houses were huts of what are called 'stake and rise'. One could not enter but on all fours and after entering it was impossible to stand upright. The people had no opportunity of cultivating cleanliness and many of them suffered from skin diseases....the rents of the Parish were not more than £1500 and the people were starving.....it is hardly possible to believe on how little the Highlanders formerly lived....

The Highland districts were dependent on outside sources to supply raw material for making agricultural instruments, though these were made and repaired locally. Iron bars needed were carried on horseback, a number being suspended from each side of the saddle - same for building and furniture planks - carried across passes now considered impassable.

Fortingall town was built after 1760 to replace the accommodation for the tenants which was described by Hilary WHEATER in her book "Kenmore and Loch Tay" as 'the disgrace of Europe'. The town lies on the River Lyon [called after a Celtic river goddess, *Tatha*, the silent one] just north of Loch Tay, and was planned by the Earl of Breadalbane. The Tay is the longest river in Scotland, its source high on the slopes of Beinn Laoigh from where it wends its way for 110 miles to the sea at Perth.

Hilary WHEATER's description of the housing around the Kenmore district could well describe similar hamlets in and around Fortingall. The small, low rectangular stone dwellings had small shuttered windows, roofs were thatched with bracken or heather, and their fire was in the centre of the room. The peat smoke filled the room before its way out through the thatching. The beds were of bracken or straw and other furniture was sparse. The people were mainly lightly clothed even through the coldest weather and child mortality was high.

A little cultivation was carried out, but spring was the danger time when the meagre amount of oatmeal cultivated the previous summer ran low. The main source of income was from sheep and black cattle, and to survive in lean times they bled their cattle and boiled the blood into cakes mixed together with a little milk and a meagre portion of meal. In high summer the women and girls trekked with horses, cattle and sheep from the sheltered low-lands up to the sheilings and higher grazing in the hills allotted to each holding. They built temporary huts of turf and stone, covered with divots, and spent their time making butter and cheese by the nearby fresh-water streams to take them through as much of the winter ahead as was possible. The flax they had grown was spun as they tended the animals. Despite this primitive existence, they were happy with their way of life. They were passionately attached to their home patch and their loyalty to

their chiefs was without question.

Alexander STEWART goes on to say:

In Rannoch there were many evictions. We already saw in the 18th century people were evicted from the forfeited estates by the Barons of the Exchequer. In Glenlyon evictions took place at Carnban on the Chesthill Estate between 1830 and 1840. From 1850 onwards, for at least 10 years, there were numerous evictions in Roro on Lord BREADALBANE's Estate. In Fortingall Parish as in many other places in the Highlands, the disruption of 1843 was the cause of evictions.

In many cases those who joined the Free Church and refused to comply with the laird's desire were evicted. For their adherence to Free Church principles, Stewart MENZIES of Culdare evicted the tenants on the 3 farms of Kerremore on the Meggernie estate, combined the farms into one and gave them to one of the Established Church people - one Donald CAMPBELL, father of David CAMPBELL who was afterwards parish minister of Fortingall.....

Gradually this habit of existence disappeared as higher grazing areas were converted into sheep farms. The distant sheilings became closed to tenants who formerly had the right to them.

Alexander STEWART adds to this:

2nd half of 18th century - considerable improvements in agricultural and transport facilities - improved changes in the life and habits of the people. People became orderly and law-abiding, cleaner in their habits and as well clothed as circumstances would admit. Comfortable houses were built of stone, standing up beds and an abundance of blankets. Rents rose from £1500 to £4600 - people no longer starved.

Nancy BLACK's book 'From a Hollow on the Hill' - History & Tales of Lorn & Fortingall Families, published in 1999, throws a little light on our McPHERSONS' background in and around Fortingall. Our first known McPHERSON's occupation was once given as 'tailor', so I wonder if he had a connection with the flax industry that appeared to be a prominent occupation around the Loch Tay area. Because of this possible connection with our early McPHERSON ancestor, Nancy's observations about the lifestyle and occupations of Fortingall folk follows:

For many years the potato crop of the farmers of Fortingall had paid their rent, but the potato disease now wreaked havoc on the communities there.....The grievous losses suffered by the small farmers in the hard years of 1836-1841 meant that their landlords were forced to take these into account. By 1848 it was obvious that in the Highlands sheep farming now paid best and that the domestic industries were being made unprofitable and killed by mill machinery and steam power.

The number of recorded mills and their rent records, give evidence to the fact that under the old husbandry the scant arable lands of the Highlands produced heavy crops. The tenants had plenty of farmyard manure and they burnt lime so that every field that needed it would have an application every 8 - 10 years. Most farm implements were made at home or on larger acreages by the local blacksmith.

The flax industry however, might have continued as it did in Ulster, had it not been given up in despair. The old communities were upset by changed estate management and, worst of all, by the self evictions of the people themselves who poured into towns and mining and manufacturing districts to seek a living elsewhere. Highland sheep farms eventually were no longer lettable at half the former rents and some were converted into deer forests.

.....The lands around Fortingall were more productive than those of the West and in the nineteenth century when any appeared on the market, there was much competition between the wealthy industrialists to acquire country seats where they could entertain friends and business acquaintances. When estates were sold the tenants were not always pleased with the prospect of a new owner....

After the potato and grouse diseases in the mid 19th century, there was an invasion of hares in Fortingall and so much eating and fouling of the grass on the farms, that special shoots were set up to try to exterminate them.

In each household there was a bible reading every evening. On Communion days in Kenmore there would be a long procession of people, some from as far away as Killin and Aberfeldy, to join in the fellowship. Wending their way along the dusty or muddy roads, the more prosperous in farm carts or dog carts, but the majority walking. Men in their homespun suits and women in their ground length black dresses endeavouring to quell the spirits of their young children who sometimes forgot the solemnity of the occasion.

There were two churches, the Established and the Free, but they could not contain the swelling congregations and services would be held outside the buildings.....

There were many variations of the 'plaid' worn by the Scots, originally the name of the material itself. For ladies it would be a short length over the shoulders, but the Highlander required ten yards of the heavy woollen cloth as a cover when this was his sole garment, which was also used as a blanket when travelling away from home.....Later the modern 'little kilt' was produced, as with the former there was too much material to be arranged under the jackets which had come into fashion.

The colours used varied according to the dyes available in each area. The women and children spent any spare time searching for plants which would give colour to the wool used for weaving. The patterns depended on the skill of the weaver to repeat the same in the next bolt of cloth he produced though they usually were made from crota which came out brown, crimson; alder, black; rue, red; hyacinth and brambles were also used. The dyes made from local herbs and plants kept their colour...Lairds wore shirts made of flax, often dyed yellow with saffron that grew on their own ground. The common tormentil was used for tanning hides.

Flax was processed into material by steeping, scratching, heckling and spinning. There were lintmills all along Tayside. The heckler combed the flax to get rid of the tow, then it was put into 'heads' and on to the spindle to transform into yarn. After that the flax was spun on to large bobbins from which it was reeled into hanks. Then the hanks were boiled and cleaned. On drying it was filled on to warp pirns (reels) which went on to the weavers' beam, then the linen was woven and finally bleached on the village green.

Once spinning mills commenced in Dundee and Arbroath, flax was imported from the Baltic and the country workers soon found the manufacture of linen became uneconomic. This regular work was now lost to them.

Ancient roots which had been buried for thousands of years in the peat, and now dried, were the means of lighting, and tallow and was candles were made at home. Lamps were filled with oil or fat. The continual fire in the house was not allowed to go out, as it was essential for lighting up their houses, thus enabling the wives to spin in the evenings.

Employees and farmers were always welcome in the neighbouring houses, and they enjoyed nothing more than listening to the tales of battle and genealogy, interspersed with poetry, to the strains of harp and bagpipes. The many craftsmen in the district, joined with masons, joiners, smiths, dykers, millers, weavers to meet with one another. Or they would walk on a summer evening through the glens, discussing the business of the day and worldly affairs. A dawn to dusk day was the norm, six days a week until the twentieth century. Ploughing matches were held, along with shooting matches, and the latter were encouraged by the fencible and territorial regiments who trained recruits for the army. But the attractions of the towns drew people away from the countryside, where they could enjoy the luxuries of such things as gas lighting and labour saving devices. Who could blame them? The population of Fortingall, apart from a few farmers, shepherds, gamekeepers and retired people, gave way to sportsmen and tourists. Salmon spawned in the Tay in the shallows at Fortingall until it was time to head to the North Sea.

Ruined huts still mark some places to where our ancestors made their early pilgrimages. The crofts that supported the 45 village families in the Fortingall area of the 1700s have all disappeared and only two families farm in the lower part of the valley today.

The life of our ancestors in this beautiful part of Scotland was extremely hard and those who had insight and the courage to leave, could only benefit from the change. And so did our ancestor **Robert** who married just two weeks after his father died at Carnbanbeg, the home of his daughter Christian, wife of William MENZIES. A John Stewart MENZIES was one of the chief landowners in the area, but whether William is a part of this family is not known.

Another branch of the early McPHERSON family to settle in New Zealand was traced in 2008, through the finding of this marriage of William MENZIES and **Christina McPHERSON**. Christina was a sister of my great-grandfather, **Robert**, [b. 1825]. A cousin of mine mentioned that their daughter Margaret, born 1851, married John CAMPBELL of Ardconaig, Parish of Killin and they lived at Cannibal Bay in the Owaka area. Their 1877 marriage was found and some time in 1888, they and their then family of five, emigrated to New Zealand and were traced to Sawyers Bay, Dunedin and then to Cannibal Bay in the Catlins District, Owaka. They had two more children in their new homeland. John became a well-known resident of the Owaka district and was an elder of the Presbyterian Church for some years before his death in 1929. Margaret, nee MENZIES, also a devout church worker, died at Owaka in 1941.

The family of MENZIES (pronounced Mingies) is one of the oldest in Scotland. Most of the tenants of MENZIES land in Rannoch were McGREGORS who had been there for nearly 200 years and when trying to trace McGREGOR ancestors, this is the area they appeared to come from. The MENZIES did not share the CAMPBELL Clan's hatred of the MacGREGORS, but when Mary, Queen of the Scots was no longer there to support the MENZIES, the CAMPBELLS resumed their persecutions by stealing cattle, burning corn and even stooping to murder. These wrangles continued for years, and bit by bit the CAMPBELLS, by fair means or foul, gained possession of Menzies land.

Bonnie Prince Charlie stayed at Menzies Castle on his way north to his fate at Culloden, and because of this harbouring of the 'Pretender', the Castle was taken over as a garrison for troops who plundered the surrounding land and damaged the Castle furniture beyond repair. For this damage, Sir Robert MENZIES was successful in a £12,000 compensation claim from the Government. After 1746, with the Highland lands laid waste and disarmed, the MENZIES and their tenants tried to eke a living out of what was left. Old feuds were forgotten as the Highlands settled down and Castle Menzies became a residence instead of a stronghold and is now open to the public.

After a contact made by cousin **Gordon McPHERSON** prior to 1989, I corresponded with Jenny KININMONTH of 'Kinnigallen', Fortingall, a McPHERSON before she married. Her family lived in Fortingall but are not related to ours, but Jenny and Jack kindly had us to stay, both in 1989 and 1991. The McPHERSONS that weren't hers, were ours! Before the KININMONTHS took over 'Kinnigallen', the ancestors of Nancy BLACK, the author, lived on this property.

To reach the township of Fortingall one must cross Wade's Bridge over the River Tay at Aberfeldy, a well-known landmark in the area. It has been standing since 1735 and it stands as strong today as it was then, with its two smaller spans on each side of a large middle span, topped on each corner by four stone pinnacles. Wade's new highways and bridges opened up Scotland and revolutionised the entire country. Aberfeldy is the biggest remaining township in the area today and is as picturesque as its surrounding areas, but the heart of the Vale of Menzies in the early days was the now small village of Dull.

On a field close by Wade's Bridge at Aberfeldy is a monument to the 42nd Highland Regiment, the Black Watch, which was raised there in 1740. The calibre of men who offered for enrolment

in this famous regiment was very high and most of the soldiers had their own servants to attend them. They were sons of the Highland Gentry with no prospect of inheritance, and this opportunity to carry arms which was normally prohibited, and be paid for so doing, delighted them.

Their uniform was of the Black Watch tartan which belonged to no clan, topped with a scarlet jacket and waistcoat trimmed with white lace. Their plaid was 12 yards long and when not pleated at the waist could be thrown back and fixed at the shoulder by a brooch. It was then available to be loosened and wrapped over the shoulders as protection against the weather, or as a wrap when sleeping out in the open.

The Regiment was stationed at Aberfeldy for fifteen months until summoned to London to be reviewed by the King. The English who regarded the Scots as barbarians and savages who killed their prisoners and sucked their blood to whet their appetite for war, were amazed to see an orderly body, marching tall and proud in their full colourful regalia, to the sound of the skirling pipe bands and people in their thousands turned out to see this amazing spectacle.

In Hilary WHEATER's book "Aberfeldy to Glenlyon" it is said that:

There has been in Glenlyon a tradition handed down by word of mouth that Pontius Pilate was born in Fortingall. It is not the kind of tradition that anyone should be overproud of, but nevertheless it has survived despite all efforts to disprove it.

To lend plausibility to this legend, a rectangular site defended by ditches, south-west of the village, is referred to as the "Praetorium" and it is probably an early medieval fortified homestead.

Again in Hilary WHEATER's book:

In the Churchyard of Fortingall stands the famous Yew tree; estimated to be 3,000 years old and the oldest piece of vegetation in Europe, the circumference of the tree measured 56 feet in 1776....

This tree is very well protected today by a high stone fence and can be seen on the left in the following photograph.



Fortingall Parish Church, Perthshire.

On our return visit to Fortingall in May 1994, Jenny KININMONTH, who is a very active member of the congregation and one of its elders, took us to a Sunday service in the parish church. Our lasting memory of that visit will be of trying to sing all the unknown hymns in a key so high as to be quite out of our range. The Scottish service of today is still a very formal one compared to our more relaxed form of worship. This church is a more recent building than the one of the 1800's and it lacked the atmosphere of the past.

Opposite the Fortingall hotel is the Cairn of the Dead. A plaque records that during a 'visitation' of the plague in the 14th century, the victims were buried at this spot, having been brought there on a sled drawn by a white horse and led by an old woman. There are several important archaeological sites in the neighbourhood of the village. In the graveyard behind the yew tree is a fine example of a cup-marked stone, said to have been found 8' below ground level. In a field between the road and the river, a short distance east of the village, are three circles each of three standing stones. Above the farm of Balnacraig is Dun Geal, a stone ringfort of the Iron Age similar to those in Glenlyon House. Between the Fearnan road and the river, in a wide low-lying flood plain, are a Bronze Age burial site (disc barrow) on which is a cup-marked stone that originally stood upright, a standing stone by the river and a long earthen mound that is probably prehistoric and possibly a Neolithic burial tumulus. It is near the bridge over the River Lyon.

Beautiful Glen Lyon stretches west of Fortingall for 25 miles through Breadalbane country. It is one of Scotland's richly wooded passes with its romantic MacGREGOR's Leap. The road itself takes the motorist between the peaks of Cairn Maig (3,419') and Ben Lawers (3,984') and there is an excellent tourist centre on route which we visited in 1989 and 1991.

But my interest in Fortingall goes further. The farm the KININMONTHS lease stretches from Drummond Hill down to the flat and includes all the hamlets our McPHERSONS lived on. Alistair, their son, who has taken over the farming of the property, took us to all my named hamlets and their remaining piles of stones, which occasionally were recognisable as parts of walls or rooms. The distances I had imagined to be in many miles shrank on examination to a few hundred yards, with the second earliest McPHERSON marrying the girl practically across the road. I made the comment that this was such a beautiful part of Scotland and it must have been pleasant to live there, until it was pointed out by Alistair that life would have been as hard here as anywhere else in Scotland in the 1700s and his comments echoed the previous

paragraphs.

Today the peace and beauty of the area to the visitor would be hard to equal. The village of Kenmore at the end of Loch Tay is quite charming, nestling below Drummond Hill which separates it from the valley where our McPHERSONS lived. Both Kenmore and Fortingall looked quite breath-taking from the lookouts Alistair took us to on the top of Drummond Hill by four-wheel drive. The view up the valley from Fortingall on the other side of the Hill, which was Jenny KININMONTH's daily outlook until early 1994, one would never tire of. Alistair her son has taken over 'Kinnigallen' and Jenny has moved to 'Tynayare' which is a mile or so down the road and the place where she was born. From this property our ancestors' patches are clearly visible.



Picturesque Village of Kenmore from Drummond Hill

Parish Church visible near centre



Fortingall Village from Drummond Hill



Fortingall Valley from 'Culdarbeg'

DONALD McPHERSON

Farmer,

of Croftgarrow, Fortingall, Perthshire

(Generation 1)

Donald is the earliest traced McPHERSON and even though the births of his family were found in the Fortingall Parish Register, his marriage to **Vear MENZIES** was over the hill in the attractive Kenmore Parish on 3 December, 1763.

There is a possible christening entry for Donald in the I.G.I:

- to Donald McPHERSON and Kathrine LESLEY, chr. 12 June 1743, Perth

but nothing apparent around the Kenmore/Fortingall areas. There are also two possibilities for Vear, his wife:

(1) Robert MENZIES/Christian or Kirstian BOYD - 28 July, 1735,
Kinalty, Dull,

(2) Alex. MENZIES/Barbara BOYD - 30 December, 1737, also at Dull.

Dull is definitely MENZIES country and if either of these entries are correct, it would appear that Vear could have been six to eight years older than Donald, with Donald only twenty when they married. Two of the mother's names entered above, Kathrine and Christian, have been used in Donald and Vear's family - a help in pin-pointing the correct family - there is no sign of a Barbara in the McPHERSON lineup.

I have **Donald** noted here as a farmer this information given on his son **John**'s death certificate. But recently the death certificate of another son has surfaced and the deceased's daughter, as informant, gave her grand-father's occupation as 'tailor'. Are these two occupations for our g-g-g-grandfather compatible? But whatever is correct, **Donald** and **Vear** had ten of a family. It is interesting to note that the Scottish habit of naming children has not been followed by this family:

1st son after paternal grandfather
2nd son after maternal grandfather
3rd son after father
1st dau. after maternal grandmother
2nd dau. after paternal grandmother
3rd dau. after mother.

1. William b. 1763 - crofter m. Christy STEWART of Innervar 26 Dec. 1780, Fortingall.
(the computer IGI showed William's christening date as 6 Sep. 1765.) - 10 children.
2. Christi[na] b. 1765. (the computer IGI had her christening date as 13 January 1765 at Kenmore. Was Christi possibly the eldest in the family?)
3. Archibald b. 1767 - Weaver m. 1800, Kenmore to Christian McGREGOR - 9 children.

4. Mary chr. 6 May, 1772. (This appeared in the latest computer IGI but was not found when searching the Parish Register.)

5. Alexander 1774 - 1858 - m. Elizabeth MILLAR (MILLER), Errol, 11 Dec. 1803 - 8 children.

6. **John** 1777-1859 - m. **Christina McGREGOR** (1785-1856)

7. Donald b. 1780.

(The latest computer IGI shows that there were two Donalds born in this family, one christened on 3 June 1780 who presumably died.)

8. Donald b. 1783 of Croftgarbh - m. Margaret (Peggy) McGREGOR of Duneaves 24 Jan. 1806 at Fortingall - 8 children.

9. Catherine b. 1783.

10. Margaret b. 1785, Croftgarbh.



'Croftgarbh'
home of g-g-grandparents,
Christina McGREGOR & John McPHERSON

In 1994, I obtained a copy of an Inventory of the Personal Estate of this ancestor, **John McPHERSON** - dated at Perth, 8 December, 1859. It confirmed what was already known - that he died at Carnbane, Glenlyon, which was the home of his daughter and it gave the value of his estate as £93.11.5. This amount was made up as follows:

1. A Bed and Press	£1. 0. 0
2. Sum due the dec'd. on an Interest Receipt with the Central Bank of Scotland dated 7.12.1858. £91. 0.0. Interest due thereon at date of dec.death	£1.11.5.
	_____ £92.11.5

	£93.11.5.
	=====

The Inventory listed the executors as Archibald McPHERSON, residing at Chesthill, Dalmally, Duncan McPHERSON, Carpenter, Rhuvucky, Alexander McPHERSON, Labourer, Carnbane, Christian McPHERSON, wife of William MENZIES, Shepherd, Chesthill, John McPHERSON residing at Kinnell, near Killin and **Robert McPHERSON**, Carpenter, Enochdow, Strathardle, Kirkmichael.

Our g-grandfather by this December date had married and was on his way to New Zealand.

THE McPHERSON/KEAY MARRIAGE

1859

This marriage was the coming together of the McPHERSON and Keay families through the marriage of **Robert McPHERSON** and **Elizabeth KEAY**. Even though their marriage took place in Blairgowrie, neither actually lived there, although in the 1861 census, Elizabeth's parents, **Peter KEAY** and **Margaret McDOUGALL** lived for a while in Brown Street, Blairgowrie. This street is where the Blairgowrie Church was to be found, having been purchased in 1837 when the old parish church became too small for its congregation.

Just before **Robert**'s marriage, he was working as a carpenter in the village of Enochdu, a village 10 miles north-east of Pitlochry. For how long he had worked there is not known, but up until the 1851 census he had been at home in Fortingall with his parents, **John** and **Christian**. Sadly **Robert**'s father died just three weeks before his marriage.

Elizabeth, **Robert**'s wife-to-be, gave her address as Dalruzian, Blackwater, which was a shooting lodge 4 miles north-west of Blairgowrie and here she worked as a servant but again for how long is not known. The Dalrulzian Lodge was photographed by us on our 1989 trip to Scotland.

The rest of **Robert** and **Elizabeth**'s story begins with their emigration to New Zealand and the new life they and their descendants established in Dunedin, New Zealand.

Robert McPHERSON

1825 - 1890

Carpenter,

Dunedin, New Zealand



(Generation 3)

Three weeks after **Robert** and **Elizabeth**'s 1st November, 1859 Blairgowrie marriage, they sailed for New Zealand on the 'Gala' which left the Clyde on 19 November, 1859. The 851 ton vessel was an iron Clyde-built clipper ship, four years old and considered highly seaworthy. It left with a total of 317 passengers, 305 of them travelling steerage. 185 of them were Scots, the rest from England and Ireland. The voyage appeared to be uneventful, except for heavy weather at the commencement and end of the voyage. The general health of the passengers was stated to have been good on the whole. They suffered the usual illnesses of such confined quarters - sea sickness and bowel complaints with the coming of the hot weather. When the cold snaps recurred, catarrhal and bronchial ailments returned, but the general quality of the water and provisions were good and over the whole voyage their physical conditions improved remarkably

The 'Otago Witness's account of the voyage dated 25 February, 1860, concluded with some quaint, amusing comments:

The increase to our industrial population by this importation of a highly superior stamp - a character applying more especially to the married couples and single men. Some of the single females coming with the protection of brothers or other real friends are worthy specimens of this class. Of the greater

number who are adventurers, some will be found very useful aids, and most of the rest we hope may be made so by good kind management.

The occupations of these new residents was widespread - joiners and carpenters, one shipwright, sawyers, blacksmiths, masons, a quarryman, boot and shoemakers, a tailor, a dyer, gardeners, farmers, ploughmen, agricultural labourers, shepherds, common labourers, one carter, domestic and general female servants, a dressmaker and two matrons.

Exactly where **Robert** and **Elizabeth** spent their first few months in Dunedin is not known, but by 3 May, 1860, **Robert** had signed a Deed to purchase a plot of land for £40 - section No. 20, block 36, bounded on the north by St. David St., on the east by Sec. No. 21, on the south by Section No. 19 and on the west by Leith St. (corner section.) In 1882 the List of Freeholders for Dunedin showed that this property had a value of £700.

By 1861 **Robert** had built his 'Blair Cottage' on the crest of the hill which now overlooks Otago University. Early electoral rolls gave his address as Leith Street and Directories for Dunedin started listing **Robert** in 1863. **Robert** continued to work as a carpenter, but I have no exact knowledge of where his employment took him in those early days. Family have made mention of his involvement with the building of Otago Boys' High School and his use of Oamaru stone in his work, so his expertise may have also been in the building trade. Family also recalled that when the Memorial Gates were being built at OBHS, **Robert** carved his name on a block of wood and threw it into the foundations. I wonder when and if it will ever be recovered? Confirmation of this has died with him.

Elizabeth and **Robert** had just three of a family:

1. **John** 1865 - 1947 m. **Elizabeth Bain MUNRO**- 29 August, 1890, Dunedin
2. Margaret b. 1867 - Unm.
3. Christine ('Tinie') b. 1870 m. David Christie DEMPSTER, music teacher, carpenter -1908, Dunedin.

Robert died at his home on 19 March, 1890 of 'Paralysis of the Brain' and **Elizabeth** continued living there (83 St. David's Street] until her own death on 26 November 1900 after 'Gradual heart failure due to pneumonia'. Their tombstone is to be found in the Northern Cemetery, still in very good condition. The Rev. D. M. STUART, first Presbyterian Minister at Knox Church, Dunedin, officiated at the burial of **Robert**. He had arrived in Dunedin the same year as our great-grandparents - 1860.

By March 1901 their two daughters, who were executors, had sold the family home. This property had decreased in value through the depression years of the late 1800s and it was sold to David Renfrew WHITE for £590. Prof. David WHITE at that time was an Assistant Master at the Old Stone and Union Street Schools and later was to become Principal of the Dunedin Teachers' Training College. 'BLAIR COTTAGE' was later demolished and replaced by the large two-storeyed house owned by the Otago University today.



**Elizabeth McPHERSON [nee KEAY]
1828 [approx.] - 1900**



**'BLAIR COTTAGE',
83 St. David St., Dunedin - built 1861**

John McPHERSON

1865 - 1947

Carpenter,

Dunedin

(Generation 4)

Grandfather John's childhood days were at 'Blair Cottage', St. David Street, the cottage built by his father in 1860. He was born in 1865 and was christened at Knox Church, Dunedin on 24 December of that year. We next learned of his whereabouts through school records held by the Hocken Library, Dunedin.

I could always remember my mother saying her own mother had attended 'The Old Stone School'. When hunting for records of this school, the Hocken Library in Dunedin produced L.F. De BERRY's book which was a record of the 69th anniversary celebrations of the Union St. School, North Dunedin School, Old Stone School, Normal School, published by Coulls, Somerville Wilkie in 1930. This book helped to pin point the positioning of The Old Stone School.

The Old Stone School stood near the corner of Gt. King Street and Union Street - where the Museum now stands [?] and faced Gt. King Street, with large Australian bluegums growing on the Union Street and Cumberland Street frontages. The present site of the University of Otago was then magnificent native forest and this was a playground for the children from the school. This area was called the 'Tannie' - [corruption of 'botanical'] and a small hill that was cut away to provide a site for the Home Science Department of the University was known as 'Tannie Hill'. The native forest and hill were part of the botanical gardens at that time - all very close to 'Blair Cottage' on its hill-top.

The Old Stone School had a short life of under twenty years. The roll grew rapidly and so towards the close of the 70's, the Union Street School, a large, two-storied brick building, was erected behind the Old School which was then demolished. Up until this time, parents had to pay for their children's education, the fee charged being 7/6d. per pupil per quarter. The fee was abolished with the introduction of the Education Act of 1878.

Elizabeth Bain MUNRO our grand-mother is included here as mention of her overlaps with the discoveries of our grand-father **John McPHERSON**.

School records produced by the Hocken and under 'Union St. School' for 1879, found **Elizabeth MUNRO** as a pupil in Class 111 at the age of 8 years 11 months, when she passed 5 out of 5 of her subjects. And who should be in Class V but **John McPHERSON**, our grandfather, aged 13 years 6 months with 7 passes. Also in **John's** class was David DEMPSTER, aged 9 years 11 months, his future brother-in-law.

In 1880 **Elizabeth** was still there with 7 passes, and presented for examination in Standard 5 at the age of 14 1/2 years were:

John McPHERSON	passes in reading, spelling and writing.
Christina McPHERSON.	8 yrs. 10 mths. with 3 passes.
David DEMPSTER	11 yrs. 2mths. 7 passes.

Jessie and **Nell** were married in a double wedding ceremony at Hanover St. Baptist Church, Dunedin on 3 April, 1929.

9. Hector 1905 - 1907.

Gordon McPHERSON visited me early in 1995 and mentioned that **Grandfather** had been employed as a carpenter during the building of Dunedin's premier home, Olveston, between 1904 - 6. Mr. N. WALES of Dunedin supplied me with the information that the builder employed on this project was a Robert MEIKLE, but I have not been able to find out anything further about him or who he employed. Later, I think during the days at Braeview Crescent, a MILNES family connection was apparently instrumental in our un-employed **Grandfather** being engaged as a maintenance carpenter for Hudsons, the biscuit manufacturer.

This Jacobean-style Olveston mansion of 35 rooms was designed by Sir Ernest GEORGE a British architect, for the Dunedin importer David THEOMIN. It is a magnificent building of brick and plaster, finished with Moeraki gravel and faced with Oamaru stone. The owners were collectors of furniture, silver and china and in 1966 the house and its wonderful collection were bequeathed to the city of Dunedin. The room furnishings have been retained and the home is open to the public at 42 Royal Terrace.

In 1909 **John** purchased a section, [No. 15] in the township of Cannington from James West, a shipwright of Port Chalmers for £50. This was to become '24' Braeview Crescent, and **Grandfather** proceeded to build his new home which the family moved into in 1918. Up until 1927, this property was un-numbered in Stone's Directory, but from 1927 up to 1938 it was listed as '11' Braeview Crescent. From 1929 onwards the listing was '24' Braeview Crescent. A small strip was sold off to the neighbours for an entrance way to their property (plan 14) as a miscalculation had been made when they built their new house.



The House that 'John' Built

Some years ago my mother confessed to having destroyed an account book she had kept for many years which contained every purchase **Grandfather** made when building this house. She said **Grandfather** had been extremely thorough in documenting every little purchase, down to the last nail. This book had moved around with our family, but when my parents left Nelson to return to Christchurch, she could not visualise any use for this book. Later she realised what a valuable source of information for a genealogist she had destroyed - indeed it would have been a gem.

After 'the boys' came back to New Zealand from World War 1 - (May 1919), they purchased for **Grandfather** another section from Percy Collins WILKINSON, warehouseman, of Dunedin, to add to what was already quite a large property. This was the same size as the first section at 1 rood, 19 poles, but was a lot dearer at £120. **Grandfather** created a beautiful garden on this steeply sloping section, carrying small potted natives up the Bullock Track day after day from his Forth St. home through the early days of development of this new property. He established a fernery at the bottom of the section, created winding paths through the native trees, established an excellent vegetable garden, a glass house and a steep glade of silver birches where the grandchildren always played. The approach to the house was down a sloping path, separated from the back door entrance by a superb rockery.

Grandfather could always be found either in his glass-house or down on his knees with a large sieve, systematically sieving what seemed like the whole of his cultivated garden. **Granny** always declared he never worked in his garden on a Sunday, but the family can well remember he had to be fetched from the garden to make the long walk down the hill to attend Hanover St. Baptist Church.

For several years **Grandfather** suffered from 'chronic myocaiditis, coronary arteriosclerosis and pernicious anaemia' and he died at home on 3 November, 1947 after a 'coronary thrombosis'.

Ted and **Nell ROSS** and family who were house-hunting at the time **grandfather** died in 1947, moved in to live with **Granny McPHERSON** at Braeview Cres., and it was from this home I left to be married in 1954. When **Ted** was transferred to Christchurch in the same year, **Granny** was too frail to stay in her home alone as she needed full time nursing care, so the house was sold to Mr. Ernest A. GRANT for £3,100, and she moved to live with her daughter and son-in-law, Jessie and Will. HENDERSON in Roxburgh. Over a period of a few months **Granny** had been suffering from 'cholelithiasis with biliary cirrhosis of the liver' and she died in Dunedin hospital in March 1956 after suffering 'shock due to biliary colic and cerebral thrombosis'.

24 Braeview Crescent was re-sold in 1962 to its present owners for £4,600. Today the property is still the same size, but some day I fear it will turn into a developer's dream in what is now a very attractive and desirable street. The property has been beautifully maintained by the second purchasers since the **McPHERSONS**, Mr. Walter John and Mrs. McELDOWNEY, and they have landscaped the property even further, filling it with hundreds of beautiful rhododendrons. They have bridged the stream and created paths up to the high point on the far section, building a lookout which looks back over the whole property. The descendants of the **McPHERSON** family are always welcome to call and see the garden at any time. The house has been altered a little inside and the floored basement is now a bottom storey to the house, with the staircase going down from the wide 'picture gallery' front entrance, below where the deer's head and cuckoo clock always hung.

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