

The McPhersons of the West Coast of New Zealand, 1874-2011

Reynold Macpherson, 21 July 2024

Written in collaboration with Ron McPherson, Peter McPherson and Lori McPherson. One family has been deleted on request.



Captain William James McPherson, 1850-1927



Carrie, 1859-1933 and Charles McPherson, 1851-1938

Not for sale, free download available from www.reynoldmacpherson.ac.nz

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Reynold Macpherson, 24 October 2011

Written in collaboration with Ron McPherson, Peter McPherson¹ and Lori McPherson

Introduction

The McPhersons of the West Coast of New Zealand were established by an uncle and his nephew; William James McPherson and Charles McPherson. The McPhersons of Portsoy chapter explains that William McPherson was the tenth child of James McPherson and Elizabeth 'Betsy' Stewart who married 21 March 1829 in Portsoy, Banffshire, Scotland (OPR, 1829). William became a seaman who settled on the West Coast of the South Island of New Zealand and rose to become the Captain Harbourmaster of Greymouth. Since he named his only son William James McPherson, he will be referred to as Captain William McPherson and his son as William McPherson Jnr.

In the same chapter, William's nephew Charles was shown to be the eldest child of Charles Stuart McPherson and Elspet Smith who married 7 July 1851 (OPR, 1851). He also started work as a seaman, travelled and worked with William, and rose to become the Dredgemaster of Greymouth. He also had a son with the same name so they are referred to as Charles Snr, and Charles Jnr. They all played crucial roles in the early development of the West Coast of the South Island of New Zealand.

Charles Snr's father, Charles Stuart McPherson, was the second son of James and 'Betsy' McPherson. He was born 2 July 1831 and died 13 January 1906 in Portsoy. He was an older brother to the Captain William McPherson who was born 21 April 1850 in Portsoy, Banffshire, Scotland and died 26 December 1927 in Greymouth, New Zealand. Charles Stuart McPherson's son (Charles Snr.) was born 10 May 1851 in Portsoy, married and had eight children in Greymouth, then married again and died 23 July 1938 in Hamilton.

This chapter is therefore about Captain William McPherson and Charles McPherson and their descendents. It was written in collaboration with Ron McPherson who lives in Flagstaff, Arizona, USA, a great grandson of Captain William, Peter McPherson who lives in Hamilton, New Zealand, a grandson of Charles, and Lori McPherson, Peter's daughter and a great granddaughter of Charles, who did a great deal of primary research.

The story starts in the mid 1870s when William and Charles arrived at Hokitika, assisted with building roads and bridges, tried gold mining, won permanent jobs with the Greymouth Harbour Board, and married and raised families in Greymouth (R. McPherson, 2011). Hokitika is 25 miles or 40 kilometres south of Greymouth.

The Career of Captain William James McPherson

The Captain's life was summarised in an obituary provided by Peter McPherson (2010), although it contains a few errors. He was born 21 April 1850 in Coinland Road, Portsoy (Ancestry.com., 1851) and died 2.30 pm on 26 December 1927, aged 77, at his residence in Preston Road, Greymouth, New Zealand. He was buried alongside his wife in the Greymouth Graveyard, in Row 14, No. 25.

He was literate in English, possibly fluent in the Doric dialect of Lowland Scots but much less likely to be so in Gaelic, as claimed by one family source (Brown, no date). He was raised and lived as a Presbyterian (E. D. McPherson, no date). He went to sea in 1867 aged 16 on the *Luna* (Macpherson, 2010). He was back at home with

¹ Peter died 29 May 2013, in Hamilton, New Zealand.



his parents in Burnside Street, Portsoy in 1871 (Census, 1871). On 19 February 1873, aged 22, he signed on for a foreign voyage on a brigantine (see modern example right) as an able-bodied seamen with his nephew Charles, aged 21. His ship, the *Janet* of the White Star Line, was registered in Aberdeen as ship number 56599 and was a 215 ton brigantine, that is, a ship with two masts with only the foremast square rigged. William and Charles sailed in the *Janet* from Shields to Shanghai and then to Melbourne where William was discharged on 7 January 1874, aged 23. His Certificate of Discharge and Character (Victoria Port of Melbourne, 1874) signed by Captain John Crombie rated his ability, conduct and sobriety each as ‘very good’. The same Certificate shows that on 31 January 1874 he signed on to the brigantine *Sarah and Mary*, ship number 52365 of 154 tons registered at Lyttleton, Christchurch’s port, for an ‘intercolonial’ voyage that ended 22 July 1874. He was again rated as very good on all three criteria, this time by Captain H. Simpson. He and Charles first arrived in Hokitika in 1874. William resigned on the *Sarah and Mary* 30 December 1874 and came ashore on 15 April 1875 at Hokitika (R. McPherson, 2010 {McPherson, 2011 #437} (R. McPherson, 2010 {McPherson, 2011 #437}).

The Captain’s obituary indicates that he then found work with his nephew Charles as a road construction contractor. Thirty years before, in 1846, the explorers Thomas Brunner and Charles Heaphy had named the River Grey in honour of prior Governor of New Zealand, Sir George Grey. On a subsequent journey in 1848 Brunner had discovered and named the famous Brunner coal seam. In 1862 Brunner returned to the West Coast to survey and plan the towns of Westport and Greymouth (Temple, 2007).

Hence, soon after they came ashore in 1875, William and Charles were contracted by C.T. O’Connor to construct 20 chains of the Christchurch Road, a section known since as ‘The Sailor’s Road.’ They then worked on the Brunner Bridge. When the first bridge collapsed they were immediately engaged to start work on the second box girder bridge. The tourist landmark today (see right, today) is the result of near continuous restoration work since.



Their next venture was a gold sluicing claim in what became known as McPherson’s Gully near Stillwater, a small town east of Greymouth on the banks of the Grey River next to the small town of Brunner (Brown, no date). The relatively short-lived success of the 1864 West Coast gold rush led William, aged 24, and Charles 23, to help build the first Cobden Bridge (see right, dismantled in the 1970s when the current concrete bridge was built). They were evidently effective and it led to further work.



The development of the Grey District was primarily based on the extraction of coal and required a safe harbour for vessels (Port of Greymouth, 2010). The floods and constantly shifting bar of the Grey River made it a very dangerous port. Investment in breakwaters, wharves, cranes and railways in the 1880s finally transformed Greymouth into a major coal shipping port supplying the growing New Zealand economy. William and Charles were central to that infrastructure development and economic transformation.

Wise’s Directories record William and Charles McPherson as quarrymen in 1883-1884 and resident in Mount Street. William’s obituary claims that, in 1883, a year before the Greymouth Harbour Board was formed by Special Act, William was appointed Deputy Harbourmaster, a position he was to hold for 45 years until his death in December 1927 aged 77. Interestingly, a letter from the Greymouth Harbour Board to Ron McPherson (Guerin, 1987) noted that William was first employed by the Harbour Board in April 1896, then appointed Pilot 24 June 1896 and Acting Harbourmaster 1913-1915.

An article (*Grey River Argus*, 1914) confirms that William was initially trained as a pilot, while another (*Wanganui Chronicle*, 1897) reported that he qualified in Wellington when he was 47 to deputize and serve as Harbourmaster in Greymouth. Wise's Directories 1902–1903 describe him as the Harbourmaster's Assistant (R. McPherson, 2010). His obituary was certainly accurate when it recalled that he occasionally acted for lengthy periods as Captain and Harbourmaster. He was apparently very highly respected, serving as an expert witness and consultant for many years. One example was his testimony given to the inquiry about the stranding of the ship *Kotuku* (*Grey River Argus*, 1912) another concerned the wrecking of the S.S. *Kairaki* (*Grey River Argus*, 1914). Another is that he was regularly consulted by marine engineers about the state of the Greymouth bar, right up until a few months before his death.

William was long involved in charity work and yachting. He joined the Manchester Unity Oddfellows Lodge in 1883 and was a member for 44 years. This branch of the Oddfellows was established in 1810 and predated the welfare state, trade unions the national health in England. It is a mutual organization owned by its members and gives all income to members in need or to local and national charities. He was also very interested in yachting and sailed his own yacht proudly in local regattas for many years.

William McPherson and Harriet Wilson

William married Harriet Wilson (see right) on 27 November 1877, having waited impatiently for only two of the four days required by law after she disembarked. Their great grandson Ron McPherson explained the delay (2010):



Harriet Elizabeth Wilson arrived at Nelson, NZ on board the ship *Waitara*, on 21st November, 1877. She had come out to New Zealand to marry William James McPherson. They had met in Portsoy where her father was stationed with the Coastguard. From Nelson, Harriet went by the ship *Charles Edward* to Greymouth, arriving on 26th November, 1877. The Greymouth newspaper reported that "The immigrants ex *Waitara* who arrived here the other day in the *Charles Edward* are rapidly meeting with engagements. One has already taken the preliminary steps towards a life bondage, having met her "affinity" in the shape of a stalwart miner, who expressed the most supreme contempt for the calibre of New Zealand legislators when informed that the lady of his choice must be resident in the district for four days before the Registrar could assist him to a consummation of his fondest wishes." I'm sure this would have been William James McPherson given his Intention to Marry record in the National Archives. His Intention to Marry Date of Notice was 27th November, 1877. The applicant was William McPherson, miner, 26 years, of Brunnerton with two years residence. The Intention, it was stated, was to be married at the Church of England, Greymouth, with Harriet Wilson, 25 years, of Greymouth with four days residence. They must have said it was four days because going by the ship arrival dates at Greymouth, it would have been only two days!

Harriet was born 9 August 1852 in Portsmouth, Hampshire to James and Maria Wilson (néé Croucher). James Wilson was born about 1827 and died 28 January 1901 in Montrose, Scotland. It is not clear where Maria Croucher was born or who her parents were. When she was 10, in 1862, Harriet's father remarried - to Mary Ann Levett. When she was 19 her father and step mother, Mary Ann Wilson, were recorded by the 1871 Census at 19 Schoolhendry Street, Portsoy. She was aged 25 when she married Captain William McPherson as above. Interestingly, when she was 40, in 1892, her father remarried again, this time to Mary Ellen Snowling, néé Amis.

Harriet died 28 November 1920 in Greymouth and was buried two days later, aged 68 (*Grey River Argus*, 1920). Harriet's birth and death certificates and James Wilson's three marriage certificates are held in the family (R. McPherson, 2010). Relatively little is known about Harriet's two girls, her first and third children. Mary Elizabeth 'Mamie' McPherson was born 21 September 1878 and died 2

OBITUARY

MRS. W. McPHERSON.

The news of the death of Mrs Wm. McPherson, wife of Captain McPherson, assistant-Harbour Master at Greymouth, will be received by all with deep regret. Her demise came as a great shock to her relatives and friends as she was taken ill only a few hours before her decease. During the war she took a prominent part in patriotic works especially in connection with the Red Cross. Mrs McPherson was born in England and has lived in Greymouth for some 50 years. She leaves two daughters, Mrs James Brown, Blaketown and Miss McPherson, and a married son Mr Wm. Brown. The funeral takes place this afternoon.

October 1931, aged 53, in Greymouth. She married John Sutherland from Bunnythorpe, a small town 10 miles north of Palmerston North, the capital of the Manawatu province. They had no children.

Isabella Harriet McPherson was born 9 May 1881 and married James William Brown from Westport in Greymouth on her birthday in 1911. The *Grey River Argus* proclaimed (p. 5) (*Grey River Argus*, 1911)

A stylish and very pretty wedding took place at St. John's Presbyterian Church yesterday afternoon. The contracting parties being James William Brown, son of Mrs Parker, late of Trafalgar Hotel, and Isabella McPherson, daughter of Captian and Mrs McPherson, our esteemed Assistant Harbourmaster. The bride, who was given away by her father, looked charming in a frock of Japanese silk elaborately trimmed with a lace over dress, with an orthodox wreath and veil. The bride was attended by her sister Mamie McPherson, who wore a beautiful white veil elaborately trimmed with silk lace and a stylish black hat en suite. The groom's present to the bride was a handsome set of furs and to the bridesmaid a gold necklet and cross and the bride's present to the bridegroom was a gold sovereign case. Mrs Capt. McPherson recieved her guests at her residence in a pretty black silk dress, stylishly trimmed with lace and black bonnet to match. Amongst the number present were:- Mrs C. McPherson, navy blue costumes and stylish black hat; Mrs C. McPherson (jnr.) light navy costume with hat to match; Mrs Robinson (cousin of the bride), navy costumes with black and white hat trimmed with roses; Mrs Joe Brown, black and white costumes with hat to match, Miss N. Brown, cream corded velvet costume, black and cream hat; Mrs Stewart, heliotrope costume, hat to match; Mrs H. Wicks, black glace silk, large black hat with feathers; Mrs Geo. Moss, mauve costume; Mrs W. McPherson, brown costume with pretty hat trimmed with pink roses; Miss Connor, navy costume, black beaver hat with gold braid; Miss Carie McPherson, cream serge and hat to match; Miss B. McPherson, cream costume. The brides travelling costume was a beautiful purnell costume with hat to match.

The presents, which were both costly and numerous, shows the high esteem in which the young coup,e are held, amongst which was a silver tea service from the members of St. John's choir.

Isabella and James had one child who did not marry; Leola Lillian Brown (born 28 October 1912 in Greymouth, and died 8 December 2007 in Nelson, aged 95). Isabella and her older sister Mamie may be in the indistinct photo right that shows Harriet with her First Aid training group in Greymouth during World War One, 1914-1918. Harriet's obituary above indicates that Isabella was living in Blaketown in 1920. Isabella died in Nelson 25 June 1976, aged 86.



William James Jnr and Ida McPherson

More is known about William and Harriet's second child and only son, William James McPherson Jnr. As noted above, he lived from 1879 until 1962 in Greymouth, dying aged 82. He started work with the Harbour Board as a labourer in December 1901, aged 22 (Guerin, 1987). According to Wise's Directories he was employed as a labourer in 1904. In 1912 he was still with the Harbour Board as a dredge hand and living next door to his father and mother in Preston Road, aged 33.

On 14 February 1910, William McPherson Jnr., aged 30, married Ida Winifred Clarke, aged 24 (see right). The group photograph overleaf suggests the importance of the marriage to both families.





The back row, left to right, comprises Ida's parents; William Clarke Snr. (born 10 March 1854 in Churchstow, England and died 17 April 1921 in Greymouth aged 67) and Margaret Winifred Clarke (née Jones, born 28 October 1861 in Victoria, Australia, and died 31 May 1920 aged 59 in Ross, New Zealand), and Captain William James McPherson, Mary McPherson, Harriet McPherson (née Wilson), unknown. The front row includes unknown, William Clarke Jr., Catherine Connor (née Clarke), William Connor, Isabella McPherson, William McPherson Jr., Ida McPherson (née Clarke), and unknown (R. McPherson, 2010).

William Jr. and Ida had five children, all born in Greymouth: Alexis Chlorinne McPherson, born 27 July 1910 and died aged 28, in Christchurch, on 13 September 1938; Ivan Douglas 'Mac' McPherson, born 7 March 1912 and died 30 October 1979 in Wellington, New Zealand, aged 64; William Leslie 'Les' McPherson, born 27 June 1913 and died 7 July 1997, aged 84; Reginald Albert 'Rex' McPherson, born 10 August 1915 died in Greymouth 2003, aged 88; and Norma Margaret Wilson McPherson, born 15 July 1917. The five children are now discussed in turn. The blurred photo right, taken just before Christmas 1914, shows Mac, Alexis and Les (R. McPherson, 2010).



Alexis McPherson and John Andrew Poschich

William Jr. and Ida's first child Alexis married John Andrew Poschich about 1931 and had four children in Greymouth: Catherine Patricia, born about 1932 and died 12 February 1949 aged about 17 without issue; John Raymond Poschich born about 1933; Mary Anastasia, born 12 June 1934; and Angelina Poschich born 20 October 1935. Their father John Poschich died in 1941. Of Alexis and John's four children, only Mary and Angelina are known to have had children.

Mary Poschich married Gerald Keith Henwood and had a child in Greymouth, John Leslie Henwood who was born 10 December 1954. John Henwood married Deidre Wannacott 28 April 1979 and had five children: Elin Henwood born and died 15 June 1980, Gemma-Leigh Henwood born 7 December 1983; Cherilyn Breane

Henwood born 4 May 1988; Ethan James Henwood, born 16 October 1989, and Luke Gerald Henwood, born 8 July 1993. John and Deidre Henwood live in Duncan Street, Te Anau, and hold Mary Poschich's memorabilia which has yet to be added to this chapter along with the names, dates and photos of her great grandchildren

Angelina married Russell Stanley McMaster and had two children in Christchurch: Debra Ann McMaster born 15 January 1961 and Gregory Russell McMaster, born 8 November 1963 and died 12 January 1976, aged 13. Debra married Paul Witty and had two children in Nelson: Kieran Paul Lester Witty, born 31 October 1987 and Mathew John born 4 May 1989.

Ivan Douglas 'Mac' McPherson

William Jnr. and Ida's second child, Mac McPherson, married Jemima Cecilia Irvine on 15 April 1946 in Wellington, New Zealand. Jemima was born 14 March 1917 in Cunningsburgh, Shetland Islands, Scotland, and died in Wellington, New Zealand on 4 March 1988, aged 71. Jemima's parents (see right on their wedding day at Lerwick, Shetland Islands in 1902) were John William Irvine Jnr. (born 28 February 1874 in Grutness, Dunrossness, Shetland Islands and died 16 April 1957 aged 83 in Wellington) and Ursula Halcrow (born 16 August 1878 in Hoswick, Shetland Islands and died 4 January 1928 in Wellington, aged 50).



Jemima's paternal grandparents were John William Irvine Snr. (born 9 October 1843 in Haggister, Northmavine, Shetland Islands, died 7 September 1913 in Starkigarth, Cunningsburgh, Shetland Islands, aged 70) and Elizabeth Robertson Petrie (born 26 August 1852 in Lerwick, Shetland Islands, and died 27 February 1882 in Westhouse, Cunningsburgh, Shetland Islands, aged 30).

The photo below of Jemima's family was taken in Wellington in the early 1930's of John William Irvine and his six children after John's wife Ursula had died in 1928. Standing left to right are Marion Annie 'Maisie' Irvine, John William 'Donnie' Irvine and Jemima Cecilia 'Minnie' Irvine. Seated are Laurence Nicol 'Nick' Irvine, father John William Irvine, Elizabeth Petrie 'Lizzie' Irvine and Malcolm Halcrow Irvine.





Mac McPherson served overseas during WW2 (see left), meeting up with his younger brother Les McPherson on one occasion (see right, Les and Mac). Mac was taken prisoner of war on Crete in 1941.



Mac and Les' youngest brother Rex McPherson also served in the Middle East.

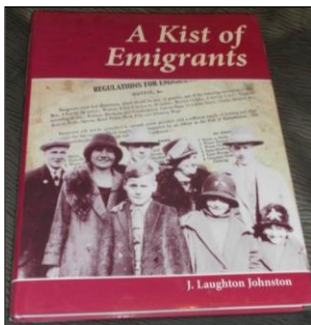
Mac had a son with Isabel Elizabeth Adamson in 1941 while he was overseas. Ivan Adamson was born in Greymouth, fostered, and in 1957, when 16, took the name of his foster mother and became Ivan Knox. He lives in Melbourne, Australia.

Mac and Jemima had three children in Wellington, New Zealand: Heather Valerie McPherson, born 13 August 1947; Ronald John 'Ron' McPherson born 22 September 1951; and Allan Wayne McPherson born 24 April 1957. Heather married Peter Kavagnah (born 25 August 1946) on 24 April 1969 and had three children in Wellington: Deborah Leigh Kavagnah, Francine Michelle Kavagnah and Paula Marie Kavanagh (born 3 May 1971 and died 8 December 1999, Wellington). More information and photos of this family are awaited.



Mac and Jemima's second child Ron married Nancy Jane Clobes (see left, 2010) on 10 May 1986 in Mesa, Maricopa, Arizona, USA. Nancy was born 5 June 1951 in St Peter, Nicollet, Minnesota, USA. Ron and Nancy had two children; Rory Ivan McPherson born 7 January 1987 in Wellington and Megan Jemima McPherson, born 23 May 1988 in the Lower Hutt. They live in Flagstaff, Arizona, USA.

Nancy is a pharmacist at the Student Health Centre, at Northern Arizona University (NAU), plays and gives lessons on Highland bagpipes and writes a superb Christmas letter. She is pictured right piping at the Phoenix Highland Games around 2004. At the time she was the Pipe Major of the Arizona Highlanders Pipeband from Flagstaff.



Ron is an electrician at NAU and genealogical researcher. He recently contributed his grandparent's family story to a book by J. Laughton Johnston (see left) published in honor of the Shetland Island's Hamefarin – the reunion held every 25 years of the descendants of families that emigrated from the Shetlands. A picture of Ron's grandmother with her six children, including his mother, as they arrived in New Zealand on the ship, was chosen as the cover of the book. His mother Jemima is the small girl in front, second from the right, who was nine when they moved.



Ron and Nancy's son, Rory is pictured right drumming for the Mesa Caledonian Pipeband, at the San Diego Highland Games, around 2004. He is currently is at the University of Arizona, a year away from finishing a geography degree and then looking for a graduate school to finish a master's degree in Geographic Information Systems.



Megan also competed as a dancer at Highland games, pictured left doing the sword dance at the local Coconino County Fair in 2009. She has just graduated from NAU,



winning the Gold Axe award for outstanding achievement and distinguished service to the university and the greater community. She also won the Lowell award for having the highest grade point average for a graduate in Physical and Natural Sciences. She is currently on a working holiday through Iceland, Norway, Scotland and Italy (see right) before going on to graduate school.



Ivan and Jemima's third child Allan married Jennifer Brown 23 January 1982 in Helensville, Auckland. They had two children: Andrew James McPherson, and Kathryn Jane McPherson who was born 8 November 1995 and died 31 November 2004 in Hamilton, aged nine. Information and photos are awaited of this family.

William Leslie 'Les' McPherson

William Jnr. and Ida's third child, Les McPherson married Betty Enid Harker on 4 August 1943. Betty had been born 17 July 1920 in Christchurch, Canterbury. Their sole child, Sandra Kay McPherson, was born 12 November 1944 in Christchurch and married Patrick Walsh on 18 June 1974. Patrick was born in the town of Hospital in county Limerick in Ireland on 7 March 1941.

Reginald 'Rex' and Doris McPherson

William Jnr. and Ida's fourth child, Rex McPherson, married Doris Louise Picken who was born 6 October 1922 in Otira, West Coast and died in Greymouth 1997 aged 75. They were married 12 November 1940 and had a boy and a girl in Greymouth: Kelvin Thomas McPherson born 23 September 1947, and Lynette Margaret McPherson, born 27 August 1952. Rex served in the Middle East in WW2.

Kelvin married Doreen Gerrard on 30 November 1968. Doreen was born 19 March 1949 in Liverpool, England. Kelvin and Doreen had three boys and a girl in Tokoroa, South Waikato: Kenneth Albert McPherson born 23 October 1969 and died 21 October 1972 aged nearly three; Garry Kelvin McPherson born 26 February 1971; Wayne Alan McPherson born 27 October 1973; and Amanda Jane McPherson. Ron recalled that Kelvin and Doreen had separated and that Kelvin had returned to Greymouth over 20 years ago and may now be the sole McPherson living there (R. McPherson, 2011).

Lynette married William John Burgess 13 March 1971 who was born 15 June 1947 and died in Christchurch in 2000 aged 53. They had three children in Christchurch; Lisa Marie Burgess, Glen William Burgess born 7 October 1972, and Rochelle Louise Burgess born 1 February 1975.

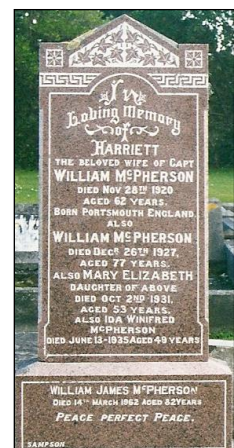
Norma McPherson and William Rowe

William Jnr. and Ida's fifth and final child, Norma Margaret McPherson, married William Seppram Rowe on 27 August 1938. William was born 17 January 1913 in Gabriels Gully, Otago, and died 30 May 1984 in Christchurch aged 71. Norma and William had two children; Janet Gloria Rowe, born 3 March 1939 in Greymouth, and Roger Douglas Rowe, born 23 July 1944 in Christchurch. Each married and had children.

On 4 February 1961, Janet married Gilbert Ronald Richardson who was born 3 February 1937 in Stirling, Clutha, Otago. They had a boy and two girls: Craig Paul Richardson born 17 August 1975; Vicki Lee Richardson born 12 February 1967; and Linda Marie Richardson born 12 February 1968.

On 7 October 1977, Roger married Tsia Pavlakis who was born 13 June 1949 in Lismore, New South Wales, Australia. They had two children in Christchurch; Amanda Norma Rowe born 1 July 1980 and Andrew William Rowe born 23 May 1982. Recent research has established that Roger Rowe died Christchurch 11 September 1999 and that Janet Richardson also died in Christchurch, 24 April 2001 (R. McPherson, 2011).

That summarises the descendents of Captain William and Harriett McPherson. As noted above, immediate family are buried in the Karoro Cemetery in Greymouth in row 24, no. 25 (photo right courtesy Ron McPherson, 2011).



The Career of Charles McPherson

Charles' life was summarised by a local paper (*Greymouth Evening Star*, 1938):

The death occurred at Hamilton on Sunday of Charles McPherson, aged 87 years, a former resident of Greymouth. A native of Portsoy, Scotland, the late Mr. McPherson came to New Zealand as a youth. After following the occupation of a gold-miner at Hokitika for some time he came to Greymouth, where he was employed by the Harbour Board as dredgemaster, for a number of years, and also by the Dispatch Foundry Company. He is survived by his wife, three sons, Charles (Auckland), John (Christchurch) and Don (Greymouth), and two daughters Mrs. W. Robinson (Hokitika) and Miss C. McPherson (Hawera). He is also survived by a sister in Scotland. The funeral will take place at Greymouth on Friday.

Charles was buried in the Greymouth Cemetery on 20 March 1938 in the same plot as his first wife Carrie who had died 23 July 1933. The obituary was judicious in its details. What it did not explain was that Charles had had an exciting career, rearing eight children with his first wife and then marrying again two years after she died in 23 July 1933, by then well into his retirement aged 84, before dying himself in 1938.

To reiterate, Charles was born 10 May 1851 in Portsoy, Banffshire, the eldest son of Charles Stuart McPherson (1831–1906) and Elspet Smith (1829–1899). He was recorded by the Census (Census, 1861) as a scholar aged 10 residing with his parents at 1 Burnside Street, Portsoy. He was raised as a Presbyterian to be literate in English in order to be able to make personal sense of the Bible.

He signed on the brigantine *Janet* as a 21 year old able-bodied seaman on 19 February 1873 with his uncle William James McPherson of almost the same age. They sailed from Shields to Melbourne via Shanghai, switched to the brigantine *Mary and Jane* to come to New Zealand, resigning 30 December 1874 and finally coming ashore at Hokitika on 15 April 1875 (R. McPherson, 2010).

He and William then worked as quarrymen and road builders, constructing the 20 chain 'Sailor's Road' section of the Christchurch Road. They worked on the first Brunner Bridge until it collapsed and on the second bridge completed in 1876 (see right), which survives today due to near continuous restoration since. The bridge failed an engineering inspection in 1996 and had to be closed. The Grey District Council, the Historic Places Trust and the Department of Conservation joined together to organise, fund and oversee the latest restoration. Funding for the bridge came from many places, including contributions from the Lotteries Grants Board, the Environment and Heritage Committee and local service clubs (see below right, today).

It was soon after 1876 that Charles and William tried gold mining in 'McPherson's Gully.' Unsuccessful, they then hit professional 'pay dirt' when aged 23 and 24 respectively by winning a Public Works contract to build the Cobden Bridge. It appears that, in lieu of a professional education, they learned 'on the job' how to be civil engineers. Permanent employment and considerable public standing followed over decades.

From 1878, when he was 27, until 3 July 1923, when he retired aged 72 (Guerin, 1987), Charles was employed by the Greymouth Harbour Board. Wise's Directories 1902-1903 note that he was employed as a diver. In his 45 years with the Board he was variously employed as waterman, labourer, diver, dredge hand, dredge master (1908), and as dredge quartermaster (1911) (Guerin, 1987), occasionally serving as Relieving Harbourmaster (E. D. McPherson, no date). Once retired he was referred to as a 'Retired Dredgemaster' (Registry-General New Zealand, 1935).



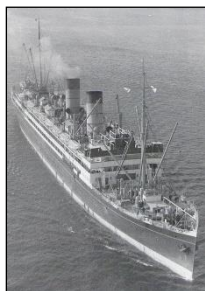
Charles and Carrie McPherson

On 10 May 1880, when 29, Charles married Caroline Cooper, aged 20, also known as Carrie or Carry. She will be referred to as Carrie to distinguish her from her daughter who was christened Carry. Carrie was married at her father George Cooper's residence in 48 Herbert Street, Greymouth. Charles Snr. and Carrie had eight children, all born in Greymouth (C. J. P. McPherson, 2011).

In the family photo right, taken in about 1910, standing in the back row left to right, are Charles Jnr., Beatrice, Jack, Jo and Carry. In the front row are Nell, mother Carrie, Don and father, Charles Snr.

Carrie was born 24 May 1859 in Emerald Hill, Victoria, Australia and died 23 July 1933 in Greymouth aged 74, when her husband was 82. Her parents were Frederick George Cooper (born 1828 in Edinburgh and died 1886 in Greymouth) and Catherine Louie Perry (born 1835 in Wadebridge, Cornwall, and died 12 October 1924 in Karori, Wellington, New Zealand). Her paternal grandfather was Frederick Brown Cooper born 1806 in St George Hanover Square, Middlesex, and died about 18 June 1870, New South Wales, Australia. Her maternal grandparents were John Perry born 1786 in Flatbury, Worcestershire, and 'Mary A' born 1795 in Plymouth, Devon, England. Carrie had "a sister Rose who married a Frenchman named Phiellon (not sure of spelling) whose son founded the cordial factory towards Taylorville. He died when he fell from his horse drawn wagon and was crushed" (E. D. McPherson, no date). Noel Robinson (2011) reported the correct spelling as Pelion and "they did not start the factory, they took it over at the invitation of their sister."

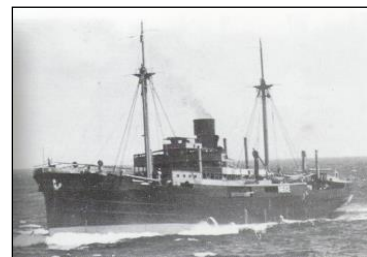
Charles and Carrie's eldest child, Helen McPherson, was born in 1881. She married William Robinson. They had a boy and girl twice: Alexander Robinson (who was in Dunedin in 1961), Elspet Robinson who died about 1948 of tuberculosis, Mac Robinson and Mona. Mona had two children: Alexander (who died of cancer about 1950 in his mid teens) and Sandra.



Charles and Carrie's second child, Charles James McPherson (born 1882), was also a marine engineer (E. D. McPherson, no date) and died about 9 November 1960 in Hamilton, Waikato, aged 78. He played rugby union for the West Coast and the Star Rugby Club. He married Mary Rosetta McCormick in 1906 and had a daughter named Rona Gertrude about 1910. Rona married Frank William Course a prominent Hamilton solicitor. They had no children. Charles was also called up by Ballot 25 May 1918 during WW1 but did not have to serve overseas.

Charles was second engineer (see left) on the RMS Niagara, a luxury 667-passenger liner (see left below) that struck a German mine just north of the Moko Hinau Islands east of Whangarei on 19 June 1940. The mine had been laid by the German raider HSK Orion (disguised as a freighter, see right) led by Captain Kurt Weyher (see right). The Niagara was carrying gold bullion from Australia to Britain.

Captain William Martin (see right below) and his crew of 237 got all of the passengers safely off the Niagara before it sank in 121 meters, a singular feat of seamanship. And 65 years later, all but five bars of the gold, each bar weighing 403 ounces, were recovered using a deep sea submersible (Gordon, 2005).





Charles and Carrie's third child was John Alexander 'Jack' McPherson who was born in 1884 and may have married Rose Lillian Finlayson in 1911. Jack also played rugby union for the West Coast and was a member of the Star Rugby Club (see left in a winning 7-a-side team, front row second right). He played in the local Highland pipe band in the 1920s and 1930s (see right).



Jack married Joanna Frances Phelan in 1913 and they had a daughter Frances born 18 October 1917. Frances married Conrad Bergman and had twelve children (E. D. McPherson, no date). John married again later in life with Margaret.

Charles and Carrie's fourth child was Joseph Francis 'Frank' or 'Jo' McPherson, another marine engineer. He was born about 1887 and died 16 November 1918 aged 31 in a flu epidemic in Wellington. He was called up in 10 Ballot 8 September 1917 for WW1 but did not have to serve overseas. Frank's passing was commemorated by his fellow officers on the SS Ngatoro, a collier built for and operated by the Blackball Coal Coy of Greymouth (Rootsweb, no date). His twin, George Frederick McPherson, died in infancy or at birth in 1887.

Carry was Charles and Carrie's sixth child born after 1887. She attended Bible Class in 1908 (see right), and when aged 20, moved to Hawera, South Taranaki to live with Peter Brown.



Charles and Carrie's seventh child was Beatrice Maud McPherson who was born 1893 and died 24 November 1918, also in a flu epidemic in Wellington. She married Robert Brittan Newlands in 1914 and had two children: Alva Newlands born after 1914 and Nola Beatrice born about January 1917 and died 30 July 1922 aged 5. Alva married Percy East and had a boy and girl: Brian East, who may live in the Bay of Plenty, and the good looking Lorraine East.



Charles and Carrie's eighth and final child was Donald David Alexander 'Don' McPherson, born 30 December 1902 and died 27 January 1973 in Greymouth aged 71. Don is pictured right in his kilt, aged about four in 1906. He was a direct, focused person who got things done. He is also pictured right below with his mother Carrie and father Charles Snr. in the late 1920s.

Don was involved in sporting administration for many years. For example, he was President of West Coast Rugby League when his son Peter was made captain of the West Coast Rugby Union team in 1957. The odd eyebrow was raised with letters to the editor of the local paper.

For many years Don was also involved with the Port of Greymouth as the shipping manager for the State Coal Mines. He literally walked in the footsteps of his father Charles and his Great Uncle William. He married Clio Delafield 'Clum' or 'Clumie' Storie on 7 October 1930 in Wellington. Clum was born 29 November 1911 in Thames, Thames-Coromandel, and died aged on 20 April 1983 in Christchurch, Canterbury. They had two children in Greymouth, Peter and Elaine, as explained below, and a third male child stillborn in 1938 when Clum fell out a window when near full term.



Two years after Carrie died, Charles married again, on 11 May 1935, at St Paul's Presbyterian Church in Wanganui, aged 84. His 68 year old bride was Catherine Celia Shaddock (née Cooper), a laundry manageress born about 1867. She was the younger sister of Carrie, and as family oral history has it, would not agree to marry Charles Snr. until he changed his will making her his sole beneficiary.

Charles died two years later of heart disease aged 86 on 20 March 1938 at 28 London St, Hamilton, although his usual place of residence was given as 115 Smithfield Street in Wanganui (Registry-General New Zealand, 1938). He was touring his sons.

Charles' body was returned to Greymouth and buried beside his first wife, Carrie, in the Karoro Cemetery in Greymouth (see monumental inscription right in section 4, row 25, no. 26) (P. Macpherson, 2010). Peter recalled his father Don pointing out the train carrying Charles' coffin from the wharf to the cemetery. They were watching from the 48 Herbert Street residence where they lived. He also recalled out that, when the will was read a few days later, they were 'turned out' of Herbert Street. Catherine died ten years after her husband in 1948 in Hamilton.

In loving memory of Carry beloved wife of Charles McPherson d. 28.7.1933. Also Charles McPherson d. 20.3.1938.

Peter and Elaine McPherson

Charles and Carrie's grand children through Don and Clumie were Charles Joseph 'Peter' McPherson, born 7 July 1934, and Elaine Delafield McPherson, born 28 February 1939.

Peter was trained as a surveyor starting as an articled cadet in 1953 with Jack Thorn. In 1959 he started with state coal mines as a surveyor working both underground and surface in the Grey Buller and Inangahua districts when much of the time was spent prospecting to discover new coal seams. He married Jillian Hunter on 25 November 1961. Jillian was born 5 November 1940 in Greymouth. Her parents were Charles Lance Hunter (born 8 August 1972 in Rutherglen, Victoria, Australia) and Frances Coulthard (born 8 July 1875 in Brunner on the West Coast).

Frances' father John Coulthard was the Underground Manager of the Brunner Mine when it blew up on 26 March 1896 and killed 65 miners. The access bridge to the mine is the Brunner Bridge referred to above was worked on by William and Charles and completed in 1876. Frances' brother John Coulthard was murdered with William Hall when the mines payroll delivery vehicle was high jacked by William McMahon near Rununga on 7 September 1917. A memorial exists today on the side of the road.

Peter captained the West Coast Buller Team (see right) beaten 58-3 by the touring Lions rugby team in 1959. They lost their No. 8 in the first five minutes and played the rest of the game with 14. Peter had his first date with Jillian after the game and she recalled that "He was in no great shape."



Peter and Jillian had five children. Their first was Alexander Charles 'Alex' McPherson was born in Greymouth 12 June 1963. He also graduated as a land surveyor from Otago University, completing two years practicum with his father in Hamilton. Alex married Janice Louise Offord born 27 November 1965 in Newent, Gloucestershire. They have three children born in Hamilton; Samantha Louise McPherson born 21 October 1995, Angus Charles McPherson born 15 December 1998, and Oliver James McPherson born 28 March 2001. They live in Yate in Gloucestershire.

Peter and Jillian's second child was Lori McPherson was born 19 October 1965 in Greymouth, before Peter moved the family to Hamilton in 1966 to further his surveying career. There was little future on the West Coast.

Peter was employed in private practice until he purchased a business with Graeme Goodwin in 1973. The partnership eventually became the largest purely surveying practices in New Zealand. Peter retired from the company in 2001 but continued in a part-time capacity. He went into hospital for heart surgery in 2013 but his other organs shut down and he passed away, on Thursday 29 May, aged 79.

Lori is a chartered accountant who owns a chain of bridal shops in Auckland, Hamilton and Wellington with her partner Bruce Halford Pye born about 3 November 1965, also a chartered accountant. They have two children; Madeline McPherson Pye born 30 November 1999 and Fletcher Halford Pye born 18 October 2001, a keen fisherman.

Peter and Jillian's third child Christopher Peter McPherson lived 10 days; he was born 3 June in Hamilton with major heart defects and died 13 June 1968 despite heroic surgery.

Peter and Lillian's fourth child, Janeen Frances McPherson, was born 10 June 1970 in Hamilton, working for a stockbroker. She spent a number of years overseas on her OE, working in the financial sector and was in Rwanda when a war broke out in the 1990s. She returned to New Zealand, trained as a chef and then married on 19 February 2009 with Luton Charles Gleeson born 8 October 1966. The wedding photograph below recorded the wider family gathering. Standing left to right are Janice holding Danielle, Jill, Marnie, Lori, Janeen, Luton, Alex, Greg, Hillas, Peter holding Alana, Fletcher and Bruce. Seated are Samantha, Madeline, Oliver and Angus, with Henry and Mila absent.



Janeen and Luton have two children; Danielle Frances Gleeson, born 24 July 2005, and Alana Clio Gleeson born 13 October 2007.

[Section deleted on request]

Elaine Delafield McPherson, was born 28 February 1939. She worked for the Inland Revenue Department before marrying Ronald 'Ron' Soppitt in Greymouth 13 July 1961. Ron was a mechanic who ran his own garage. He died 2 May 2009.

Elaine and Ron had one child; David Soppitt born 23 April 1963. David is a forester who married Marie Bishara and had one daughter; Hinemoa Soppitt born 11 December 1991. With Kelvin McPherson, Elaine may be the only other surviving McPherson living in Greymouth today.

Closing Note

That completes the lives and progeny of Captain William McPherson and Charles McPherson who established the McPhersons of the West Coast of New Zealand. Although there are only two surviving ancestors still living

in Greymouth, the evidence above is that Captain William and Harriett McPherson had 3 children and at least 47 descendents, and Charles and Carrie had 8 children and at least 44 descendents, and that they scattered to all parts of New Zealand and overseas.

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