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This time last year, I was editorialising about the way in which family history seemed to have been overlooked by those who promote Scotland's tourist industry - despite clear evidence of the growing "market" for this type of holiday. I said then that there was, however, no point in attempting this kind of promotion until we could offer visitors the proper facilities for their research. New Register House is under considerable pressure each summer, as it is, without further swelling the numbers. A visit at this time of year demands careful advance-planning, and a patient disposition, and some customers inevitably go away disappointed and disgruntled; like the American who was turned away the other week because he had not booked a seat. It was the last day of his holiday, and he had queued for 45 minutes before being given the bad news. How was he to know that access to Scotland's public records requires a prior appointment, or an early morning vigil on the doorstep to get a good place in the queue?

I suggested last year that regional research centres would be one way to "spread the load", and I was therefore heartened to read that Highland Regional Council are to commission a study into ways of encouraging visitors to trace their ancestors (see p11) It seems they want to computerise the post-1855 registers' records from the Area Repositories at Inverness, Dingwall and Brora, where lack of space and staff are once again the inhibiting factors so far as genealogical research is concerned. Even assuming permission was given, this sounds an awesome and expensive task; but perhaps something could be done to make the records themselves more accessible. There are other problems to be overcome, which the council have probably yet to discover, but at least they have identified the potential and are thinking along the right lines. It is a pity the same cannot be said for the Scottish Tourist Board, who have perpetrated the following piece of nonsense in their "Scotland 84" brochure: "In the 13th century the clans rose to prominence. Records of their separate history have been kept, enabling all those of Highland descent to trace their ancestors to that period, and in some cases to a much earlier date." Where have I been going wrong all these years? The STB, of course, are not the only ones to mistake Clan History for Family History - but they should know better. They should also know that parish records are not kept in "towns and villages", but in Edinburgh. We must not only improve our research facilities, but also avoid creating unrealistic expectations, lest we are accused of what one of our Australian members once so colourfully described as "A Pommy Rip-Off".

2 Applecross Estate Rental, 1718

This interesting list of tenants on the Applecross Estate, Wester Ross, in 1718, has come into the Society's hands through the good offices of three of our members: Mr Donald M. Livingstone, London, who obtained photocopies of original documents held by the University of St. Andrews, and who passed them on to his namesake Mr Murdo Livingstone, Sandwick, Isle of Lewis, who passed them on to Mr Alex J. MacBeath, Kishorn, who passed them on to us.

There are three documents involved, all of them from the Forfeited Estates Papers for the 1715 Rebellion. The first is a "Judicial Rental" - verbal depositions given by the tenants, under oath, as to their holdings and rents, and whether they were in arrears or not. The information regarding rents has then been transferred to a rent-roll in tabular form, although some spellings have been varied in the process. Lastly, there is a "Bill of Rests" (list of rent arrears) from among the factor's accounts. Here again, some spellings vary. Copies of all three documents are now in the Society's library.

The names given here are taken from the Judicial Rental, and the numbering system used in it has been retained, since some depositions relate to more than one tenant. Where significant spelling differences occur in the other two documents, these are given in brackets, along with any additional information the depositions provide about individuals.

The estate had belonged to the late Alexander Mackenzie of Applecross, who was attainted for his part in the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion, and the rents seem to have been paid either to Roderick McKenzie of Applecross, younger, or to the "Old Lady Applecross". They were paid in cash and kind. For example: "Eighty Seven Merks and a half Scots and a mutton"; "Two hundred and twenty six merks Scots of money three stone of butter & twelve stone cheese & three hedders", etc. Few tenants were literate, and most depositions conclude with the words: "Which is the truth as he shall answer to God & cannot write".

The Applecross list is followed by a similar Judicial Rental for Mackenzie's estate in Tarradale, Easter Ross, which provides an interesting comparison. There are differences not only in the names, but in the kind of produce used to pay the rent. For example: "Eight bolls of victuall, One Mutton One Lamb, and Eighteen poultry - and two Merks of money"; "Nine bolls half meal half bear, Six merks of money rent One Mutton & Eighteen poultry.", etc.

Some of the Applecross names are obviously recognised "surnames", e.g. Fraser & Mackenzie. Others are phonetic renderings of Gaelic patronymics - a "potted genealogy" of the individual concerned, which in one case goes back four generations, or about 100 years. In other cases it is not clear whether the name is a genuine patronymic, or has become "ficed" as the person's surname. Mr Bill Lawson, Stornoway, who assisted with the translations, believes that at this date surnames would have been the exception rather than the rule and that most of the names are patronymic or descriptive. - Duncan Ross.

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Ane Judicial Account or Rental of the Reall Estate which belonged to Alexander Mackenzie late of Applecross attainted. Taken by Sir Patrick Strachan of Glenkindy, Surveyor General of the forfeited Estates of North Brittain. In presence of David Bethun of Culbaskien (?), Sheriff Substitute of the Shire of Ross. Att Edinburgh this twenty second day of September 1718 years.

Kishorn

Rishell:

- 1) Hector Fraser
Alexander Mc ean vicolaster = MacTain mhic Alasdair/son of John son of Alexander
- 2) Donald Mc unley = MacPhiomlaich/son of Finlay
- 3) Donald Mc oil vicoerq^r vicinuish viceanmore
= MacDhombhnull mhic Fhearcobair mhic Aonghais mhic Iain mor/
son of Donald son of Fargubar son of Angus son of big John (See Back Page)
- 4) Neill McWilliam - an "anglicised" patronymic ?
- 5) Angus Mc onell = MacDhombhnull/son of Donald

Mleid:

- 6) John Mckenzie
- Rassell: (also Rashill; Rashell; and Rushill)

7) Alexander Fraser

Donald Mcean vic inish viceanmore

- = MacTain mhic Aonghais mhic Iain mor/son of John son of Angus son of big John
- Mary Mein alaster = Nighean Alasdair/daughter of Alexander
- 8) Rory Mc oil vic rory = MacDhombhnull mhic Ruairidh/son of Donald son of Roderick
 - 9) Alex^r Mc earduy = MacTain duibh/son of black-(haired) John
(but also McAnduy; and Mc andy = MacShannaid/son of Sandy)
 - 10) Rory Mc Ean = MacTain/son of John

Ironimbrass:

- 11) Murdoch Mckenzie (married)
- 12) Duncan Mc ulloch (also Mc Culloch) - a surname ?

Rory Roy = Ruairidh/red-(haired)

Lagmeacop:

- 13) Alex^r Mc Ewn (also McEwen, and McEuen) = MacEoghain/son of Ewen, or Hugh
- Alex^r Mc ormet (?) = MacThormoid/son of Norman (Since the writer did not "cross" his Ts, the name could be Mc ormel = son of Gormshuil, a female name, which could denote illegitimacy, or a father deceased.)
- Kenneth Mc William (described as "sick")
- 14) Murdoch Gordon (also given as Murdoch Grant)
- Duncan Mc Ean = MacTain/son of John

Lagginsmore:

- 15) Duncan Bain = Ban/fair-(haired)
- 16) Rory Mc ean = MacIain/son of John
John Mc oiluay = MacDhonnmhuill duibh/ son of black-(haired) Donald ("sick")

Ardaohie:

- 17) Duncan Mc Farquhar
- John Mc Farquhar

Glen:

- 18) William McKenzie
- 19) Dougall Matthewson ("old and blind")
- 20) John McKenzie, officer, makes oath that Christian Fraser Lady Applecross has in her own possession "a parcel of land in the Glen", and that she possesses the lands of Dall and Arduigaurill (?)

Aohinadrail:

- 21) Alex^r Mc onachy = MacDhonnachaidh/son of Duncan
John Mc inish = MacAonghais/son of Angus
Finlay Mc Farquhar
- John Bain = Ban/fair-(haired)

Alex^r Mc oiloig = MacDhonnnull oig/son of young Donald

- 22) John McKenzie, officer, speaks to the extent of waste lands in Kishorn

Applecross

Laggwell:

- 23) John Mc gillichallum = MacGhillechaluim/son of Malcolm
Farquhar McFinlay

- 24) Kenneth Mc ormet (?) = MacThormoid/son of Norman (could be Mc ormel - see No. 13)

- 25) Donald Mc finlay.

Farquhar Mc uryky = MacMurchaidh/son of Murdoch

Borradale:

- 26) Angus Mc onachy = MacDhonnachaidh/son of Duncan
Colin Mc eachan = MacEochuim/son of Hector
Angus Mc Gillespick = MacChilleasbuig/son of Archibald
John Mc unley = MacFhionnlaidh/son of Finlay
John Mc alaster = MacLasdair/son of Alexander
Christopher Mc uryky = MacMurchaidh/son of Murdoch

- 27) Donald Mc keen = MacIain/son of John (also Duncan Mc ean)

- 28) John Mc donald vicean = MacDhonnnull mhic Iain/son of Donald son of John

Donald Mc ean = MacIain/son of John (father of above)

- 29) Rory Mc ean = MacIain/son of John

William Mc onell = MacDhonnnull/son of Donald

Kirktown of Applecross:

- 30) John McKenzie
- 31) Murdoch Mc unley = MacFhionnlaidh/son of Finlay (son of next named)
Finlay Mc oil vane = MacDhonnnull bhain/son of fair-(haired) Donald ("old and infirm")

Kyllivorie:

- 32) Kenneth McKenzie (signs his name)

Toscaig:

- 33) John Mc Allan = (?) MacAllein/son of Allan - Could be MacCallein/son of Colin
Kaithrin Murchison (a widow)

- 34) John Smith

Malcolm Smith

Aohachork:

- 35) John Mc Gillespick = MacChilleasbuig/son of Archibald
(allowed his lands gratis "for his salary as being the pyper of the family")
- 36) Philip Mc onachy = MacDhonnachaidh/son of Duncan
Rory Mc ean vicourchy = MacIain mhic Murchaidh/son of John son of Murdoch ("absent")
Christian Nein donachy = Nighean Dhonnachaidh/daughter of Duncan ("absent")

Owagan:

- 37) Norman Mc unley = MacFhionnlaidh/son of Finlay
- 38) William Mc unley = MacFhionnlaidh/son of Finlay

Calmokeill: (also Culmokeill)

- 39) Donald Mc ean vicunley = MacIain mhic Fhionnlaidh/son of John son of Finlay
Rory Mc ean vicunley = MacIain mhic Fhionnlaidh/son of John son of Finlay
40) Alex^r Mc Gillespick = MacChilleasbuig/son of Archibald
Colin Mc kenzie

- 41) Donald Mc oiloig = MacDhonnnull oig/son of young Donald

Sheildack:

- 42) John Mc oil vic unley = MacDhonnnull mhic Fhionnlaidh/son of Donald son of Finlay
Donald Mc onelloig = MacDhonnnull oig/son of young Donald
(also Mc Nelloig; and MacNeil Oig = MacNeill/son of Neil)

- 43) John Mc Eochan = MacEachuinn/son of Hector

Ballagie:

- 44) Duncan Mc uryky = MacMurchaidh/son of Murdoch
Murdoch Mc Gilchrist = MacGhillecrisod/son of Christopher
Norman Mc Gilchrist = MacGhillecrisod/son of Christopher
Duncan Mc onell = MacDhonnnull/son of Donald

Artoashlay:

- 45) Alex^r Mc Eachan alias Mc kenzie = MacEachuinn/son of Hector

Judicial Account or Rental of the Reall Estate which belonged to Alexander Mackenzie late of Applecross in Tarradale. Taken upon the depositions of the Several Tenants thereof By Sir Patrick Strachan of Glenkindie - Surveyor Genll of the Forfeited Estates in North Brittain. In presence of David Bethune Sheriff Substitute of the Shire of Ross, Att Hilltown of Tarradale this Seventh day of October 1718 years.

- 46) Donald Mc Lellan in Auldtearindigater (?)
- 47) Kenneth McKay in Balnaclash
- 48) Kenneth Mc Lellan there
- 49) Alex^r Mc Leman in Balnagown
- 50) Rory Mc Eamric onnell in Bullivaddy (also Butrvady)
= MacIsain mhic Dhombhmill/son of John son of Donald
- 51) Duncan Bain there - a surname ?
- 52) Donald McKay in Blair of Balnagown
- 53) William Morison there
- 54) John Mc Cra in Teachladdich (also McRae)
Finlay Logan there
- 55) John McKay in Tarradale (Overseer; signs his name)
- 56) Donald McKay in Kirktown of Tarradale (signs his name)
John McLeman there (also McLellan)
- 57) John McKay in Balblair of Kilchrist
- 58) Donald McKay in Hilltown of Tarradale
Alex^r McKay there
- 59) John Mc onnell in Reindown = Macdhombhmill/son of Donald (also McKay)
William Reoch there = (?) riabhach/brindled, spotted
- 60) Donald Mcfarquhar there
James Mckenzie there (described as "valetudinary")
- 61) Donald McCaley - a form of MacAulay ?
Alex^r Mc onnell there = Macdhombhmill/son of Donald
John McKay there
- 62) Thomas Mckenzie in Glashintorren of Reindown
- 63) Kenneth Mckenzie in Fearadalloch
- 64) Donald Bailly there
- 65) Alex^r Logan in Auldinabreck
- 66) Alex^r McLeman in Pogbain (also McLellan)

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NOTE - Alexander Mackenzie was the eldest son of John Mackenzie, 2nd of Applecross, who was known as "Ian Mollach", or Hairy John. There were a further three sons and five daughters by John's marriage to a daughter of Hugh Fraser of Belladrum. His fourth son, John - "Ian Og" - is described as "one of the four famous Johns killed in 1715 under his brother Alexander, who was Lieutenant-Colonel of Seaforth's 1st Regiment, at Sheriffmuir." Alexander, who succeeded his father, was married thrice. By his first wife Anne, daughter of Alexander Fraser, Tutor of Lovat, he had three sons (Roderick, his heir; Kenneth, a merchant in Inverness; and Colin, a doctor in Edinburgh) and five daughters. His second wife was Margaret, daughter of Mackenzie of Fairburn, by whom he had one son, Simon, who served in the Foot Guards. In 1713 he married his third wife, Christian, daughter of Fraser of Belladrum, by whom he had one daughter.

He joined the Earl of Mar in 1715, and was Lieutenant-Colonel of Seaforth's 1st Regiment, for which he was attainted of high treason, and the estates forfeited to the Crown.

He was succeeded by his eldest son, Roderick, who in 1724 re-purchased the estate of Applecross from the Court of Enquiry for £3550.

SOURCE - History and Genealogies of the Mackenzies, by Alexander Mackenzie: Inverness, 1879. pp 440 - 448.

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Recording

Monumental Inscriptions

Mr Roger Tatler, who has recorded inscriptions from several burial grounds in his home area of Lochaber, shared the fruits of his experience with members when he addressed the April meeting. He first became aware of the value of recorded inscriptions after hearing of the pioneering work of Mr and Mrs J.F. Mitchell, and having used such published sources in his own research he felt "it was time I put something back".

He said there was a tremendous amount of genealogical and historical information recorded on tombstones and public monuments dotted around the countryside. Some had been collected, but most of it lay unread and unused, waiting for someone to record it and share it with others. Tombstones, for example, could provide not only the name of the deceased but the name and maiden surname of his wife, their place of origin, their ages and dates of death (from which dates of birth can be calculated), occupations and information about their children. As families tended to be buried close together, one tombstone can often lead to another nearby.

Mr Tatler offered the following tips to those interested in recording NIs:- Decide the area you wish to record and find out if any graveyards have been done before. Burial grounds are not always beside a church or chapel, so use Ordnance Survey maps and local knowledge to find out where they are. Try to get permission before entering church property. Decide whether to record all the stones, or only those pre-1855 (he prefers the latter, since there should be certificates for deaths after 1855); and decide whether to record all the writing on a stone, or to "edit" it (he makes a note of everything).

Equipment should include squared paper for a plan of the graveyard; a pad for notes; pencils (ballpoints don't write well in the damp); string to mark out a base line; bristle brush; trowel; spade; shears; gloves; bottle of water; chalk; wooden sticks (ice lolly type are good); crayon; spare paper; torch; knitting needle; and nails.

Wrap up well ! Decide your route around the burial ground. Make a map marking all stones, and numbering the ones you are going to record. Note the type of stone - headstone, flat, table, chest, altar-stone or wall plaque.

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When copying details, note any pictorial or heraldic embellishments and always look on the back of stones, where additional inscriptions were sometimes made, or worn ones recarved.

Clean away moss with a flat trowel and then scrub with a bristle or plastic brush - never use a wire brush, as this will do damage. Inspect the bottom of headstones, as sometimes the writing goes below ground. Scrub away lichen, or scrape with a slate or hard wooden stick. Flat stones should be uncovered to their edges, using the knitting needle to probe for them, if they are covered by turf. Remove turf carefully with the spade, and replace it after reading the inscription. Pick out encrusted letters with a nail or stick.

If inscriptions are difficult to read, pour on water and scrub with the brush, get down level with the stone and try to get the sunlight across it. Also try rubbing chalk in the bits you can see, and standing further back. A "crayon rubbing" can be taken of difficult words or letters. When in doubt, always get a second opinion. Wiping a stone with damp grass can also bring up difficult lettering.

Any stones dating from the late 16th century, or before, should be photographed, and reported to the appropriate authorities, since they are classed as historical monuments.

Once you have finished recording the burial ground, take a look inside the church (if there is one), since many have wall plaques, brasses on the floor, and stones or plates set in the chancel. Do not overlook the many public and private monuments set up at road junctions, on private estates and in parks. There are also many public and private mausoleums around.

Finally, collate the results of your work; redraw your maps, leaving out the stones you did not record; and please, please, index your collection - everyone who consults it will curse you if you don't ! Now circulate it in printed, duplicated or photocopied form. Copies should be given to your local Family History Society, the local church, the public library, New Register House, the Scottish Genealogy Society, and the Society of Genealogists. Make your findings as widely known as possible, and be prepared to receive letters asking about the area you have covered.

Mr Tatler concluded his talk with an interesting selection of colour slides.

NOTE: The Federation of Family History Societies publish a useful booklet "Notes on Recording Monumental Inscriptions", price 80p (inc. UK postage). Anyone interested in this work in the Highland area should contact our Committee member, Mrs Irene Sutherland, 1 Auldcastle Road, Inverness; Tel. 238104.

1851 CENSUS: The microfilm of this Census has been received from Edinburgh. There are 21 reels in all, covering the counties of Caithness, Sutherland, Ross & Cromarty, Inverness-shire and Nairn-shire, and on one or two reels there is some overlap into Moray-shire parishes. The microfilm forms an important part of our collection at Inverness Library, and will be available for use by members in conjunction with the three hand-held viewers which we purchased recently. Precise arrangements for borrowing film and a viewer have yet to be finalised, but enquiries should be made to Peter Reynolds at the Library. Peter regrets that, due to pressure of work, he is unable at present to undertake census searches on behalf of others; but in due course we hope to make some arrangement for members who are unable to use the microfilm personally. More details in the next issue. A word of warning - legibility can be a problem. Some pages of the transcript books are wonderfully clear, but the ink has badly faded on others.... The Committee have decided that the cash received from the Inland Revenue from covenanted subscriptions should be put to an identifiable use, and a quotation for the 1841 Census has been sought from New Register House....

Inverness Library have acquired a new x42 magnification lens for their microfiche reader, which should lessen the risk of eye-strain among those using the genealogical indexes.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are due at the end of August, and those members who have not received a renewal form already will find one enclosed. Please ignore it if you have paid without prompting! Subs are at the same level as last year, and we hope you will give the Society your continued support.

SIT. VAC. If you have a typewriter (and know how to use it) we could do with your help. The tombstone inscriptions from Geddes Churchyard have at last been completed and double-checked, and they now have to be typed-up for photocopying. Any offers? It's not too monumental a task! If you can help, please contact Irene Sutherland, 1 Auldcastle Road, Inverness, Tel. 238104.

BRA.FTED: We were pleased to welcome two new members to the ranks of the Executive Committee recently. They are Mr Frederick J. Glen and Mrs Margaret Glen, York Cottage, 1B Drummond Road, Inverness. They were recruited under the Committee's powers of co-option (or should it be coercion?) and we thank them for agreeing to be "drafted". We now have a Committee of 10 among whom to share the workload.

STUDY: The "Inverness Courier" reports that Highland Regional Council's general purposes committee are to commission a study into ways in which tourism can be given a boost in the North by encouraging visitors to trace their ancestry. Councilors had talked about the possibility of computerising information from birth, death and marriage records at present held at Inverness, Dingwall and Brore. They were told existing computers were not sufficiently developed for this, but it might be possible in the future. The study will investigate other ways of improving genealogical facilities, and the possibility of setting up some sort of research organisation.

MR J.F. MITCHELL: Mr John F. Mitchell, who has been described as the "Grand Old Man" of Scottish genealogy, has died at the age of 97. He was a founder member of the Scottish Genealogy Society in 1953, and during his long association with that body he served as a Council member and latterly as Vice-President. He will be especially remembered for his pioneering work on the recording of gravestone inscriptions. He and his wife Sheila, who survives him, began recording pre-1855 inscriptions from graveyards throughout central Scotland, and between 1967 and 1975 the results of their work were published for the following counties: Kinross-shire; Clackmannanshire; West Lothian; Dumbartonshire; Renfrew-shire; Fife; Stirlingshire and Perthshire. The good work is being carried on by their daughter, Miss Alison Mitchell, who has produced a volume on Speyside, and three volumes on Angus.

NEW ADDRESS: The Society of Genealogists have moved from 37 Harrington Gardens, London, to new premises at 14 Charterhouse Buildings, London EC1M 7EA.

CONFERENCES: We can supply further details, on request, about the following:- The 4th English Genealogical Congress, University of York, September 3-8 1984; Cleveland F.H.S. One-Day Conference, Darlington, October 13 1984; The 3rd British Family History Conference, West Lavington, Wiltshire, April 19-23 1985; Family History Summer School for North Americans, Manchester Polytechnic, July 9-19 1985.

ROSSENDALE Society for Genealogy and Heraldry, Lancashire, have put on microfiche the various projects undertaken by their members (monumental inscriptions, marriage indexes, etc) and are willing to sell them at 40p per fiche plus post and packing. **MORE COPIES** of Donald Whyte's useful booklet "Introducing Scottish Genealogical Research" have been obtained, and can be purchased from our Treasurer. Price £1.80, or £2 by post (£2.50 airmail).

319. ABERDEEN, Mr & Mrs W., Park Street, New Brighton, N.S.W. 2483, Australia.
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James Fraser, Kiltarlity: A Canadian Memoir

By Patricia Belier

These notes on my great-great-great-grandfather, James Fraser of Kiltarlity, are based on details gleaned from a handwritten memoir recorded by him in 1867, two years before his death and in the year of Canadian Confederation. I was given access to this material through the kindness of another descendant of James (1). The memoir rambles a bit and is maddeningly devoid of names and dates, but it does give most interesting details on James's early life and the Gaelic School Society.

James Fraser (1792-1869) was the only child of Donald Fraser MacAlaster (2) (c.1745-c.1804) and his second wife Mary (3) (c.1744-c.1816). They resided on the Belladrum Estate near Kiltarlity. In fact, Donald lived his early years under the direct care of Colonel Belladrum, running errands and doing messages for him until he married and was given a life-lease on a little farm on the estate, probably at Foxhole. Donald had first married a woman whose name I don't yet know, and they had a son John and three daughters, Janet, Katherine and Mary. Mary and John died young and Janet died unmarried at age 24. Katherine married a veteran of the Egyptian campaign against Napoleon. He was reported to have been blinded in this war but regained his sight and was sent as a catechist to his native Skye, and had a large family. Donald also had two brothers who fought at Quebec and remained in North America (c.1759).

James describes his own parents as having been brought together by the Abriachan schoolmaster Laughlin McLaughlin. James's mother Mary had been McLaughlin's housekeeper for about 20 years, going to work for him when she became a widow. She is described as being of Urquhart or Lord Grant's country, and was supposed to be the 18th child of her father, by his third wife! As McLaughlin and Donald Fraser MacAlaster were good friends, a bit of match-making must have taken place after Donald's first wife died. Mary and Donald were probably married c. 1791. Young James was born in 1792 and was briefly sent as a student to McLaughlin's school. In the winter when he couldn't get to school and to his Bible class, his mother made a bergain with James that "she would give me a good buttercake for every chapter (of the Bible) I would translate from English into Gaelic. And in about a month I could make more than I could eat and was still gaining fast".

James's schooling came to an end after his father's death. "Young Belladrum" put the widow and her young son out of the life-lease cottage. A neighbour, possibly Alexander Hutchison, arranged for the two of them to live with him until another house could be built, and until they could start a garden and get some animals. James would have been about 12-15 years of age then. He says "concerning my life at these times, I tried whiles at many things such as canal work, harvest work, and serving high gentry farmers."

In 1811, James married Anne Cummin(g). One day a few years later, a letter arrived at the place where James worked containing a "complete license" from the Gaelic School Society to begin a school in the very place where he was born. James suspected that the Rev. Donald Fraser of Kirkhill, another of his father's friends was behind the invitation. James accepted the offer, and began his school every morning at nine and continued until four in the afternoon; and then began again at six "to teach any parents or children that could not attend in day time, until nine at night."

Three times a year, Fraser of Kirkhill, another Fraser of Inverness, Dr. Baine and Dr. McDonald of Ferintosh, would examine the school and report to the Society. James taught English, writing and arithmetic during the day. At night his pupils included "men with their cradles on their shoulders and women with their babes in their bosom for to learn to read the Holy Bible in the Gaelic tongue. How delightful it was after such darkness among the poor wild, warmhearted Highlanders when before that you could not get the Old Testament in one volume in the Gaelic."

James worked at schools in "Caplich, Glen Convich and Port Aigears" (4), before getting an offer to teach at a school in Nova Scotia where his wife's uncle resided. The Gaelic School Society sent James a clearance card and £5 as a parting gift. James, Anne and their children, Donald, Alexander and Isabella, departed Scotland from Cromarty in 1820 aboard the Diligence. He described a heart-rending parting from "numerous friends and lovely Scotland". The family began a 10-year stay in Pictou, Nova Scotia, where James worked as a teacher and later as a lay preacher and missionary in the Church of Scotland, before they moved to London Township, Ontario, in the summer of 1830.

A male child had been born to James and Anne on board ship from Scotland to Nova Scotia. He lived only three days, and his death had been predicted by the seer, Alexander Hutchison, on their departure from Inverness-shire. However, five other children were born to them in Nova Scotia, the first one being William Fraser, my great-great-grandfather.

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Anne died in 1832, just about a year after their arrival in Ontario. Later in that year, James married a Margery McBain from Elgin County, Ontario, and they had a family of five children.

James Fraser was a well-known and respected member of the London Township community for over 30 years. He was the Clerk in the Session of Bethel Presbyterian Church, and was a catechist in the London Presbytery. His memoir is full of religious declarations and prayers, reflecting his deep religious views and his abilities as a powerful extemporaneous Gaelic preacher and preacher. He recounted a memory of "great gatherings (in Scotland) of from 5000 to 15,000 people in the open fields to hear the Gospel and receive the sacraments."

I would be pleased to correspond with anyone who thinks they recognise or have information on this group of Frasers. I have had some interesting and helpful correspondence with Mr Hugh Barron on the Kiltarlity area, and he has helped me identify some placenames curiously spelled by James. I have come across some references to the Gaelic School Society which may be of interest to readers (5). In building my family tree, I have consulted the Parish Registers of Kiltarlity and Inverness, and a variety of genealogical sources in Nova Scotia and Ontario. However, many gaps remain.

NOTES

- (1) Mrs Anne Wylie, London, Ontario. She provided the material on the Frasers appearing in F.T. Rosser's London Township Pioneers. Belleville, Ontario: Mika, 1975, pp. 145-151.
- (2) Does this form of the name indicate Donald was the son of an Alexander, or does it mean they are members of a particular branch of Frasers, or was the surname originally other than Fraser?
- (3) On James's baptismal record, his mother is listed as "Mary Fraser". Would this be her former maiden name, or a surname of her first marriage?
- (4) All spellings are as James recorded them.
- (5) "The Gaelic School Society" in An Gaidheal, March 1875, pp. 93-95. James Hunter, The Crofting Community. Edinburgh: J. Donald, 1976., page 98. Hugh Barron, "Some Notes on the Parish of Kiltarlity" in Transactions. Gaelic Society of Inverness, v. 50 (1976-1978), pp. 40-59.

