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*Edna Forbes and Liz Foubister representing our Society at the Braemar Gathering on
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Oats and Porridge, Part 2

Part 1 appeared in the previous Journal issue

My great-great-grandfather, Colin (a.k.a. Coll or Colquhoun) McKenzie, spent most of his life as a miller at Mill of Inver in the parish of Crathie and Braemar. The mill stands near the mouth of the Feardar Burn where it enters the River Dee, 2½ miles west of Balmoral Castle. Family folklore tells that Colin supplied oatmeal to the castle when the Queen was in residence. Colin's death record states that at his marriage in 1811 he was at the mill. I have never found a birth or baptism record, but in the 1851 census he was aged 76 and born in Glenmuick, Aberdeenshire. He died at Mill of Inver on 27th February 1866, aged 88 according to the informant. The 1841 census rounds down to age "60", but he seems to have been born in 1775–8.

Colin's death record gives his parents as Peter McKenzie (farmer) and Janet McGregor. I have found a marriage entry for Peter McKenzie (Glenfenzie) and Janet McAra (Little Inverey) on 20th December 1774 in Crathie and Braemar parish. I suspect that these were Colin's parents. Since the McGregor name was banned from 1603 to 1784, it is possible that Janet's family were using the name McAra to avoid prosecution, but their real name was used at the time Colin died (as they were by then long deceased).

Colin is buried in the Foot of Gairn cemetery at the western edge of Ballater. Adjacent to his monument is another, which reads: "Here Lays The Body of Petter McKenzie who Day'd in The year 1786 Aged 42 years Also the body of John McKenzie who Day'd in the year 1807 Aged 28 years". I believe that "Petter" is Colin's father, and I suspect that John is Colin's brother, but to date I have found no relevant documentation.

To add to the puzzle, DNA-testing has revealed a very close match (65 of 67 markers) between me and a James Ian McKenzie. He has traced his ancestors back to Robert McKenzie (1794–1875) of Blair Atholl, son of James (dates and locations unknown). As Blair Atholl and the area around Crathie are within a (long) day's walk, it seems certain that we have a common ancestor, though we have not yet been able to identify the link.

Colin seems unlikely to have learned the miller's trade from his farmer father. The Mill of Inver is listed as part of the Monaltrie estate in 1755. I had hoped that estate records might show when Colin became the miller, and who immediately preceded him (to whom he might have been apprenticed). Unfortunately, the Monaltrie estate papers are held privately, and my request to allow a professional genealogy researcher to access them for information about tenants of the Mill of Inver was denied. From horse-tax records, the researcher did find that the miller in 1797 was named Alexander Davidson, but I have not discovered anything that would support the idea that Colin learned the trade from him.

Colin married Janet Grant on 15th December 1811 in the parish of Glenmuick, Tullich and Glengairn. Janet (1794–1875), eldest of five children of Alexander Grant (Tomnivarán) and Isobel Brown (Tullich), also lived the rest of her life at Mill of Inver. It still stands, but it was converted from a working gristmill to a vacation residence many decades ago.



The Mill of Inver in 2010

Colin and Janet had 10 children: Lizzie (birth year: ?), Alexander (1815), John (1817), Jessie (1818), Margaret (1820), Peter (1824), Janet (1826),

Jane (1829), Anna (1831) and William (1835). Alexander, Jessie and Peter are buried in Ballater with their parents. Alexander and William lived at Mill of Inver until at least 1871 working as millers, and neither ever married. Otherwise, I have little or no information about the rest of the children except for the third, my great-grandfather John.

Born in 1817 in Crathie, John learned the miller's trade from his father. Not only did he mill oats, he sowed wild oats as well, fathering a natural daughter, Mary Ann McKenzie, born on 21st September 1844 when he was 27. Her mother, Margaret Mitchell, was 20, and in 1841 she was a servant at an inn in Castletown, Braemar. In 1851 and 1861, Mary was at Mill of Inver with her grandparents and some of her father's brothers and sisters. She is gone by 1871.

On 9th October 1845, John married my great-grandmother Anne MacQueen (b. 1823) of Castletown, Braemar, and moved to Tomintoul, about 23 miles north of Crathie, to operate the gristmill there. In a letter by a neighbour, the wedding is described as follows:

perhaps owing to the wind blowing astern, you might not have distinctly heard the thundering noise of cannon and smaller calibre which rent the air at Castletown of last week – however in case you should charge me with writing fiction – I shall only allude to the occasion viz the marriage of Ann McQueen and John McKenzie miller Inver. They left here at 10am in a chaise and pair for Tamintoul, he having taken a mill there.



The mill at Tomintoul in 2010

Anne MacQueen's heritage can be traced far back: her paternal 2g-grandparents were Isabella Rose and John MacQueen; he was born in September 1681. Their son Dougald (b. 1712) married Jane Gollan, and they had at least two children – James (b. 1747) and John, Anne's grandfather (b. 1749). John married Jane Alexander, and they had seven children. The second-youngest was William, Anne's father, born on 30th January 1791 in Ardclach, Nairnshire.

William MacQueen married Henrietta Leslie (b. 1798) on 1st September 1820. Anne was their second child, and the family now lived in Castletown, Braemar. William was a schoolmaster, and for at least some of his life boarded students. The census of 1841 lists six boarders, but later census records show none. The Scottish Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge conducted inspections of schools affiliated with the established church. In a report dated 28th April 1830, the SSPCK stated:

This is one of the most efficient and useful schools on the establishment of the Society. William McQueen has been teacher here for eleven years. He is a very judicious, sensible man. He is in the midst of a numerous body of Catholics ... Every attempt was made by threats, flattery and otherwise to induce the teacher to allow the Catholic Catechism to be taught in the school to the Catholic children. These however he has persistently declined and notwithstanding his refusal, his school is well attended by Catholic children ... The number of children attending this school in winter is about 100. There were upwards of 40 pupils to day although it was Fair day in the village, and they had no idea of my being there till after I was in school. With the general appearance of the scholars and their progress and proficiency I had every reason to be satisfied. The accommodations here are in every respect excellent. The school room is

large, well lighted and sufficiently furnished. The glebe consists of an acre and a half of excellent land all enclosed.

In 1843, a schism in the Church of Scotland resulted in the formation of the Free Church. William MacQueen became one of the first elders in the Braemar Free Church. In letters to a friend, one of William's neighbours wrote: "*Mr Mcrae has left the Kirk. On Sabbath he preached in the Fyfe Arms [a Braemar hotel] to 170 hearers while Mr Anderson preached in the Kirk to 100 sitters ... Mr Mcqueen and family has also left ... the Session book is taken from Mr Mcqueen – his successor not appointed.*" At least two of William's sons became Free Church ministers: John MacQueen was minister in Kirkmichael, and Richard MacQueen was minister in Archiestown, Knockando parish.

William died in 1861, and Henrietta in 1836 (aged 37) after eight children: Jane (b.c. 1822), Anne (1823), John (1824), Henrietta (c. 1828), Mary (c. 1831), Christian (c. 1831; d. aged 11), Richard (1834) and Alexander (1836; d. aged 22 in Australia). I have not yet searched for more information about any of these except my great-grandmother Anne.

After marrying in 1845 and moving to Tomintoul, John McKenzie and Anne MacQueen had four children there: William (1847), Janet/Jessie (1850), Henrietta (1852) and Jane (1854). In Part 1, I described the family's move to Canada in 1856 and, after three days at sea, the birth of their fifth child, James Forbes McKenzie.

The family settled in Athelstan, Quebec, where John milled oats for "Laird" Anderson, and two more children were born: John (1858) and Anna (1860). The family then moved to Burke, New York, where their final three children were born: Elizabeth (1862), Alexander Anderson (1865) and my grandfather Charles Richard (1868). John applied for United States citizenship on 31st December 1861 and was admitted as a citizen of the USA on 22nd August 1865. He served as Supervisor of Burke in 1871, as Deacon of the Presbyterian Church (1867–79), and as elder from 1875. In 1877, the family moved to Constable, where John bought the mill run by their son William, who in turn bought the mill at Burke. Anne died in 1883 and John in 1886, both in Constable. They are buried in Burke.

John and Anne's two youngest children are of interest here. Alexander Anderson McKenzie, named after "Laird" Anderson who helped the family emigrate from Scotland to Canada, and later helped John to purchase the gristmill in Burke, New York, was a prototypical "Scottish engineer". He graduated from Franklin Academy in 1887 as class valedictorian. He entered Dartmouth College, where he completed three years, and then went to Nicaragua, where he was employed in surveys for an Atlantic-to-Pacific canal.



The mill at Burke, New York

His engineering drawings for the canal are now in the Dartmouth library. He then returned to Dartmouth, where, according to his obituary in the Malone New York *Palladium*,

he was employed in the construction of the reservoir and waterworks for the supply of the college and the precinct. In 1895 he was appointed ... Superintendent of Buildings ... It was largely due to his invention, as well as to his careful inspection, that the [centralised] heating system, introduced in 1898, has proved so great a success. He was so capable an

engineer that the ordinary plans for the extension of heating, for electric lighting, and sewers, were made in his office.

He received the Bachelor of Science degree in 1899. He died in 1904 and is buried in Burke.

My grandfather, Charles Richard, following in his brother Alexander's footsteps, was Franklin Academy's valedictorian in 1888. He received his BS from Dartmouth in 1893 with special honours in mathematics and Phi Beta Kappa standing. In 1896, he was hired by William J. Milne, President of New York State Normal College in Albany, as chief assistant in preparing the Milne mathematical series of textbooks. Charles strongly resented the fact that, although he did most of the work for 19 years, his name never appeared as an author. He married Zora Hiscox on 30th December 1907, and they had one son, Alexander Anderson II, born in Albany on 2nd October 1908. On a summer vacation journey between visiting his sister Elizabeth at Fraser Point and his sister Henrietta in Toronto, Charles died of apoplexy on 13th August 1915 at the Daniels Hotel in Prescott, Ontario. His son, my father, was not yet 7 years old. Zora lived until the age of 78, although a severe fall when she was 57 left her an invalid for the rest of her life. Zora is buried with her parents in Troy, New York.

Sources

Virginia Wills (ed.), *Reports on the Annexed Estates 1755–1769* (1973).

W. McLeod, P. F. Farr and R. M. Farr (eds), *Letters From the Glen: Glen Clunie, Braemar, Scotland, 1839–1871* (Aberdeen: ANESFHS). [Note: p. 56 has the text "John McKenzie miller Inverey". The authors have been kind enough to provide me with a copy of the original letter, which I have confirmed reads "John McKenzie miller Inver".]

Langford, Helen (1921–2006): unpublished collection of obituaries of all descendants (who died prior to 2000) of our great-grandfather John McKenzie, gathered without use of the Internet!

Records of the Scottish Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge held by the National Records of Scotland, researched for me by "Gene Genie Scotland", Macduff.

Old Parish Records on microfilm, and other items, held by ANESFHS, accessed 2010.

Census and other records from Scotland's People online at www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk

<http://www.smithancestors.com/SmithGeneology/> [*sic*] has additional details on all my ancestors mentioned in this two-part article.

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