

Putting Your Family History into Context:

Social History
and Genealogical Research



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What is Social History?

- ♦ History is the study of past events in human affairs.
- ♦ Social history delves underneath the big stuff of human affairs and looks at the collective lives of human beings rather than scrutinizing the great, powerful or elite individuals whose influence affects those lives for good or ill.
- ♦ Social historians study common people and how they lived, so it is much more inclusive and can enlighten their descendants concerning their lives and how the grand events of the day shaped them as well as the day-to-day living that everyone does.

How does it relate to genealogy?

- ♦ IT MAKES GENEALOGY FUN! (By turning genealogy into Family History).
- ♦ Adults and children discover they are part of something larger than their present day stories.
- ♦ Younger generations can feel more connected by sharing or learning stories from the past.
- ♦ New perspectives and understandings are gleaned about an ancestor's life.
- ♦ New pathways for your family research projects can be uncovered.
- ♦ New ways to share your research can be utilized.



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What can I learn about?

- ♦ Life cycle: Birth and birthing customs, health and medicine, diseases and epidemics, mental health, mortality rates, death and burial customs.
- ♦ Life at home: Clothing and fashion, food and cooking, housekeeping, land and property, alcohol and drug use.
- ♦ Life at work: Economy (prices, cost of living and salaries), occupations, working conditions and the labor movement, businesses and employers, social welfare and relief.
- ♦ Relationships: Morality, marriage and divorce, children and childhood, ethnicity and prejudices,
- ♦ Community life: Celebrations and holidays, traditions, education, language and literacy, religion/church, faith, crime and punishment, societal unrest, leisure pursuits.
- ♦ Life-changing events: War, emigration, inventions, transportation, communication, slavery and emancipation.



How do I go about
it?

Ask questions and find the answers!

Some great questions to ask:

- What was the (approximate) address of the family?
- What was their street (house) (neighborhood) (city) like?
- How much money (in past and today's currency) did they earn? How did they earn it? How did they spend it?
- What was their social class?
- What did they eat?
- What did they wear?
- What were their political beliefs?
- What were their religious beliefs?
- What social and leisure activities did they indulge in?
- How did larger social events/problems/disasters affect their lives?

Where can I find
the answers?

Go BEYOND the Timelines



What was their (approximate) address?

- Census records
- Tax records
- Court records
- Estate records
- Envelopes from letters
- Electoral records
- City and telephone directories
- Newspaper articles (also search newspapers BY addresses)

1900 United States Federal Census for Perils Pollock
 Pennsylvania > Philadelphia > Philadelphia Ward 20 > District 0444

Name	Relation to Head	Race	Sex	Birth Month	Birth Year	Age	Marital Status	Years Married	Children	Children	Birthplace	Father's Birthplace	Mother's Birthplace	Immigrated	Years in U.S.	Naturalized
William Pollock	Head	W	M	Nov	1870	29	M	14	2	2	Penn	New York	Penn			
Perla Pollock	Wife	W	F	July	1876	23	M	14	0	0	Amsterdam	Amsterdam	Amsterdam	1876	24	W
Leah Pollock	Daughter	W	F	July	1883	16	M	14	0	0	England	England	Holland	1883	20	
Poloman Pollock	Son	W	M	May	1881	17	S	0	0	0	Penn	Amsterdam	England			
Jenette Pollock	Daughter	W	F	Aug	1882	16	S	0	0	0	Penn	Amsterdam	England			
Jacob Pollock	Son	W	M	Apr	1885	13	S	0	0	0	Penn	Amsterdam	England			
Rebecca Pollock	Daughter	W	F	Nov	1881	17	S	0	0	0	Penn	Amsterdam	England			
Joseph Pollock	Son	W	M	Feb	1886	12	S	0	0	0	Penn	Amsterdam	England			
Ladie Pollock	Daughter	W	F	Jan	1890	8	S	0	0	0	Penn	Amsterdam	England			

What was their street (house) (neighborhood) (city) like?

- Google Street view, Google Earth
- Local library, university libraries
- Community histories
- Newspapers
- Magazines of the period
- Wikipedia
- Local museums
- Photos from the era of the neighborhood or town
- Relatives



How much money (in today's currency) did they earn? How did they earn it? How did they spend it?

- Census and tax records
- Websites by company or institution or occupation, trade directories, apprentice records, union rosters
- Estate records, land records, plantation records
- Community Histories
- Personal or private records, papers and/or correspondence
- Business records
- Diaries or journals
- Merchant records, receipts
- Rate (rent) Books
- Books or websites about the social history of the location



What was their social class?

- Court records and Criminal records
- Occupation
- Newspapers
- Estate records and wills
- Special collections at university libraries
- Diaries and journals
- Community histories
- Headstones
- Relatives
- Artifacts and heirlooms

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
IDENTIFICATION DIVISION, WASHINGTON, D. C.

Received MAY 4 1932
From N. Jell - Chicago
Crime Vis Income Tax Laws
Sentence: 10 yrs. — mos. — days
Date of sentence Oct 24 - 1931
Sentence begins May 4 - 1932
Sentence expires May 2 - 1942
Good time sentence expires Feb 19 - 1939
Date of birth 11-99 Occupation Jambler
Birthplace NY Nationality
Age 32 Complexion fair
Height 5-10 1/2 Eyes gray
Weight 255 Hair dark brown
Build stout

Scars and marks oblique scar of 4" across cheek 2" in front left ear - vertical scar of 2 1/2" on left jaw - oblique scar of 2 1/2" - 2" under left ear neck

NAME	NUMBER	CITY OR INSTITUTION	DATE	CHARGE	DISPOSITION OR SENTENCE
	C	NY City	1919	Dis Comd	Discharged
	D	Chicago Ill	1923	Truffic Vis	Dismissed
	E	Do	5-8-24	Murder Wit	Released
	H	Do	6-7-26	Vis NPA	Dismissed
	I	Do	7-28-26	Murder	Charge Withdrawn
	J	Do	10-1-26	Vis NPA	Dismissed
	K	Do	11-12-27	Refus. & Duty	Do
	L	Joliet Ill	12-22-27	Car Weap	Fined 26.00. on
	M	Phila. Pa	5-17-29	Do	Released
		Miami Fla	1928	Do	Released
		Do	5-8-30	Do	Released

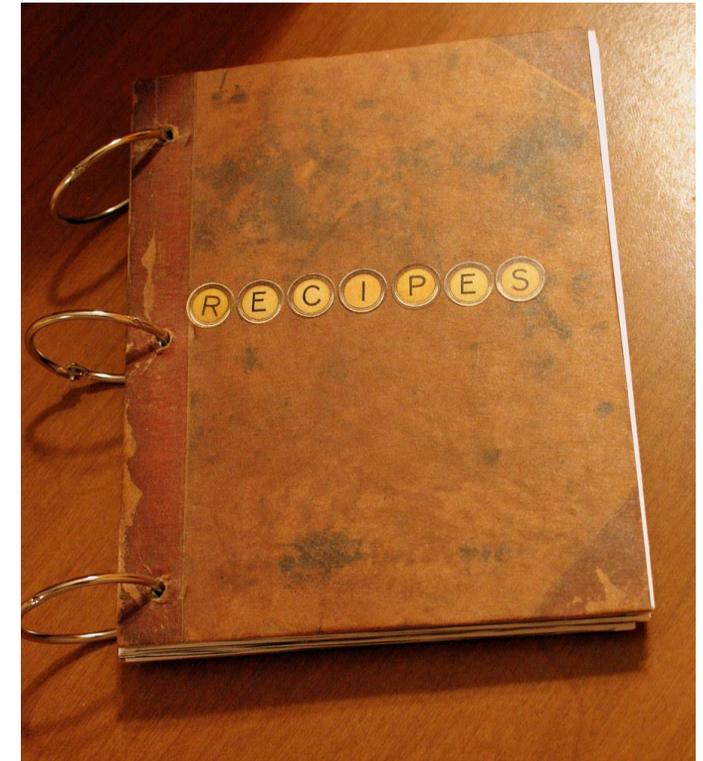
(Please attach additional criminal history and police record for other arrests)

What did they eat? What did they wear?

- Recipe books and collections
- Books or websites about the social history of the location
- Google books
- Historynet.com
- Diaries and journals
- Newspaper advertisements
- Magazines of the period
- Photographs
- Artifacts and heirlooms



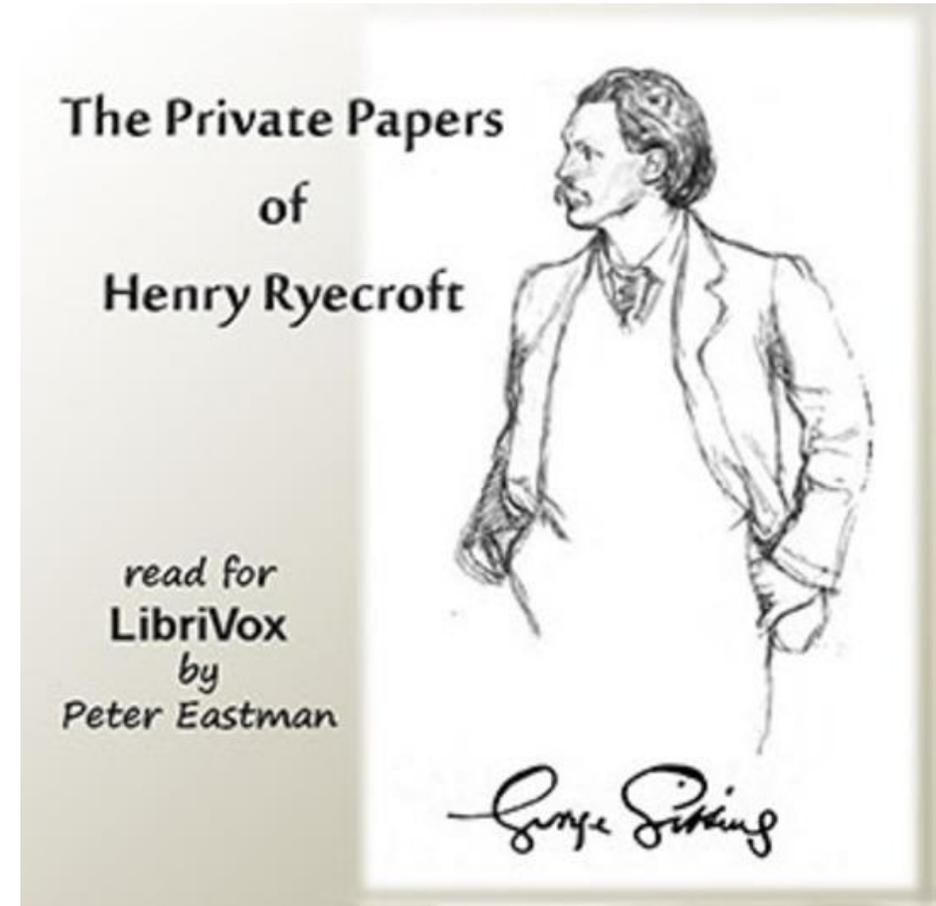
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What were their political beliefs?

- Diaries and journals
- Personal and private papers
- Local library
- Letters
- Community histories
- Newspapers and magazines
- Electoral records



What were their religious beliefs?

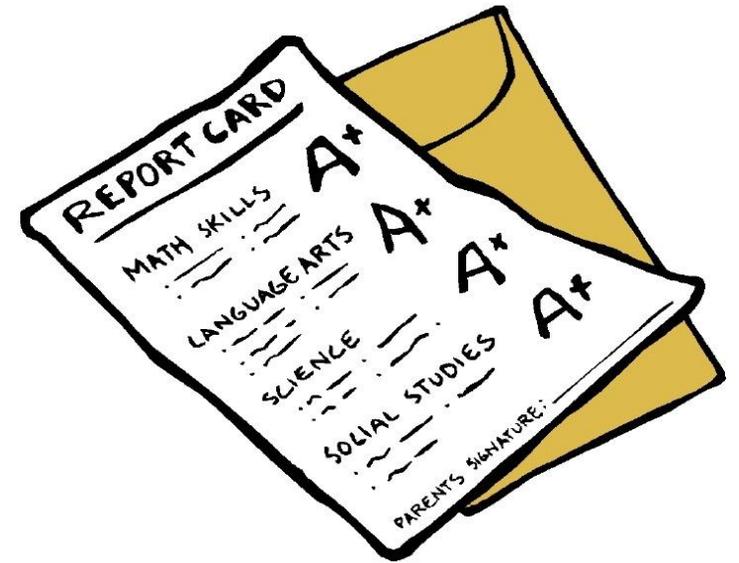
- Diaries and journals
- Letters
- Church records
- Artifacts and heirlooms
- Music (sheet music, recordings) and films
- Community histories

The image shows two pages of a baptismal register from 1906 and 1907. The pages are titled "Registrum Baptizatorum in Ecclesia" and "Diocesis". The entries are handwritten and include names, dates, and locations of baptisms.

Nomen Familiae	A. D. Die Mensis	REGISTRUM BAPTISMORUM	Observanda
Sampko	Dec. 28 th 1906	Ego infra scriptus baptizavi nat. Dec. 20, 1906 Stephen Carolus Sampko Anna Hauert John Delaha Magne Palasz E. S. Kough	
McGee	Dec. 30 th 1906	Ego infra scriptus baptizavi nat. Dec. 13, 1906 Francis Connett Nicholas Mitroich Terena Ryan Matthew Ryan Carbone Ryan Chas. H. Quinn	
Osborne	Jan. 27 th 1907	Ego infra scriptus baptizavi nat. Jan. 10 th 1907 Gileen Thompson John Osborne Mary Anne Carliss Thos. Osborne Mrs. Alice Shelton Edward S. Kough	
Bourke	Jan. 27 th 1907	Ego infra scriptus baptizavi nat. Jan. 8, 1907 John Matthew Bourke Bridget Hastings Doris Sheehan Mary Sheehan E. S. Kough	
Dietz	Feb. 3 rd 1907	Ego infra scriptus baptizavi nat. Jan. 23, 1907 Francis Agnes John Dietz Barbara Schuff Barbara Dietz E. S. Kough	
Enright	Feb. 3 rd 1907	Ego infra scriptus baptizavi nat. Jan. 20, 1907 Thomas Michael Enright Mary Sullivan Patrick Enright Nellie Sullivan E. S. Kough	
Corcoran	Feb. 24 th 1907	Ego infra scriptus baptizavi nat. Feb. 7, 1907 Howard James Timothy Corcoran Ellen Smith Peterson Venard Agnes Venard E. S. Kough	married Maga Catharina Corcoran Feb. 11, 1908. Died. Milt. ad ad. died. ad. cont.
Mack	Mar. 2 nd 1907	Ego infra scriptus baptizavi nat. Mar. 4, 1878 William Joseph Mack Louise Kings Michaelweeney E. S. Kough	Baptized Catholically having been baptized in the Lutheran church

What social and leisure activities did they indulge in?

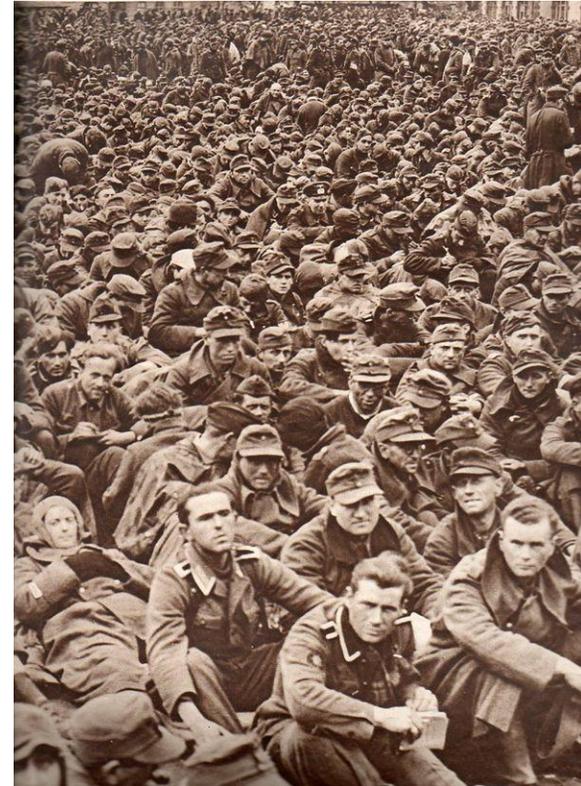
- Local library or museum
- Court records, criminal records
- Personal papers or letters, diaries and journals
- Community histories
- School records
- Yearbooks
- Books or websites about the social history of the location
- Relatives
- Clubs, societies, and social group records



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How did larger social events / problems / disasters affect their lives?

- Census
- Diaries and journals
- Letters
- Community histories
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Hospital records
- Cemetery lists, burial records and grave receipts
- Military histories, websites about wars and military units
- Books and websites about disasters and epidemics (Gendisasters.com)
- Museums
- Bastardy records
- Inquest records



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Some general sources about social history

- ♦ University special collections
- ♦ Local, state and county histories
- ♦ Internet Archive
- ♦ Historynet.com
- ♦ TheSocialHistorian.com - History of everyday people
- ♦ FamilySearch catalog and books
- ♦ Google books
- ♦ Ancestry.com catalog
- ♦ findmypast.com catalog under Directories and Social History.



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And the WIKI!

- Be sure to check out the FamilySearch Research Wiki page for your locality. Each locality page will have a section called Background that will give you a lot of information and sources for social history of the area.
- Or look up "Category: Social Life and Customs" for a list of articles on different countries under this topic.

Germany Background

- Biography
- Church Directories
- Church History
- Cultural Areas
- Cultural Groups
- Feast Days
- Former German Areas
- Funerary Customs
- French Influence
- Gazetteers
- German Word List
- Handwriting
- Historical Geography
- History
- Jurisdictions
- Languages
- Letter Writing Guide
- Maps
- Nobility
- Personal Names
- Websites

Moses McDonald: Wrongfully executed?

Family history and other documents indicated that Moses was born in Ireland, but no one knew much about his parents or his death. He had been confused with another Moses McDonald at one point. Finally, some intrepid family genealogists were able to solve the mystery once and for all! Here's what they found.

In 1976, Eunice Young discovered the 1778 christening of Moses McDonnald, son of John, in the records of the Carnmoney Presbyterian parish, County Antrim, Ireland. (Records now in FamilySearch.org)

Note: I don't take credit for finding this information! The research was done over many years by several people. Larry McDonald found much of the documentary evidence online. Others found things through good old-fashioned research!

F 1595
S.L. # 33839-2.6
p. 43

FHL 258610 #1 pg 43

CARNMONEY PRESBYTERIAN, ANTRIM, IRE.
1700-1916

Child's name	Parents' name	Date	Child's name	Parents' name
		1778		
ee	Saml. M' Carmick	July 26	W ^m Kirkpatrick	W ^m M' Mullon
es	Geo. Duncan	Aug 16	Jane Merochal	Geo. Paisly
ea	W ^m Harper	26	Jennet	James Paisly
ea	Richard Dixon		Rebecca	John Biggar
Thy	W ^m Anderson		Elizabeth	David Ramsey
es Thomson	W ^m Murphy		Elenor	William Logan
abeth	W ^m Dawson	★ 30	Moses	John M' Donald
es	John Harper		James	James Blanning

Moses was married to Mary Glass, according to records of their son, James from 1845.

"Moses and Mary Glass McDonald lived in picturesque Crawfordsburn, but it was a hard scrabble life just as it was for all Irish peasants. Owning little and not apt to ever acquire much, the future oftentimes looked bleak. Though we don't know why Moses and Mary decided to migrate to Scotland it may have been because of political unrest and economic problems in Ireland. In 1800 the Irish Parliament and the Parliament of Great Britain passed the Act of Union which, in January 1801, abolished the Irish legislature, and merged the Kingdom of Ireland and the Kingdom of Great Britain to create the United Kingdom of Great Britain. England regained direct power over Ireland which brought major changes for the Irish people as decisions on the Irish economy would be made by people in London who had little understanding of Ireland and its needs. In addition, in the late 1700s there was a large increase in Irish population, which, coupled with the small size of their tenant holdings created an untenable situation where crops were so small they could not feed a family. Emigration became common during that time."

- ♦ From "The Book of Moses," by Mary Ann Wilke McDonald

Irish History and Genealogy

History Ireland

Clan MacDonald | History, Tartan, & Battles | Highland Titles

GENUKI: Ireland, .All of Ireland

GENUKI: Scotland, .All of Scotland



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On the Fringe and in the Middle The MacDonaldf of Antrim and the Isles 1266-1586 by Philip Smith

Published in [Early Modern History \(1500–1700\)](#), [Features](#), [Issue 1 \(Spring 1994\)](#), [Medieval History \(pre-1500\)](#), [Volume 2](#)

During the later middle ages the Gaelic-speaking regions of Ireland and Scotland witnessed a revival in influence. In the north of Ireland, the arrival of Anglo-Norman power in the mid-fourteenth century facilitated a partial indigenous 'reconquest', while in Scotland the Gaelic-speaking Hebridean population escaped Norse rule to maintain a degree of autonomy within the kingdom.

The Gaelic revival in Scotland was the Clan Donald or MacDonaldf, a family whose 'Lordship of the Isles' was of an extent in terms of size and military strength that at its height it encompassed the whole of the Scottish west coast, from the northern highlands and part of Ulster too. As a consequence the MacDonaldf not only played a leading role within the affairs of the 'Celtic' fringe, but were increasingly drawn into the wider world of the British Empire, Ireland, Scotland and England.

MacDonaldf

The MacDonaldf were descended from Somerled of Argyll who in the mid-twelfth century ousted the Norse from the Scottish west coast, a consequence of Viking settlement over the previous three centuries. Upon his death in 1165, his lands were divided amongst his sons in Gaelic fashion; in 1266 when Alexander III of Scotland died, the territories of the three major clans descended from Somerled – the MacDougalls, the MacRuairis and the MacDonaldf – were incorporated within the Scots realm. This had a profound effect upon the Gaelic west. Since the early twelfth century, the Scots kingdom had been a mixture of Gaelic and Norman and continental society. The Gaelic tongue was superseded by Scots English. The west was transformed into a feudal kingdom, where practices such as primogeniture and the issue of charters of land replaced Gaelic usages such as tanistry. After 1266, although the highlands and islands remained Gaelic-speaking, elements of feudal society were introduced from eastern and lowland Scotland.



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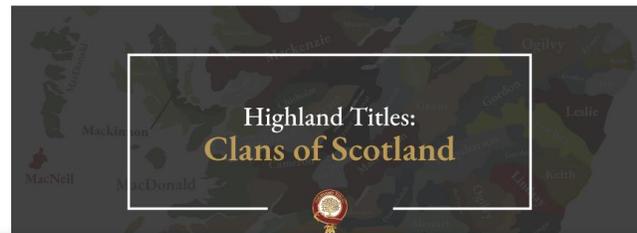
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Clan MacDonaldf: History, Tartan & Battles

Written by: **Stewart Borland**
Published: 26th March 2019, last updated: 14th April 2022

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CROWDFUNDING THE REVOLUTION

'Expertly chronicles the struggle of the revolutionary Irish government to fund itself under the nose of a hostile British empire.'

Ronan McCreevy, *The Irish Times*



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2022 MUSEUM PRIZE POUR DU MUSÉE

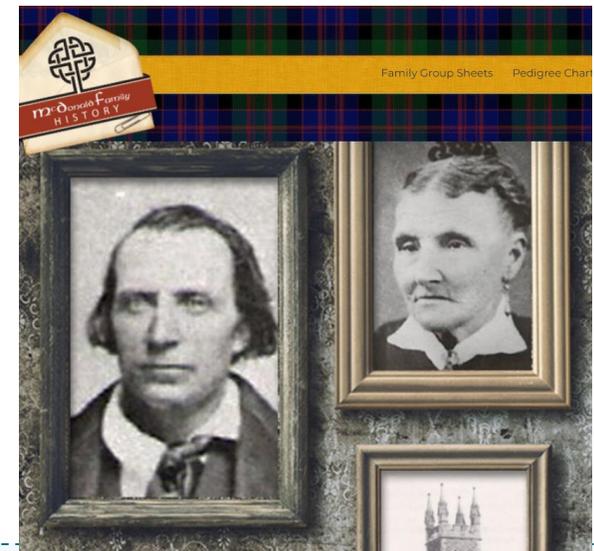
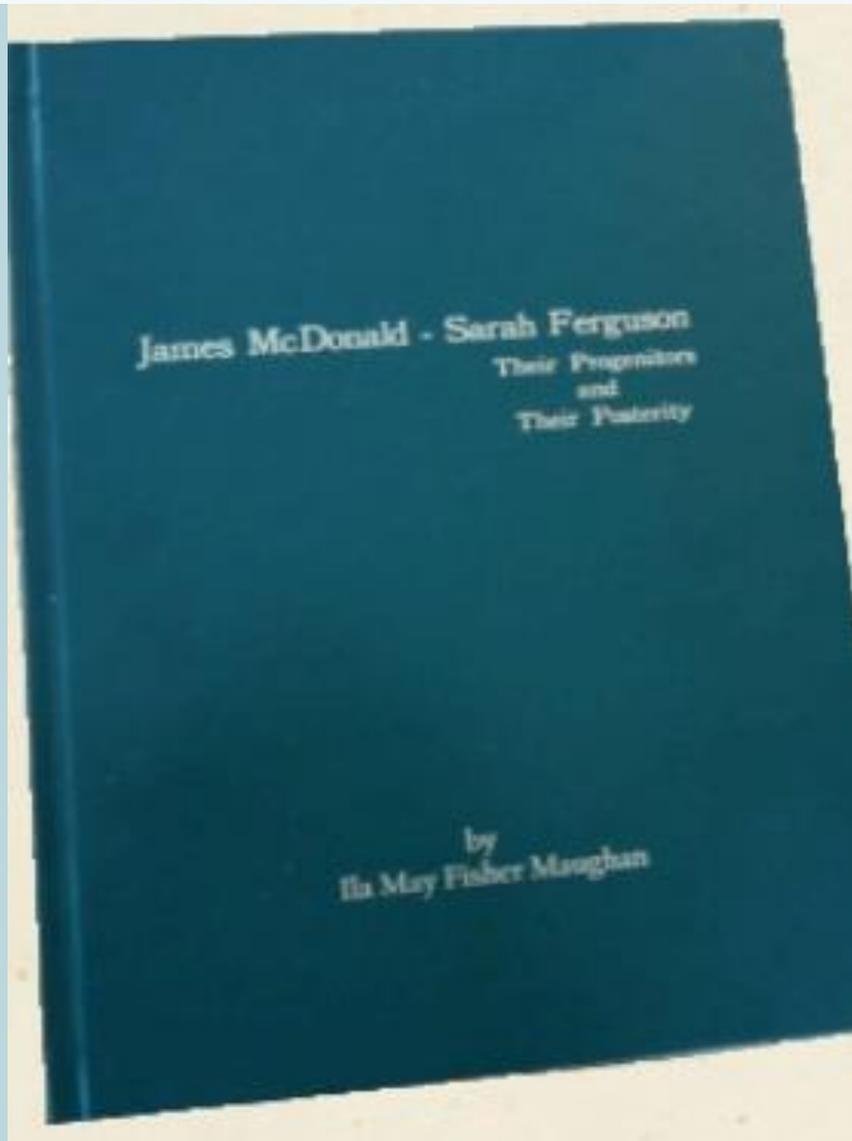


AVAILABLE TO ORDER

BIRTH and the IRISH a miscellany

A Family Website and
a Book about their son
that contained church
records with their names.

[McDonald Family History – Our Past. Your Future.](#)



A journal and a newspaper article

- *The Caledonian Mercury* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland)
• 8 Jun 1812, Mon · Page 3

Larry McDonald discovered that Moses had been hanged for robbery in 1812 by doing online searches.

"I Googled 'Moses McDonald' and after scrolling through several pages found a journal of a Greenock town clerk named James Muir that shocked me. It said, 'Friday, June 5th (1812) Moses McDonald was executed at Greenock, for Housebreaking theft.'"

EXECUTION OF MOSES McDONALD.
Greenock, June 5, 1812.

Yesterday, in pursuance of his sentence, at the last Circuit Court of Justiciary, held at Glasgow, Moses McDonald was executed here, for the robbery of the ship of James Jelly, grocer, Leigh Street, in December last. In addition to the detachment of the Ayrshire militia, which has been stationed here for some time, four companies arrived from Paisley, on Thursday, of the same regiment, at present quartered in that town. The gibbet was erected early yesterday morning, on the square, about six yards from the front of the Church. At twelve o'clock the military were drawn out round the scaffold; at a quarter past two, the Sheriff, the two Magistrates, with white staves in their hands, the Town Council, Town Clerk, Kaytred McSkel, Dr. Gilchrist, Reverend Messrs Heron and Bryan, his father and sister, all dressed in black, together with the town officers, the executioner from Edinburgh, and the criminal, attended by a party of soldiers, came down from the Bridewell, and walked up under the pillars of the Church; the criminal then received some wine from the hands of his sister. They continued in prayer and singing psalms until ten minutes past three o'clock, when he took farewell of the Magistrates and Clergy, and ascended the scaffold with a firm step, by a stage erected just from the Church falling; the executioner then put the rope round his neck, drew a white cap over his face, then withdrew, and at a quarter past three, he gave the signal by dropping a handkerchief; the drop fell, when, dreadful to relate, the rope broke, and he fell to the ground; his sister, who was near instantly assisted him in rising, (his arms being tied) he immediately got up, and walked steadily, without the least attempt to escape, to the Church door; he was then taken into the Church, and, turned aside, the back of his head was a little bruised by the fall; another rope was procured, the drop was supported underneath by a plank, he again mounted the scaffold with a firm and quick pace, the executioner put the rope round his neck, tied the other end on the hook above, and drew the cap over his face. He then went below, and, on the signal being given, knocked the prop away, when the drop fell, and he was launched into eternity at 20 minutes before four o'clock. He made three or four feeble convulsive throes, and was apparently dead in three minutes. The body was taken down at 20 minutes past four o'clock, put into a coffin, and given to his relations, who carried it up to the Bridewell. McDonald was a stout man, about 35 years of age, a native of Ireland, but has resided here for a number of years, wrought as a jobber about the quays, and furnished ships with ballast. He was dressed in his common clothes, viz: a short blue coat, blue vest, white trousers, and grey stockings. He seemed very penitent, and duly affected with his awful situation. He has left a wife and five children.

There was a great number of spectators, but no accident happened.

History of the Town of Greenock

Part 12

- ♦ Among the oldest establishments is the rope-work possessed by the Messrs. Ramsay, near the old battery. It was begun by Robert Donald in 1725, and was in different hands till purchased by its present possessors. Besides this, there is a variety of works, where excellent ropes of all kinds are manufactured. There is the Gourock Rope-work Co., as also Messrs. Quintin Leitch & Co., Messrs. M'Nab & Co., and some smaller works.
- ♦ Fifth—Glebe Sugarhouse, built in 1811 or 1812, for two pans. Enlarged, and now the property of William Leitch & Co.

[History of the Town of Greenock \(electricScotland.com\)](http://electricScotland.com)

Sir Walter Scott's
*Edinburgh Annual
Register, V. 5, Part
II, p. 90-91.*
Found in Google
Books and
Archive.org

4th.—MURDER.—On Tuesday last, the 2d current, Captain Charles Munro, late of the 42d regiment, and Robert Ferguson, ship carpenter, both residing at Inverbrecky Ferry, parish of Resolis, Scotland, having met at a neighbouring work-shop, a trifling dispute arose between them. After a little altercation, Ferguson pulled a large knife out of his pocket, and plunged it into Captain Munro's side. Dr McDonald at Cromarty, who was immediately called, dressed the wound with the greatest skill and tenderness, and afforded every possible assistance, but all to no purpose; the wound was mortal, and next evening, about 28 hours after receiving the cruel stab, the Captain died.—Upon perpetrating the atrocious deed, the base assassin attempted to elude the violated laws of his country, by absconding. In consequence, however, of the exertions of Capt. Mackenzie of Newhall, whose activity on this occasion merits the highest praise, the miscreant was taken on the same evening, and lodged early next morning in the jail of Tain. Capt. Munro has left an indigent widow and a numerous helpless family to deplore his premature and cruel death.

5th.—ATTEMPT AT ASSASSINATION.—Mr Burrows, a hay salesman, residing at Appleton, was suddenly attacked in his chaise, near his residence, by Thomas Bowler, a neighbouring farmer, who discharged a blunderbuss at him, and lodged the contents (slugs) in his neck and body. The following testimony of a blacksmith at Appleton gives the whole case.—The assassin, who is a man seventy years of age, called at the smith's shop, on horseback, at five o'clock on Saturday morning, accompanied by his grandson, and produced a blunderbuss, which he asked leave

to make the lock secure to go off, as he wanted to shoot a mad dog. After he had done something to the lock, he left the piece in the shop, having described it as being loaded, and walked by the side of the canal, whilst his grandson led his horse about the road. The canal path commanded a view of Burrows' residence, and after walking there nearly two hours, he returned to the smith's shop, when Burrows was approaching it, and having taken up the blunderbuss, he met him and presented it, when Burrows called out, "For God's sake don't shoot me," and inclined his head upon his legs. The assassin, however, pulled the trigger, and Burrows fell, when the former mounted his horse, and rode off. The situation of the wounded man is very precarious; four slugs have been extracted from his neck and head, but there are others in the body, one of which is supposed to have lodged near the blade-bone. There are some favourable symptoms, and some hopes are entertained that his life will be saved. Mr Wood, a coal-merchant, pursued the assassin as far as Bushy Heath, near Watford, and police-officers have scoured the country. The cause of the diabolical act is said to have arisen from some family jealousies. The parties had a litigation about a month since, when high words arose, but they had since been apparent good friends.—Bowler has since been apprehended, tried, and executed.

6th.—GREENOCK.—Yesterday, in pursuance of his sentence, at the last Circuit Court of Justiciary, held at Glasgow, Moses McDonald was executed here, for the robbery of the shop of Mr James Jelly, grocer, Laigh Street, in December last. At ten minutes past three o'clock, he took farewell of the magistrates and

clergy, and ascended the scaffold with a firm step, by a stage erected out from the church railing; the executioner then put the rope round his neck, drew a white cap over his face, withdrew, and, at a quarter past three, he gave the signal by dropping a handkerchief; the drop fell, when, dreadful to relate, the rope broke, and he fell to the ground; his sister, who was near, instantly assisted him in rising (his arms being tied), when he got up, and walked steadily, without the least attempt to escape, to the church door; he was then taken into the church, and became faint; the back of his head being bruised by the fall—another rope was procured, the drop was supported underneath by a plank, he again mounted the scaffold with a firm and quick pace, the executioner put the rope round his neck, tied the other end on a hook above, and drew the cap over his face. He then went below, and, on the signal being given, knocked the prop away, when the drop fell, and he was launched into eternity at twenty minutes before four o'clock. He made three or four feeble convulsive throes, and was apparently dead in three minutes. McDonald was a stout man, about thirty-five years of age, a native of Ireland, but has resided here for a number of years; he wrought as a jobber about the quays, and furnished ships with ballast.

8th.—PLYMOUTH.—This morning at three o'clock a dreadful fire broke out at three places at once, in the Rope-house of the Royal Dock-yard at this port, which raged with great fury for several hours, and entirely consumed some of the machinery and the roof of that noble building; but by the exertion of the different regiments in garrison, and dock-yard men, it was at length got under, with the

aid of the ponderous fire-engines of the dock-yard. As the wind blew hard at E. and the fire broke out on the weather side, in three places, and where neither fire or candle, or light of any sort, is ever used, there is no doubt of its having been perpetrated by some incendiary, or incendiaries, and had it not been discovered providentially when it was, the vital interests of this country might have been nearly destroyed, as the opposite storehouses contained 1000 barrels of tar and 1000 tons of hemp, &c. and very large piles of heavy timber. The windows of those storehouses were scorched, but by the timely and strenuous exertions of the troops and all ranks of people, the intended mischief was prevented. Various conjectures are afloat as to the cause of this conflagration, but at present all is conjecture and surmise.

POLICE.—BOW-STREET.—Yesterday, between 11 and 12 o'clock, as two females, genteelly dressed, were passing the end of the Mall, opposite the Queen's Palace, they were rudely accosted by a man, with a large open clasp-knife, in a position as if he intended to cut them down; they screamed out, ran away, and escaped from him into Pimlico. After they had escaped, he went up to a man who had the appearance of a porter, and in a more direct manner attempted to stab him, but he also avoided the attack, and escaped. A gentleman who had observed his outrageous conduct, watched him into the White Horse public-house in Pimlico, went in search of a police-officer, and found Nicholls in the Park, who went there, took him into custody, got him quietly across the Park to the office, where he underwent an examination; when it appeared that a soldier on duty at the Queen's Guard had taken the

The National Records of Scotland catalogue. (I can send for these records.) These give the trial information, including witnesses, one of whom was Moses' wife, Mary Glass, whom we know is the correct spouse!

The screenshot shows the National Records of Scotland website. The logo is in the top left, and the word 'Catalogue' is in the top right. A navigation bar contains 'Welcome', 'Browse', 'Search', 'Results summary', and '[Results]'. Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb trail reads 'You are in: Catalogue search > Search results > Overview'. On the left, there are 'Page options' (Print this page, Previous page) and 'Records updated: 14 May 2022'. The main content area is titled 'Search results overview sorted by reference.' and shows a search for 'Moses McDonald' between 1812 and 1812. A 'Jump to:' list of letters A-Z is provided. Below this, there are navigation links '< previous' and 'next >'. A table of results is shown with columns for Reference, Title, and Date. The first result is 'AD14/12/68' with the title 'Precognition against Janet Henry, John Gray, Moses McDonald, Alexander Gibson for the crime of housebreaking and reset' and the date '1812'. The second result is 'JC26/1812/30' with the title 'Trial papers relating to Moses McDonald, John Gray and Alexander Gibson for the crime of theft by housebreaking' and the date '29 Apr 1812'. Below the table are navigation links '< previous' and 'next >', and a note 'Click on a reference number to see details'. A 'Refine Search' link is at the bottom. The footer contains contact information for the National Records of Scotland.

National Records of Scotland
H.M. General Register House, 2 Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3YV; tel: +44 (0) 131 535 1314; email: historical_enquiries@nrs.gov.uk

And a religious pamphlet that gives eyewitness detail, although some of it is suspect.

The Life and Character of William Bird, who was Executed at Cambridge for Forgery, on the 28th of March 1812. With Some Letters which He Wrote While Under Sentence of Death. By a Resident in the University. To which is Added, Some Account and Reflections of M. Macdonald, who was Executed at Greenock, for Robbery, on the 5th of June 1812

By William BIRD (Forger.) · 1812

A Book about the Town that gives more detail and contains exonerating evidence.

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outlawed. There was still another person involved, a woman of the name of Scott, who was afterwards tried and convicted of retreating part of the stolen goods, and sentenced to imprisonment. This being the first execution in Greenock, it may be imagined that the public mind was greatly excited, and not less so were the authorities on whom devolved the painful duty of enforcing the sentence. It so happened that the prison of Greenock, erected a few years before, was undergoing alteration and repair, which were absolutely necessary before the felons could be received. The Town Clerk, by instructions of the Magistrates, therefore corresponded with the Sheriffs of Kestrew and Lanark, and the Sheriff-Substitute at Paisley, requesting that the prisoners should be detained in Glasgow, until accommodation should be provided for them in Greenock; and they were asked to "concert in what manner the felons are to be transported, but it has been suggested that the sending them with officers on a cart, and under a military guard, will be the easiest and best manner." This appears to have been the course adopted. The Chief Magistrate, (Mr. Crawford), then communicated with the Exchequer, and City Clerk in Edinburgh, for the loan of the gibbet, (or, as it was called, the apparatus), lying at Edinburgh, to be forwarded to Greenock. They engaged John High as executioner, (the *Marrowd* of the day), whose services had been often required in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and only recently in Glasgow.* Arrangements were made for the fee and expenses of High and his "guide," or guard. A communication was also addressed by the Chief Magistrate to General. Peters, commanding the western district of Glasgow, intimating the day fixed for the execution, and stating, "You are aware that there is but one company of military here at this time, and as at least three or four additional companies will be requisite to prevent tumult and confusion at the execution, I have to request you may order them to be here by Wednesday, the fourth of June." The request was complied with. At the same time Mr. Campbell, Sheriff-Substitute at Paisley, had suggested to the magistrates the hazard the executioner ran, and this was the reason no doubt why he was accompanied by a guide. It would appear that a petition had been addressed to His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, craving a commutation of Macdonald's sentence; but two days before the execution, Sheriff Campbell communicated to the magistrates a letter he had received from the Secretary of State, intimating that His Royal Highness had seen no cause to stay the execution of the sentence. Accordingly on the fifth of June, between the hours of two and four in the afternoon, Macdonald suffered the extreme penalty of the law. The gibbet was erected in front of the Mid Parish Church, outside of the railings, the condemned man being led from the prison through what is now Church Place, to the place of execution, the Church being at this time enclosed by a wall on the east and another on the west, now occupied by pavements. It is a popular fiction that the execution took place in the *centre of the Square*, and that this was the reason for the insertion of the *horse shoe* on this spot. It was a

* Chambers ("Traditions of Edinburgh," vol. 2—"Characters") notes that High officiated as public executioner for nearly forty years previous to his death in 1817. He was prevailed on to accept the berth as the condition of his own escape from college punishment, his saving eggs from the nooses of Peter Bannan, the celebrated looker-up at the Cowgate Foot.

GREENOCK UNDER THE SHAW STEWART FAMILY. 221

day long remembered in Greenock, and we have often heard it spoken of by eye-witnesses. One of these was a nephew of old Mungo Telfer's, who informed us many years ago that he had viewed the execution from Telfer's house, which he described as in the top flat of Mr. Cameron's old property at the corner of the Square. The house was standing in 1839, when Weir wrote his "History," which contains a drawing of it. We here transcribe a letter addressed by the author's father to the *Greenock Advertiser* of 2nd October, 1839, speaking of the execution. "In the 'Statistical paper relative to the criminal business in the Circuit Court in Glasgow,' lately published by the indefatigable Dr. Cleland, of Glasgow, I observe that the Doctor has given a list of the names of criminals executed in Greenock. The first in the list is Moses Macdonald, quay jobber, who was hanged 5th June, 1812, for theft, committed by means of housebreaking. To this notice of Macdonald, the Doctor subjoins the following anecdote:—'He was tried in *Edinburgh*; and while in Glasgow prison, where he stopt one night on his way to Greenock, he requested of James Wright, the upper turnkey, to give him a piece of candle in his pocket to grease the rope, as he was afraid they did not know how to hang folk in Greenock. At his execution, when the drop fell, the rope broke, and Macdonald, who was a heavy man, was precipitated to the ground.' Now, as the anecdote might, if unexplained, lead to the supposition that the people of Greenock were as ignorant of the knowledge of rope-making as they were unaccustomed to 'hanging folk'; I deem it but fair play to my townsmen to state that the rope which broke was that which the finisher of the law brought with him from Glasgow; and which, when afterwards examined, had more the appearance of, and indeed was conjectured to be, a cord taken from a tea box, rather than a rope made on purpose to suspend, 'until he be dead,' so heavy a man as the criminal proved to be. The rope with which Macdonald was hanged was made in Greenock. Between the time of his falling, and his finally being thrown off with a new rope, a period of fully three quarters of an hour elapsed, which the unfortunate man employed in prayer in the New Church, in front of which the drop stood. He was assisted into the church by his *sister*, who was a spectator of the execution, and was the first person who ran to raise him when he fell!" This was not the last of this deplorable case. We have still something to say of Jelly himself. The following paragraph is from the *Advertiser* of 16th September, 1812:—'James Jelly, the keeper of a buckster shop in town, whose dealings were pretty extensive, having formed the design of defrauding his creditors, robbed his own shop and cellars of a variety of articles, which were concealed in various places, and delivered bank notes and bills to a considerable amount to his wife, so as the same might be secreted; and bank notes and bills to the amount of about £700 were accordingly conveyed by her to a neighbouring house and concealed, and Jelly himself absconded. A variety of circumstances led to the discovery of the whole property, which was secured, and Jelly and his wife taken into custody. To avoid the trial and punishment to which their conduct exposed them, they petitioned for, and have been allowed to go into banishment, for and during the term of their natural lives, under certification that, if they are again seen within the liberties of Greenock, they will be committed to

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the *Blackwell for thirty days*, exposed on the pillory, and again sent into banishment." Jelly had been in good circumstances, for it appears that in March of the same year he had fenced a large piece of ground from Sir Michael Shaw Stewart on the south side of Alexander Street, now Roxburgh Street, and west side of Captain Street, consisting of upwards of 75 falls, charged with an annual fee-duty of £50. The ground is now occupied by the Roxburgh Street Sugar Refinery. With a view still further to defraud his creditors, Jelly conveyed the ground, with a slated house of two stories and garrets, built on part of the fee, to his wife and his three sons, by a post-nuptial marriage contract, on which they were infert, but, as the transaction took place within sixty days of his insolvency, the property was seized by his creditors. In our old Scottish Acts, according to Baron Hume, "the pains of *thief* and *sworn* are spoken of as things well known to be one and the same." "Among the many authorities which touch on this point there is none that argues for such excessive severity, or carries the precept further than this, that a single act of theft may warrantably be punished with death, *si sit admodum grave*, if taken in all its circumstances, it is a great and serious offence." Cases of cattle stealing are those most commonly cited. The aggravation of housebreaking, and the *quantity of property stolen*, appear to the Court to have made theft *furtum grave*. Happily the capital sentence is not now pronounced for such offences, however grave, and is restricted generally to murder. Transportation and the extreme penalty above noticed have been abolished, and penal servitude has been substituted.

Five years and more elapsed since the first execution, and now we proceed to record the second. The particulars which follow are derived mainly from the "Personal Recollections" of the author's father. "The town of Greenock during the year 1816 was uncommonly tranquil. Unfortunately, that tranquility was disturbed on the morning of Sunday, 23rd March, 1817, when Bernard and Hugh McIlvogue and Patrick McCristal, along with Bernard Hutton, an accomplice, broke into the house of Robert Morris, farmer at Everton, and were guilty of the crimes of *stealbrief*, robbery, and a brutal assault, etc. charged in the indictment against them. Neither Morris nor the women who were in the house could give any information so as to trace the criminals. Mr. Lennox, the Master of Police, to whom he made his complaint, interrogated him closely whether any persons were in the habit of frequenting his house, but he could mention nobody, and from being of rather a dull disposition, little or no information could be drawn from him. At last he happened to mention that when the robbers were in the house, they pretended as first to be *gangers*, looking for smuggled whisky. Lennox took the hint, and having heard some time before that a man who lived behind Boag's Land, in Sugarhouse Lane and Vennel, had been accused of presenting an Exciseman, and taking whisky from smugglers, he instantly repaired to his house, in company with Morris, but Morris could not identify him. As Lennox was coming out, the man slipped a piece of paper into his hand, which was instantly perused. It purported to give information against Bernard Hutton and other two men whom he called *Ziggo*, or some such name, as vendors of base money, and the man stated verbally that these persons had injured him in some smuggling transaction, and that he took this

Old Greenock from the Earliest Times to the Early Part of the Nineteenth Century:
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📖 **Book** / Steele, William (Advocate)

Edinburgh: Thomas Clark, Getzville, New York: William S. Hein & Co., 1833, 1 online resource (235 pages)., English

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And another newspaper article

The Observer (London, Greater London, England) · 27 Sep 1812, Sun · Page 4

James Jelly, the keeper of a huckster's shop in Greenock, whose dealings were pretty extensive, having formed the design of defrauding his creditors, lately robbed his own shop and cellars of a variety of articles which were concealed in various places, and delivered bank-notes and bills to the amount of 700*l.* to his wife, to be secreted at a neighbour's. Jelly then absconded; but a variety of circumstances having led to a discovery of the whole property, which was secured, Jelly and his wife, to escape punishment, petitioned to be allowed to go into banishment, for life, from Greenock, which was granted.

THE
BOOK
OF
MOSES

The Saga of Our Forefather:
Moses McDonald

All of this
information was put into
a biographical essay by
Mary Ann Wilke
McDonald.

[Moses McDonald \(1778–1812\)](#) | [Person](#) | [Family
Tree](#) | [FamilySearch](#)

Final Word of Advice

From Katherine Stott Sturdevant:

- ✓ Remind yourself to be flexible.
- ✓ Be open-minded.
- ✓ Avoid anachronisms.
- ✓ Never assume.
- ✓ Do not dismiss something interesting as minor or frivolous.
- ✓ Expect complexity.

And I would add:

Don't be surprised, chagrined or dismayed at what you find. Most family trees have lots of fruits and nuts!