

A Brief Barclay Family History

The furthest back ancestor I have now traced is William Barclay, who was born in Auchtermuchty in 1719 to James Barclay and Katharin Crow, and married Margaret Honeyman in Falkland in 1748. Katharin's father was given as Robert, and was cautioner (proposer) for their marriage. I haven't yet been able to trace either side further back than that but will continue to try to track them down. William and Margaret had 3 children I have traced so far, plus another 2 whom I have names but no dates for. The relevant one to our line was again William, born 24 July 1767 in Falkland. He married Mary Stark in Falkland in 1791, and they went on to have a total of 10 children, 9 of whom I have traced successfully, in Leslie then moving to Markinch. He worked initially (1791) as a servant to Andrew Donaldson at Ballingall mill, before moving to Pitcairn as a labourer (presumably agricultural) and then Balfarg, another farm in the area. Interestingly, Pitcairn Farm still exists (the buildings, anyway) and now serves as a Station for the local Ranger service. Balfarg is an area of Glenrothes nowadays and the farm is long gone.

Their son David was born 22 April 1796 at Pitcairn, and married Margaret Ford c 1818 in Markinch. The Old Parish Records for this period are a bit sporadic, and I have been unable to trace their marriage, but it is certain that by 1819 when their first son William was born that they were resident at Bandon Farm. This still exists as a working smallholding, and two small cottages from that period are attached to the main farm building. I hope to have photographs of Pitcairn and Bandon available on this page shortly. This is where the line diverges towards the American connection. James was born 10 April 1822 at Bandon, and David 3 August 1828 at Pitcairn. They both became shoemakers. I descend from James's line, and Brian Barclay in Arizona comes from David's line. David Barclay and Margaret Ford had seven children, and then she died in August 1833. The Markinch burial Records note an *"Isobel Barclay, aged 7, daughter of William Barclay at Markinch, 12 Mar 1840 in grave of Mgt Ford, spouse of David Barclay at Pitcairn, int 8 Aug 1833."* David then married Jane Graham in Arngask on 16 November 1834, and had 4 further children I am aware of.

His son Michael Barclay married Margaret Finlay around 1870, started to raise a family and then emigrated to Utah, in the United States, in 1878 following his his half-sister Jean (from David's marriage with Margaret Ford). Jean had married George Meldrum in 1848 in Leslie. They raised a family of 5 boys in Cowdenbeath before emigrating to the United States in 1860. They left on board the "Underwriter" from Liverpool on 30th March, and landed in New York on 1st May, 33 days later. They were members of the church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons), and joined boarded a train which took them to Nebraska. Here they joined the Ninth Handcart Company, with 6 wagons and 43 handcarts, which set off on the thousand mile trek to Utah on 6th June 1860. The carts were pushed and pulled by the families, and small children rode on the carts. It is alleged that the 2 oldest sons, John (11) and David (8), walked the entire distance. Five months and 6 days after leaving Cowdenbeath, the Meldrum family reached Provo, Utah, where George Meldrum set up a shoe making shop.

Moving back to my line, James married Agnes Turner in Falkland in 1846, and they had 8 children I know of. My great-great-grandfather was a shoemaker in Freuchie in all the censuses from 1851 - 1891, before dying there at the ripe old age of 81 in 1903. His family all worked in the weaving or linen mill trade, which was flourishing in the area at that time. My paternal grandmother Isabella's father, James, died just before she was born, leaving a family of six, and life must have been rather difficult. He married Isabella Margaret Kerr in Cupar in 1890, where he was employed as a carter, but had moved to Burntisland by June of that year

when his first son was born (yes, another shotgun marriage - it wasn't just the Brand side of the family!) when he was described on the birth certificate as a Farm Servant. In the 1891 census he is mentioned as being employed as a Waggon Driver (Dock). By the time my grandmother Isabella was born he was described on her birth certificate as a dock labourer, which given the fact that the docks were very busy and probably more lucrative by then than the land, is hardly surprising. His early death must have caused my great-grandmother a lot of problems, being left with 6 children.

Gran married William Brand on 4 August 1924 at Burntisland Manse, uniting the 2 main branches of the family. Her mother had died just 2 months before in Edinburgh.