

Carswell Connection

The Carswells of Duncarnock, an Ancient Scottish Family.

By N McN Brodie Nova Scotia, written in 1884.

The house of Duncarnock had been built after a primitive type of architecture. It was a long low thatched building that varied in its functions & character as you went from one end of the range to the other. At the west end was the dairy next to which was the cow house & stable, between which & the kitchen there was a passage across the building, & beyond this the other rooms of the family dwelling. Here the building was terminated, but after the interval of a passage about 15 feet wide, it was resumed by the barn & ended by the cart house. This primitive but commodious homestead stood in a mossy table ground beneath the shadow of a lofty hill. Before the front door was a large garden, surrounded by a stone fence & tall ash trees like giant sentinels guarded its borders. Further out at the end of the corse one of the most extensive views in Scotland in a clear day presents itself. Although to the West & South the scene is curtailed & abridged by rocks & moorlands that are comparatively near. To the Southeast the eye stretches far away over valley & ridge till it rests on the hazy outline of Tinock standing above the blue mists of the horizon. Rising from a plain of the east & towering over & beyond the dim gloomy City of Glasgow, are to be seen the Campsie Hills in Stirlingshire, while nearer & more to the North are the braes of Kilpatrick in Dumbartonshire & behind the latter the famous range of the Grampians, blue as the Summers sky & stretching away into Perthshire. To the North down over the village of Barrhead looking past the Ferenese braes & the town of Paisley, then rising above the hills of Dumbarton, the eye lights upon the lofty summit of Ben Lomand, & then roams wonderingly athwart the rugged peaks of Glenorchy, once a bone of contention between the Campbells & Macgregors.

Duncarnock has been owned & occupied by the Carswells of that ilk from a very remote period, for I once saw part of an old record, which stated that William Carswell was a heritor there, as far back as the reign of William & Mary, the same standing that his namesake & successor maintained during the reign of the last two Georges & of William 1V. Probably the same family lived in Duncarnock for a long period preceding the time of William 3rd, & not unlikely they were there at the time of the Norman conquest, & how long before that period we do know not, but circumstantial evidence may be gathered from certain characters of the family, such as the non Saxon but British type of features & complexion, with a decided conservation of ways & means that have been long proven & tested, & a prudent aversion to things that are merely speculative. These & other items favour the thesis, that they were there from the time of the Druids. Probably these Carswells dwelt by the Craig of Carnock & spoke Welsh along with the other Britons of Strathclyde in the days of the famous King Arthur. Further more by a very little stretch of the imagination Carswell may be derived from *Caer isel*, which in *Cymrag* signifies Low Camp to distinguish it from *Din Carnedd*, or stone fortress above on the Hill.

We know of no written history of this ancient battleground. It only awaits a careful visit of the learned archaeologist to draw from its timeworn rocks & grisly features, the long secret of its remote history. In the meantime we may safely conclude that this was an important place in the earliest part of our nations' history when the Britons & their Caledonian Kindred may have combined against the hosts of the Roman Caesars. In further proof of the above, there still remains the name at least of a town, which points to a time of Celtic rule & occupation, at least as far back as has been suggested. Fingalton is neither Norman nor Saxon but claims a period when the house of Fingal, the son of Maini defended albyn of the hoary cliffs against the invading forces of the King of the World.

Fully 50 years ago two aged brothers & their widowed sister, dwelt in the peaceful farm house. William the laird was the oldest of the three & must have been about 90 years of age. Robert was six years younger, & Mrs. Allison was 3 or 4 years younger than the Laird. (there was another sister, Mrs Glen of Paisley). William was never married though he had been proprietor of that estate ever since the death of his Father hard upon 80 years before.

Roberts memory could just reach back to the time of his Fathers funeral when someone lifted him up in arms to look at the slow procession of mourners winding round the foot of the hill on their way to the Churchyard at Neilston. After this the three fatherless children grew up together in unity under the charge & care of their excellent Mother. When Robert grew up to manhood, he went to a large manufacturing town in order to learn a trade, but his elder brother sent for him to come back & live on the farm, where they had been born, as there was enough of employment & produce to maintain them all for the rest of their life.

Robert wisely acceded this advice & while the laird attended in his part to the gristmill, for the next 60 years, the younger brother took charge of the farm till 12 years after William's death.

Robert married when he was 40 years of age, more or less, & was the father of a large family of sons & daughters, whom he endeavoured to train up in the fear of God.

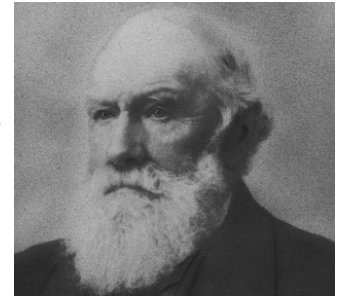
The bible was read morning & evening, in that house by one of the members of this family, & prayer & praise ascended to the god of their fathers. When I first read the book of Genesis about Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob, I did not turn to the east to find their model among the sheiks of Palestine or Arabia, but saw them better & more truly represented in the old men who dwelt close beside us at the foot of the ancient British hill. Those aged people are long since gathered to their people, but while they lived they were the Salt of the Salt of the Earth; a blessing by their spirit & example to their neighbours, for even the habitual swearer & profane jester had to restrain themselves, & maintain decorum in their presence. After William died, a number of people were speaking of his good qualities, when one ventured to speak of him with less respect than the others when Andrew McFarlane, the talented but unfortunate shoemaker answered - "If Laird Carswell is not in Heaven then there is not such a place" & another added "If he is not there few will enter" In every locality there may be some professors whose shortcomings are pointed at in derision, an godless triumph by the unbeliever, but no one had room for such unholy pastime against the Men of whom I am writing.

Robert the youngest died 40 years ago at the advanced age of 97 revered & beloved by the great circle of relatives & friends.

This aged family is a sample of many that I have known, who lived & died trusting in their Saviour, but when wheat is separated from the chaff, many shall come from the east & from the west, from the north & from the south, & shall sit down with Abraham with Isaac & with Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven.

Signed N MC N Brodie.1884.

James Carswell's diary, 1848



Following is the first of selected excerpts from the 1848 diary of James Carswell, Miller, at Dalbeattie, Kircudbrightshire.

January, 1848

6 Thursday . Dry with hard frost but not likely to stand long. I hear (today) that Phillip Kelly died from shock of the palsy a few days ago.

7 Friday. Wet morning, but dry all day. Through working in the mill. Robert Gilchrist is poorly. He has done nothing since last Tuesday. I think it is influenza. James Smith has got his woman home again.

16 Sunday. Cold but rather soft looking. I was at church, heard Mr Arthur preach. Thin attendance and very cold. There were three ministers preaching at evensong. I heard Mr Bane of Hardgate. He baptized two children, one of Baker Patterson's, Mary Isabella, and one of Mr Heuchans, (and) one of Mr Smith. I hear that Mrs Carnochan is dead this morning.

Wednesday. Frost last night. The Palnackie (Carswell) family was at Dalbeattie last night. Thomas is away at Dumfries today with a load of oat meal at 21d per stone.

21 Friday. Frost. Some people playing at the ice (curling). My Father and Doctor Currie bought a heifer from Plascow. They were killing it today and likewise one for the soup kitchen which commenced two days ago. Through at the mill.

26 Wednesday. Still cold and frosty. I could not get to the ice, nor could I play – have a sore arm.

28 Friday. Still frosty. There is eight players out of Dalbeattie to play Kelton, but Kelton won by 2 stones. Thomas has got an addition to his family this morning.

February

6 Sunday. Soft morning. I went to church but Mr Arthur did not come forward. He was away at Edinburgh. It is supposed his mother is poorly.

12 Saturday. Fine morning but very wild in the afternoon with wind and rain. Plenty of work.

13 Sunday. Dull morning with rain going to the church. Heard Mr Arthur preach. He made an excuse for his absence (last week).

Wednesday. Wild morning but dry. Thomas at Dumfries and brought out 2 millwrights to repair the bone mill.

March

3 Friday. Little frost in the morning and very fine day. James McAdam and Mary came here today. We went out to have a shoot and got 6 partridges and two hares, and had a game at cards at night. I lost 3 1/2d + Thomas lost about 2/6. James McAdam won £2.0

6 Monday. Fine day. My Father at Castle Douglas, sold 300 bushels of bones to be delivered next week.

8 Wednesday. My Father started from Dumfries at five o'clock this morning for Lockerbie (Lockerbie) to go to Liverpool by railways. Thomas stopped at Kirkland last night.

10 Friday. Wild showery day. A letter from my Father and a paper arrived in Liverpool on Wednesday night. Rioting in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Mr Hedlin has turned off (fired) some of his men.

12 Sunday. Wild but dry. I hear that Mr Arthur is going to leave Dalbeattie, going to another place near Edinburgh. He gave indication that next Tuesday would be his last day in this place.

13 Monday. Dry day. Grinding bones. Mr Brown of Campbelltown got 200 bushels today, the first this season.

15 Wednesday. Fine morning but there was some rain last night. Thomas is at Dumfries, my Father came to Dumfries last night and will be coming home tonight. I commenced my garden today, but will not get it finished today.

17 Friday. This is St Patrick's day and is to be expected a great day in Ireland and likewise in Dumfries intending to kick up riots...a great many constables down...and the officers all called to Dumfries.

18 Saturday. Very fine day. There was no disturbance at Dumfries, all was quiet. Thomas at Kirkcudbright for some flour and with pork to Mr Laurin.

21 Tuesday. Hard frost this morning. Mr Arthur went off today. He has received in ___[?] since he came here 74L yearly with glebe and manse and 20L as present. We commenced to discharge the corn this afternoon.

26 Sunday. Some rain last night and still rather damp this morning. There will be no sermon today. Mr Arthur went away last Tuesday night. Mr Frazer (of) Colvend is to preach next Sunday.

30 Friday. Fine morning with a little frost. I hear that Mr Martin has failed. His shop is shut this morning.

Miscellaneous Carswell information

Paisley High Kirkyard

88* 178. Wm McGAVIN (Writing) master Paisley w Jean CARSWELL. Robt CARSWELL manufacturer 3.12.1811 72, w Margt PEDEN 1.2.1829 59, s Allan 6.11. 1804 11m, s John 17.2.1833 25, gda Margt MUIR 17.11 1835 14 m, da Eliz 25.8.1847 41 (wid of Matthew MUIR of Greenhill)

Paisley Low Births - Carswell

1786 Jun 23 Thomas, born to John Carswell, carter and Janet Brown

1788 Jan 30 Jean born to Allan Carswell, Weaver and Margaret Ballantyne

1791(5?)Jun 4 Margaret, born to Robert Carswell and Johanne Houston

Marriages Daltry Parish

1780 3 Jul Robert Carswell in Parish of Neilston and Mary Easdale in this Parish booked June 16th and Married July 3rd

Births

1781 18 Dec Robert Carswell, weaver in Kirktown had a lawful son called Robt baptized 18th of Dec

1784 14 Dec Robert Carswell weaver in Kirktown had a lawful daughter called Margaret baptized set supra 1784

1788 5 Nov Robert Carswell Weaver Town had a lawful son called James baptized 5th of Dec

1793 14 Apr Robert Carswell, weaver, in Kirktown had a lawful son called John baptized 14th April

Scotlands People...

...are pleased to announce that the Catholic Parish Register births and baptisms are now online. The new records include details of French Royal post revolution refugees and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's family tree.

Approximately 700 registers have survived, the earliest dating from 1703, but most records only begin in the 30 years following the relaxation of legislation against Catholics in the 1790s.

www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk

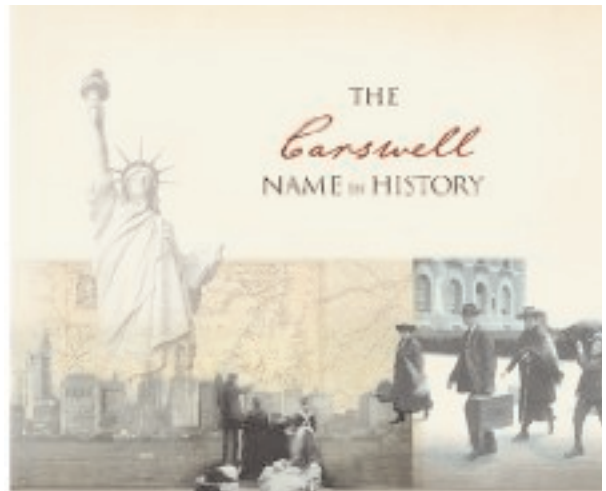
Amazon.com

Bob in Toronto sends along the following information:

Among the 300,000 books in the Ancestry.com family history series is one called -

THE **Carswell** NAME IN HISTORY

This 98 page book is available through Amazon.com at a list price of USA\$29.95 and is currently in stock.



Season's Greetings



and best wishes for 2010

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