

THE GRIERSON FAMILY FROM PARTON, KIRCUDBRIGHTSHIRE, SCOTLAND

Parton is situated in the area known as Galloway which included Kircudbrightshire and parts of Dumfriesshire. It is a small village in a road leading north-west from Castle Douglas, along the banks of Loch Ken.

Our earliest recorded direct ancestor in Parton appears to be William Grier, whose wife Margaret Gorran gave birth to a baby named John in 1714. The parish records are missing from 1717 to 1745 so we do not know if this John was the father or uncle or was himself the John Grier who married Janet McMonnies in Tongland in 1757 and gave rise to the extensive Australian Grierson family.

We do know that Margaret Gorran died in 1770 at the family farm as an aged woman, the habit in Scotland being to refer to a woman's maiden name, so useful in genealogical research. This family farm situated in Parton still exists and over the years had the name Glenswynton, Shaw, Cairn and Glenswinton, sometimes simultaneously.

Early records in the area, which haven't been connected directly, include items that suggest family connections. One, from 1674, notes that John Greir in Cairne and his son Roger Greirson owe £38 to David Chartors. This deed was taken at Dalry, the nearest town to the farm Cairn later occupied by our ancestors. Others, from 1668 and 1715 related to transactions between Grierson and McMinnies at places close to the farm Cairn. These are of interest because of the 1757 Grierson/McMonnies marriage of our ancestors.

The John Grier mentioned above, married to Janet McMonnies, had eight children between 1758 and 1778 at Parton. Grier and Grierson appear interchangeable at this time. The second child, John, died as an infant from an epidemic of measles. The eighth child was born in 1778 and was again given the name of John Grierson. In our family we call him John (1). Each successive surviving eldest son was called John and so we currently have John (6), John (7) and John (8) living in Melbourne, Australia, in each case known by their second names but maintaining the family heritage.

There was a considerable amount of property owned by John (1)'s elder brother Robert, possibly part of an inheritance, but John was unable to benefit from this. He decided to go to Perth, Scotland and enlist in the 73rd Regiment which brought him to Australia. At this time, in 1808, he married Mary Burgess in Perth and she proved to be a strong and loyal wife, accompanying him to Australia and Ceylon and back and giving birth to 9 children. After his service in Australia in the army, John was invalided out in 1815 and they decided to return to Troqueer, Scotland, where most of the children were born.

Perhaps farming did not provide a good living, or times were hard. The decision was made to emigrate permanently to Australia on the first ship available to them which was the David Clark, in 1839. This famous voyage included very many families who settled in Victoria and made their mark. Shortly after their arrival, John and Mary were admitted as Communion Members of Scots Church, Collins Street, Melbourne, having brought a certificate from Troqueer. John thereafter walked to Scots Church regularly from his home in Collingwood, and he died in 1855, highly esteemed. Mary died in 1870.

Their descendants now number many hundreds in Australia and beyond, some with the name Grierson but others from the female lines of Cockerell and Thomas.

Compiled 2018 by Elizabeth Shade (formerly Grierson).