

Correspondence with Mr. George Muir of Kilmarnock.

This gentleman wrote to T.D.F. (who referred him to me) on 14th December, 1885 as follows: "I observed in the Illustrated London papers of Saturday a notice of the death of Coll. Findlay of Easterhill and it just occurred to me that he was very likely the great grandson of Professor Robert Findlay who was a Kilmarnock man. I have been making some notes with a view of contributing an article on the Muirs of Bruntwood and their association with Kilmarnock for the local press. You may possibly know that Bailie Mungo Muir of Kilmarnock was married to Janet Findlay, daughter of Findlay of Waxford (Symington Parish) merchant in Kilmarnock and that she was Dr. Findlay's aunt... I will be very glad if you can give me any information about Professor Findlay and his descendants, and also if you know anything of any of the descendants of his aunt, Mrs. Mungo Muir. Dr. Wm. Muir, surgeon in Kilmarnock, was Mungo Muir's son and had a large family the most of whom left Kilmarnock. The families of Mrs. Clarke and Mrs. Fairlie, Dr. Muir's sisters kept up the intimacy with Robert Findlay of Glasgow who I suppose would be Coll. Findlay's father and probably your grandfather. A granddaughter of Dr. Muir's, Mrs. A. Fullerton, is still living in Glasgow (Woodside Place) at 95 years of age. I should like very well to learn about the descendants of Francis Muir of Bruntwood who were probably known to Robert Findlay of Easterhill. I think there should be some of them about Edinburgh or Glasgow. Any information you can give me from family tradition or documents will be esteemed a favor. Yours &c. Sd. G. Muir.

(Margin note here adds: I replied giving him all the information I could, likely to interest him, and of course saying that we had no knowledge of Muir relationship. Robert Findlay whom he alludes was no doubt my grandfather, who doubtless knew all about his relations, but my father having been only a boy of 17 when he died, no doubt explains his vague acquaintance with the subject.)

Under date 19th December Mr. Muir replies to mine, and proceeds. "The name of Bailie Mungo Muir's second wife was Mary Findlay and she had three daughters. 1st Agnes, md. to John Fairlie, ironmonger in Kilmarnock, whose sons were James, Mungo and William Fairlie. (Margin note: "Ironmonger" must have had a different signification in those days one would think). 2d. Margaret md. to P. Clarke, merchant in Glasgow who had a house in the "Sautmarket" and a country house called Braehead on the Clyde near Renfrew. 3d. Mary md. to Mr. Mitchell. The Mitchell family lived in Ayr. The son, William, was a doctor in the army, and subsequently practiced in Kilmarnock. Mungo Muir had a daughter, Elizabeth, by his first wife who married John Smith of Dronagan (Stair Parish). Your statement that the aunts of Dr. Findlay married Fairlie, Clarke and Wilson I'm afraid is a mistake. It seems more probable that Dr. F's connection to the Clarke and Fairlie families was through the marriage of his cousins, Mungo Muir's daughters. I think the connection to the Wilsons was also through the Bruntwood family. Bailie Wilson married Margaret Montgomerie of Bogston (Beith Parish) whose mother (and also her grandmother) was a daughter of Bruntwood. Probably the reason of Mungo Muir being appointed one of the curators of Dr. Findlay was that he had married his aunt after the death of his father. It is not impossible an aunt of Dr. F's may have married a Clarke and another a Wilson. We have an instance of the family connection being renewed in the case of P. Clarke, son of Mungo Muir's daughter, Margaret, marrying a Fairlie who was his cousin. Mrs. Fullerton, Dr. Muir's granddaughter who lives at Woodside Place, Glasgow and is in her 96th year remembers her grandfather, Dr. Muir, and also the Fairlies and Clarkes. She is in full possession of her faculties but just rather deaf.... Some of the things you mention are very interesting to me, such as your reference to the tanning company.... I can remember five tanneries in the town and now there is only one.... It must be our place to which you refer.... It was at one time carried on by the "Laigh Tan Yard Compy." ... My father is the sole proprietor of it now, and it is very much larger than it was, having been added to repeatedly during the last hundred years, but I believe we still have a part of the old shed and pits which were

in existence in the time of the Laigh Tanyard Coy. The books of the Incorporated Trades of Skinners and Glovers until I presented them to the Museum of our Public Park about 3 years ago... I observe that William Findlay was Town Treasurer in 1718.... Mungo Muir was a Bailie in 1716; he could not be more than 33 years of age then.... Paterson (Margin note: History of Kyle, Cunninghame and Carrick.) gives an account of the starting of the woollen factory in his notice of Kilmarnock. The Patersons and others were the Men who gave the start to Kilmarnock as a manufacturing town and so any notice of them and their business becomes interesting. G. Muir writes 22 December 1885: I thought it vey likely that the name of Robert Smith would be found in the minute book of the Skinners and Glovers.... the name of Robert Smith appears in the Charter of 1658, which is the oldest document extant. I am not so sure about his being a Bailie. I think if you read Paterson's account of Kilmarnock Parish you will find that he states the first magistrates were appointed in 1695. The name Bailie is found before that date, but just seems to mean those to whom the Baron had delegated his powers. Bailie was pretty often applied to the Deacon Conveners of the Trades and I think it is perhaps probable that Robert Smith was Deacon of the Skinners and would be called Deacon Smith or Bailie Smith.... (Margin note: Robert Smith I think may have been called Bailie in both capacities.) Mrs. Fullerton, her mother, was Janet Muir, daughter of Dr. William Muir (Mungo Muir's son) and was married to Dr. Wilson who lived at the foot of the Strand.... by the bye did you ever hear of Thomas Reid, merchant of Saltcoats before, and do you know how he was connected? You will observe that he was one of the partners both of the first and second tannery companies, and the Town Clerk's letter of 19/8/16 (under 16 is pencilled a 7) leads me to suppose it was to his house in Saltcoats he proposed going on Saturday (Margin note: Thomas Reid. This refers to an allusion in a letter from William Paterson to Dr. F, in which he mentions our old auntie Mary being ill at Saltcoats. Had he said annantie Jean it would have been clear. (See marginal note page 12). As it is I do not know who she could be, unless my father was mistaken as to Reid having married a Hodgert instead of a Paterson - see page 171.) (A pencilled note here adds: It will be seen that my father was mistaken.)

(A marginal note further up the page may here be inserted: The following ought to appear in the text. Robert Smith was probably a skinner who prepared sheep and lamb skins, and manufactured them into breeches and gloves, one of the staple industries of Kilmarnock in old times. He does not appear as a magiste since 1690. He may have been previous nominated by Ld. of yc. Barony(??) I had mentioned that from certain correspondence Dr. F and the Patersons appeared to have continued interested in the tanning trade.)

G. Muir 18 Jan. 1886. I have been taking a look through the old deeds of the Tanwork. The ground seems to have been acquired by Robert Paterson in 1734 for the purpose of building a Malt Barn. In March '50 application was made to the Council for more ground in order to build a Tan Yard, and the document states that the Town Clerk was abroad at that time. He had died before September '52, as William Paterson is then described as "heir of his father". There is an agreement betwixt the Tannery Coy. and the Woollen Factory Coy. dated 6 Sept. 1750 in which the names of the partners are given as follows. Thos. Reid, Merchant in Saltcoats. Robert Findlay, Minister att Galston Robert and William Patersons writers Kilmk. Robert Paterson Junior Writer there, all members of the Tannerie Compy. John Cunninghame eldest son and heir of the deceast Alexr. Cunninghame Mercht. was one of the partners of the Woollen F. Coy..... I find at Martinmas 1757 that other partners had joined the Tannery Coy. William, Earl of Glencairn, Mr. William Wallace of Cairnhill, advocate, Edinburgh, Alex. Cunningham one of the Clerks of the Signet, Edinburgh, James Campbell, merchant in Irvine, William Gilchrist and James Wilson, merchants in Kilmarnock.... I see in Paterson's Account of Kilmarnock Parish that William Cunningham merchant in Glæ. w (Lainshaw) and Elizabeth and Barbara Cunningham inherited the interest of their father Alex. C. "merchant in Glasgow" in the Woollen Factory. (This is muddled see page 13).

The Tanyard was sold 1 Nov. 1758. The buyers were William Gilchrist junior and William Muir (both Bailies) and they formed a new company by taking in James Wilson senior, Thomas Reid (Saltcoats) and William Paterson. It would seem from the letter you sent me for perusal that Dr. Findlay's interest had not been fully realised till 1766.

G. Muir 11 Nov. 1886.... I may mention that Sir William Muir, Principal of Edinburgh University, who is a great great grandson of Bailie Mungo Muir is coming to open our new Art Gallery, and to have the freedom of the Burgh conferred upon him on December 7.

On the flyleaf will be found some cuttings of Kilmarnock newspapers sent me by Mr. Muir, but he promises me a pamphlet containing these and other articles contributed by him in a more complete form.

G. Muir 27 December 1886.... Regarding your question about Robert Paterson, he seems to have been the son of Robert Paterson, Merchant, who was Bailie in 1695 (vide McKay's Hist of K.). He was apprenticed to Patrick Alexander the Town Clerk as appears from a deed dated in 1701, "written by Robert Paterson servitor to Patrick Alexander writer in K." James I think appears to have been his brother who continued the father's business. R.P. was appointed Town Clerk in 1709 in succession to his old master P.A. It appears from deeds I have seen that several of the Patersons were lawyers; one in Newmilns who was factor to the earl of Loudan; another held a County appointment in Ayr.

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The Old Oak Cabinet at Easterhill.

we know belonged to John Findlay and may possibly have been in possession of his forebears. It is wonderful how the ancient dusty and musty papers deposited in it have so long escaped destruction considering the years they have been unprotected by a key. These throw some light on family history which it may be as well to mention here.

Acct of Curatory of John Findlay's children 30th September 1701. appoints to this office David Brown, merchant in Kilmarnock, John Adam Bonnet maker and Margaret Smith, their mother, and James Smith their uncle. The children in question were William, Mary and Agnes. From no mention being made of Margaret she no doubt was by that time of full age.

There are two deeds endorsed respectively "obligation. Robert Paterson and his Cautions to William Findlay and his spouse 1716", and "discharge. Hodgerts &c. to Findlay and his spouse 1716". The parties to the former besides Robert Paterson Clerk of Kilmarnock were Thomas Boyd of Pitcon, Andrew Brown of Knockmarlock and William Morris apothecary in Kilmarnock. The parties to the latter deed besides the aforesaid Curators are "Annabella, Jean and Eupham Hodgert, lawful daughters to the deceast Robert Hodgert Chirurgeon Apothecary in Kilmarnock." In both documents Barbara is distinctly designated "second lawful daughter" &c.; my father was therefore mistaken in calling her "youngest" at page 3.

Thomas Boyd of Pitcon was her father's cousin Germain as shown at page 17, and Andrew Brown was her uncle, see page 12. The daughter formerly mentioned supposed to have died unmarried it will be seen from this was Jean, and Eupham was the youngest evidently from the order in which the names come. (Typing note: the next sentence appears to have been added later in a different handwriting). It is worthy of notice that in these deeds the names is in every instance written Hodgort, whilst Margaret, Eupham and Jean in every instance sign Hodgert; probably Hodgort was a clerical error, and yet it appears curious it should be so. (Margin note: a mistake. It is only the form given to the letter e. See also page 39) (Two other margin notes: William Morris appears as Bailie frequently. Jean married Reid; no. see page 6).

"Accompt. of the Intromissions of Barbara Hodgert relict of Wm. Findlay Merchant in Kilmarnock with the enerie and movables of the said defunct for the behoove of herself and Wm. Findlay the defuncts second son and Execr. given up by her to James Willson Merchand in Kilmarnock her Constituted Tutor dative to the said Pupil" is dated 7th of Decr. 1726 and shews a balance of £5,011.12.10d. "Scot's money, whereof the one third belongs to the said relict, and the other two thirds to the said William Findlay."

William (the father's) Burgess Ticket is dated Kilmarnock 23rd May 1716. He died 1725, and his son, William, 1727, when Robert the future D.D. remained the sole surviving child. I have said that during his long life he never was known to have been ill but these papers show this to have been a mistake. There is an account of "William Moris, Surgeon in Kilmarnock" from February 1728 to February 1730, and others from "Alexr. Cunninghame, Chirurgeon in Irvine" of later dates, for medicines, which shew the strength of his constitution in resisting treatment which probably killed his two elder brothers. The "Chirurgeon Apothecaries" of those days made no charge for attendance, looking to their remuneration by sale of medicines. There is a letter from said Mr. Cunninghame to R.F.'s. stepfather beginning "D.Cusine" (no doubt dear Cousin) "I am concerned your stepson is again seized with nervous distempers....but I hope his youth with suitable applications will remove that obstinate distemper.... I am of opinion his head be shaven close and a setton or cord be put in his neck. Give him the vomite in the morning about nine and warm water as it works. Give him 3 of the pills each night at bedtime in berrie, and on of the pouders every morning in a little ale posset and drop in with it 15 drops of the spirit. This method I expect will check his untill he gett better advice".

"Decreet for making up Inventerirs." James Wilson, Tutor, to Robert and William Findlay against their nearest of kinn 1726", granted at Ayr 18th March 1726.

"Extract, Act of Curatory, Robert Findlay". "Att Kilmarnock 17th October 1735 and 14th April 1736. Anent the Edict of Curatory raised and pursued.... at the instance of Robert Findlay.... against John and Thomas Findlays merchants in Kilmarnock both two of the nearest of Kin and Agnats to the said pursuer on the father's side, and Andrew and George Brown's elder and younger of Knockmarlock two of the nearest of Kin and Co-agnats to the said Complr on the mother's side" (margin note: John and Thomas Findlay seepage 180) "Mentioning that whereas the said Complr was passed the age of tutory and yet within the years of minority &c.", he chose as curators Alexr. Cunninghame (his stepfather) James Wilson, and Mungo Muir, merchants in Kilmarnock, and Robert Paterson, writer there. The foregoing shows that in those days there were relations of the name of Findlay (col^laterally) which is contrary to what I have said at page 11. On the documents quoted above Thomas and John, and John and Thomas are mentioned indiscrimately from which it may be inferred that they were not father and son, more probably brothers, and probably cousins of William Findlay. Andrew and George Brown, elder and younger of Knockmarlock, were as shown at page 12 respectively grand uncle and uncle of Robert Findlay. (typing note: in pencil the word "uncle" has been crossed out and instead in the margin the words added "mother's cousin").

Inventar of the Heretable and moveable Estate of Robert Findlay 1736 "faithfully given up by Alexander Cunningham, James Wilson and Mungo Moor, merchants in Kilmarnock and Robert Paterson writer there, curators elected and chosen by the said Robert Findlay &c.". According to this "James Miller of Waxfoord" disponded said estate to William Findlay 30th June, 1697, from which it would appear that although the purchase was made as stated by my father in John Findlay's lifetime it was not completed until after his death. (Margin note: referring to note on Waxford at page 2, Paterson Vol.I. Part II page 737 says Symington Parish at an early period belonged to the Wallaces and mentions among the Heritors in 1737 Alexander Cunninghame Bailie in Kilmarnock for Mr. Finlay.) It appears also that William Succeeded his brother Robert in Drumgrieslaw or Lawhill. "Item. There is pertaining to the

said Robert Findlay as heir to his said father and to umqll. John Findlay, merchant in Kilmarnock, his grandfather the kindly right of these houses high and Laigh and Yeard In Gleibland of Kilmarnock that pertained and belonged to umqll. William Assloos of Arathill, disponded by James Assloss, merchant in Glasgow, his son, to the said umqll. John Findlay, his heirs and Assignneys Conform to disposition and assignation of the said houses of the date the 19th of December 1691, and Tack of the same date by Mr. James Osburn, Minister of the Gospell at Kilmarnock to the sd. John Findlay... as also Tack thereof from Mr. Laurence Hill Minister of the Gospell...which heritable subject is burdened with the Liferent and Teirce of Barbara Hodgert relict &c...". "Item. £6,000 Scot's... made up of the Goods, Debts and every of the said deceast...and Legacy from the deceast Margaret Smyth his grandmother and the deceast Agnes Findlay spouse to John Symburner, merchant in Kilmarnock, his aunt and growing rents and annual rents..." The other "Items" refer to investments of Capital. John Symburner is quite a new name to me, and, with reference to my father's history at page 1 must I think have been a second husband of Agnes Findlay's. I have detailed the description of the Tenure of Gleiblands as it is of peculiar interest, purchased 1691, liferented to our great great grandmother who died 27th December 1786. From account of William Paterson, writer Kilmarnock, it appears that it was sold to James Cunningham April 1787 so that it was 96 years possessed by the Findlays. The sale of Lawhill appears from the same document to have been effected to Miss Scott in March 1788 but from an account headed "Dr. William Paterson, writer in Kilmarnock, for the Rev. Dr. Findlay of Drumgrieslaw" To "Thomas Adair, Clerk to the Signet" it does not appear to have been concluded till January 1790 owing to delays in completing and perfecting Titles. I have not found any allusion to the sale of Waxford failing which it may be assumed to have been made about same time. I find in my father's writing the following, no doubt written down on his visit to the old Kirk Yard of Kilmarnock: "beneath this stone is interred the Body of William Findlay Merchant in Kilmarnock who died 17th December 1725 in the 40th Year of his age. On its south side lie buried the bodies of his two children John, who died 6th April 1723, being 12 old, and William who died 23rd March 1727, aged 2 years and 3 months. Also is interred under this stone the Body of Barbara Hodgert, spouse of the said William Findlay, who was afterwards spouse to Alexander Cunninghame, merchant in Kilmarnock and died a widow 27th December 1786, in the eighty-eight year of her age".

In the aforesaid account of William Paterson there is the following item "1789 May 8. To paid Hugh Kerr, Mason for engraving an inscription on Grave Stone in the Parish Church Yeard of Kilmk. & Receipt, £1.12.1d.". "Also Nov. 30 1790. To pd. Hugh Kerr for new Stone pedestal to your father's Tombstone and for assistants in taking down and taking up the stone £0.15.0."

(margin notes on page 37 not yet typed: James Smith, see page 17; also 16. John and Thomas Findlay, see page 180. Regarding John Symburner there is a note: see page 180. From later information I incline to think he may not necessarily have been a second husband of Agnes Findlay, see page 15. In McKay's History of Kilmarnock page 384, John Symburner appears among list of magistrates 1757, 1758, 1759, 1762, 1763. Robert Symburner mentioned by Wodrow 1666, vol. I, page 235, was probably his father. (Typing note: the last mention of this name could be written with a capital "L" rather than an "S" and two of the entries in the main text appear to have had the "S" altered to an "L" in pencil). There is a margin note opposite the remarks about the tombstone : see McKay History of Kilmarnock page 270.

N.B. the name in these old papers is invariably Hodgert, so that Hodgart is a mistake.

Robert Findlay born 1721 made his will at Kilmarnock 6th August, 1740