

THE OTHER MCNAUGHTONS OF EDINBURGH

By Ken McNaughton

In July of 1791, James McNaughton was living in the Edinburgh parish of Canongate. So was Margaret Watson, who was a glover. On July 30th, they gave their names to be married at St. Andrews (Fig. 1). This church, on the north side of George Street, had only been erected six years earlier—a handsome structure in the Grecian style, with a stately portico of four Corinthian columns, and a lofty and graceful spire rising to 168 feet.

Figure 1. St. Andrew's Church Edinburgh, 13 George Street, was completed in 1784.



They may have been in a hurry because, five months later, on 1 January 1792, their first child was born, Charles McNaughton. Perhaps they didn't want to go back to St. Andrews, because Charles was baptized two days later at Old Gray Friars parish. James was to use many of the fine parish churches in central Edinburgh on important occasions, indicating, perhaps, that he was not attached to any one in particular. I have described the churches of Old Gray Friars, Canongate and St. Cuthbert's in another article [1].

The couple produced one child every two years for six years. Mary Adair McNaughton was born on 27 July 1794, Malcolm on 24 April 1796, and James on 24 May 1798. Five years later, Margaret was buried in West Church (St. Cuthbert's), on 30 April 1803. James now had sole custody of Charles (11 years and 3 months old), Mary Adair (8 years and 9 months), Malcolm (7 years) and James II (4 years and 11 months). All four children could have been eligible for some kind of schooling. James had to earn money, pay rent, buy food, and look after them and their needs. He was a coppersmith, listed on West Bow in the heart of Old Edinburgh between 1797 and 1811 [2].

In the parish of Canongate on 27 January 1804, nine months after Margaret was buried, James married Christian Ross of Dalkeith, daughter of James Ross, a mason. Dalkeith is eight miles southeast of Edinburgh. Christian must have been busy helping to raise the four young children. It wasn't until six years after they were married, on 20 February 1810, that James and Christian had a child, Lauchlan Ross McNaughton. Charles was now 18, Mary Adair 15-1/2, Malcolm almost 14, and James almost 12. Lauchlan was baptized on 7 April 1810 at Old Gray Friars parish, but died the same year, on 15 December 1810, aged ten months.

James and Christian waited three-and-a-half years before having another child. John Ross McNaughton was born on 12 May 1814, registered at St. Cuthbert's parish, and baptized there on May 23rd. His father, James, was now listed as a coppersmith in Portsburgh, an area immediately south of central Edinburgh. John Ross McNaughton was my great great grandfather, born into a family with four half-siblings. But would he get to know them? Charles was now 22, Mary Adair

19, Malcolm 18, and James 16. Were they interested in a new baby half-brother? When John Ross McNaughton was born, his mother had spent ten years raising the four children from his father's first marriage. And while young John Ross, carrying his mother's maiden name, was negotiating the first ten years of his own life, his mother would have been guiding the other four through teenage into young adulthood.

Charles was married the next year, on 3 January 1815, aged 23. He was listed as a coppersmith at 18 West Bow. Was he learning a trade from his father in the same shop? (He was still listed as a coppersmith in 1851). Charles married Helen Fraser, almost 24, daughter of Kenneth Fraser and Jean Taitt. When she was married, Helen's residence was listed as "Mr. Gray, teacher, St. Leonardshill." St. Leonards is a suburban area immediately south of city center, by the extinct volcano, Arthur's Seat.

Charles, the first-born son of James, mirrored the married life of his father. On 10 March 1815, two months after Charles and Helen married, they had their first child, Margaret, born at Greenock Old or West, Renfrew, and named presumably for the deceased mother of Charles. He and Helen had three more children registered at Old West Kirk in Greenock—Mary (like Charles' sister Mary Adair) on 22 February 1818; Kenneth (like me, born 120 years later) on 31 January 1820; and Jean on 2 December 1823. The Old West Kirk of the Church of Scotland, authorized by a 1589 Royal Charter and first opened in 1591, was the first Presbyterian church built in Scotland following the Scottish Reformation, and the first approved by the Parliament of Scotland (Fig. 2). The church closed in 1842, was restored in 1864 and was relocated in 1928.

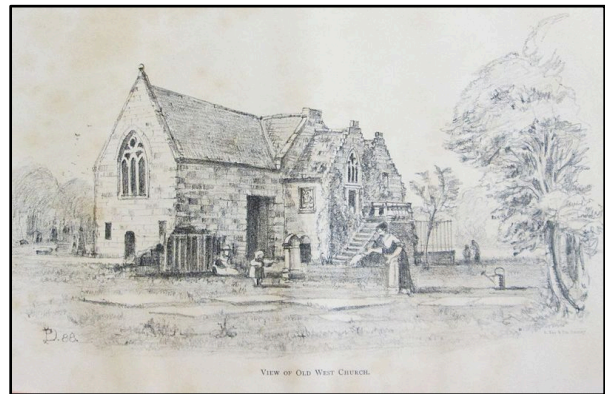


Figure 2. Old West Kirk, Greenock, as it was from around 1700 to 1841.

Greenock is 77 miles west of Edinburgh. This would have been a long journey in 1815 when Charles and Helen relocated out of Edinburgh. Greenock, on the southern shore of the River Clyde estuary west of Glasgow, grew up around the church, and shipyards developed between the church and the Clyde. Did Charles apply his knowledge of copper-smithing to the ship-building industry? As we will see, Greenock was to play an important role in the life of my great-great-grandfather, John Ross McNaughton, who was less than one year old when his half-brother Charles married and relocated there in 1815.

It was ten years before another marriage is recorded for a child of James McNaughton. By this time, John Ross was eleven. He may have attended the wedding of his half-brother, James, aged 27, a baker, to Isabella Hossack. The wedding occurred in the settlement of Inveresk and Musselburgh, five miles east of Edinburgh, on the southern coast of the Firth of Forth. On 24 February 1826, ten months later, they had their first child, named Mary Adair McNaughton—the same name as James' sister—registered in Duddingston, east of Edinburgh, next to Holyrood Park. A second child, named James, like his father, was born 9 August 1829, also in Inveresk and Musselburgh. A third, Agnes, was born on 26 January 1832, in the parish of Liff and Benvie,

Angus, sixty miles north of Edinburgh on the north coast of the Firth of Tay, near Dundee. It's possible that young John Ross McNaughton, aged about fourteen, may have left home while his half-brother James was having these children.

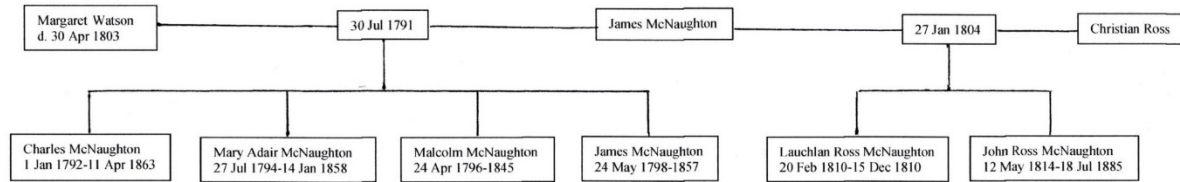


Figure 3. The two marriages and six children of James McNaughton.

The children of James were moving out—Charles eighty miles west to Greenock, James sixty miles north to Dundee, and Malcolm, a shoemaker, was married in St. Cuthbert's on 17 November 1828, to Marion McLaren, daughter of Robert McLaren. Her residence was 3 Mackenzie Place in Stockbridge, a northern suburb of Edinburgh. They had four children, all named for existing members of family—John in 1836, Marion in 1838, Charles in 1839, and James in 1841. When the fourth of James' children, Mary Adair McNaughton, married Robert Baird at Canongate on 20 November 1832, my great great grandfather, John Ross McNaughton would have been eighteen (Fig. 3).

EMIGRATION

John Ross McNaughton sailed from Greenock on the *William Rodger* with Agnes née Stirling (We never found a marriage certificate, but she was listed as married on arrival in Australia) and their one-year-old daughter Jane on 17 May 1838. This was the seventh vessel in a bounty program (assisted migration) targeting married couples, shepherds, farm laborers, country mechanics and cartwrights. They arrived in Port Jackson, Australia, on 26 September, after a perilous journey [3]. John couldn't find work in Sydney, and they sailed on the *Hope*, arriving in Port Phillip on 3 January 1839, where he had arranged a job with a ferryman [4]. John found his place in Melbourne, helped establish the West Melbourne Presbyterian Church, which he attended regularly, and became a Justice of the Peace [5].

Before migrating to Australia, John obtained two references from Kirkintilloch, dated 15 February 1838.

"These certify that the bearer John McNaughton is connected with the United Associated Congregation here though not yet in full communion & that so far as is known to us he is of a blameless character."
[signed] And. Marshall, Minister

"The bearer John McNaughton has resided for about ten years in Kirkintilloch & has behaved himself in a respectable manner so far as is known to us."
[signed] Adam Forman, Minister
John Horn, Elder

If John had resided in Kirkintilloch ten years, he would have arrived there in 1828, the year he turned fourteen. Did he leave home at fourteen? Did he have a decent education before he left?

Or after? He never displayed any skill at copper-smithing, like his father. His half siblings were getting married, moving out and having children. When John arrived in Australia, he was listed as “Son of Christian Ross of Dalketh [Dalkeith], House keeper.” His father James would have been about 68, but may have died. It’s possible his father died ten years earlier and John had to leave home and get a job. In 2007, my friend Peter McNaughton, chairman of the Clan Macnachtan Association Worldwide, told me that his wife’s family migrated from Ireland and settled in Kirkintilloch to find work in the industrialized Glasgow area in the early 1800s. Kirkintilloch is eight miles northeast of Glasgow. I visited in 1964 and 2007, published an article in the local paper [6], contacted McNaughtons in the local telephone directory, browsed the library, and placed a copy of the book about John Ross McNaughton in the reference section [7], but could find no other record of him there.

Although his father and mother gave her maiden name Ross to both of their children, John McNaughton never carried that name to Australia. It never emerged in any documents we found for him there. When he died, his own eldest son, John McNaughton, didn’t even know his grandfather’s name, guessing it was Charles, like his father’s half-brother, instead of James, like his father’s father.

In 1874, thirty-six years after John Ross McNaughton migrated half way around the world and started a new dynasty in Melbourne, he took a trip back to Scotland. He stayed two years, traveled around, spent time in spas, and wrote to family in Australia [8-10]. My second cousin, Kevin Carver, an accomplished memoirist, found some of John’s handwritten correspondence, which included grammar and spelling mistakes, suggesting he did not have a good education. (When he arrived in Australia, he could read and write, but his wife Agnes could only read). The extensive correspondence did not reveal any of the family names in my story here. John’s parents would have been dead by then, and John had outlived his older half-siblings. Charles died in 1863 aged 71; Mary Adair died in 1858 aged 64; Malcolm died in 1845 aged 49; and James died in 1857 aged 59.

John wrote to his daughter in Australia to say “we are staying with your aunt and cousin in Govan” (a suburb of Glasgow). We don’t know much about his wife Agnes, except she was a native of Glasgow born in July 1816 to William and Jane Stirling. If she had a sister in Govan, it might have been nice for her to complete her circumnavigation of the world on a modern steamship [11] and spend a couple of years swapping stories and catching up with family. And it would have provided a good opportunity for John to spend weeks in a variety of health spas and travel around with Colin, as he did.

John gave two reasons for making this monumental trip back to Scotland—for his health, and to educate his youngest son Colin for the medical profession in Edinburgh. Was this the education that John never got as a boy when he was in Edinburgh? Colin commenced high school in Edinburgh on 15 May 1874 and traveled with his father, but did not continue his education there. John, Agnes and Colin returned as steerage passengers on the *Durham*, arriving back in Melbourne 17 March 1876.

I have written a lot about John Ross McNaughton, who brought our name from Scotland to Australia. My friend David McNaughtan, who commutes between Glasgow and Edinburgh,

discovered the death notice for Lauchlan Ross McNaughton, found that James McNaughton, coppersmith, was listed on West Bow, and shared his voluminous records of births, deaths and marriages. Just after I thought we had exhausted all the known records, Davie discovered the other family of James McNaughton, and alerted me to the online street directories for Edinburgh. I am very grateful for his kindness, diligent work and patient correspondence.

I built this story from the basic life events of James' first family in an effort to understand more about where John Ross McNaughton came from, and to cast light on some questions that had troubled me. Why did this brave, entrepreneurial and outgoing man not appear to be well educated? Why did he not carry his middle name to Australia—his mother's maiden name? Why was it that on his death, his son did not know the name of his father's father? Now I feel I understand better where he was coming from. John made a name for himself and his family in Australia. The West Melbourne Presbyterian Church that he helped found was eventually moved to Box Hill and still stands. This is the story of an ordinary man who led an extraordinary life. Perhaps some descendants of the other McNaughtons of Edinburgh will read this and cast more light on the family that John left behind in Scotland.

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NOTES

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