

Kintyre Ryburns

By Roderick James Ryburn, Canberra, ACT, Australia

On a beautiful sunny day in September, 2007, my wife Christine, daughter Jessica and I drove the very scenic journey from Glasgow to Campbeltown, near the knob (the ‘Mull’) on the end of the long Kintyre Peninsula, on the west coast of Scotland. My main purpose was to learn something about the lives of the ancestors of all New Zealand Ryburns, including me. That afternoon, in the [Old Kilkerran Graveyard](#) in Campbeltown, Jessica found the ivy-fringed gravestone of James Ryburn, baker and farmer, who died at age 66 in 1857. He was my great, great grandfather, and I call him “James the Baker”.

That evening we stayed in bed-and-breakfast accommodation at ‘East Drumlemble’ farmhouse (Fig. 11), about 6 km west of Campbeltown, on the road to Machrihanish (Fig. 4). This is a dairy farm now run by the Ralstons, a well-known Kintyre name, that along with Ryburn, Armour and many other names, ultimately came from Ayrshire in the 1600’s. I already knew that James the Baker was born near Drumlemble Village, but it was only some months later I discovered that this particular farmhouse was built in 1800 by his uncle, “James the Farmer”. However, all good things come to an end, and, as I learned later, the Ryburns were booted out of several farms by their landlord, that powerful Scottish lord the Duke of Argyll. You could say they were late victims of the Highlands clearances.

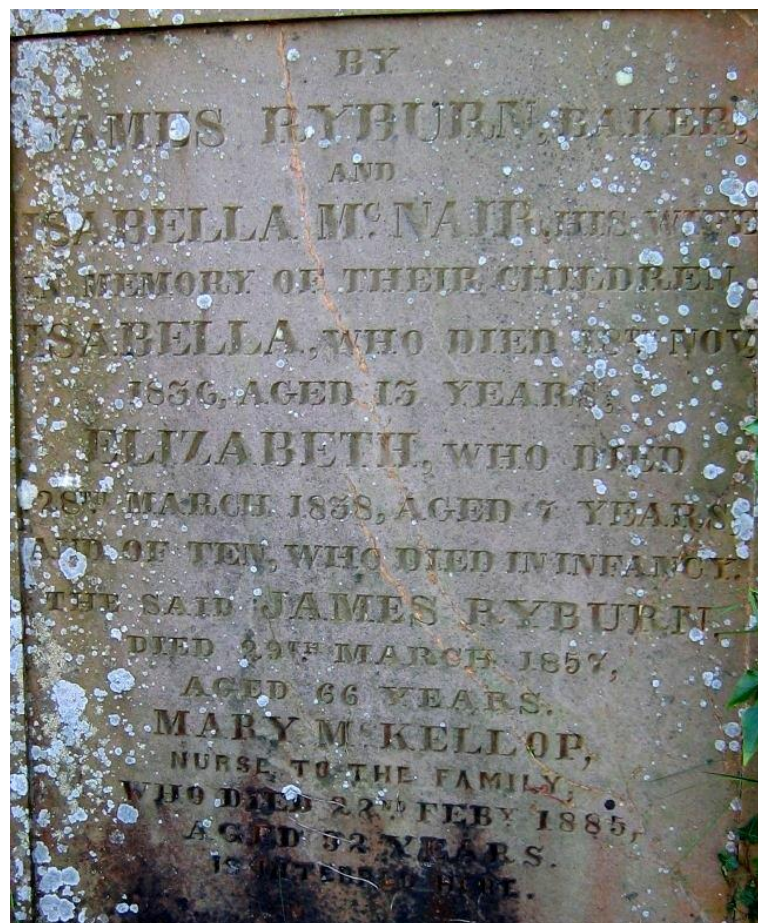


Fig. 1. ‘James the Baker’s’ Gravestone in Kilkerran Graveyard

This trip kindled my interest in conducting further research into the Kintyre Ryburns, their lives and times. Accompanying this account is a GEDCOM file of a family tree that incorporates most of the Kintyre Ryburns we know about, as well as a fairly complete and accurate tree of most New Zealand Ryburns. This file can be imported into nearly all genealogy programs. The New Zealand part of the tree comes mainly from my cousin, Michael Gray, of Pukekohe, near Auckland, New Zealand. Parts of the Kintyre tree are now fairly solid, but other parts can best be described as ‘working hypotheses’. My ancestors back to William Ryburn and Margaret Armour (Fig. 15), married in 1735, are rock solid, and the tree post 1780 has relatively few uncertainties. Most ambiguities in the inferred links between births and marriages are stated in the notes accompanying each individual. The Kintyre tree is a work in progress, so I welcome any alternative hypotheses, particularly if supported by unassailable new evidence.

The Kintyre tree draws heavily on a typed transcript of the Longrow (Lowland) Church birth registry, Campbeltown, that was painstakingly compiled in about 1973 by New Zealanders Stewart McNair Ryburn and his son Donald, and on Excel spreadsheets compiled by Diana Powell, Atherton, California, from microfilms of the Lowland Church births and marriages registers prior to 1775. My wife and I have also made extensive use of online databases at the ‘Scotland’s People’ Web site and the Latter Day Saints genealogy site. I also wish to acknowledge historical contributions from Angus Martin and Elizabeth Marrison of Campbeltown, and the gravestone photos of Drumlemble farmers and brothers James and William Ryburn sent to us by Jim and Muriel Adam, Edinburgh (Web, 2007). These were critical in fixing William Ryburn and Margaret Armour as my earliest certain ancestors.

James and Isabella’s Family

James the Baker’s gravestone, minus the ivy, tells quite a story, as James and his wife Isabella McNair produced a total of 15 children, only 3 surviving into adulthood. Isabella died at age 13, Elizabeth at 7, but ten died as infants. This family lived through the ‘hungry forties’ and the potato famine in Ireland. Diseases were common and a baby’s life was precarious indeed, although they seem to have avoided a severe cholera outbreak in 1832. As we shall see later, some of my earlier ancestors fared much better with regard to infant mortality.

After James died in 1857, his wife Isabella, his three surviving children Martha, James and Robert, and an orphan, Mary Ryburn, all emigrated to New Zealand. In June 1859 my great grandfather, Robert McNair Ryburn, aged 21, sailed for Auckland, New Zealand, on the ‘Spray of the Ocean’. There he became a seed merchant, commercial traveler and farmer in Auckland, and he married Sophia Middleton Hamlin there in 1863 (Nicholson, 2002). He is the only one of my Kintyre ancestors to have received a middle name. The rest followed on the ‘Mary Shepherd’, which arrived in Auckland in 1866. By that time Martha was married to Archibald Stewart. An account of this particularly grueling voyage appeared in ‘The Daily Southern Cross’, Auckland, 16 Feb. 1866 (Anon., 1866). How Isabella coped at age 72 can only be imagined.



Fig. 2. Jessica Ryburn at James the Baker's Gravestone



Fig. 3. The Bakery, 19 Main St, Campbeltown

It is unlikely they traveled steerage, though, as James the Baker died quite well-to-do, much to my surprise. I had imagined that with all those infant deaths they must have been quite a poor family. However, we were able to obtain a copy of James's last will and testament via the 'Scotland's People' Web site. He died at 'Kilkivan' on 29 Mar, 1857, leaving to Isabella an estate worth a total of £3,391- 4s, a tidy sum in those days.



Fig. 3. Celtic Graves in the Ruins of Kilkivan Chapel.

Kilkivan, also known as 'Low Kilkivan', is a farm located on the flat ground, or 'Laggan', just north of the Machrihanish road (grid ref. 165660, 620425), about 0.5 km northwest of Drumlemble Village. Kilkivan is also a ruined chapel on the hill to the south, believed to have been built in about 600 AD. The name means 'St Kevin's Church'. A Celtic cross, now in the center of Campbeltown, is said to have come from Kilkivan Chapel in about 1680.

In his will, James was described as a "sometime baker in Campbeltown, thereafter farmer at Drumlemble". His 1816 marriage registry entry states he was a baker. Pigot's 1825 and 1837 Directories of Scotland list James as a baker on Main Street, Campbeltown. I assume he lived in Campbeltown at that time, probably at the bakery. Between 1825 and 1828, James was a partner and share-holder in the 'Burnside Whisky Distillery'. In 1885 they were producing 96,000 gallons of "Campbeltown Malt" per year, sold mainly in the London and Glasgow markets. 'The Campbeltown Book' (Kintyre Civic Society, 2003) page 164 :-



Fig. 4. Kilkivan Farm. Photo courtesy Paula Ryburn, 2009.

Founded in 1825 by McMurchy, Ralston & Co; Situated on Witchburn Road; Original partners were Alexander and Hugh Greenlees, maltsters, James Ryburn, baker, John Colville, sadler, and Robert McMurchy (Ralston not traceable). Dissolved in 1828; In 1840 partners were Alexander, Hugh and Robert Greenlees; the owners became Colville, Greenlees & Co of the Argyll Distillery; Burnside Distillery Co in 1923;

Pigot's 1825 Directory also lists a James Ryburn who was master of the trading packet boat "Isabella", which delivered goods to and from Glasgow every fortnight "or oftener, if loaded". This may have been his cousin James. In 1833, "James Ryburn, baker", was listed as a shareholder in 'The Campbeltown Steamboat Company', which ran the steamships between Campbeltown, Greenock, Glasgow and other places (Kelly, 2004). His nephew, Alexander Ryburn, was the steward in charge of the catering on the 'St Kieran' between 1843 and 1848, then briefly on the 'Duke of Cornwall'.

In 1838 James took out a 19-year lease on East and Mid Drumlemble Farms (E. Marrison, pers. comm., 2008), following a court case (Archives, 2007) brought by the Duke of Argyll against William Ryburn, tenant of East Drumlemble, William Ryburn, tenant of Mid Drumlemble, and others. These were James's brother William, and his cousin William, who the Duke was trying to prevent holding on to their leases. The first Scotland Census in 1841 records James (50) living in Drumlemble, with his wife Isabella (45), sons James (5) and Robert McNair (2) – also his sister Agnes (44) and her daughter Isabella (18), both listed as 'Farm servants'. It seems that in 1821 Agnes was married to Edward Ryburn, originally of 'Kilwhipnach' Farm, but Edward may have died. Living in a separate house at Drumlemble was William Ryburn (59, 'Ag. Laborer'), probably James's brother, and his sister Janet (55, 'House Keeper'). No children were in evidence.



Fig. 5. Campbeltown and the Mull of Kintyre, showing Ryburn farms.

In 1850 James was a member of the Highlands and Agricultural Society of Scotland. (Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, 1851, p cxix). In the 1851 census, James (59) is described as a farmer of 168 acres, employing 5 men. He was living at 'Drumlemble' with Isabella (55), Martha (19), James (14), Robert (12), his sister Agnes (53, 'House servant'), her daughter Isabella (28, 'Dairymaid'), and Mary McKillop (15, 'Cow Herd'). Mary McKillop is probably the nurse recorded on James' gravestone. The 1855 Valuation Rolls in [Scotland's People website](#) show James Ryburn as tenant in East and Mid Drumlemble farms, paying an annual rent of £175 to "His Grace the Duke of Argyll.

From the letter of Duncan Ryburn (1955), Glasgow headmaster, the following is almost certainly James the Baker. Nicholson (2002) also relates this story, and I have read a similar account in the online 'Kintyre Mag' (but have misplaced the article, for the time being).

"It seems to me that the Ryburns having the Christian name of James must have been the persevering members of the tribe. In the old Longrow Church records of Campbeltown a James Ryburn is recorded as having gifted \$50 to the poor of the town and an equal sum to some other deserving object. \$100 in those days was a small fortune – in the early years of the 19th century."

James's will indicates that before he died he was supplying oatmeal to 'John Greenlees Merchant Lintmill' (flax mill), and 'bear' (a type of four-rowed barley) to the 'Glenside Distillery Co.'. As we shall see, other Ryburns were also involved in the whisky trade. An advertisement in the Glasgow Herald, dated 27 August, 1856, confirms that James Ryburn was in possession of East and Mid Drumlemble farms at that time. The lease on the Drumlemble properties expired in 1857 (Marrison, 2008), so another court case was instigated by the Duke of Argyll against James in 1857. James died in March 1857, so Argyll sued his son James to prevent tenancy transfer. At the time the Duke of Argyll was trying to prevent the automatic transfer of leases to the sons of tenant farmers.

Note that the current village of Drumlemble was mainly a coal mining village, and a row of coal-miners cottages, *à la* a Welsh coal mining village, are still in existence. The coal was mined from the 'Skeyloch Pit' between East and West Drumlemble farms since about 1765 (Cormack, 1999). Coal was transported to the Campbeltown distilleries first by horse and cart, then by a canal surveyed by James Watt of steam engine fame in 1773, and from 1876 by a light railway that eventually went as far as Machrihanish. Coal was being mined as late as the 1960s, and the mine extended under the Irish Sea to the west. The mine, canal and railway have all virtually disappeared.

After James died in 1857, the 1861 census records his wife Isabella (67) as head of the 200-acre farm called 'Gartvaigh', employing 3 men. This is located 2 km west of the remote village of Southend, near the southern tip of the Mull of Kintyre. The farmhouse still exists, (Fig. 4) and is at grid reference 167085, 608529 (UK Web map, 2008). The census also records Isabella's son



Fig. 6. Gartvaigh Farmhouse. Photo by Paula Ryburn, 2009

James (24, 'Farmer'), orphan Mary Ryburn (12, 'Herd', born Larnakshire, Glasgow), sister-in-law Agnes Ryburn (65, 'Domestic work'), Mary McMillan (19, 'Dairymaid', b. Southend) and Ann Neavies (16, 'Domestic servant', b. Southend). Mary Ryburn was the granddaughter of Alexander Ryburn, younger brother of James the Baker (Fig. 15). Martha and Her husband Archibald Stewart were living in Campbeltown at this time. Agnes died in 1863, leaving the rest free to emigrate to New Zealand in 1865/66.

On a second flying visit to Kintyre in May 2010, we were able to visit Gartveigh and avail ourselves of the hospitality of the present occupants, complete with delicious tea and scones.

William and Isabell's Family

James the Baker was the 3rd son of William Ryburn and Isabell Paterson, who were married in 1779. They had 9 children, 8 of whom seem to have survived to adulthood, and all 8 of them appear to have married. Although we did not see it, William's gravestone (Fig. 5) is in the [Old Kilkerran Graveyard](#) in Campbeltown. It is very weathered and difficult to read, but Jim Adam of Edinburgh has provided the following transcription :-

1817
Erected by William Ryburn, tenant
Drumlemble in memory of
his Father William Ryburn
Drumlemble
late tenant there
who died the 3 (?) March 1815
aged 64yrs. also Robert
who died young. the place
designed for the family.

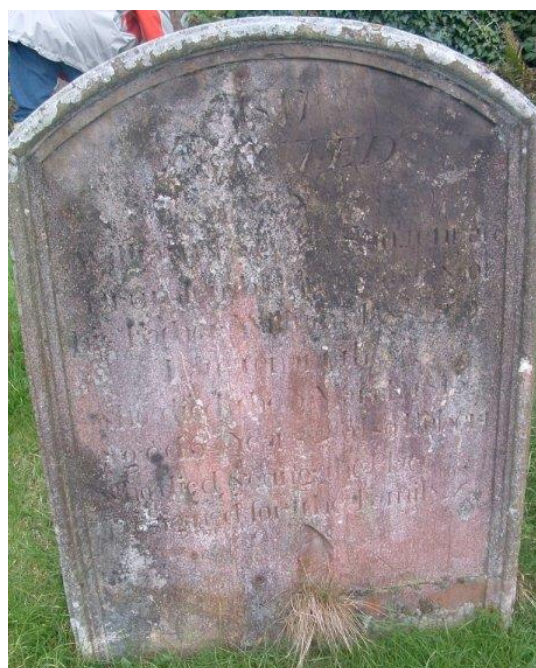


Fig. 7. William the Farmer's Gravestone.

In 1792 the Duke of Argyll was responsible for the first census ever conducted in this part of the world. At 'Drumlemble (Killchivan)' were recorded (none too accurately) William (39), his wife 'Isobell' (36),

William (10), Jean (7), Peggy (5), and James (1). Their first son Robert was born in 1780, but seems to have died before 1792. The birth of daughter Jean, also known as Janet, was not recorded (or was illegible) in the Longrow Church register, as she clearly existed in a house at Drumlemble in the 1841 and 1851 censuses, where she was described as a 'Sister' and 'House Keeper' to her older brother William. She fills



Fig. 8. Drumlemble Village from west. 'Mid Drumlemble' on left.

what would have otherwise been a gap of five years in William and Isabell's family. James and Jean Ryburn also possessed a daughter Jean (9) in 1792, so William was not harboring his brother's 'Jean' on census day. As revealed by the 1797-8 Farm Horse Tax records, William and his brother James were both still at "Drumlemmen" (Drumlemble) in 1797, both with two horses to their names.

'Killchivan' most probably refers to Kilkivan Farmhouse (also called Low Kilkivan), which is shown on modern maps on the flats (known as the "Laggan"), less than one kilometre northwest of Drumlemble village. This appears to have been where James the Baker breathed his first and last breaths. Today, Kilkivan is a none-too-attractive dairy farm, with the old stone house dwarfed by ugly modern farm sheds.

In 1800 William Ryburn requested to the Chamberlain of the Duke of Argyll that his farm be divided into two divisions (East and Mid Drumlemble), one for himself and one for his older brother James (E. Marrison, pers. comm., 2008). It was James who occupied the new house at East Drumlemble (Fig. 11). Why it was William that officiated, and not his older brother James, one can only guess. This must have been William, father of James the Baker, and not his father William, who would almost certainly have been dead by 1800.

Exactly where William's family lived is not yet clear, but he may have lived first at Kilkivan farmhouse, as stated in the 1792 census, and later at West Drumlemble after 1800. West Drumlemble farmhouse is now just across the road from Drumlemble Village, on the north side. The Ryburns may have occupied three adjacent farms in the vicinity of Drumlemble Village, not necessarily all at the same time. William's eldest surviving son, William, inherited the farm from his father. He appears to have married a Peggy Conley at Southend on 1 Jan 1814, and have fathered one daughter Ann, born on 11 May 1814. In 1838 both he and his cousin William (eldest son of the deceased James) were the target of litigation by the Duke of Argyll to remove them from their tenancies. However, James the baker stepped in and took a 19-year lease on both East and Mid Drumlemble Farms (Elizabeth Marrison, pers com, 2008). In the 1841 census, William was living with his sister Janet Ryburn in a house at Drumlemble (probably Mid Drumlemble) separate to that of James the Baker. There is no sign of his earlier wife or daughter, who may have both died.

William's daughter Margaret married Edward Ryburn's son Andrew in 1823, producing a daughter Isabella who was baptized in Campbeltown in 1824. In the marriage record, Andrew was described as "Labourer, Drumlemble". As outlined below, Andrew, Margaret and probably two of her brothers settled in North Carolina, USA.

Two of William senior's sons married on the Island of Islay, which is not far northwest across the sea from Machrihanish. Alexander moved to Bowmore/Killarow, where he married Elizabeth (Betty) Crawford in 1814 and produced at least 5 children (Fig. 15). Bowmore was, and still is, the home of the famous Bowmore whisky distillery, and it is quite possible Alexander was involved in Islay's major industry. In 1820, William's son Mathew married a Betty MacArthur at Kildalton, Isle of Islay, site of the famous Kildalton Celtic Cross. This family later emigrated to the USA (see below).

As already mentioned, Alexander's son, also called Alexander, was a steward on steamships between 1843 and 1848 (Kelly, 2004). He seems to have married a Mary McNicol in Glasgow in 1843, and in 1847 they produced a child, Mary, who went to New Zealand with the survivors of James the Baker's family. In the 1861 census Mary was living with them at Southend -- described as a "Herd" and an orphan who was born in Larnakshire, Glasgow. Alexander junior and Mary McNicol must have died between 1848 and 1861

William's daughter Agnes married Edward Ryburn's son, Edward, in 1821. In the parish marriage records Edward is described as "Cooper, Campbeltown". They produced their first

daughter Isabella (no originality here!) in 1822. However, Edward seems to have died or disappeared, leaving Agnes and her daughter as servants in the household of James the Baker in the 1841 and 1851 censuses. Agnes died at Gartvaigh, Southend, in 1863.

Williams youngest son, John, may have married a Mary McAlister in 1829, ultimately producing one daughter, Jean or Jeanie, in 1830. I think this John went by himself to North Carolina in 1830. In 1841, 'Jeany', age 10, was apparently living with her maternal grandmother in Main Street, Campbeltown. Any ambiguity between John and his cousin John is resolved by the 1851 census, which has his cousin with his wife Isabella and mother Jean, in Campbeltown.

The North Carolina Connection

It would seem that three children of my g.g.g. grandfather, William the Drumlembie Farmer, migrated to North Carolina around 1830. These were Margaret, Mathew and John. However, at least some of them first went to Canada, as on 4 Aug, 1826, Andrew, Margaret and John Ryburn were listed as early steamboat passengers travelling up the rapids from Quebec to Montreal, on the Saint Lawrence River. An Andrew Ryburn is recorded as having arrived in Quebec in 1824. As far as I know, he was the only Andrew Ryburn ever to be born in Kintyre, a son of Kilwhipnach farmer Edward Ryburn. Andrew had married Margaret in Campbeltown, on 20 Aug, 1823. She was the immediate elder sister of my g.g. grandfather, James the Baker. John was probably James' youngest brother. Not on the passenger list was Andrew and Margaret's first child, Isabella, born in Kintyre on 9 September, 1824. On Aug 24, 1826, Andrew and Margaret were registered as having baptized their second daughter, Margaret, at Niagara, Ontario -- yes, that is close to Niagara Falls. In the 1880 US Federal Census, Margaret, sister of "Isabilla", is noted as having been born in "mid ocean".

I initially thought they must have settled in southern Ontario, as there were a few Ryburns there decades later. However, I now know these later Canadian Ryburns were from Ayrshire. The US Federal census data of 1850 and 1860 clearly reveal Andrew and Margaret as residing in North Carolina, USA, as their names and ages, and those of their children, all match far too closely for this to be a coincidence -- despite some errors and inaccuracies in the census data (In the 1860 census all their ages were understated by at least 10 years!) However, they and their daughter Isabella were noted as having been born in Scotland. There is a record in Ancestry.com of an Andrew Ryburn having made a "Declaration of Foreigners" at Lincoln County Court, in September, 1824. So Andrew may have first gone to North Carolina to do some reconnaissance. He must have been absent from Kintyre when Isabella was born.

In the 1830 and 1850 censuses a John Ryburn, 'ditcher', single and born in Scotland, was recorded in Cumberland County, NC. This is probably the same John Ryburn, 'ditcher', who was mentioned in the "Directory of Scots in North Carolina, 1680 - 1830", and was likely to have been Margaret's youngest brother. He was naturalized in 1838. No US descendants are known.

Andrew appears in the 1840 census at Lower Regiment, Lincoln County, North Carolina, and he was naturalized there in 1842. Prior to 1850 the names and ages of others in the household were not recorded. In the 1850 census, Andrew and Margaret were living in Gaston County with their children Isabella, Margaret and [William E. \(b. 22 June, 1832; d. 30 Jan, 1892\)](#). In 1880 Margaret and Isabella were living together at River Bend, Gaston County. In the 1860 census William E. Ryburn was a carriage maker in Cleveland County, NC, and was married to an Ann C. Warlick, 24. On 6 October, 1864, he enlisted as a private in Company A of the Confederate States Marine Corps, and in 1880 he was the landlord of a hotel in Shelby, Cleveland County. The "Ryburn Memorial Presbyterian Church" in Shelby was probably

named after the prominent Shelby lawyer [Robert Lee Ryburn](#), who was the only child of William E. Ryburn and Anne Warlick. There is also a Ryburn Street in Shelby. However, there appear to be no further Ryburn descendants of that line in North Carolina.

Ryburns in the Charleston Poor House

The Cape Fear River and Cumberland County, North Carolina, were the destinations of many Scots who migrated to the USA from South Kintyre. Almost certainly not a coincidence was the presence in the 1830 US Federal Census of a “Matthew” Ryburn living in, Fayetteville (originally “Campbeltown”), Cumberland County, North Carolina, with a wife, 6 children (not named) and one female slave. Three of them were born outside USA. Mathew was James the Baker’s second youngest brother. He had married Elizabeth (Betty) McArthur (b. 19 Sep., 1800 in Kildalton) in 1820 at Kildalton, on the Isle of Islay.

However, I discovered recently that this family did not remain in North Carolina, but moved to South Carolina at some time between 1830 and 1834. There they fell on hard times. Their former abode in North Carolina is confirmed by the 1880 and 1900 US Federal Censuses that indicate their youngest child Peter was born there in about 1829. Also, the death certificate of their eldest daughter Catherine claims she was born in 1822 at Fayetteville, North Carolina.

South Carolina death records reveal that a Mathew Ryburn, born in Scotland, died of fever in the “Charleston Poor House” on 19 January, 1834. His given age of 36 tallies precisely with the Mathew born in Kintyre in 1798. Mathew may have come to South Carolina to take up a staff appointment at the poor house.

Shortly after Mathew died, [five of Mathew’s children were admitted to the Charleston Poor House on 21 January, 1832](#). The Charleston Poor House, later known as the Charleston Orphan House, was the earliest metropolitan orphanage in the USA, and an institution of considerable substance ([Susan L. Knight, 1984](#)). The four children of Mathew and Elizabeth who spent some time there seem to have benefitted from a good education or trade apprenticeship.

The eldest child Catherine (11, b. 13 Jul 1822) did not stay there for long, but was released to her mother in April 1834. The “Charleston Observer” reported that Catherine married a Capt. R. N. Bullen in Charleston on 4 January, 1844. Catherine’s mother Elizabeth died in Charleston on 6 Feb, 1857, at age 59. [She was buried in Charleston at Magnolia Cemetery](#).

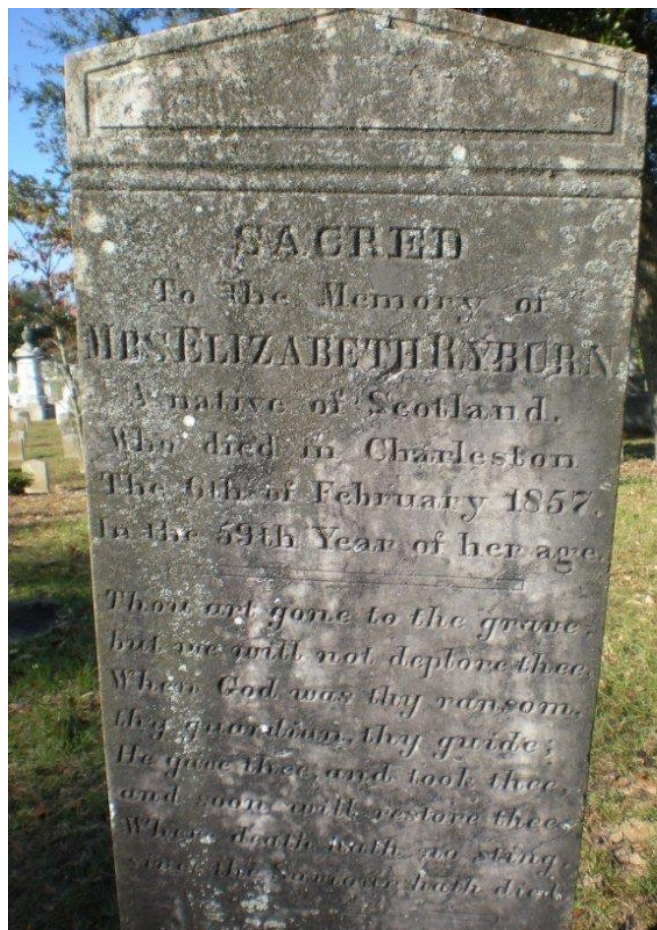


Fig. 9. Grave of Elizabeth Ryburn (nee McArthur), Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston, SC.

In the Charleston City directories from 1878 to 1886, Mrs Catherine C. Bullen, widow, is listed as Matron of the Charleston Orphan House and her daughter Catherine a teacher there. Catherine's death certificate gives her birthplace as Fayetteville, NC, and both parents Scots. She died at Charleston Orphan House on 31 July, 1886, and was [buried at Magnolia Cemetery](#)

William, their next eldest child (10), was indentured to a cabinet maker and released in 1845. In the 1860 census, the same William Ryburn, born in 1825 to parents from Scotland, was with his Irish wife Margaret and six children in Bridgeport, Connecticut. William was a cabinet maker, and later a "stair builder". Various census records for their children place them in Bridgeport by 1846, and state their father's birthplace as South Carolina. There is not much doubt that this William was the son of Mathew Ryburn, and was therefore born in North Carolina. There is no evidence of another Ryburn family living in South Carolina at that time, and a similar error can be seen in Peter M. Ryburn's census records. William died in Bridgeport in 1877. There were many Bridgeport Ryburns in the 1930 US census.



Fig. 10. Charleston Orphan House, South Carolina.

Their next son, John Ryburn (8), encountered some trouble in the orphanage. In 1840 he drew a knife on another boy, and when "reproved" by a nurse, "struck her several blows, so violently as to require the attendance of a Physician, who had to bleed her." The boy was then ordered to be "kept in confinement". John was sent to a Naval School in 1840 and released in 1847. John appears to have followed his brother William to Bridgeport, as the 1880 census reports that the father of a John J. Ryburn, born there in December 1855, was born in South Carolina. William appears not to have had a son called John, so the father was probably the John Ryburn from the orphanage. John J. Ryburn was at first a grocer in Bridgeport, and then a very prominent real estate man, who was twice bankrupted. His son James F. Ryburn was also a wealthy real estate broker living on Main St in the 1940 census.

Daughter Mary Anne Ryburn was six years old when admitted to the orphanage. In 1842 she was indentured to the Reverend William Moultrie Reid of Sumpter District, and was released from the orphanage in 1846. She returned to the orphanage as an assistant teacher from 1850 to 1869. The 1850 census states her age as about 22.

Youngest son Peter M. Ryburn was only four years old when admitted. He was sent to Charleston High School in 1844 and graduated from Charleston College in 1851. In 1855 he requested money for a theological library. Peter reappears in 1860 in Polk, Georgia, with two slaves. In the 1870 census he is a Methodist Minister in Marietta, Cobb, Georgia, with a wife, Maria A. Ryburn (37), and one child Lucy E. (13). His birthplace is given as South Carolina. In the 1880 census he is recorded as living in Cartersville, Georgia, and his birthplace is given as North Carolina. Both of his parents were born in Scotland. In 1900 Peter (70) is living in Edgewood, Fulton, Georgia, with "Marrie" (66). Again, he was born in North Carolina, and both parents were Scots. His birth date was given as August, 1829.

James and Jean's Family

James Ryburn was William the Farmer's older brother, who lived at East Drumlemble Farm (Fig. 11) from 1800 onwards. Born in 1741, he married Jean Smith in 1779, and they gave issue to 15 children, six of whom died in infancy. Like his brother, he died in 1815 and his gravestone was erected in 1817 in [Old Kilkerran Graveyard](#) by his eldest surviving son, William. Although similar in size and shape, his gravestone was made out of superior stone to that of his brother and is much better preserved -- It reads as follows :-



Fig. 11. East Drumlemble Farm, built for James Ryburn in 1800.

1817
Erected
By
William Ryburn Jun^r., tenant in
Drumlemang; in memory of his
Father James Ryburn, Late
Tenant there who died July 16th
1815 aged 75 years, likewise
W^m.. Ja^s.. & Ja^s.. Mathew Eliz^h.. & Jn^t..
who died in infancy, the Place
designed for the Family.

The abbreviation “Jun^r.” was there to distinguish James's son William from his cousin William, who was born a few years earlier and was also a Drumlemble farmer. The last child to die in infancy, ‘Jn^t.’, was probably the twin Janet born in 1803. The 1792 Duke of Argyll census records James Ryburn (41), Jean Smith (36), daughters Peggy (12) and Jean (9), and son William (3), all at Drumlemble. Peggy is short for Margaret, of course.

“Drumlemang” is an alternative name to Drumlemble. On early military maps (Roy 1747-55), “Drumleman” is at roughly the same location as present-day Drumlemble. In the 1797-8 Farm Horse Tax records, both James and his younger brother William were stated to be at “Drumlemmen”. [Pigot's 1837 Directory of Scotland](#) lists both William Ryburn and William Ryburn Jnr as farmers at “Drumleman”. The well-known Scottish folk song, “[The Road to Drumleman](#)”, is all about Drumlemble on the ‘Laggan’ plain – [click here to listen](#).



Fig. 12. Gravestone of Farmer James Ryburn, courtesy Jim Adam, Edinburgh.

We know a little about James and Jean’s surviving children. Their eldest surviving son, William, took over East Drumlemble Farm (Fig. 11) when James died in 1815. William married Ann Mitchell in 1831, producing at least 7 children, three of whom, James, William and Jane migrated to Illinois, USA (see below). The 1822 PO Directory has William Jnr, along with his older cousin William Snr, both as farmers in “Drumleman”. William seems to have lost his tenancy of East Drumlemble in 1838, when the Duke of Argyll took him and his cousin William to court. The 1841 census shows him and his family living in Lorne St, Campbeltown, and gives William’s occupation as ‘Carter and Spirit Dealer’. His son James was orphaned by age 11 (see below), so William and his wife Ann must have died in 1844. James and Jean’s daughter Mary appears to have married a mason, Archibald McCallum, in Campbeltown in 1813. They had 11 children. Archibald’s occupation was ‘Mason’ in the 1841 census.

James and Jean's surviving son James may have been the skipper of the [48-ton packet sloop “Isabella”](#) that sailed between Campbeltown and Glasgow each fortnight in the 1820s -- the other possibility being the James born in 1789, the son of Edward Ryburn and Isobel Cordiner. The Scotland's People Web site has the death of a James Ryburn, age 70, in Campbeltown, in 1861. The definitive information here is his mother's maiden name, which was given as 'Smith'. In the 1841 Scottish census it is clearly this James, aged about 47, living in Main St, Campbeltown, with his mother Jean, aged about 80, and another Jean, aged

about 50, probably his older sister Jean. He does not appear in the 1851 census, but in 1861, just before his death, he was recorded as a 70 year old lodger at Gavarchie farm, with a Jean and James McAlister. His occupation was given as, '??Baker'. This suggests that later he may have worked alongside his cousin James the Baker in the Main Street bakery in Campbeltown, and to have taken over the bakery when the other James moved back to Drumlemble in 1838.

James and Jean's youngest son John became a 'Distillery Worker' in Campbeltown, although his marriage record describes him as a 'Merchant'. He married Isabella McAlister in 1829 and had 7 children. This line of descent is clear, as the 1851 census has John (44), wife Isabella (52, quite a lot older than him), his mother Jean (90), his son John (1) and his daughter Mary (6) -- all with him. The 1881 census shows John (75) with his daughter and housekeeper, "Jane" (Jean, 49), at 1 High Street, Campbeltown. He died in 1886.

John's youngest son, John, was a 'joiner' (carpenter) in Campbeltown who married Mary Barret in 1875. They had four children, the youngest being **Duncan Ryburn, the last Ryburn to be born in Kintyre** (in 1883). Duncan's Gaelic-speaking mother was descended from a long line of Matheisons (or McMaths), who had occupied the same farm at Southend for over 600 years. It was reputed to have been gifted to them by Robert the Bruce. Duncan eventually became the headmaster of the large Alexander Parade Primary School in Glasgow, retiring in 1948. I have a copy of [an interesting letter he wrote in 1955](#) to a Ryburn descendant in New Zealand. He died in 1959.

However, Duncan's older brother Alexander was the last Ryburn to live in Kintyre. Born in 1879, he became a watchmaker in Campbeltown. He seems never to have married, and was buried in in 1947 in the [New Kilkerran Graveyard](#).

The Illinois Connection

In the 1880 USA Federal Census there were two Ryburn families living in Winnebago County, Illinois, the parents of whom were born in Scotland. I was able to deduce that the fathers of these families, James and William, came from the family of William Ryburn and Ann Mitchell, originally of East Drumlemble Farm, Kintyre (Fig. 11). Their ages closely matched their birthdates in 1833 and 1835.

I later came across two biographies that relate to these Ryburns. James's biography states that he was born on 22 Aug, 1833, to William and Ann (Mitchell) Ryburn of Argyleshire, Scotland, and that he was orphaned by age 11. He then lived with relatives in Kintyre and worked as an agricultural labourer. In 1854 he came to Belvedere, Boone County, Illinois, via Quebec. In 1860 he married Mary Flemming from Campbeltown, and eventually became a successful farmer. In 1877 James was living in Harlem Township, Winnebago County, Illinois. In the same year he bought a plot in the Willow Creek Scottish Cemetery, near Argyle Village. James's biography further states that his sister Jane also settled in Illinois, at New Milford. In the 1880 census she, her husband Alexander Cameron and her family of four children were living in Cherry Valley, Winnebago County, Illinois.

The other biography is mainly about William's son, but it does state that William and his wife Mary Legg were both born and orphaned in Aberdeenshire. I believe that in William's case this is incorrect, and that William was born to the same parents as those of James and Jane. There appear to have been no Ryburns in Aberdeenshire at that time, and the "Argyle Settlement" in Illinois, where William first went, was pioneered by farmers from Kintyre. In 1850, William arrived at age 15 in New York on the "Sarah", and in the same year was recorded as a pupil at the "Log School" in the Argyle Settlement, Illinois. William became a blacksmith in Rockford, Winnebago County, where he was recorded with his wife and six

children in the 1880 census. In 1883 he and his family moved to Hanson County, South Dakota. The biography says that "Both were worthy members of the Presbyterian Church and were folk of sterling character, honored by all who knew them". William died in 1898.

William and Margaret's Family

Until not long ago, we were unsure who the parents of Drumlemble farmers James and William Ryburn were, but the images of their gravestones sent to us by Jim and Muriel Adam were critical in fixing their parents as William Ryburn and Margaret Armour (a well-known Kintyre name, ultimately from Ayshire) who were married in Campbeltown in 1735. They are my earliest certain ancestors.

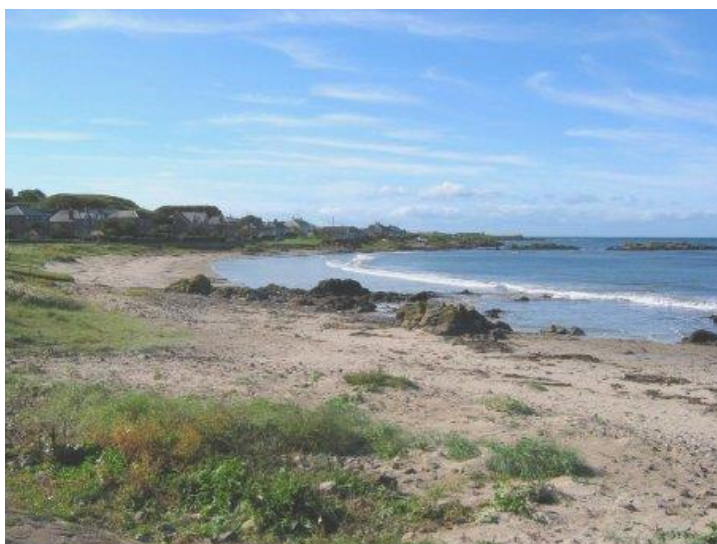


Fig. 13. Beach at Machrihanish, 2 km West of Drumlemble

Their son William was 64 at death, and this matches his Longrow Church birth record in 1751. James's birth record is missing from Stewart Ryburn's typed transcript of the Longrow Church register, but we found it on the Scotland's People Web site and on Dianna Powell's spreadsheets. There is a one-year mismatch between his age of 75 at death, as recorded on his gravestone, and his record of birth in 1741, but that is hardly significant. There is little doubt that William and James were brothers.

William and Margaret's marriage record is somewhat dubious, as the groom was originally written in the register as what looks like "Johne Ryeburn", with the word "Johne" overwritten by the abbreviation "Wm". However, in the births register William and Margaret are clearly the parents of their eight children, so the amended marriage record is probably correct. There is a two year gap between William and Margaret's marriage in 1735 and the birth of their first child Margaret born in 1737. Margaret was probably the eldest daughter, born in 1715, to James Armour and Margaret Anderson of Trodugal Farm, near Machrihanish. Both of Margaret's parents appear to be buried in the [Kilkivan Chapel graveyard](#) near Machrihanish, James in 1745 and Margaret in 1747, both aged 65 years.

A 1767 list of subscribers to the "Relief Congregation" of Campbeltown records a William Ryburn, tenant in "Drumlemon" (Susan L. Macdonald, 1982, p.339). Son William was only 16 years old in 1767, so Drumlemble Farm was probably where William and Margaret were living at that time. The Relief Congregation was a breakaway church group of lowlanders, who liked to make their own decisions, and not have them imposed from above. "Drumleman" was also used for what is now called Drumlemble Village.

The fact that none of William and Margaret's children's names repeat means few died young. Their eldest daughter Margaret probably married Alexander Anderson in 1757 and had eight children. There are no other candidates for that marriage. Mary may have married a James Greenlees in 1758, and Mathew was probably the Campbeltown 'Cooper' (barrel maker) who married Mary Turner in 1753, and had 6 children (Fig. 15). From the 1797-8 Farm Horse

Tax, William and Margaret's youngest child Agnes was very likely the same Agnes Ryburn that is recorded as tenant at 'High Tirfergus' with two horses. High Tirfergus is about 2 km up the hill southwest of Drumlemble, on Tirfergus Burn (grid ref. 165570,618375).

In 1776 a 19-year lease of 'East Drumlemble' was taken by William Ryburn (E Marrison, pers. Comm. 2008). We do not know when William senior died, so this could have either been him or his son. 'East Drumlemble' probably corresponds to what is now the 'Mid Drumlemble' farm (Fig. 9), as the present-day 'East Drumlemble' farmhouse (Fig. 11) was built For James in 1800.

Mathew and Elizabeth's Family

In trying to trace the parents of William Ryburn, husband of Margaret Armour, there is only one birth of a William Ryburn in the whole of Scotland that fits, and that is the William born to Mathew and Elizabeth Ryburn in Campbeltown, in 1704. Younger Williams Ryburns are all far too young to have married Margaret Armour in 1735, and older Williams were too old to have fathered children in 1755, when William and Margaret's last child Agnes was born. The next oldest William would have been 65 when Agnes was born – possible, but unlikely.

So, Mathew and Elizabeth were probably the parents of William, and my g.g.g.g.g. grandparents, but we cannot rule out the possibility that his birth was not recorded, or the record did not survive. The names of William's children appear to confirm the connection, but not rigorously. Mathew and Elizabeth had nine children – James (1697), John (1699), David (1701), William (1704), Neil (1706), Jean (1709), Janet (1712), Elizabeth (1715) and Mathew (1716). Again, none of the children may have died young, as no names are repeated. David appears to have become a successful 'maltster' in Cambeltown, marrying Janet Galbraith in 1735 and raising six children. David died in 1776, leaving a three-page testament dative (see www.scotlandspople.com) that mentions a Samuel Galbraith, his probable brother in law and business partner. Neil may well have been named after the Neil Ryburn that sold the ancestral Ryburn lands near Dunlop in 1638. At least seven of the nine children appear to have married, although some of these connections are speculative. Mathew Jnr may have emigrated to America in 1741, or earlier (see American Ancestors, below).

[The 1694 Hearth Tax records](#) show Mathew living in Killeonan Farm, along with a Robert Forrester, and James Forrester, and that John Ryburn Jnr was in Gillchrist and Octeran along with five others. In 1709, Mathew shared a lease on 3 of the 4 merklands of Killeonan Farm with John Ryburn (Jnr), John Flemming and James Sheddan. We also know from the testament of John Ryburn (Snr) that Mathew was living at Killeonan Farm in 1706.

Mathew's parents are now known to be the patriarch and tacksman John Ryburn and his wife Janet Jamieson of Backs Farm (and later in Aros and Uigle), as Mathew was confirmed as son and executor in John's 1706 testament dative. Also, Mathew's son Neil, born in 1706, was seemingly named after his great grandfather (see below). His wife Elizabeth's maiden name was Ryburn too, and she was almost certainly the daughter of Patric Ryburn and Jane Baird, who were living at Garvachie when an Elizabeth was born in 1676 (McKerral, 2001). Patric and Jane had five children recorded in the Longrow Church birth registry, but the record is intermittent and difficult to read in the damaged early pages of the original registry (Fig. 14).

Ryburn Sea Captains

There were several sea captains amongst the Kintyre Ryburns. The earliest I know about was a John Ryburn, who was master of the 'Prince Ferdinand of Glasgow' that arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, during February, 1760, having departed from Glasgow on 15 Dec, 1759. However there were at least two Ryburn sea captains at this time, judging by the departure dates and destinations of ships reported in newspapers at the time. For example, 'Ryburn' sailed the 'Kingston' from Edinburgh on 22 Feb, 1759, bound for Antigua with herrings, and on 1 Mar, 1759 another 'Ryburn' sailed the 'Rebecca' from Edinburgh bound for Maryland with merchant goods. Lloyd's Lists, London, May 13, 1768 edition, have the 'Peggy' and 'Charlotte', both captained by Ryburns, sailing from Waterford in Ireland for Newfoundland. In 1768, a Ryburn was captain of the 'Charlotte' of Campbeltown, bound from Cork to Halifax, when the ship "was by distress of weather forced to the West Indies and cast away at Wiekland Bay on the north side of Antigua". It was reported that "the crew, most of the ships materials, and part of her cargo, were saved".

The 1767 list of subscribers to the Relief Congregation of Campbeltown (Susan L. Macdonald, 1982) has a William Ryburn, shipmaster, living in Campbeltown. In 1768 Orr and James Ryburn exported cloth from Waterford to Newfoundland on the ships Peggy and Tartan.

In 1743 David Ryburn Senior (son of Mathew & Elizabeth) and Janet Galbreath had a son Arthur who was almost certainly the Arthur Ryburn who was master of the 'Sloop Privateer Mercury', a British 'victualler' during the American War of Independence ('Publications', 1916, p25). Arthur and mate James Ryburn were honourably mentioned at the Seige of Savannah, Georgia, in 1779 (Allen, 1852, p285). The Sloop Mercury was sunk in 1780, just 6 miles from New York, in the North River (New York Times, 1853), but I don't know if Arthur was still master of the Mercury. In about 1780 Arthur was the commander of the 'Hellenora', of Greenock (Scottish Records Society, Register of Testaments 1547-1800, p.47). In October 1782 Arthur was master of the 'Bellona', bound from Greenock to Tortula in the British Virgin Islands, and in April 1784 he was master of the brig 'Virginia', of Glasgow, bound for the Rappahannock River, Virginia, from Leith in Scotland. He died aged 41 on 5 October, 1784, at "Brookes Bank", a tidewater plantation on the Rappahannock River.

The above James may have been the son born in 1725 to Mathew Ryburn and Mary Galbreath in Campbeltown. In a 1752 petition ([Campbeltown Burgh Court Processes, 1752](#)), a James Ryburn was noted as a "Shipmaster" married to Janet Mitchell. In 1779, possibly the same James Ryburn was captured with the crew of the brigantine 'Hannah' by the American privateers Argo and Macaron.

Ancestors of North American Ryburns

Mathew Ryburn and Mary Galbreath, who married in Campbeltown in 1747, seem to be the ancestors of Diana Powell (2007) of Atherton, California. Mathew produced four children with Mary. They probably lived at Killeonan Farm, as a Mathew Ryburn and James Ryburn held 19-year leases there 1756. However, Mary died and Mathew appears to have remarried in 1761 to a Margaret Dunlop, producing four more children. (Very confusingly, there was an earlier Mathew Ryburn who also married another Mary Galbreath in Campbeltown in 1724. They had eight children, the eldest being James Ryburn, a shipmaster who was on the British side during the American Revolutionary War.)

Longrow Relief Church stood on the grassy mound in front of the current Lorne & Lowland Church, known before 1990 as Longrow Church. Two of the subscribing members in 1767 were Mathew and James Ryburn. They were noted as tenants in Killeonan (Powell, 2007).

Two children from the first marriage, Mathew (b. 1753) and Ann (b. 1756), migrated to North America in about 1770, to join an uncle 'Gilbreath', in York County, Pennsylvania. Mathew was just 17, and Ann 15, when they sailed for North America. There is evidence to suggest they did not like living with their stepmother (D. Powell, pers. comm. 2007). Later, they both travelled on to Washington County, Virginia, in about 1780, where [both were married and had children](#).

Diana Powell has discovered another Mathew Ryburn, who is recorded as having unclaimed letters at Philadelphia post office in 1741. This Mathew was probably born in Kintyre in 1716, the youngest child of Mathew and Elizabeth Ryburn. The only other possibility is a Mathew born in 1722 to William Ryburn and Janet Colville. However, that Mathew most likely remained in Kintyre, as he is the favored candidate for the father of the Mathew and Ann that went to America. The earlier Mathew may have joined the Scots-Irish settlement in the Cumberland Valley, Pennsylvania, as there was a Mathew Ryburn who was taxed on 200 acres in Hamilton Township in 1778 and 1779, and then on two acres in nearby Antrim Township in 1781, 1782, and 1786. This suggests he retired from full-time farming in about 1780, at an age of approximately 64 years. As yet, no descendants are known. By 1786, Diana Powell's ancestor Mathew had long departed from York County, Pennsylvania, for Virginia. However, there were definitely two Mathews in Pennsylvania for about 10 years.

According to Diana Powell, a Patrick and David Ryburn were living in York County, Pennsylvania, in the 1750s. They were probably the sons born in 1724 and 1733 to John Ryburn and Ann Langwill, of Knochrioch farm, Kintyre. A James Ryburn living in York County in the 1750s could also have been their son born in 1732. Patrick Ryburn was not a common name in Kintyre, and there is really only one candidate. David appears to have died young in 1762, but Patrick may well have been the father of two brothers, William and John, who were in York County, Pennsylvania, in the late 1770s, but moved to Washington County, Virginia, in about 1781. There are no obvious candidates for these two amongst Scottish births. While in Pennsylvania, both William and John were on the York County militia roll of 1778, so they probably fought for America's independence. William's second son was called Patrick (<http://www.ramblingroots.com/RYB-p/p2280.htm>). William was the ancestor of Roger Ryburn, of Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

Eric Ryburn, a Methodist pastor in Richmond, Texas, is descended from a James Ryburn born in York County Pennsylvania in about 1753. James may have been a son of the Patrick, David or James Ryburn that we know were in Pennsylvania at that time, and therefore a probable grandson of the John Ryburn and Anne Langwill of Knockrioch Farm, Kintyre. However, recent Y-DNA test results have thrown some doubt that hypothesis. Eric and Roger Ryburn's Y-DNA signatures are not as close a match as expected, although they are probably related.

The movements of Andrew, John, Margaret and Mathew Ryburn to North Carolina, USA, and those of Jane, James and William to Illinois have already been covered.

The Earliest Kintyre Ryburns

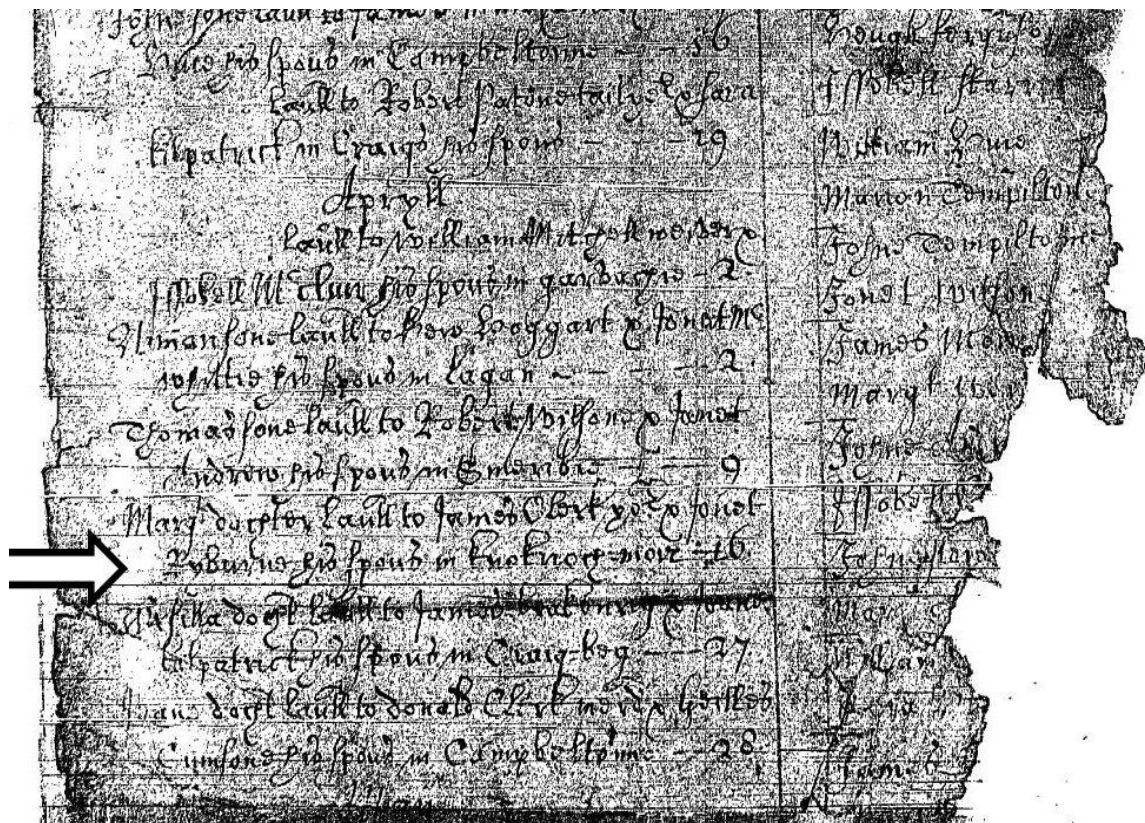


Fig. 14. Image of part of the first page of the original Campbeltown Parish register, courtesy Diana Powell. The arrow marks an entry that in the transcribed ‘copperplate’ version was deciphered as ‘16 April 1681, Margaret, lawful daughter to James Clark and Janet Ryburn of Knockriochmore’.

Starting in about 1650, the first Marquis of Argyll (Chief of Clan Campbell) led a “plantation scheme” which brought lowland farmers and landed gentry from Ayrshire and Renfrewshire to settle the land in Kintyre and to introduce more modern methods of farming (McKerral, 2001). The Ryburns were amongst them. Suppression of the troublesome MacDonald Clan by Argyll, followed by pestilence, had by 1647 left the land in Kintyre partly depopulated (Maiden, A. M., 1997). The lowlanders were supposed to exert a civilizing influence on the surviving Gaelic-speaking highlanders.

A characteristic of most Kintyre Ryburns is that they stuck with the original Ayrshire spelling of ‘Ryburn’, as opposed to the variety of spellings found in mainland Scotland and Ireland. The book “Kintyre in the 17th Century” (McKerral, 2001) has an appendix titled “Lowland Names”. The names were taken from old Kintyre rentals, from the Parish Registers, and from other sources such as the Registers of Testaments and Inventories and the Sasine Registers. In each case the earliest date of occurrence of the name in the record was noted, and also the locality of its bearers then, and at subsequent dates. The notes were meant to be illustrative and selective, not exhaustive. The paragraph on the Ryburn name is as follows :-

“Ryburn, Reyburn, Raeburn; a family named Ryburn owned estate of that name in Dunlop parish, Ayrshire. In 1638 Neil Ryburn of that ilk sold this estate to Porterfields of Haplund, who were among the planter lairds of Kintyre. Ryburns of Kintyre most probably of this family. John Ryburn and Janet Jamieson in Backs, 1659; John, tacksman in 1666, name of holding indecipherable, but probably Backs [*Aros is more likely*]; Patrick and Jane Baird in Garvachie, 1673; John, tenant in Aros, 1678; Mathew

Ryburn and Elizabeth Ryburn, 1702; John Ryburn and Mary Dunlop, 1701; William Ryburn, tenant in Drumlemble, 1830.”

“Of that ilk” is a Scottish title that means that the name Ryburn was derived from their ancestral lands and was formally awarded to them by the King of Scotland. They were “Lairds of the Manor”, which was roughly the equivalent of English squires.

Fullarton (1858, p165) confirms that in 1638 a Neil Ryburn sold the ancestral Ryburn lands near Dunlop, Ayrshire, to [Gabriel Porterfield](#) of ‘Hapland’. McKerral (2001, p69) states that the “heirs of the deceased John Porterfield of Hapland” were amongst the twelve original tacksmen who came to Kintyre in the 1650s, at the beginning of Argyll’s plantation scheme. Their ‘tack’, of twelve merklands extent, included the farms of Achalick, Craig and Backs. McKerral also says that in 1653 the tacksmen of this tack was Alexander Porterfield, who was the brother of John Porterfield, formerly the ruling elder in the Parish of Dunlop. John Ryburn must have been closely allied with the Porterfields, as the Ryburns had lived next door to Hapland, probably since feudal times. The Porterfields may not have remained in Kintyre for very long, as their name does not appear in the appendix of Lowland names in McKerral’s book. Also, there are no Porterfields in Kintyre birth records. McKerral says the Porterfields were ‘Remonstrants’ who were caught up in the ‘Persecution’, and some of them sought refuge in Holland. John Ryburn seems to have taken over part of their tack by 1659.

‘Backs’ still exists (grid ref. 168565, 621665) as East and West Backs Farms, both located near the southeastern end of Campbeltown Airport runway. McKerral was wrong about John Ryburn being in Backs in 1666, as [the Earl of Argyll’s Kintyre rental records](#) mention “**The 1 merkland of Arois (Aros) possess by John Ryburne for 19 years after Whitsunday 1666**”. The annual rent was 53 pounds six shillings and eight pence, Scots money. The records also show that John was still a tenant farmer in Aros in 1678. Aros (grid ref. 168296, 621157) is just near Backs. The name Aros is Gaelic for dwelling place. From the 1694 Hearth Tax records we know that John Ryburn was later in “Wigel” (Uigle) – probably from 1685 onwards, as the Aros lease was for 19 years (as were most leases).

John Ryburn was likely to have been a son of Neil Ryburn, who in 1638 sold the Ryburn ancestral lands in Ayrshire. A “tacksmen” in much of Scotland would mean that he was a patriarch of some sort, and a go-between for the chief of the clan and the lowest layer of tenant farmers, or serfs. He was able to sublet his lands. However, I have also read that in Kintyre a tacksmen was merely a tenant farmer, and a ‘tack’ a plot of rented land. From John’s *testament dative* (see below) we know that Mathew Ryburn was probably his eldest surviving son. Mathew had a son in 1706 who seems to have been the only Neil Ryburn born in the whole of Scotland between 1650 and 1868. A James, born 2 Nov 1660, was the only child of John and Janet’s to be recorded in the Campbeltown baptismal records, but he may not have lived very long. Other probable children include Janet, who married James Clark in about 1678, and John who married Jane Sheddan in about 1687. These other children may have been baptized in Dunlop, Ayrshire, to whence many of the early plantations used to return each year for communion and baptisms. But the records there did not survive.

‘Scotlands People’ Web site has an image of the hand-written testament and inventory of a John Ryburn who died in December 1705, at ‘Vigill’ Farm, Parish of Kilcheran (Kilkerran). Vigill (also ‘Wigil’, ‘Wigle’) is the same farm as ‘Uigle’, located on Chiscan Water on modern maps. It is not far from Garvachie. This is the earliest Ryburn testament known from Kintyre. The document is hard to read, but it does reveal that his son, Mathew Ryburn of Killeonan Farm, was confirmed by the Argyll Commissary Court as the executor of this ‘Testament Dative’ (intestate). It also mentions an Elizabeth, possibly Mathew’s wife. This John Ryburn was probably the original patriarch, as only he was sufficiently high up the

social ladder to have left such a document. The next testament was that of David Ryburn Jnr, a wealthy Campbeltown merchant who died in 1771.

Patric Ryburn and Jane Baird, who were living at Garvachie in 1673, may have come from another family in Ayrshire, or even Ireland. Following blood-feuding in Ayrshire, a John Ryburn had fled to Ireland in about 1603. Their children include Jane (b. 1673), Elizabeth (b. 1676), John (b. 1676) and twins Jenat and Patrick (b. 1681). Note that two of their children, Elizabeth and John, were supposedly born in 1676, only 7 months apart. One of their birth dates may have been incorrectly written or transcribed.

Patric and Jane's daughter Elizabeth seems to have married John and Janet's eldest son Mathew Ryburn in about 1672, so John's and Patric's families

were probably not very closely related. On the other hand, first-cousin marriages were not uncommon in those days. Garvachie (grid ref. 168900,616743), is about 5km south of Aros on the east side of the road to Southend. According to the Campbeltown birth register, Patric and Jane were at what looks like Intiglach or Jutiglach in 1680, when the twins Patric and 'Jenat' were born. I have been unable to locate a farm that resembles those names. However, [the 1694 Hearth Tax records](#) put "Patrick Ryburne" at "Christalloch" (now Christlach), which is a farm located about three kilometers up the road from Southend, on the eastern side. Most tenancies were of 19 years duration, so Patric was probably in Garvachie by 1661, at least 19 years before the twins were born at Christlach. Patric may have arrived in Kintyre at the same time as John Ryburn.



Figure 15. Christlach farmhouse today.
Courtesy Ralston Genealogy Website.

In 1683 a John Ryburn, was at 'Knockriochmore' Farm when his son Patrick was "born out of fornication". This John cannot have been Patric and Jane's son John, as he was only 7 years old at that time. The John Ryburn and Mary Dunlop, 1701, mentioned by McKerral could be the same, and he may have been a son of the original John Ryburn. Knockrioch is near the modern hamlet of Stewarton. Bleau's atlas of 1650 has a 'Knockreoh Moir' at roughly this location, the Gaelic suffix 'mor' meaning 'big'. From his files, Angus Martin (pers. comm. 2007) says that in 1692 a 'Jon' and Mathew Ryburn were at 'Killeunan' (Killeonan) Farm, and another John Ryburn at 'Achachork' (Oatfield) Farm. However, the 1694 Hearth Tax records place a "John Ryburne" at "Gillchrist and Ochteran", and Mathew Ryburn at "Killeunan" (Killeonan). These farms are just 3 km southeast of Drumlemble, on either side of the road to Southend. In addition to the original John, there must have been at least two younger Johns.

Maltmen, Rich Merchants and Slave Owners

Not all Ryburns were poor struggling farmers. Starting in the 18th century, there were several Ryburns who were very much immersed in the capitalist world. David Ryburn Senior, who I now think was the 3rd child of Mathew and Elizabeth Ryburn, born in 1702, was a "maltster" or "maltman" when married to Janet Galbraith in 1735. Malt is the sprouted barley grain used in whisky making, but by the mid 18th century Campbeltown maltmen made most of their money by lending money to farmers and receiving payments after the harvest. In other words

they acted like one-man merchant banks, taking over much of the tacksman's roles in earlier times. In 1743, David and Mathew Ryburn (possibly David's father) were both maltmen and town councilors ([Susan L MacDonald, 1982, p.315](#)). In 1767, "David Ryburn Senr", maltster in Campbeltown, was listed as a "Subscriber to the "Relief Congregation of Campbeltown", along with John Ryburn, shoemaker, James Ryburn, shipmaster, William Ryburn, tenant in "Drumlemon" (my g. x 4 grandfather), Mathew Ryburn, tenant in Killounan (Killeonan), William Ryburn, tenant in Olaknahavell, William Ryburn, shipmaster in Campbeltown, and James Ryburn, tenant in Killcunan (ibid, Appendix 9). In later years Campbeltown maltmen switched their investments to herring boats, also known as "busses". David Senior did so after 1757 (ibid, p.315). When he died in 1776, David Senior's Testament Dative was executed by his eldest son John Ryburn, a Campbeltown shoe maker. His 3rd son was Arthur, an illustrious sea captain during the American Revolutionary War (see below). Incidentally, the David Ryburn born in 1707 to John Ryburn and Isobell Greenlees could not have been David Senior, as his nine children did not include a David. Other Davids were born too late.

Campbeltown merchant David Ryburn Junior was David Senior's third child. He married Jean Anderson of Glasgow in 1763, and the evidence that follows suggests he married into wealth. He may have lived a somewhat dissolute life, as he died before his father, and he was not on any of the lowland church congregation lists. He appears to have had two wedding ceremonies, one in Glasgow on 16 October, 1763, and one in Campbeltown on 1 November, 1763. He died in Campbeltown in 1771, leaving 33 pages of [Testament Dative](#) detailing debts totalling £650, but shop assets worth £1,644. According to Susan Macdonald (1982, p.325) he had shares in four herring boats when he died.

David Junior and Jean's two sons, John (b. 1766) and Thomas (b. 1767) were both educated at Glasgow University, respectively starting in 1779 and 1782 ([Matriculation Albums of the University of Glasgow](#)). The university records clearly state that their father was the Campbeltown merchant David :-

"JOHANNES RYBURN filius natu maximus Davidis quodam Mercatoris apud Campbeltown"

A John Ryburn with Glasgow merchant connections, probably David Senior's elder son, is recorded as living in Fredricksburgh, Virginia, in [1791](#), [1793](#), [1794](#), and [1796](#). Also, a Thomas Ryburn, probably John's younger brother, held a retail merchant license there in [1791](#). However, by [1798](#), they both appear to have had moved on to the Caribbean.

Both sons became trading merchants and plantation owners in the West Indies in the late 18th century, and co-owners of several ships. These included the Pomoana and Alfred of Glasgow and the Nancy of Greenock (Dobson, 2006b, p.98). [John lived in the Township of St George](#), on the island of Grenada, while [Thomas was in Kingston, Jamaica](#). They traded coffee, sugar, flour, Madeira wine ([Pearce, 2002](#)) and probably tobacco, cotton, rum and slaves. In 1813 a ship called the "Betsey", owned by Guthrie and Ryburn of Grenada, [was captured by the Spanish privateer "Conquistador"](#) and sold in Caracas on a charge of smuggling. Subsequent diplomatic attempts to obtain recompense came to nothing.

In 1798 Thomas fathered an 'African' daughter called Margaret Ryburn. However, Thomas died in Jamaica the following year ([Dobson, 2006b, p41](#)). John must have inherited Thomas's properties in Jamaica, as he is recorded as "Absentee Merchant" and part owner of the Jamaican sugar estates of Heywood Hall, in the St Mary precinct, and Iter Boreale in the precinct of St George. John was later compensated at total of £7878 for the 410 slaves he had previously owned at these two properties ([Scotland and Glasgow in the records of slave compensation](#)). This followed the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833, and the Slave Compensation Act of 1837. The British Colonial Slave Registers also reveal that the company called Guthrie-Ryburn once owned numerous slaves in Grenada.

John returned to Glasgow a very wealthy man. He lived in a mansion at 29 (old numbering) Buchanan Street, on the SW corner of the St Vincent Street intersection. By 1816 he had become a member of the Glasgow House of Merchants ([Cleland, 1816](#)). In 1817, 'Mr Lindsay', a Grenada-based partner of the firm Guthrie and Ryburn had tried to sell arms to Spanish Government in South America. Several court cases ensued, culminating in 1833 with an appeal to the Privy Council in London ([Knapp, 1834, p188](#)). By 1832 John had [imported some cactus plants from Grenada for the Botanic Gardens in Glasgow](#). In 1832, John Ryburn and an Andrew Rankin [appear to have sold two Grenada sugar plantations, "Union" and "Marli", to George Patterson for a grand total of £16,553](#).

John retired in 1835, when the partnership of the firm of James Findlay and Company was dissolved (<http://www.london-gazette.co.uk/issues/19355/pages/296/page.pdf>). John, aged 75, is in the 1841 census as living at Dunoon and Kilmun (Holy Loch) with three servants and a 40-year old merchant, Robert McCunn. He died in 1844, leaving 100 pounds to the Glasgow House of Merchants.

In 1909 there was a [Stronsay-based lifeboat](#) called the 'John Ryburn', which was probably named after this John Ryburn. The benefactor was a W. McCunn of Largs. The connection was likely to have been via John and Thomas's elder sister Mary Ryburn, who married Greenock merchant Thomas McCunn, in Glasgow, in 1790.

According to Susan L. MacDonald (1982, p212), David Junior's wealth was passed on to a Matthew Ryburn in Campbeltown. However, there is no evidence in parish records of a Matthew who was a son of David Junior.

Other Ryburn Families

A quick check of the Kintyre Tree reveals many other Ryburn families in the 18th and 19th centuries. In fact, there were nearly 200 Ryburns recorded in the Campbeltown Parish Registers. Wherever possible, I have tried to link the husband and/or wife to the previous generation and in many cases there is only one reasonable candidate for their birth. Inevitably, though, there are cases where there are several eligible candidates, with little to choose between them. Children's names can sometimes be of assistance, but most are repeated over and over, and the children's naming conventions that were supposed to be used in Scotland at the time were often not followed. The lack of middle names and the repetition of William, James, John, Mathew, Jean, Janet, Elizabeth, Mary and Margaret make the genealogist's task very difficult. We already know that some births were simply not recorded, or the record was lost. Where ambiguities exist, these have usually been annotated in the notes on each individual.

However, some unambiguous links and additional bits of information, like old letters, family bibles, wills, passenger lists, census and tenancy records, often serve to eliminate possibilities where multiple candidates previously existed, and there is some hope that the tree may one day be solved, like a giant Sudoku puzzle, or Fermat's last Theorem. Every little bit of information, such as who was in what farm, at what time, can be used to reduce ambiguities.

I do not intend to comment on many other Ryburns, at this stage, but a few stand out. In 1756 a Mathew and James Ryburn were amongst the petitioners from the Lowland congregations of Campbeltown and Southend to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. They were protesting against a ruling that forbade sermons to be preached on a Saturday or Monday, but were apparently unsuccessful (Morrison, 1999). These two were almost certainly the same as the Mathew (ancestor of Diana Powell) and James that were in

Killeonan Farm.

Seemingly from nowhere, but perhaps from Ireland, was Edward Ryburn of 'Kilwhipnach' farm. Edward married Isobel Cordiner in 1785 and they had had 7 children. From a July 1791 letter to America, reproduced in the online 'Kintyre Mag', we have "Ned Ryburn's Kilwhipnach grasses 20 Cows belonging mostly to David Ferguson" (Ker, 1791).

Kilwhipnach is a farm in the hills 4 km south of Drumlemble, at grid reference 167470,616560. There is no record of Edward's birth, but one possibility is that he was the son of an Edward Ryburn, listed by Dobie (2006) as a merchant and/or 'maltster' in Campbeltown in 1771-1776.

In 1821 his son Edward married Agnes Ryburn, daughter of William the Drumlemble farmer, and they had one child Isabella, born in 1822. Edward junior seems to have died young, as Agnes and Isabella were living at Drumlemble with James the baker in the 1841 census. In 1822, As previously mentioned under 'Ancestors of North American Ryburns', Edward senior's youngest son Andrew married Margaret Ryburn the daughter of William the Drumlemble farmer. They settled in North Carolina, USA (see below).

The 1791 letter to America mentioned above (Ker, 1791) also refers to a John Ryburn, who was probably married to Agnes Langwill in 1764, and living at 'Knochrloch' farm, at Stewarton (grid ref. 169675,619805).

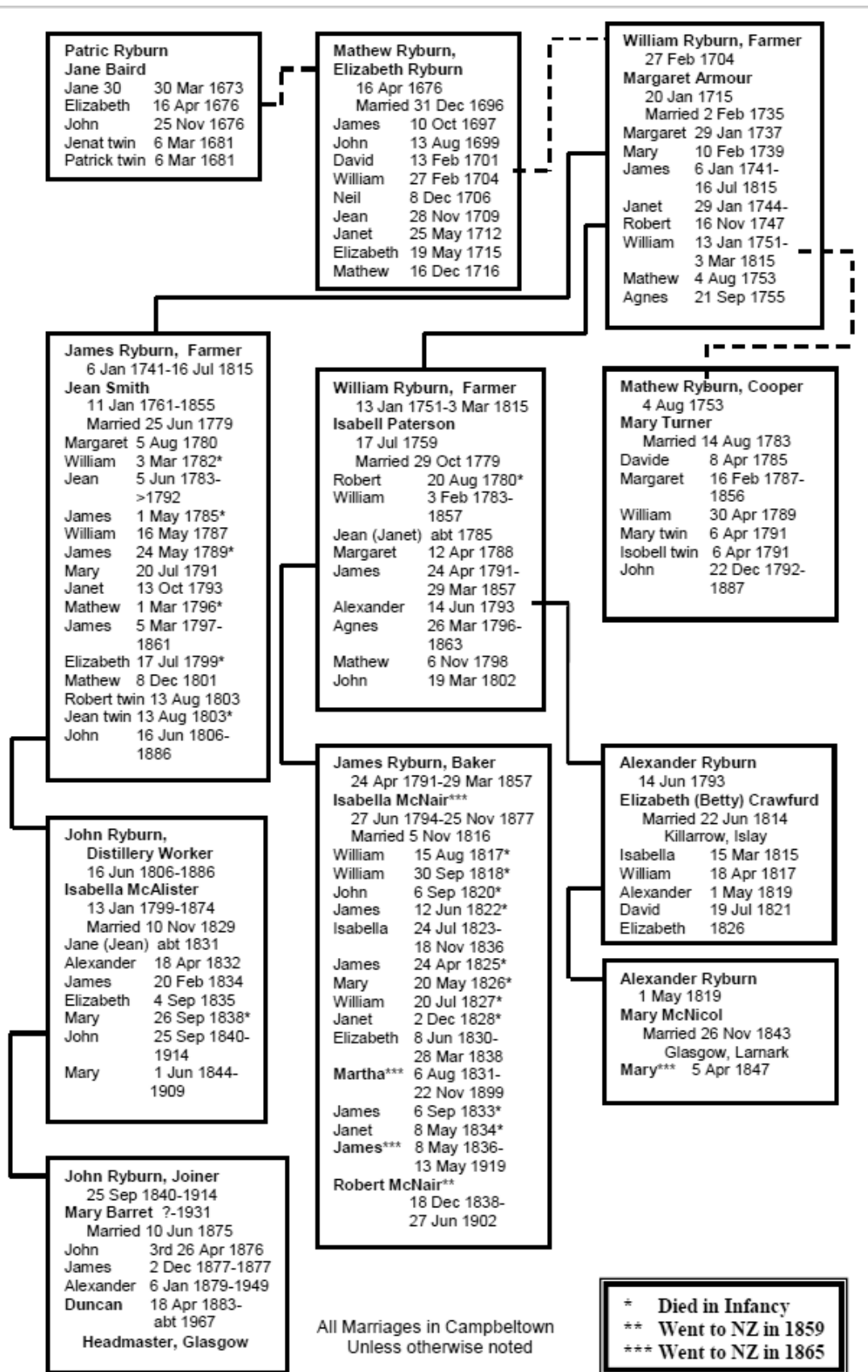


Fig. 15. The relationships between a few Kintyre Ryburn families.

Another interesting character was Thomas Ryburn the ‘scavenger’, or street cleaner. Thomas was not a common name amongst the Kintyre Ryburns. He married Euphemia Gillies in Campbeltown in 1858, fathered one child, Catherine, in 1860, and died in 1901. He first appears at age 15 in the 1841 census, working as an agricultural laborer at ‘Ballinabraid’. In 1851 he was still an “Agrich Labu” and a lodger in ‘Burn Side’ St., Campbeltown, but was said to have been born in Greenock in about 1827. In 1861 he was a ‘Day Labourer’, still living in ‘Burnside St’, but now born in Ireland in about 1829 and married to Euphemia. In the 1871 census his birth was given as Belfast, Ireland, in about 1827. He is still there in the 1881 census at age 52, a ‘scavenger’, living with his wife Euphemia (51) at Lochend St, Reidsland, Campbeltown, and born in Ireland. There is a member-contributed record in the LDS database of a Thomas ‘Reburn’ born 12 April 1829 in County Monaghan, Ireland, to John Reburn and Margaret Wier, although this Thomas was supposed to have emigrated to America. The Reburns, who may be distantly related to the Kintyre Ryburns, go back to 1711 in the County Monaghan birth records. Other possibilities from the online Irish birth records (<http://ifhf.brsgenealogy.com/>) are a Thomas ‘Reyburn’ born in County Louth in 1825, and also one from County Westmeath born in 1824.

John Ryburn, Moonshine Maker and Publican

In case you were thinking that all Kintyre Ryburns were virtuous, upstanding church-goers, I give you the case of John Ryburn, farmer, publican and moonshine whisky maker. According to Campbeltown historian Angus Martin (pers. comm., 2007), in 1823 this John Ryburn was at ‘Balmainach’ (Ballimenach), ‘Kildalloig’, “illicitly making whisky”. Kildalloig (grid ref. 175350,618780) is a farm on the coast southeast of Campbeltown, about 1 km south of the Island of Davaar, and Ballimenach is a cottage, or cottages, only 0.5 km south of that. I think John was probably the youngest son of Mathew Ryburn (Cooper) and Mary Turner, but I am not absolutely certain about that. He married Mary McCallum in 1814 and had 7 children. Their oldest child, Isobell (Isabella), was tagged as illegitimate in her birth record.

In the 1841 census he was living at ‘New Orleans’, a coastal cottage about 1 km south of Kildalloig, with Mary and his three youngest progeny, Robert, John and Janet. Angus Martin (1987, p134) mentions that John Ryburn was the first subtenant of New Orleans, and in the 1820s was paying a rent of 14 pounds, plus a further 4 pounds for the kelp he collected there. In 1843, when his daughter Margaret Orr was married to John McCoag, John senior was described as a farmer of ‘Ballymenach’.

In the 1851 Census John was listed at age 58 as a publican at Genramskill, which is on the coast about 2 kilometres southeast of Campbeltown. He was with his wife Mary (63), youngest daughter Janet (22) and visitor and grandson Daniel McCoag (5). John was also labeled ‘Publican’ in the 1851 marriage record of his daughter Isabella (Isobel) to William Greenlees. John’s daughter Jean married a James Hope and lived in Greenock, where the 1851 census appears to have her sister Mary staying with them. In the 1855 marriage record of his youngest daughter, Janet, to John Armour, ‘Coppersmith’, at ‘Kildalwig’ (Killdalraig), John was again a ‘Farmer’. John Armour was born in 1824 to Robert Armour and Mary Porter. Robert Armour was a coppersmith in Campbeltown, who did very well out of making copper whisky stills (Armour, 1999). John’s son John became a railway clerk in Glasgow, marrying a Henrietta, and producing two children, the eldest of which, John, was born in 1857 and emigrated to Michigan in the United States. In the 1884 Michigan State Census he is listed as having been born in Scotland in about 1858, and he was living as a boarder in Montague, Muskegon County.

In 1881 John, aged 89, was living at Kildalloig with his daughter Janet and son-in-law John Armour. His wife Mary seems to have died in 1873. John was 96 when he died in 1887, and

his gravestone is appropriately located in the [Old Kilkerran Graveyard](#). His eldest daughter Isabella appears to be buried in [Kilchousland Graveyard](#), along with her husband William Greenlees. She is the only Ryburn in that cemetery. She died in 1901, aged 86 years.

John may not have made moonshine all his life. After all, he is listed in the censuses as a farmer and later a publican. But this was a time the government was trying to control the manufacture of strong spirits and impose taxes. Naturally the natives were resisting, and there were very many illegal distilleries in Kintyre, as well as 30 odd licensed distilleries in Campbeltown – which was then known as ‘The Whisky Capital of the World’ (Wikipedia). Pistol-toting ‘Revenue Men’ were thick on the ground, and in the late 18th century up to 176 people were prosecuted for the illegal distillation of whisky in any one year (MacDonald, 1999). John’s isolated existence in a remote coastal area suggests he may also have been involved in smuggling whisky, as were many distillers of illicit whisky. However, there was a time in the late 18th century when practically all farmers had stills for making whisky for their own consumption.

If you think John Ryburn was bad, you should read my account of the early Ayrshire Ryburns. They indulged in running feuds, were involved in several murders, and were themselves murdered for their trouble (Fullarton, 1858).

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