

“Willie’s Will and Nettie’s Treasures”

It is a pleasure and privilege to be here in Dunfermline, the native city of my paternal ancestors to share with you some results of exploration into the lives of some of Dunfermline Watts, notably George Watt (1806-1887) a weaver here and his wife Helen Meikle (1810-1892). This presentation focuses on how I found photos of this couple, documents on their lives and especially the lives of two of their younger sons, William Meikle Watt (1839-1901) Collector of Burgh Rates for Dunfermline for 28 years before his death, when he was succeeded in that office by his brother Edward Watt (c.1854-1922).

The title of my presentation refers to how I was inspired to find out more about this branch of the Dunfermline Watts. I hope to share some stories of startling survivals of evidence about the lives of the children and grandchildren of George and Helen’s family and demonstrate how frequently the most impressive evidence, including period photographs, is found outwith Scotland. Near the end of my story I would like to feature a gallery of photographs of Dunfermline studio portraits taken from circa 1865 to 1895. These are of individuals who must be, because of the albums in which they appear, relatives or family friends of George and Helen’s but who are as yet not identified.

Let me begin with three images; a period engraving of Dunfermline Abbey, circa 1844 and two marriage records [illustrations 1, 2 and 3]. The steel engraving of Dunfermline Abbey is Plate XI, from Reverend Peter Chalmers Historical and Statistical Account of Dunfermline, published in Edinburgh in 1844. As many of you know, the newer part of this parish church was begun in Chalmers’ words “...in March 1818 and completed in September 1821”. It immediately adjoins the Old Church on the east, the latter now being, in Chalmers’ words, “a porch or vestibule to it”.¹

¹ Chalmers, 1844, p. 322

Less than fifteen years after this new church had been consecrated for worship, it was the setting for two marriages of young Dunfermline weavers. The first, shown here [Illustration 2] is the personal marriage record of George Watt, weaver, Dunfermline, and Helen Muckle, later spelled Meikle, issued on 26 May 1834 by the Parish Clerk James Rankine. George and Helen were married in the Abbey Church four days later by Reverend George Barlas. An important instruction is given in smaller print at the bottom as follows:

“It is requested of the Minister who marries the above parties that, after certifying the marriage and marking the date, he could enjoin the parties to return to the Clerk’s office with the certificate so that he may insert it in the Marriage Register accordingly; which he will do without any further expense.”

George and Helen’s marriage can be found in the Old Parish Registers for Dunfermline, but not with the date of the marriage nor the name of the officiating minister so this certificate is especially valuable.

Illustration 3 shows a very similar certificate, this time for James Watt, another weaver in Dunfermline and his bride Jean Brand, issued two days later on 2 June 1834 for a marriage in the Abbey the next day, conducted by Reverend Andrew Bullock, Minister of the nearby parish of Tulliallan. Before turning to the key question of who these Watts were and where were these certificates found, a word about this type of record, which some of you may not have seen before. My colleague in the Court of the Lord Lyon, Elizabeth Roads, Snawdoun Herald and Lyon Clerk since 1986 has explained that over the course of her long career she has seen seven or eight of these sorts of certificates. In the decades before mandatory civil registration in Scotland before 1 January 1855, in the larger parishes, printed forms such as these came into use, to help clerks with volume of writing and to provide couples with a personal record of their union.

Now, we move to the centre of our story. Who were these people? Where were these records found? How did I connect with the people who had them?

First let me explain that George and James Watt shared a common grandfather, George Watt, born in Dunfermline Parish in 1750, the son of a coach wright from Carnock, John Watt and his wife Agnes Blackadder. In the late 18th century George acquired a small farm in Crossford, west of the town of Dunfermline and on the 24 October 1776, married Helen Morgan from the Parish of Saline. George, who died in 1814, and Helen, had six children, five sons

John, born 1777

James born 1779 who died young

James born 1781

George born 1783,

Robert born 1787 and

one daughter Margaret born 1794 who died in 1802.

John was my three greats grandfather, who married Isabel Cant of the Parish of Carriden in 1802 and became a master baker in Dunfermline.

George was the eldest son of James, John's younger brother, and James' wife Janet Anderson, who were married in Dunfermline on 11 September 1805. James and Janet had seven children;

Alison born in 1805

George born in 1806

William born in 1808

John born in 1810

Helen born in 1813

Agnes born in 1815 and

James born in 1820.

Save for John Watt, my three greats grandfather, James' older brother, these families were deeply involved in the weaving industry which dominated Dunfermline, first using hand looms and then mechanized with power looms throughout the 19th century and into the 20th century.

Where were these two marriage records found? The younger of the two, the record for my great great grandparents, James Watt and Jean Brand was lost for over a century. It was found by a cousin by marriage, Rina Guthrie, here in Dunfermline in 2008, folded up and hidden away in a small wooden box. The box had two folded up documents; the second was even earlier, the personal marriage record of James' father and mother, who were married in Canongate Church in Edinburgh on 2 October 1802. How did these family heirlooms get lost? My guess is as follows: Rina's husband Jimmie is a great grandson, on his mother's side, of a Dunfermline weaver James Inches (1839-1916) who married James Watt and Jean Brand's third daughter Janet Brand Watt (1840-1928). After Jean Brand was widowed, she went to live with her daughter and son-in-law in a house on Buffie's Brae and died there in 1886. I think that Jean (Brand) Watt, having inherited her in-laws marriage record and treasured her own, folded them up and put them away for safe keeping and either forgot to tell her daughter, Janet Inches where she had put the box, or Janet forgot to tell her family in the next generation. In any case, it was only Rina Guthrie's careful sifting through a dresser belonging to her sister-in-law, that saved this priceless record from oblivion.

What about the George Watt and Helen Meikle record? It forms part of what I have decided to call "Nettie's treasures", in this case rescued from a garden bonfire nearly forty years ago by a cousin Ken Watt, now living in England but as a teenager, a regular visitor, with his father William Meikle Watt (1921-1982), to his father's aunt Janet "Nettie" Watt, in her home on Monastery Street. Ken was a great great grandson of George Watt and Helen Meikle, descended from a son of William Meikle Watt and his wife Margaret Hutton, and his Aunt Nettie was a favourite.

This precious relic was in papers rescued by Ken as a teenager when it fell to his father and mother to clear out Nettie's belongings following her death in 1978. Ken seemed to be the only person interested, so he placed everything in a big cardboard box and cared for it until I expressed interest. In the summer of 2014 he began to look in detail at what he had saved and on 27

July that year sent the scan of the marriage record. Having seen my great grandparent's certificate only a few years before, you can imagine my surprise at seeing the virtual match, and for ceremonies in the Abbey so close together. What a treasure. Records belonging to two Watts that I was eventually able to prove were related.

By that time, 2014, I knew a lot about my own paternal ancestors and had published on the FFHS site a lengthy history of those Watts and related families. But I knew very little about George and Helen.

How did Ken and I connect? Through his older sister Margaret, who I had found living in Dunfermline with the help of my Guthrie cousins. I learned about Margaret from a distant family connection in Ottawa when I was working there from 1988 to 2007. It was during the same time that I became aware of legal papers from the late 1960s and early 1970s, which listed 36 names, many of them Watts, living in Scotland, England, Canada, the United States, New Zealand and Australia, beneficiaries of an estate available for distribution totalling GBP 40,092.08. Which estate was this and who were all these Watt beneficiaries?

With the help of three cousins, all descended from George and Helen Watt, between 2002 and 2014 I was able to solve the puzzle. This list was ultimately a result of a will created by William Meikle Watt, a trust disposition and settlement dated at Dunfermline on 17 September 1901, just weeks before he died. He suffered a chronic illness and as the father of seven children, four sons and three daughters (one son died as an infant in 1880), and a successful civil servant, he wanted to make proper provision for his family. He had a substantial estate of both moveable and fixed assets. His trust disposition as [he] termed it, gave generous support to his immediate family under the watchful eye of three executors; his eldest son George, his wife Margaret and his brother Edward. The provision which was perhaps the most unusual, or at least distinctive, was that as long as any sons or daughters remained unmarried and agreed to live in the family

home, Glenview Cottage on Monastery Street, they would receive an annual allowance.

Here we see William Meikle Watt (1839-1901) and his wife Margaret Hutton (1856-1931), the daughter of James Hutton, a labourer, and Margaret McGregor. [ILLUSTRATIONS 4 AND 5] William and Margaret were married in the Manse in Dunfermline on 10 November 1875. We know exactly when this studio portrait from Norval Studios was taken as you see from the inscription on the reverse: 8 September 1886. From the statutory records, we can fairly assume that we are looking at the eldest daughter Margaret Hutton, born 1876 on her father's left, her brother George, born in 1878 with his hand resting on the table, son William born in 1882 in the centre and daughter Helen born 1884 next to her mother. Several years later this studio portrait was taken. [Illustration 6]. Three more children were to be born to William and Margaret; James in 1881, Edward in 1891 and Janet in 1893. As things unfolded following William's death, Helen or "Nellie" and Janet or "Nettie" never married and lived with their mother in the family home, Janet being the last of her siblings to survive and passed away on 25 February 1978 in the house where she was born. Well before that time, the first three executors had passed away: William's widow Margaret in November 1931, [Illustration 6a Funeral Notice for Margaret Watt from Nellie and Nettie Watt) her brother-in-law Edward in April 1922 and his nephew George in March 1949. This meant that new executors had to be found and appointed by the courts. The jobs were kept in the family and fell to Janet "Nettie" Watt living at Glenview Cottage on Monastery Street, and her cousin Mary Ann Goldie Walls Watt, (2 June 1887-22 March 1969), the surviving daughter of her uncle Edward Watt (1854-1922) and his wife Jessie Goldie Walls (1853-1935) who were married in Dunfermline 15 January 1885. Here we see Edward and Jesse in another Norval Studio portrait c. 1895 [ILLUSTRATION 7] Mary is the taller sister on her mother's left.

When Mary died in March 1969, Nettie was the executrix of her estate under direction from lawyers acting in the Court of Session. It was

necessary to try and establish who the beneficiaries might be, in conformity with a decree granted by the Sheriff of Fife and Kinross 2 May 1969.

This search, pre-Internet, pre-Google led to the list that my three cousins shared with me; first Eric Watt, living in Oregon when I connected with him first in 2005, then Ken Watt, living in England when we connected in 2010, and finally Chris Watt, in Melbourne, who actually found me with an internet inquiry based on finding the Watt family story published by the FFHS years ago.

Eric is the son of William Meikle Watt (1914-1978) and his wife Joanne McEwan (1925-1990). Eric's father was the eldest son of James Watt (1886-1949) and his wife Jane Johnston (1886-1973). James was the third son of William Meikle Watt, the Burgh Rates Collector. He and Jane emigrated to Montreal with their family just before the start of the Great Depression.

Ken Watt's father, William Meikle Watt (1921-1982) and his wife Jemina Angles Brown (1916-2005) lived most of their lives in Dunfermline. Ken's grandfather, Edward Meikle Watt was the youngest son of William Meikle Watt and Margaret Hutton and was the closest sibling in age to Janet "Nettie" Watt.

Chris Watt is the son of Ronald Edward Watt (1918-2005) and Kathleen Brock (1931-2003). Ronald and Kathleen spent most of their lives and careers in Southern England where Ronald's father George Watt (1878-1949) had taken his family during World War I. George was William Meikle Watt, the Burgh Rates Collector, eldest son. George married Mary Grant, 28 July 1902 in Edinburgh.

So these three cousins now widely separated geographically, in the US, Australia and England, each descended from William Meikle Watt were to be the key to locating more records about their paternal ancestors. This project has enabled them to be in contact for the first time.

What did the list of beneficiaries look like? ILLUSTRATIONS 8 – 10 give you an idea. These pages, dating from 1975 would form the basis of an ongoing search for the descendants of George Watt and Helen Meikle. The majority of those listed here have passed away, but thanks to internet sleuthing I have found some still living and others of the next generation. Ken's father, William Meikle Watt, appears on the preceding page, as being a beneficiary of 1/14 of the estate. Chris' father, Ronald Watt is found near the top of page 2, listed at his then home in Rugby. Eric's father, William Meikle Watt, appears near the top of page 3 living as he then was, in Montreal.

Along with the beneficiaries' sheet came a rough family tree which must have been put together with Nettie's help. It started with George Watt at the top but no mention of Helen Meikle, both of whom had died before Nettie was born. As researches using Scotlandspeople and other sources proceeded it was clear that the tree was incomplete, with birth order out of phase in several generations and people missing.

Nevertheless, the fine records in the cache saved by Ken, loaned by Eric, and emailed by Chris, spurred me on to try to find out more about George and Helen's family in several generations with clear signposts contained in the beneficiaries list and the primitive tree, annexed to it.

As many of you know, finding living descendants of ancestors, and in this case collateral branches of a paternal line, is not easy. However with liberal use of ancestry.co.uk and other internet sites, and phone calls, in the last two years especially, I have connected with a number of new cousins, three of whom turned out to have saved wonderful photographic and family heirlooms.

The first breakthrough came in late May 2015 when I spoke with a great great granddaughter of George and Helen, Kay Melcher in California, whose mother was Mary Moose who is listed on page 3 of the beneficiaries. Kay has inherited many family photos and records which stretch back to the time when her grandparents William Moose and Margaret Watt were

married in Kansas in 1895. Of all the treasures Kay had inherited, the most wonderful and informative was a small diary kept by her grandmother Margaret (Watt) Moose (1874-1943) when she travelled to Dunfermline in the summer of 1907. This would have been a long trip by rail and sea, and unusual for the time. Most immigrant families did not have the means to return home for a visit. But Maggie Moose was clearly a keen traveller and keen to see the city where her parents were from, and visit relations and friends. Maggie was the eldest daughter of James Watt (1834-1880), George and Helen's eldest son and first child, and his wife Margaret Kay (1842-1904), the daughter of Robert Niverson and Margaret Kay. James and Margaret were married in Kansas about 1872 and they had five children, George born in 1873 who died as an infant, Margaret the diarist, William Meikle Watt (1875-1957), George John Watt (1878-1941) and James E. Watt (1880-1918), born in the year that his father passed away, aged 46.

Illustrations 11 and 12 show the pages of Maggie's diary from August 8th to 13th, 1907. Details abound; which relatives and friends she's seeing, visiting the factory to see Lizzie's 3 looms working, also Ann Bogues; receiving samples of hand loom weaving done by her father James before he emigrated, going with "Auntie" Polly and Nellie until tea time to listen to the Band play, meeting Mr. and Mrs. Lawrie on the street. On Saturday the 10th, she describes going to the Carnegie Baths and then touring the Abbey. Luckily, as part of this tour, Maggie carefully recorded the family monument as follows "Grandfather's Tombstone in North part of Abbey or old part. Erected by the family in memory of

"George Watt

Who died 9th March 1887, aged 80 years,

Helen Meikle, his wife

Who died 10th January 1892, aged 82 years

Also

George Watt, their son

Who died 4 April 1846 aged 4 years

Janet Watt, their daughter, died 17th

August 1863 aged 17 years
James Watt: their son died in Kansas U.S.A. 29th
March 1880 aged 46 years
George Watt, their grandson died 23 December 1890 aged 3 years”

This monument is still there. [ILLUSTRATION 13] But the inscription is completely weathered away even since the Matthews produced their MI's for the Abbey in 1972, so Maggie's careful notations are invaluable, not least because they identify a young boy born to George and Helen who died before statutory registration began.

Beyond this, her daily activities bring Dunfermline of over a century ago to life. On Sunday the 11th, she noted:

“We were at services in Abbey in forenoon; heard Rev. Beard preach [sp?] from Psalms 8: In P.M. Cousin Maggie and I were invited up to Charlotte Morgan, Lesley & James her husband, also met his sister Janet & her niece Belle to take tea. Spent a joyful afternoon as they were all old friends of Pa & Ma. At night we went to Canmore St. Congre. Church and sat beside Ellen Bewick in Mama's old Pew in her own church; and listened to Rev. Fairley ... preach the best sermon I have heard in Scotland on “God's love for Man”; John 16:8-12. After services met Isa Philp & she walked down with us home for a few moments. Giving us a history of their holiday.”

The next day was a day for receiving letters and newspapers from home and writing part of a letter to her husband William H. Moose, seen here in a studio portrait with Maggie [ILLUSTRATION 14]. The next day was extra special. Maggie had arranged to tour the Erskine Beveridge Linen Factory. Her words, set out in careful lines made it clear this was an important pilgrimage, so that she could visit where her mother had worked years before. Let's follow her walk:

“Tue. 13th. At 10:30 A.M. Met Mr. Wilkie the under-manager of Beverages factory who had previously invited me to come down & he would take me through. We went first through the new part where the Red, blue, & green tablecloths were worked in cotton yarn, also damask tablecloths & towels.

In the old part contained more of the fine linnens as Tablecloths Napkins, Towels and Doileys, etc. some beautiful patterns and cotton Bedspreads. In the old part I seen Isabella & Lizzie Laurie, Ann Boag, & Isa Philp, Betsy Heltry. About half way up the isle was our Mother’s loom 143, but the web was out & loom empty.

We then passed through room where the shuttles were being filled; also room of empty ones then into room where they were wound from large wheel at the bottom of Purns [Pirns]. All being turned by machinery. Over 2,000 looms alone in the factory; some attend to 3 looms at once. Then we passed through the Lapping Room and out again. In the same yard but apart from factory was the Store or Washhouse where all the linen is taken from Factory & sold. No traveler allowed in Warehouse.”

Maggie was a fine diarist and a prolific letter and postcard writer. Among those she kept in touch with, even after her move to California in 1917, was her father’s younger brother John Watt, and his wife Lizzie McLeod. John was a jeweller, born in Dunfermline in 1851, who married Lizzie in April 1884 in Bridge of Weir in the Parish of Renfrewshire. Lizzie (1858-1927) was born in Glasgow, the daughter of a very successful broker originally from Ayrshire, Alexander McLeod (1830-1898) and Mary McLintock (1830-1915).

Maggie not only wrote to Lizzie regularly, but journeyed from California to Victoria in July 1926. John and Lizzie had emigrated in 1892 and after a short attempt to re-establish his jewellery business, they purchased land north of Victoria and started farming. They called their farm “Firbrae”. John and Lizzie had a big family and nine of them were among the beneficiaries listed on the Court of Session record. Although the addresses were near me in British Columbia, I had had no luck finding any of them for many years.

Then suddenly the puzzle was solved in one phone call which was answered by the wife of the one the beneficiaries. I was able to meet almost all of them over several lunches in the autumn of 2015: Robert John Watt, Douglas one of the sons of George Evans Watt, James Watt, Mary Holman, Jean Porter and Elsie Harris. Most helpfully, I found that these siblings and their children had a family lunch every month. The meetings resulted in the discovery of three Victorian era albums, put together by John and Lizzie before they emigrated. They are now cared for by Doug Watt and his wife Penny. Doug is a great grandson of John's son, George (1885-1968), who was born in the Parish of Erskine in Renfrewshire.

As with so many of these albums, not all the photographs are identified, but the ones that are, at a fell swoop, allowed me to put a face to George and Helen and all their children who lived to maturity, and many grandchildren and members of the families with whom the Watts intermarried. These period photographs are a real treasure trove and I suspect may be images in most cases unique on earth. I will highlight a selection shortly.

Before featuring these, one more marvellous collection of "Wattiana" awaited discovery. John and Lizzie's eldest son George married twice. His first wife was Lilian Daly, the daughter of an Irish born minister, William Evans Daly (1860-1939) and Margaret Anna Gibson (1859-1937), who settled in Victoria before the start of the first World War. The Watts and the Dalys were to be bound together by two marriages: George's to Lilian and George's sister Helen Meikle Watt to Lilian's brother Vernon William Daly (1889) who were married in Saanich north of Victoria on 6 April, 1920. Although he had been born in Ireland, along the way Vernon became a naturalized American citizen and shortly after his marriage he and Helen settled in Seattle. Nettie Watt in Dunfermline and Maggie Moose corresponded with Helen who was identified as one of the beneficiaries in 1975.

The Vancouver Island Watts that I met last year remembered the Daly name but had no address.

Using the internet and noting from the US census of 1940 that Vernon Daly and Helen Watt had four children: Wilfred Vernon, Helen, Ruth and Nancy Margaret, I was able to find the family. The son remained unmarried but the daughters all married and had children. Two of the sisters, twins, Helen and Ruth are still living and in their 90s. Nancy died in 2015 and I have now met her grandson who lives near Seattle. Jeff Perry, this grandson, has inherited the most recently discovered treasure, a very large album filled with photos and documents on the Watts, Dalys and related families, with records reaching back to the 1850s. The album was put together by Helen and her daughters and is a superb record of the lives of their families in the second half of the 19th century and well into the 20th. Jeff even has inherited an Empire Coronation linen cloth milled in Dunfermline in 1902 and sent to Helen Daly by her cousin Mary Goldie Watt, then living at 11 Park Place in Dunfermline.

So for the moment, the search for records of George Watt and Helen's family is finished. At every turn we are reminded of a reality of emigration. Before frequent travel, before the internet and google, those leaving Scotland took mementoes with them, especially photos of loved ones. What has been found? An excellent pictorial record and documents which relate to peace time occupation, houses, wartime service and much more. The obvious place to begin is with the portraits of George and Helen themselves, which are found in the Vancouver Island albums.

Illustration 15 George Watt (1806-1887) and Helen Meikle (1820-1892)
1865

Monastery Street

Illustration 15a Note the comment "likeness bad"

Illustration 16 Another view of George and Helen
Studio A.P. Taylor, Dunfermline c. 1875.
George with heavier beard and a cane

Illustrations 17 and 18 George and Helen in later life. Norval portrait.

The Vancouver Island albums feature at least one and sometimes several images of each of George and Helen's children, except for George (1841-1846) and Janet (1846-1863).

Here is their eldest son James, born 24 July 1834 who left Dunfermline and his work as a weaver in the late 1860s and took up farming in Kansas in Nehama County. (illustration 19)

Next in the family was Rose, born 22 October 1836, died 2 September 1900. Here she is (Illustration 20) seated with her husband John Colville, an iron Moulder whom she married in Dunfermline in March 1864. Standing with Rose and John are the three of their children who survived infancy, George Watt Colville (1869-1943), Catherine Colville (1870-1948) and Janet Watt Colville (1872-1949). The photo was taken in a Glasgow studio. The Colvilles had moved there in the 1880s.

William Meikle Watt, born in Dunfermline 17 March 1839, was next eldest. We have already seen him in a Norval photo from September 1886, with his wife and several of their children. The Island albums contain a number of images of William, as a young man, (illustration 21) and from a time when he had begun working for the Burgh (illustration 22). He began his career as a clerk in the early 1860s in the office of Thomas Stevenson, a Dunfermline solicitor and then in 1865 entered the office of John Beveridge, Collector of Rates for the Burgh. He succeeded Beveridge in 1867 and remained Collector until his death in 1901, serving under nine provosts. He had an exemplary career over more than three decades. With the death of his sister Janet in 1863, William's next eldest sibling was his brother George, born 7 September 1848 in Dunfermline. He took a very different occupation path to his older sibling William becoming a blacksmith.

The Island albums have at least two portraits of George; one taken in the Drummond Studio in Dunfermline on 10th February 1870 (illustration 23) and another inscribed on the reverse: "To Brother John Watt yours truly George Watt, Capioma [Kansas] from the studio of T.J. Williams, Sabetha,

Kansas (illustration 24 and 24a). It seems clear that George followed his brother James to America and became a blacksmith in Kansas. He remained in the mid-west of the U.S. living with or near his sister-in-law and her children until the early 1890s when he moved to British Columbia and established his trade in Victoria, near his brother John. George never married and died in Victoria in January 1920.

John Watt was next in age, born 22 June 1851. The Island albums contain a number of photos of him. Here we see him and his wife Lizzie McLeod perhaps near the time of their marriage (Illustration 25). A charming family portrait (illustration 26) dates from circa 1890 and shows John and his mother and sister-in-law, Jessie Goldie Walls, in a garden scene, which may be the rear of 11 Park View Place, Edward Watt and Jessie's home, where Helen (Meikle) Watt lived in the last years of her life. John was working and living near Glasgow at this period and this may be a record of him visiting his mother to show her the three eldest of his children, George, Alexander and Helen.

John's youngest brother, Edward, born circa 1854 in Dunfermline appears a number of times in the Island albums, including several times as a young man. Here we see him perhaps close to the time of his marriage to Jessie, with Jessie placed next to him in the album (illustration 27 and 28).

Among the most fascinating images in these albums is the one circa 1870, showing Edward in the uniform of Fife Rifle Volunteers. In this Drummond Studio portrait it is inscribed on the reverse: "E. Watt brother [I believe is standing on the left to the viewer), H. Dunn, E. Stobbie, C. Toddie". (Illustration 29) I am indebted to Richard Dickens creator of the Fife Military Project for the following comment: [email of 28 Nov 2015]. "Edward and his mates are wearing the uniform of the Fife Rifle Volunteers, which fits your estimate of 1870, unusually they are wearing the undress "pillbox" hats rather than the fancier full dress shako normally seen in photographs... You will see from my site that Fife had quite a lot of part-time volunteers and

militia units and it was a popular movement because it was part-time and not a career like the army, many people of all sorts of backgrounds joined.

Edward may have belonged for some time but, like his older brother William, he chose white collar work and succeeded William as Collector of Rates in 1901. Like William, Edward established and maintained an excellent reputation as a valued employee of the Burgh. There is an interesting comment about his ancestry in a lengthy profile of Edward titled "The Burgh Rates Collector" published in the Dunfermline Journal, found in a clipping saved by Cousin Eric's family in Montreal. It is undated but may be circa 1905 from references to the Carnegie Baths. "Thirty four years have elapsed since Mr. Watt entered the Townhouse as a servant of the community. He succeeded his brother, a most faithful and devoted officer, who previously had succeeded Mr. Beveridge, a member of a family intimately connected with the administration of civic affairs. Indeed, the Dunfermline history of the Watt family is perhaps much longer than that of the Beveridges. When one endeavours to trace the genealogical record, he feels himself in contact with the mists of antiquity. There are however, men and women living who remember Mr. Watt's father as a master weaver, who pursued his craft in a loom shop behind Monastery Street, enjoying a vision of the romantic Pittencrieff Glen, and who have heard that grandfathers and great grandfathers wove fine linen on the modest paternal estate.

So we come to the final part of this paper and the generations and families descended from some of the children of George and Helen.

First a quick look at some of Nettie's treasures, those records saved by cousin Ken Watt and preserved in his home in England. They allow us an interesting glimpse into key facets of Nettie's long life; her relationship with sister Helen "Nellie", evidence of the great regard Burgh council held for their father, his purchase of pew No. 77 in the Abbey, Nettie's school record, mementoes of the First War when she served as a nurse and may,

like so many women, have lost a sweetheart in the carnage of France, and of the Second War when she was appointed an air raid warden.

Illustrations 30 Purchase of Pew 77 in the Abbey, 1882. William M. Watt purchased this pew from Janet (Anderson) Wyld (1817-1904). Janet's mother, Christian Campbell was the original purchaser of pew 77 when the new church opened in 1821. The pew with its number can still be seen in the church sanctuary today.

31 Extract from minutes of Council, 14 October 1901

“Mr. Watt held the office of Collector for the last twenty-eight years and during the whole of that time discharged the duties of his office with great fidelity and accuracy and to the entire satisfaction of the Council and Community.”

32 Nettie Watt School Record

Dunfermline Commercial School, August 1907

33 Nettie Watt's School Leaving Certificate, 1912.

English, Mathematics, Latin, French and Science
Dunfermline High School

34 Nettie Watt, c 1916

35 Nettie Watt, nurses uniform, 1916

36 Nettie's sister Helen, Xmas 1919

37 Allied Cross, a fabric souvenir of World War I

38 “To Nettie with best wishes from Rob France 13/2/1918”

Illustrations 39 Robert Dowie

40 Somewhere in Belgium May 26, 1916

W.M.L. Watt (nephew)

41 16th Royal Scots postcard: “To Aunt from Ted”

Ken has saved many other records including several related to Nettie's service as an Air Raid Warden in Dunfermline in the Second War (Illustration

42). There are also two photographs listed as one saved by Eric's Aunt Janet in Montreal of Nettie's mother and several of her children, c. 1890 and one of Helen Meikle which is duplicated in the Island album.

Chris Watt sent a beautiful portrait of his grandparents George Watt (1878-1949), one of the executors of his father's will, and Mary Grant (1880-1965) [illustration 43] who were married in Edinburgh on 28 July 1902. They had six sons, William Meikle, George, Lewis Stanley, Norman Grant, Ian McGregor and Ronald Edward Watt (1918-2005), Chris' father. Chris was able to send me additional material on his branch of the Watts but that will form another presentation in the future, not least because surviving correspondence makes it clear that George, his grandfather, was one of those who struggled hardest to settle the complex issues surrounding the resolution of Willie's estate of 1901 and the linked estate of Nettie's cousin Mary.

And what of other grandchildren of George and Helen? Some of the finest records of some of them are found in what I call the Daly/Perry album in Seattle and in the associated family records there.

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| Illustrations | 44 | Watch made by John Watt "Watchmaker and Manufacturing Jeweller 15 Paisley Road, West Glasgow" prior to his emigration from Scotland |
| | 45 | John Watt and Lizzie McLeod's children, c. 1918. Alex, Ted, Helen, Bill and George. Missing is John. |
| | 46 | The first Watt home north of Victoria, replaced in 1918-19. Family working in the fields. |
| | 47 | Scenes from Firbrae Farm. Big change for Lizzie especially and John, from watchmaking to development a new farm in a new land. |
| | 48 | The McLeod home, Thistlebank, Bridge of Weir. Lizzie went from this to a new frontier. |

- 49 Some of George and Helen's great grandchildren, c. 1943. Children of George Watt and his second wife Beatrice Webber.
Helen holding Jean, Bill, Mary Jane, Robert and Jim. [These were all beneficiaries of the 1975 division and all were met or contacted in 2015.]
- 50 John Watt and his wife Lizzie McLeod, circa 1920.]
- 51 "Photo of Glenview Cottage, Monastery Street inscribed "The Watt home in Dunfermline. The Lower Part was the Linen Mill", c. 1955
Cousin Ken has confirmed that the woman in the centre is Nettie and the man on her left is his father's father, Edward Meikle Watt (1891-1960) who married Margaret Douglas Burt in Edinburgh, 6 December 1920.

While there are at least a hundred records in the Daly/Perry Album, I think this gives a good flavour of how wide-ranging they are and how they contribute so much important new material to the story of this branch of the Dunfermline Watts.

As I mentioned at the outset, the Island albums include a number of very early photos from Dunfermline studios that remain unidentified. I will show a small selection, in hopes that they may ultimately be recognized.

- Illustrations
- 52 Young man, Dunfermline c. 1968/69. Studio William Walter Netherton, Broad Street
- 53 Young man, Dunfermline, John Drummond Studio, c. 1870
- 54 Family group, Dunfermline, c. 1870. Studio John Drummond [Neighbours of the Watts?]
- 55 Young woman in apron and cap, Studio John Macdonald, Dunfermline, High Street, c. 1857/66. Could this be Maggie, the diarist's Mother Maggie?
- 56 Young man Dunfermline, c. 1875, Drummond Studio

57 Young woman, Dunfermline, c. 1870, John Drummond
Studio

The story of this branch of the Dunfermline Watts has many dimensions as you have seen. There is so much more that could be said and many more documents shown. Still, I believe it is clear that for this particular family, spread outward from Dunfermline to several continents and at least seven countries, the records of their story have been preserved outwith Scotland and been found in time to give colour and life to the evolution of Dunfermline in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Thank you.