

# Chapter 1 Preliminary

## What This Book is About

This book tells the stories of two branches of a Campbell family that came to Canada in the 19th century. They are called for convenience here the senior branch and the junior branch. The senior branch consists of Duncan Campbell and Janet McGregor, their oldest son Archibald, their daughters and numerous kinfolk. The junior branch consists of Duncan's youngest son Duncan junior and his wife, Christian McGregor, and their family. Both branches settled in Ontario, the senior in Halton County in 1833, the junior in Essex County in 1849. They were descendants of tenant-farmers and labourers who for the previous two centuries had lived in and worked the soil of Lawers and Fearnan<sup>1</sup> in the parish of Kenmore in Perthshire. The children of the last, emigrant, generation received an elementary education in Scottish common schools and a hardening of a country upbringing. This made them well prepared for the physical and economic conditions that lay awaiting them in tree-covered Canada.

## The Family Tree

A portion of the Campbell family tree is sketched in Figure 1. It will be shown in the following pages that this tree can be extended back several more generations to an Archibald Campbell of 1623.

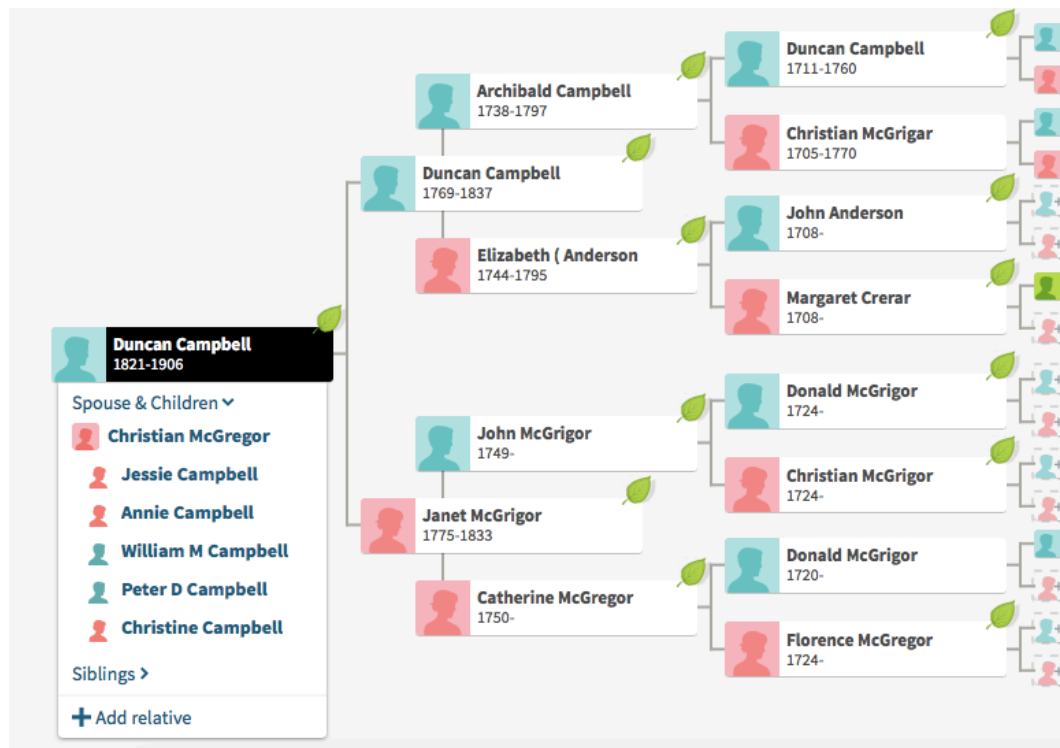


Figure 1.  
*Three generations of Duncan Campbell's ancestors, 1769-1705.*<sup>2</sup>

1 Pronunciations in modern Scots are: "Lorrs" and "Furr-nun".  
2 Taken from the author's tree on ancestry.com: "Duncan and Archibald Campbell of Kenmore, Perthshire".

## The Emigration

The emigration was the critical event in the lives of both branches. It is therefore important to understand the underlying reasons, at least for the senior branch that was the first to come. Duncan senior in 1827 was engaged with brother James in the working of a farm in the hamlet of *Croftnalin* on the north shore of Loch Tay. The two had years before inherited the tenancy from their father, Archibald, a cooperative effort that had begun, one supposes, in brotherly fashion. But by 1827, their relationship had soured to a deep-seated antagonism. The disagreements between them had been fanned by the decision of their landlord, John Campbell, the Earl of Breadalbane, to alter the boundaries and usage of fields. Those suitable for arable agriculture would be put to tillage while the remainder would be opened for the raising of sheep. Having inherited the position of field-officer along with his share of the tenancy, James stood to profit from the changes and was pressuring Duncan to accept them. Supported by the factor and the surveyor, he had become the brother from hell.

The merits of the plans notwithstanding, James' tactics with Duncan were bullying, harassment and the threat of eviction should he refuse to comply. He was going so far as to trespass on lands that by mutual agreement were Duncan's. The ugliness and worry were wearing Duncan down. And Duncan had other problems too. His family was a large one, the health of his wife uncertain and the issue of schooling for his youngest child, Duncan junior, were concerning. He decided to put the boy in the keeping of his kinsman, William McGregor and his wife, who had children of Duncan's age. William was a native of *Croftgarrow*, a hamlet that lay in the parish of Fortingall nearby. Duncan was confident the environment of the MacGregor household would benefit the boy and enable him to get a good education, an arrangement that seems to have suited the boy well enough.

Duncan and Janet bore six more years of ugliness until they had had enough; they would emigrate. Others were thinking likewise. In letters sent home daughter Elizabeth and her husband, John Anderson, who had left for Canada not long before, were encouraging them to come out. Ready to follow were his daughters, their intended husbands and his sister Christian and her husband. Son Archibald, now twenty-two, had a duty to his father and saw no future in Scotland in the poisonous atmosphere thrown up by his uncle. It was decided Duncan junior would stay with the McGregors. They hoped, even assumed, that the MacGregors would go to Canada and bring the boy with them.

So in 1833 the senior Campbells made their way across the North Atlantic to join the Andersons in Ontario. The move was not so much the result of an enforced highland clearance as a collateral effect of the improvement of an estate. This does not mean their move was free of stress and nagging doubts. And as it turned out they would never see Duncan junior again. Too soon their health would decline, undermined by the troubles they had borne, the rigours of the voyage and the shock of adjusting to a new land. By 1833 Janet was dead, and by 1837 so was Duncan.

As so often happens when changes are toxic to an older generation they are exhilarating to a younger. Archibald in 1834 with funds from his father purchased a lot in Nassagaweya township in Halton County not far from the settlements of his aunt and sisters and their husbands. A year later he married a fellow Scot and began a family. He helped establish a Presbyterian church and served as elder. He earned the respect of his fellows and was elected a councillor of the township, then a reeve and finally a justice of the peace.

Duncan junior in Scotland grew up in the McGregor household and went to school with the MacGregor children. After his parents' departure, his foster parents moved to Scone where his foster father, William McGregor, purchased the lease of a small farm. Then in 1840 his foster mother died. This ended what plans William had to follow the Campbells. The years flew by. In 1846 Duncan junior married Christian, William MacGregor's oldest daughter. Three years later the two sailed for Canada and bought a farm in Malden township near Amherstburg in Essex County. Duncan junior's achievements were the mirror images of his brother's. He, too, raised a large family, became a stalwart member of his Presbyterian church and served as treasurer and finally reeve of Malden township.

This, then, is the essence of this book. As with most family histories there are gaps in the documentation that require assumptions and inferences to move the story forward. Let us pause here to sketch the problems before we launch into the history proper. The reader who finds the arguments tedious can move on to

## Problems in the Story

There are problems in our story that stem from the following incompletely proven assumptions:

- 1 The man who we call Duncan Campbell junior who died in Malden in 1906 was actually a son of Duncan Campbell (1769-1837) and Janet McGregor of the hamlet of Croftnalin in Kenmore
- 2 Duncan Campbell junior was a foster child of the McGregors

Having read the previous section the reader is no doubt surprised by these admissions. The reader may see them as so fundamental as to make the story look like a fiction. Others they may see them insurmountable or of no difficulty at all. Take problem 1. This problem on the face of it seems to be solved by a bona fide church record: a Duncan Campbell was born to a Duncan Campbell and a Janet McGregor of Croftnalin on 25 December 1821 and baptized in Kenmore church. This date however differs from the “August 1821” carved on the gravestone of the Duncan Campbell who died in Malden in 1906. As for problem 2 there is no actual document that proves Duncan was a foster child.

At this stage we must ask for the reader’s indulgence to wait for the presentation of the evidence in the following pages. Even then the veracity of the problems will be argued with circumstantial evidence. Let us begin with the claims made about the family and at the same time describe the landscape in which the events took place.

## Claims About Duncan

To minimize tedium only the major claims, without their sources, are listed in Table 1. Full details including sources can be found in the Documentation Section.

Table 1. *Claims and Reminiscences About Duncan Campbell Junior taken from Various Sources.*

- 1 Mr. and Mrs. Campbell were born in Perthshire, Scotland, he in August, 1821, she, July 14th 1819
- 2 Her maiden name was Christina McGregor.
- 3 They grew up together and attended the same parish school.
- 4 They were married, Nov 3rd 1840 , by Rev. Mr. Crombie, now deceased.
- 5 Mr. Campbell followed the occupation of shepherd, his father owning a large sheep farm there.
- 6 After their first two children were born, Jessie, ...and Miss Annie, ...they decided to leave Scotland, which they did in June 1849.
- 7 They landed in Detroit, some six weeks later and immediately crossed to Windsor where there were but two or three houses at that time.
- 8 They were accompanied to this country by the late James Brown, of Colchester South, and his sister, now Mrs. Helfarich, of Michigan.
- 9 He held this office [township assessor] for some time, and in 1866 was made township treasurer, which office he retained for 19 years in succession.
- 10 He afterwards was councillor for some years and in 1890 was elected reeve.
- 11 The school house in S.S. No. 2, was built on his farm, and he was one of the trustees from the formation of the section to within a few years ago.

A family history is a work of nonfiction. If done correctly the facts are taken from reliable sources and woven together by interpretation and inference. There are two types of sources: *primary* and *secondary*. A primary source is a document whose facts are beyond dispute, like the register of a church or a deed of land.

A secondary source is a book or a newspaper article based on facts taken from primary sources. A primary source has a greater *veracity* than a secondary source. This book is an example of a secondary source. This does not mean that a newspaper article cannot serve as a source for a family history, especially if based on clearly cited primary sources. The reader should be warned that none of the newspaper articles named in this book proves Duncan junior is a son of Duncan senior by, say, putting the two in the same time and place (on a par with siblings Archibald, Elizabeth, Janet, and Isobel). However, we shall argue that a core tenet of this book is adoption, which accounts for the lack of *connection*. It is in fact common for adoptees to take leave of biological parents before leaving a record that connects them to their parents.

## Observations and Speculations

### Birthplace

The authors of the newspaper articles imply they heard Duncan junior himself admit he had been born in Perthshire, but nothing more. One of the authors, Richard Atkinson, is a highly credible reporter being Duncan Campbell's son-in-law. It can be argued this reluctance of Duncan's to talk about himself at a time when pioneers were eager to celebrate their origins and voyages to Canada is understandable in a foster child. The theory he was born in Kenmore is supported (aside from the article and the church record) by the fact the man who we argue was his foster father, William McGregor, was born and lived his youth in *Croftgarrow*, a farm within walking distance of *Croftnalin* (Figure 2). Croftgarrow was in turn a stone's throw from Melmont where Janet McGregor, Duncan senior's first wife was living at the time of her marriage.



Figure 2. Loch Tay and a section of the Tay River. Shown are Croftnalin and Croftgarrow, the birthplaces of Duncan Campbell junior and William McGregor no more than two miles apart.

### Background of the Brothers

Archibald and Duncan junior had much in common. Both paid their passage to Canada and bought land on their arrival. Archibald, at the age of twenty-three in 1834, paid £100 for his lot in Nassagaweya. Duncan junior, twenty-nine in 1850, paid £275 for his lot in Malden. These are large sums for young men new to a country. These remarkable similarities are not proof they were brothers but they do imply they were sons of tenant-farmers not labourers.

### Early Life

Excepting dates, the claims and reminiscences are mostly confirmed or stand as probable. That Duncan junior grew up with Christina and attended the same parish school is consistent with him being a member of the McGregor household. That he worked on his father's sheepfarm as a boy is consistent with his father being a tenant-farmer. He and Christina were certainly married in Scone in 1846. Rarely in the 19th century did a first marriage take place far from kith and kin, and rarer still did a young woman have her first child far from the family household. We should therefore not be surprised to find the 1841 census showing a William McGregor in Scone at the head of a family of five children. One of them, twenty-year-old Christina, is destined to become Duncan junior's wife.<sup>3</sup>

### Use of Names

Names are the genealogist's stock in trade. Duncan junior named his first son "William M". The meaning of the "M" is not known for certain. Nowhere in the historical record is there an explanation. Surely it stands for "McGregor". No Scot of the time would name his first son after someone who was other than a father to him. The lack of explanation underscores the reluctance of the family to explain the meaning of the initial to outsiders.

## The Setting

Kenmore is the name of a parish and a village in the northern part of Perthshire where the Lowlands meet the Highlands. The parish is irregular in shape with an area of sixty-two square miles and a width of seven miles. It is one of the larger parishes in the county embracing eight miles of both sides of Loch Tay. During the period of this history it encompassed portions of other parishes that for centuries had a common name but no physical connection.<sup>4</sup> Kenmore village lies at the northeastern end of Loch Tay. Further east lay parts of Dull parish (pronounced *Dool*) and Weem, to the west parts of Killin (pronounced *Kill-een*) and other parts of Weem, and to the south and north the hills that enclose Loch Tay. The hills on the south side of the loch border the parishes of Comrie and Monzievaird, on the north the parishes of Fortingall and more parts of Weem.



Figure 3. *A Typical View of Loch Tay.*

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3 Christian's baptismal name evolved to "Christina" in Canada.

4 This legacy of ancient Scotland can be seen in the map of Perthshire and adjoining counties in *The Phillimore Atlas & Index of Parish Registers*, C.R. Humphery-Smith (Phillimore). The parishes have been reorganized and the boundaries redrawn in modern times.

Loch Tay winds in a lazy “S” shape from the southwest to the northeast. The rivers draining the hills gather strength in the glens, and it is there where the villages lay. The loch drains through its lower, north-eastern end into the Tay River. The river flows northeast for a few miles and then turns south to flow across the Lowlands to the Firth of Tay beyond Perth. On its way it passes through or by a number of parishes, many containing a village of the same name. There are, in addition to Kenmore, Dull, Logierait, Dunkeld and others. It should not be surprising to find a person who is born in any one of these places leave a record in another place up or down the river. We shall see this most particularly in the McGregor story in Chapter 5.

Loch Tay is served today by roads of decent construction and maintenance, but of a narrowness that betrays their ancient origin. As late as the 19th century the roads were of packed earth, often miry. People traveled often by water. It was not uncommon for folks on the north side of the loch to associate with people on the south side, but they bonded most often with fellows on the same side. Young people found mates on farms within walking distance of their homes, a fact that will become more evident in Chapter 2.

## The Research

Research into a Campbell or a McGregor<sup>5</sup> family in Perthshire is not a straightforward matter, especially if the target person be a native of Kenmore. Both clans were numerous in this part of Scotland from medieval times. The job of locating placenames on maps can be difficult at best, even if the name be decipherable from archaic handwriting. Farmers and workers lived in hamlets with Gaelic names, often haphazardly spelled by the clergyman or antiquarian whose works we tend to read. Some places have vanished altogether, the result of clearances. The Campbells were farmers so to place them in context I will be calling upon the writings of local ministers, paying attention to their description of the state of agriculture, the concerns of the small tenant-farmer and the issues that led to their disaffection and movement out of Kenmore, and at the end of the day, out of the country.<sup>6</sup> The Campbell and MacGregor lines of the family are drawn in Figures 4. Armed with a little knowledge we can now begin our history.

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5 No one questions the ancient spelling “Cambell” evolved into “Campbell”, but some genealogists search for meaning in “McGregor” vs “MacGregor”. In my experience the difference is simply the work of the clerk doing the recording. Sometimes a person baptized as “McGregor” is married as “MacGregor”. I attempt in this book to use the spelling that appears in the image of the record.

6 Ministers of the established Church of Scotland were often classically-educated in England and were often more familiar with the English language than the Gaelic. Appointed, in most cases by the local proprietor, they were careful not to offend him.

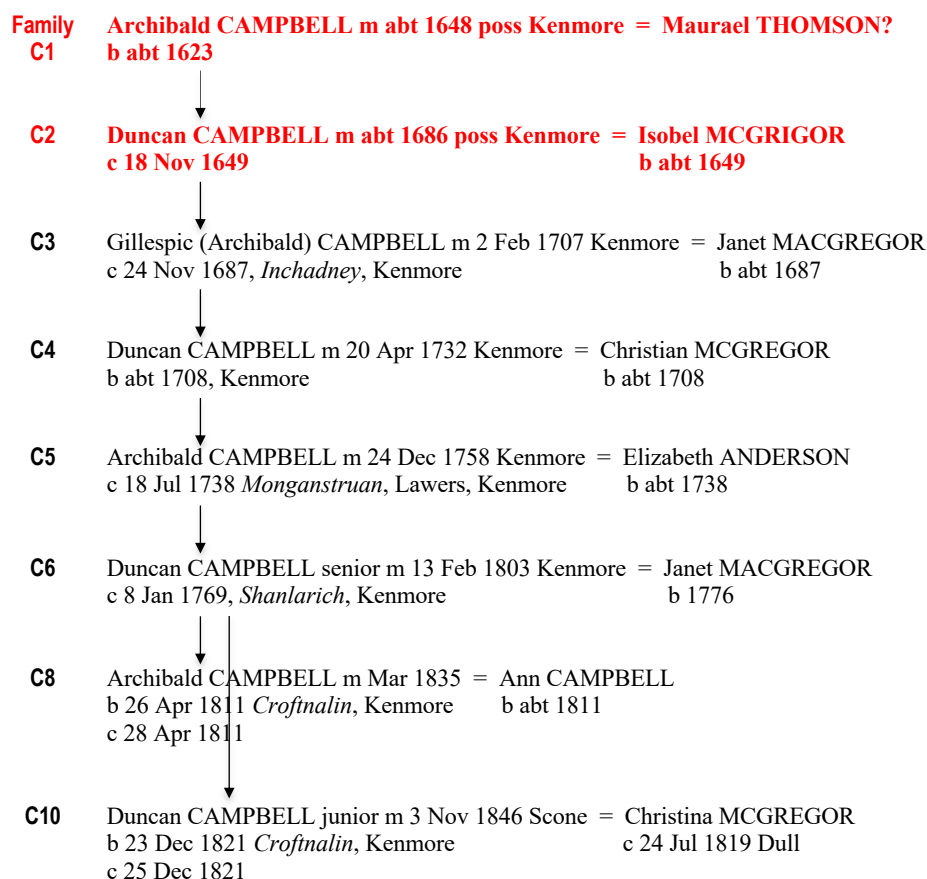


Figure 4a. *Probable Ancestry of Archibald and Duncan Campbell junior.*

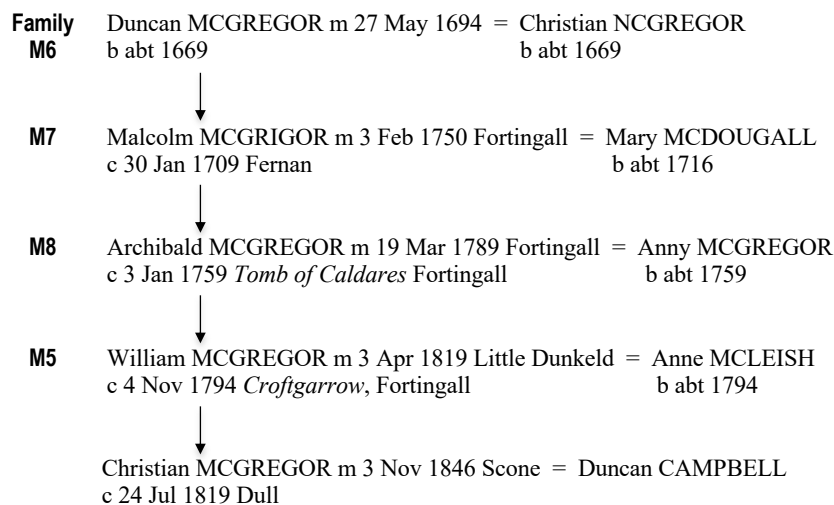


Figure 4b. *Probable Ancestry of Christina McGregor. The two families lived in adjacent farms for many years and were biologically connected as far back as the 18th century.*

