

Christina McLean, nee McPhee

March 2022

www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com

How you can use these notes

- Too much detail?: Read the summary first, to get the essence of what this is all about - rather than getting lost in the details in the body of these notes. Delving into the details is useful if you want to check on something more closely.
- Research: These notes are not in a narrative style because it is not intended for the general public. This is for serious researchers. There are standardized headings and dot-points that are a framework into which new details can be placed so the document can be occasionally updated.
- Sources: References are acknowledged throughout. Much of this is from what is already available on the internet - we have not yet directly researched many original physical records.
- Finding: You can search this PDF document using Control/F, and relevant key words.
- Our other docs: This is one of a series of research notes that are interconnected. These can be found in the SMALL PRINT directory on the left of the homepage. The notes that are most relevant to Christina's forebears are:-
 - G20 – 'Overview of the life of Donald McLean' – Christina's spouse
 - D30 - 'Donald's parents & grandparents – our strategies'
 - D40 – 'Donald's birth, his parents & grandparents – searching BDM records'
 - D55 – 'John McPhee & Christ'n Cameron' – Christina's parents
 - D60 – 'Other McPhee families' – genealogies which have not (yet) connected to Christina McPhee
- Feedback: Your corrections and comments will be welcomed - via 'Contact us' on the homepage.
- Authors: Compiled by Don Gordon, in collaboration with Lorna McLean. Don and Lorna are GGG-grandchildren of Donald and Christina.

Summary

'The History of Donald & Christina McLean & Their Descendants' (a big red book = BRB) was published in 1995 and all the details have now been entered on the website www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com. The website has a great deal of information about their descendants in Australia but nothing about Christina's background in Scotland.

We have found confirmation that Christina was born in Crieff on 28th April 1787. Her parents were John Oag McPhee of Crieff and Christ'n Cameron of Achnacarry. We have the OPR confirming that John and Christ'n were married in March 1786. Crieff and Achnacarry are 5 kms apart, near Loch Arkaig.

Her father was from a long line of tenants at Crieff farm - passed from father to son for four generations – all called John McPhee.

Her mother, Christ'n, grew up at Achnacarry where Christina's grandfather was possibly Donald Cameron (a sawmillier at Achnacarry) and grandmother was Jane Robertson. Christ'n moved to Crieff when she married John. Christina was born there the following year.

When Christina was about 17 years old, the family were evicted off Crieff and moved to near Fort William. This is how she met Donald McLean.

Christina and Donald McLean lived in Blaich and Duisy on Loch Eil where they had 12 children over the next two-and-half decades. Their first child was born in 1811. Two died of their children died as infants.

In 1837 the family migrated to South Australia on the Navarino. They were amongst the earliest pioneers of the colony. They set up a small farm near Adelaide where they grew the first wheat crop. After a few years, they moved to Strathalbyn and they named their farm Achananda's. The McLean families established many farms throughout the district.

Donald died after almost two decades in the colony and Christina died 14 years later, after more than three decades as a pioneer.

Names: Mother and daughter are both recorded as Christ'n in Christina's birth record. In order to avoid confusion in these notes, we refer to the mother as Christ'n and daughter as Christina. The BRB also refers to her as Christina.

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Searching for Christina's birth

The BRB did not provide details of her birth. So, what should we be searching for in Old Parish Registers (OPRs)? What criteria should be applied in Scotland's People or other genealogical indexes?

Name

- Her first name could be spelled as Christina, Christian, Christ, Christ'n, Christine, Christy or Anna – or, in Donald's Will, her name is spelled variously as Christina, Christinia, Christiana, Christeance and Christian.
- *"Christina, Donald's wife is named in the Parish Records, sometimes as Christian, the old form of Christina; sometimes as Christy which her husband might have called her, and also as we know her – Christina".* (BRB p8)
- Her father's surname might have been spelled McPhee or MacPhee, McPhie, McFie, MacFee or other variations.
- Her father's first name could be anything.
- Her mother's surname and first name could be anything
- In order to distinguish between the daughter and mother whose names are recorded identically in the OPR record of Christina's birth, in these notes (and the McLean website), we are referring to Donald McLean's wife as Christina and her mother, the wife of John McPhee, as Christ'n.
- Search criteria: We need to search for all these variations

Year of birth

- 1791: The BRB states that she was born about 1791 (BRB p7). We do not know where the BRB got this year from. There are no sources quoted. Maybe it was estimated from the family's belief that she was 78 years old when she died in 1869.
- 1791: Donald & Christina's gravestone in the Strathalbyn Cemetery has it that Christina died on 9th April 1869, aged 78 years. This indicates that she was born around 1791.
- After 1791: Census: In the South Australian 1841 census, Christina as 'under 50' (BRB p13). This indicates that she was born after 1791. [Research: Image required]
- 1812: Emigration documentation: *"To obtain free passage the applicant at that time [1837] had to be under 40 years so there was much lowering of true ages. Donald, already 65 years gave his as 35 and that of his wife Christina who was 46, as 25 years. When an application had been approved and numbered, an embarkation number was given: Donald - (including wife and 4 children) - Application No. 1376. Embarkation No 720. Occupation - farmer"* (Quoted from Dianne Facey, BRB p9). Christina would have been born in 1812 if she was 25 years old in 1837. However, we must **DISCOUNT** this because her first child was born in 1811.
- 1775 to 1785: In a court case in 1855, Christina was referred to as a 'septuagenarian' (sic) (SA Register 21st Feb 1855, p3). This would indicate that she was born between 1775 and 1785. Maybe the reporter was just using the term septuagenarian as another way of saying that she was old.
- 1781 to 1801: We can assume that her own children and grandchildren (at the time) would have not been mistaken by more than a decade before or after the stated birth year of 1791 – ie it is unlikely that she was born before 1781 or after 1801.



- Criteria: Search for births between 1781 and 1801.

Place of birth

- Place of birth is not specified in the BRB.
- Christina and Donald got together in Blaich where their first child was born in 1811, so it is probable that their paths crossed when they were living in that general area in Scotland. Thus, it is assumed that Christina was born somewhere within 100 kilometers of Blaich. Of course, it is always possible, but less likely, that she was born much further away and that her family moved a great distance.
- 100 kms is a long way – especially when we consider that walking was the main way of getting around in that area more than two centuries ago.
- Criteria: Christina might have been born within 100 kms of Blaich.

Parents

- Patronymics & matronymics: The names of her parents were not specified in the BRB but it suggests *“If the old system of naming was used her parents would have been Ewen and Mary McPhee”* (BRB p7) but there is no other evidence for this. [Research: We would need to check that this interpretation of the traditional naming system can be applied and be correct. See our document on Donald’s predecessors – D30]
- Her father would have the surname of McPhee (various possible spellings). His first name could be anything.
- Her mother could have any surname or first name – but probably a clan and typical highland first name.
- Criteria: Search father’s surname McPhee, and variants.

Findings

- In Scotland’s People, we used the search criteria of various spellings of Christina McPhee born between 1781 and 1801.
- We found only three in that year range – appendix B. All with the spelling ‘Christian McPhee’. Although, within the range of years, none of the three had the spelling ‘Christina’ or ‘Christ’ or other variations of McPhee, we found many with Christina and variations of McPhee for births outside our year search range.
- 1787 in Crieff
 - Baptized *“28th April 1787 – Christ’n dau to John McPhee & Christ’n Cameron in Crieff”* (Scotland’s People OPR Birth 520/1074 Kilmallie p74 of 243 and film No 1041070 – see our appendix C)
 - Credibility:-
 - Birthdate: A birth in 1787 would make her 4 years older than the BRB stated. Is it likely that the family could have been mistaken? = **MAYBE**
 - Birthplace: Crieff is about 30 kms north of Blaich. It is in the parish of Kilmallie and should not be confused with Crieff near Perth. = **LIKELY**
 - Conclusion: = WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THIS IS CORRECT = **ACCEPTED**
- 1786 in Balfroun
 - Baptized *“12th Nov 1786 – Christian natural daughter to Donald McPhee and Helen Kay was baptized at the manse John Fernⁿ and other witness”* (Scotland’s People OPR Births 472/10197, Balfroun, p197 of 333 – see appendix D)
 - Credibility:-
 - Birthdate: A birth in 1786 would make her 5 years older than the BRB stated. Is it likely that, at the time, the family could have been mistaken? = **MAYBE**
 - Birthplace: Balfroun is over 100 kms southeast of Blaich. This is a long way away = **NOT LIKELY**
 - Conclusion: = **DISCOUNTED**
- 1797 in Ryoralick (or Ruilick)
 - Baptized *“3^d Oct 1797 – Christian daug’ to Angus McPhee & Christain Tomson in Ryoralick”* (Scotland’s People OPR Births 107/2042 Urquhart and Glenmoriston, p42 of 212 – see appendix E).
 - Note that here the mother’s name is spelled ‘Christain’ (rather than ‘ChristIAN’) so was probably a clerical error by the person who wrote the original record.
 - Credibility:-
 - Birth date: A birth in 1797 would make her 6 years younger than the BRB stated. Is it likely that, at the time, the family could have been mistaken? = **MAYBE**
 - Birthplace: The place of birth is difficult to read in the image of the birth record, but it looks like ‘Ryoralick’. *“Ryoralick is possibly Ruilick of which there are, to my knowledge two - one is in the Braes of Lochaber (Spean Bridge/Roy Bridge) and the other near Beauly”* (Les Horn, email 18th

March 20920). The Ruilick near Spean Bridge is only a few kilometers from Achnacarry and Crieff, and a 25 km walk to Blaich but is certainly not in the parish of Urquhart and Glenmoriston. However Beauly is in the parish of Urquhart and Glenmoriston – so this is where this daughter of Angus McPhee was born. The Ruilick near Beauly is 110 kms north of Blaich. = **NOT LIKELY**.

- Conclusion: = **DISCOUNTED**

Conclusion

- Of the three, we accepted her birth as 28th April in 1787 in Crieff because:-
 - Place: It is nearest to Blaich that is 30 kms away whereas the others were more than 100 kms.
 - Year: 1787 is nearest to 1791. It is four years before the BRB's 1791. The others were five and six years which are not very different. With a disparity of four years, we do not have a perfect match.
 - How probable is that the earlier sources were wrong? These sources were (a) Christina's contemporary family (her own children and grandchildren in their lifetimes), (b) whoever installed the gravestone some years later because it has Donald's name inscribed on it whereas he was buried at Achananda's, and (c) the compilers of the BRB. However, four years is not a large difference, and it is an understandable misapprehension by people without access to official records.
 - The notion that previous sources miscalculated Christina's birth year by a few years is not so surprising when it is noted that there was a seven year disparity with the birth of her husband. Donald was definitely born in 1779 whereas the BRB has it as 1772. We have to rest with the fact that Donald was seven years younger than was previously thought, and Christina was four years older.
 - Without a perfect match, we are still left with the possibility that her birth was never registered, or perhaps the record was lost, mis-transcribed or not yet digitalized and indexed. Something might have gone astray because it is surprising that we have not been able to find any siblings.
- Conclusion: We have settled that Christina was born in Crieff in 1787 rather than 1791.

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Christina's life

- The BRB has plenty of details about the life of Donald McLean, but no personal information about his wife. Christina is barely mentioned in the BRB even though she is a central figure in our family history.
- We only know that she gave birth to 12 children and raised them in the highlands of Scotland. She experienced the heartbreak of two of the children dying as infants. Then she pioneered with her big family to colonial Australia. She would have been immersed in household duties and supported the farm work in Crieff, Duiskey, Hilton and Strathablyn. She would have been engaged with the lives of her many children as they grew up, married, and established their farms - and the grandchildren.
- That's a lot of life events - but we have few details of incidents or what she actually did. What kind of person was she? We can make some guesses about the character of someone who raised so many children and established the family in such an unfamiliar environment. Was she a dutiful wife and devoted mother, or was she a dominant matriarch? (See 'My Red Red Rose' in the profile of her son, Allan.)
- We only have a few clues. She might have been feisty at times because, late in life, she was fined two pounds for '*violently assaulting with a stick*' a young woman who was pregnant to her unmarried son (SA Register, 21st Feb 1855, p3). Or was she soft hearted because she made a point of singling out the child who was born from that contentious pregnancy, for special benefit in her Will.
- We are unlikely to be able to fill out these bare bones, but we have pieced together whatever we can as follows.

Childhood

- Crieff: Christina probably grew up in Crieff because this is where she was born, and her father's family had been there for many generations.
- Context: What was life like in Crieff in the last decade of the 1700s? Was it just one or two isolated families or was it a little community with Christina surrounded by cousins to play with and explore? What sort of agricultural activities? What sort of accommodation? Our D55 pieces together some details about life around that part of Loch Arkaig at those times. [Research: Accommodation was generally described in the publication 'McPhees of Argyll' by Ian McPhee - also 'On the Crofters Trail' by David Craig published 2010 ISBN 978 184158801.8]

- **Schooling:** Maybe there was no formal schooling available in Crieff during her childhood. Her mother, Christ'n, was taught handicrafts and English at home in Achnacarry by her own mother (Jane, who was Christ'n's mother and Christina's grandmother) – see our D57. We do not know how literate Christ'n but it seems that little was passed on to Christina because she was illiterate - as indicated by the fact that, near the end of her life, she had to have someone read her Will to her and then she marked it with a cross.
- **Eviction:** When she was 17 years old her family moved from Crieff to near Loch Eil. This is detailed in our D55.
- **Occupation:** There are no indications whether or not she was working before she was married. Maybe she was a servant which was a common occupation of females at that time.

Christina's siblings

- So far, apart from Christina, we have not been able to confirm births of other children of John and Christ'n.
- It would be surprising if Christina had no siblings because in those times, there were often many children in each family. Maybe some births were not registered, or some registrations have become lost.
- However, some public genealogies have, without adequate evidence, listed some possible siblings – these are detailed in our D55. All are **DISCOUNTED**.

Spouse

- Christina's husband was Donald McLean - see our separate document D40.
- The BRB (p7) stated that they were married around 1810. This year was probably on the assumption that they were married before the birth of their first child in 1811.
- The BRB states (p7) that no record was found in either Inverness-shire or Argyllshire for the date and place of their marriage.
- We also have not found any records of their marriage. Maybe there was never a formal wedding, or it was not ever registered, or the record was lost.
- **Criteria:** Search between 1806 and 1811 in Kilmallie.

How they met

- Donald was born in Blaich in 1779 and was still there in the early 1800s.
- Christina was born in Crieff in 1787.
- Crieff is on the eastern end of Loch Arkaig. It is 30 kms walk from Blaich on the southern shores of Loch Eil.
- 1804: It is probable that, when Christina was about 17 years old, she moved with her family to the northern side, and eastern end, of Loch Eil. This is detailed in our D55. They were among the evicted families who moved to Fort William, Muirshearlich, Banavie or Corpach Moss. These are about 10 kms from Blaich, depending how you cross Loch Eil.
- Donald was 32 years old and Christina 24 years when they had their first child.
- **Conclusion:** 30 km between Crieff and Blaich, and 10 km between Corpach and Blaich are considerable distances because they were walking in those times, but it is not surprising that Christina's and Donald's paths crossed – perhaps around Fort William.

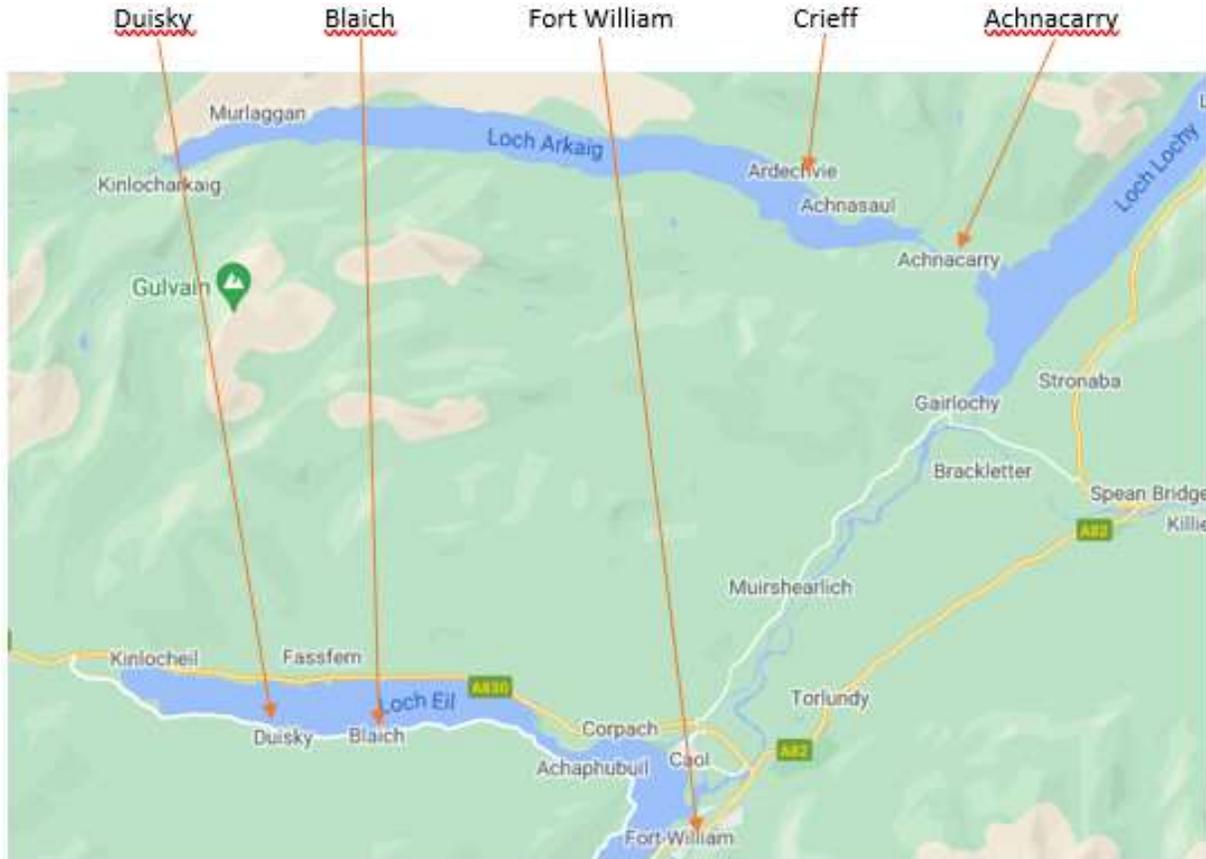
Children

1. Allan – baptized 12th Feb 1811 in Blaich
2. Mary (the elder) – baptized 22nd Jan 1813 in Blaich – died as an infant
3. Ewen (Hugh the elder) – baptized 20th Feb 1814 in Blaich
4. John – baptized 6th Feb 1818 in Blaich
5. Mary (the younger) – baptized 2nd April 1818 in Duiskey
6. Anne – baptized 18th Feb 1820 in Duiskey – died as an infant
7. Archibald – baptized 1822 in Duiskey
8. Ann – baptized 6th April 1823 in Duiskey
9. Rachel – baptized 6th Feb 1825 in Duiskey
10. Margaret – born 1827 in Argyllshire (the only birth for which an OPR has not been found)
11. Jane - baptized 18th April 1830 in Duiskey
12. Ewen (Hugh the younger) – baptized 26th May 1836 in Duiskey

Residences

- Christina grew up at Crieff which is near the northeast end of Loch Arkaig.
- She moved to the north side of the junction Loch Eil and Loch Linnhe when she was about 17 years old (1804).

- Around 1810, she married Donald who was in Blaich and leased the adjacent Duisky farm. The family were there for 26 years.
- The family migrated to the new colony of South Australia on the *Navarino* - leaving in August 1837 and arriving in December of that year.
- They were initially in Hilton, near Adelaide. This was a small farm of 80 acres that they had pre-purchased before leaving Scotland. They were there for about three years.
- They co-pioneered to the Strathalbyn area in 1842. It was within the Strathalbyn township. They named their residence Achananda's. They had many other farming properties in the district.



Deaths

- Donald died at Achananda's on 11th October 1855. He had been in the colony for 18 years.
- Christina died at Achananda's on 9th April 1869 and was buried in the Strathalbyn cemetery. This was 13 years after her husband's death and she had been in the colony for 31 years .

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Appendices

A	<u>Marriage of John McPhee & Christ'n Cameron</u> - OPR: "28 th March 1786 – John oig McPhee in Crieff & Christ'n Cameron in Achnacarry"	– page 8
B	<u>Births of Christina McPhee (& variations) from 1779 to 1810</u> Source: Scotland's People, Church of Scotland on 17 th March 2020	– page 9
C	<u>Birth of our Christina</u> – in Crieff in 1887 OPR: "McPhee, Christ'n dau. to John McPhee & Christ'n Cameron in Crieff April 28 th 1787"	– page 10
D	<u>Birth of another Christian</u> – in Balfron in 1786 OPR: "Nov 12 th 1786 - Christian natural daughter to Donald McPhee and Helen Kay was baptized at the manse John Ferg ⁿ and other witness" in Balfron parish	– page 11
E	<u>Birth of another Christian</u> – in Ryoralick or Ruilick in 1797 OPR: "3 rd Oct 1797 – Christian daug' to Angus McPhee & Christain Tomson in Ryoralick"	– page 12

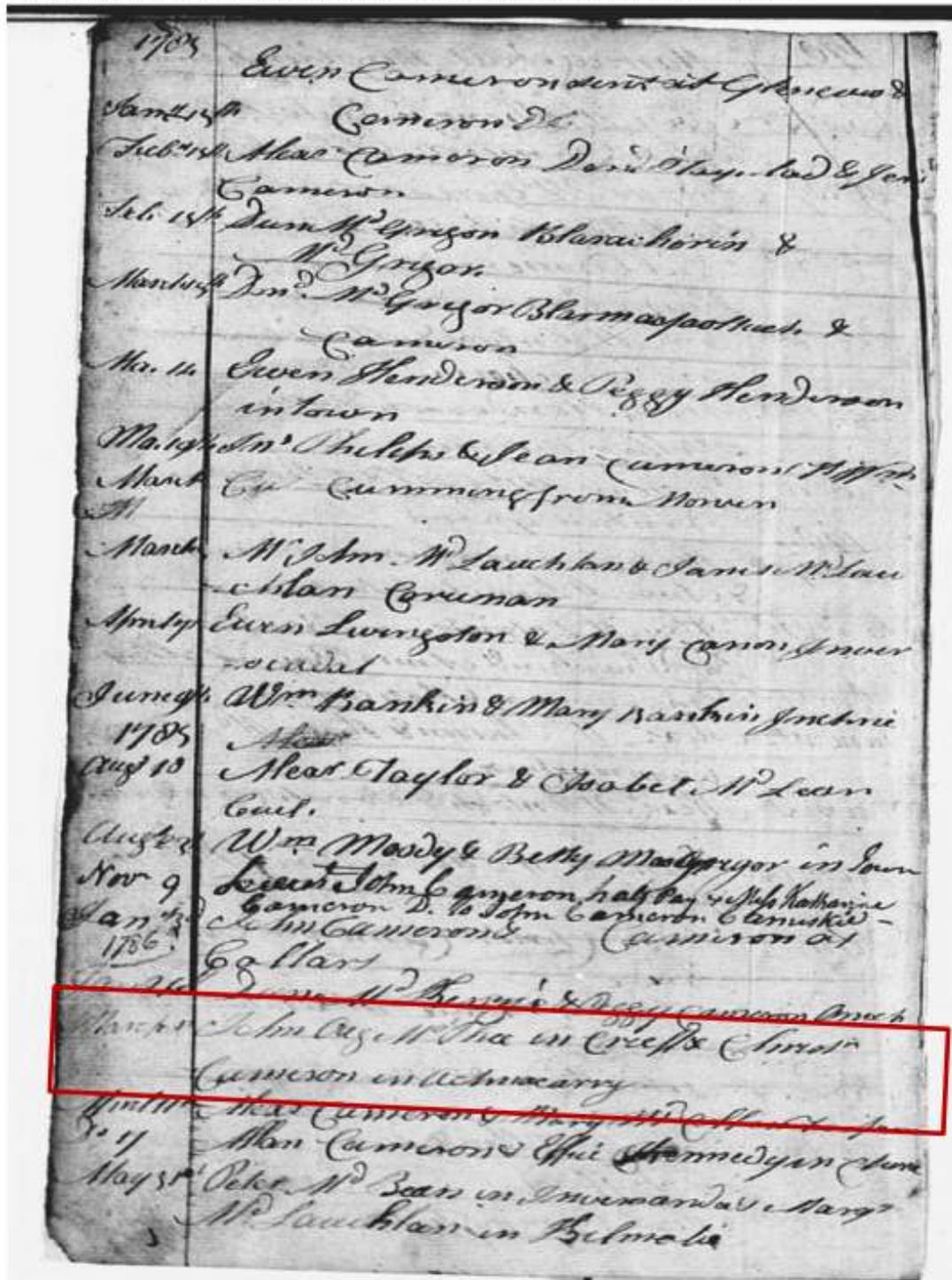
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Marriage of John McPhee & Christ'n Cameron in March 1786 in Crieff, Kilmallie

"March 1786 – John oag McPhee in Crieff & Christ'n Cameron in Achnacarry"

Source: Scotland's People OPR Births 520/ 10 229, Kilmallie, p229 of 243

00/03/1786 MCPHEE, JOHN PAGE (Old Parish Registers Marriages 520/ 10 229 Kilmallie) Page 229 of 243
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Appendix B

Births of Christina McPhee (& variations) from 1779 to 1810

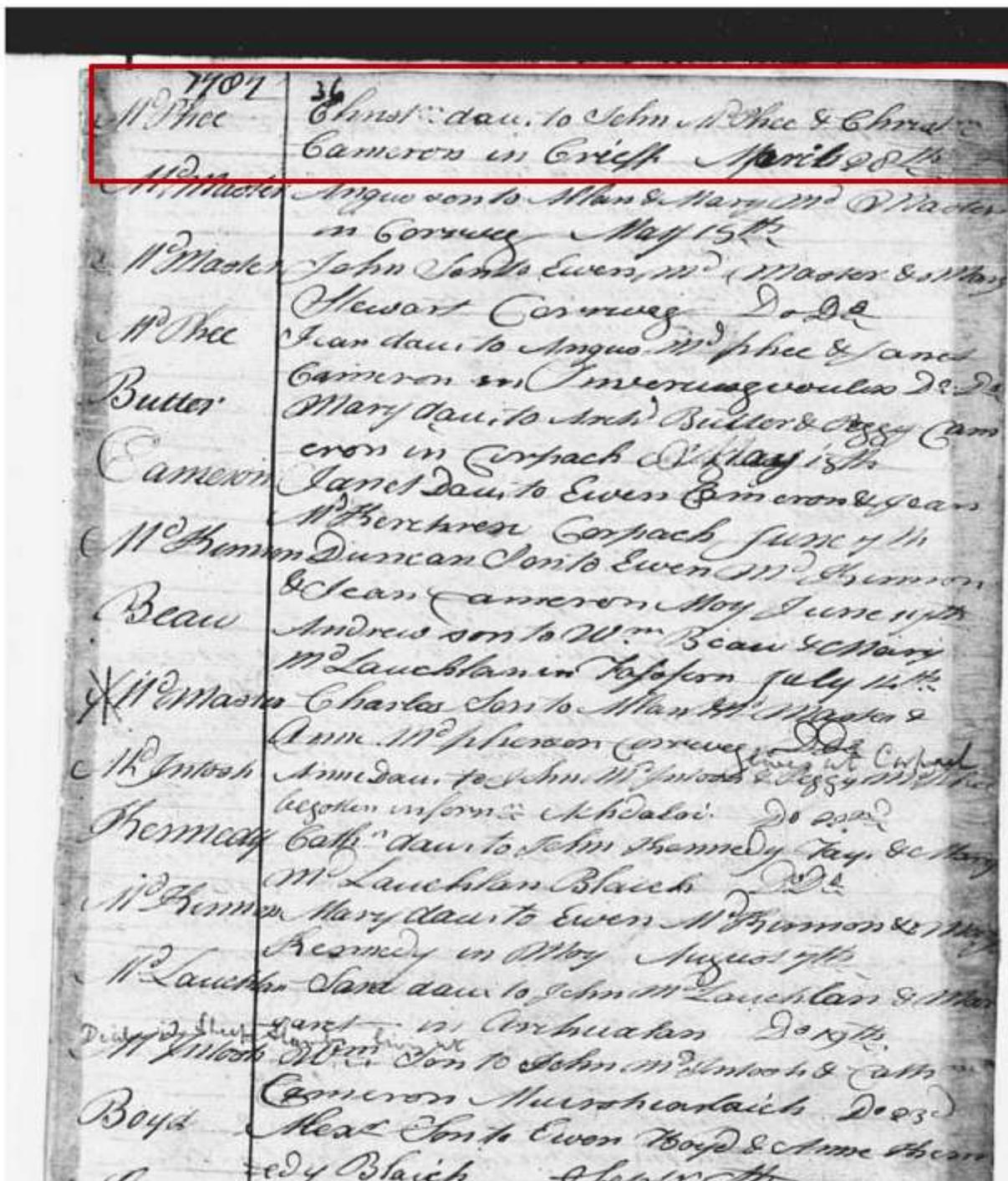
Source: Scotland's People, Church of Scotland on 17th March 2020

Surname	Forename	Parents/ Other Details		Date	Parish Number	Ref	Parish
MCFEE	CHRISTIAN	ARCHBALD MCFEE/CATHERINE MCCALLUM FR1157 (FR1157)	F	05/06/1779	644/1	170 23	Glasgow
MCPHEE	CHRISTIAN	DONALD MCPHEE/HELEN KAY FR201 (FR201)	F	12/11/1786	472/	10 197	Balfron
MCPHEE	CHRISTIAN	JOHN MCPHEE/CHRISTIAN CAMERON FR72 (FR72)	F	28/04/1787	520/	10 74	Kilmallie
MCPHEE	CHRISTIAN	ANGUS MC PHEE CHRISTAIN TOMSON FR212 (FR212)	F	03/10/1797	107/	20 42	Urquhart and Glenmoriston
MCPHEE	CHRISTIAN	ANGUES MCPHEE/HELEN GRAY FR360 (FR360)	F	02/02/1806	625/	10 491	Bothwell

Birth of our Christina McPhee on 28th April 1787 in Crieff, Kilmallie.

"McPhee, Christ'n dau. to John McPhee & Christ'n Cameron in Crieff April 28th 1787"
Source: Scotland's People OPR Births 520/ 10 74 Kilmallie, p74 of 243

28/04/1787 MCPHEE, CHRISTIAN (Old Parish Registers Births 520/ 10 74 Kilmallie) Page 74 of 243
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Birth of another Christian – in Balfron

"Nov 12th 1786 - Christian natural daughter to Donald McPhee and Helen Kay was baptized at the manse John Fergⁿ and other witness" in Balfron parish

12/11/1786 MCPHEE, CHRISTIAN (Old Parish Registers Births 472/ 10 197 Balfron) Page 197 of 333
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Year	Date	Event
1786	March 9	James Laupful Son to James Ewing and Elizabeth Ewing his spouse was Bapt. at over Gylins in presence of the Congregation
1786	June 25	Martha Laupful Daughter to Thomas Wre Taylor at Balfron and Elizabeth Neilson his Spouse was Bapt. in presence of the Congregation
1786	Nov. 12	Christian Natural Daughter Daughter to Donald McPhee and Helen Kay was Bapt. at the manse John Ferg ⁿ and other witnesses
1786	Dec. 17	Janet Laupful Daughter to George Cullings and Margaret Fairley his Spouse in Kilpatrick was Bapt. in presence of the Congregation
1787	Jan. 19	Mugh Laupful Daughter to the late Mr. Mr. Hugh Gouslay and Elizabeth Colquhoun his Spouse was Bapt. at the manse by the Rev. Mr. James Graham of Helensburgh Mr. Colquhoun M ^r . Gouslay Father being Sponsor
1786	June 18	George Laupful Son to Peter Mully and John Malaster his Spouse was Bapt. at Whippen before the Congregation Sean Laupful daughter of Robert Mully in Over Gylins & Elizabeth Mully his Spouse was bapt. at the manse 17 th 1788

Birth of another Christian – in Ryoralick (or Ruilick)

"3rd Oct 1797 – Christian daug^r to Angus McPhee & Christain Tomson in Ryoralick"

Source: Scotland's People OPR Births 107/ 20 42 Urquhart & Glemmoriston, p42 of 212

03/10/1797 MCPHEE, CHRISTIAN (Old Parish Registers Births 107/ 20 42 Urquhart and Glenmoriston) Page 42 of 212
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