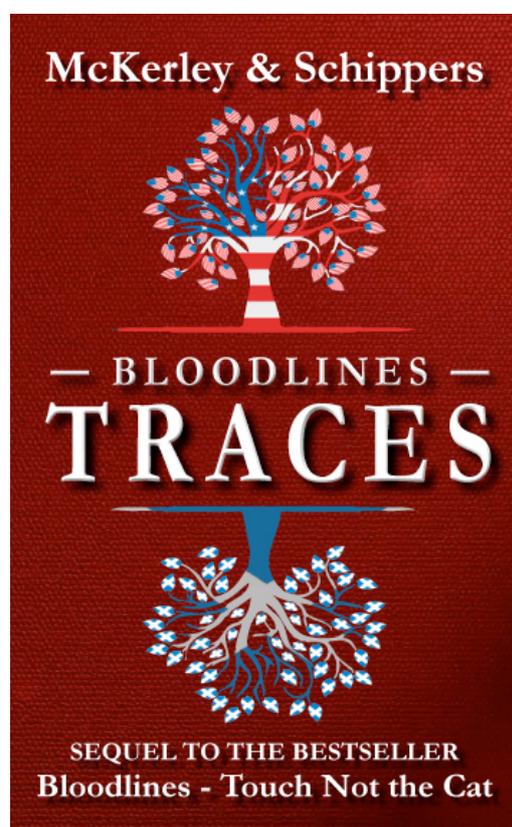
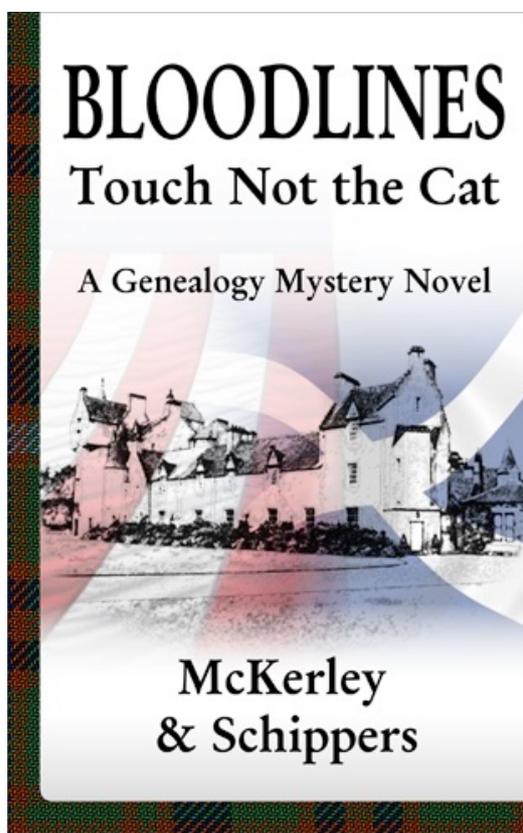


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**Family History Research Guide**

**A 'How to' genealogy guide  
with excerpts from:**

**Bloodlines - Touch Not the Cat &  
Bloodlines –Traces**



**Scottish American Genealogy Mystery Novels**

First Published in The Netherlands 2018  
By WYBT Publishing

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## **Do you know what happened in your family seven generations ago?**

You may already be proud of your roots, but what is it that really links you to your ancestors?

In our Scottish American Genealogy Mystery Novels *Bloodlines-Touch Not the Cat & Bloodlines - Traces*, we set this question in the context of a fictional narrative wrapped in real life historical events, while using recognized family history research methods.

Initially, our protagonist, Cathy Macpherson, a police officer from North Carolina, has little interest in family history. It is her husband, travel writer David Stewart, who is keen to find out what drove his ancestor Alexander Stewart out of Scotland in 1895.

David lures his wife into joining him to visit the Highland Estate where his forefather was born and raised. It is there and then, Cathy's police mind is switched on and a long kept family secret, dating back to Victorian times, begins to unravel its impact on present day life on both sides of the Atlantic, Scotland and the United States.

The sequel *Bloodlines-Traces*, further expands to the Dardanelles during World War I, with a narrative based on the true life-story of a war correspondent who changed the course of history, while back in Edwardian Scotland, character Katherine paves the way for generations to come at Edinburgh University. Going back and forth between 2011 and Victorian/Edwardian days, David and Cathy reach their conclusions in an intriguing genealogy mystery.

## **Tracing your lineage.**

While this Family History Guide is written from a Scottish American perspective, the elements such as church and census records, birth, marriage and death certificates, are widely used in genealogy in most West European cultures and the USA.

In this guide we let our ‘Bloodlines’ characters share their adventures with you along the roads they travelled, using examples from *Bloodlines -Touch Not the Cat* (WYBT Publishing, 2011) and *Bloodlines-Traces*. (WYBT Publishing, 2016)

Genealogy is about so much **more** than listing dates of birth, marriage and death. Once you add the ingredients of researching what life was like in the times of your ancestors - globally, but definitely locally - and filter the historic events that might have been of influence, your family’s past really starts to open its doors to you.

You might well be in for a surprise or two, real-life facts you would never have expected or perhaps never wished for. Yet they may well have determined who and where you are today.

Before we start our tour, we would like to emphasize that while the narrative of our Bloodlines genealogy mystery novels is partly set at Ballindalloch in the Scottish Highlands with the permission of the residing Macpherson-Grant family. **The Macpherson characters in our Bloodlines series are purely products of our own imagination.**

**What is real and based on historical research** is our interpretation of what daily life looked like in our characters’ days. In that context, we lead you past historic sights in Scotland, (Edinburgh and the Highlands) as well as the United States, (New York, Boston and Chicago) and the Gallipoli disaster of World War I, which among many, also took the life of one of author Tom McKerley’s forefathers, leading Tom to his own personal quest to find out more about his family history

*“ Understanding our ancestry helps us understand ourselves,  
and knowing where you come from can create a strong desire to go there  
and walk in the footsteps of your ancestors ”*

Quote from ‘Ancestral Research’

*Family history research is an absorbing pastime,  
It’s also fun and very addictive*

Tom McKerley

*What happened in previous generations  
is without doubt of influence on your life story today.*

Ingrid Schippers

## 1. Journey of Discovery

### 1.1 Do you know what happened in your family seven generations ago? Be careful what you wish for!

First ask yourself *why* you want to research your family history. Outline the reasons in the preface of your document. The answers will support you as a framework for your personal quest and remind you to stick to your subject.

It will also make an interesting read for those who read your findings, who knows, maybe generations later.

In Chapter 2 of *Bloodlines-Touch Not the Cat*, we describe which family line character David Stewart decides to research and why.

#### **Saturday 25 June 2011, 11:30 pm, Raleigh, North Carolina, USA**

The tall frame of David Stewart was sitting behind his desk in the study reading the most recent email Wayne Stewart had sent him. He had hooked up with Wayne through a website, “Genes Reunited”. David had posted a request for information on his Stewart lineage, detailing what he had learned from his grandfather some years ago about their family’s Scottish connection to an Alexander Stewart. It had been a deep and emotional exchange of memories with his grandfather at his father’s funeral, which had triggered David’s need to find out more about his Stewart connections. He learned his great-great-grandparents, Alexander and Sarah, sailed from Scotland and they married in Boston. Gramps had given David the wedding certificate as a keepsake. It was on his desk...

The order of events seems easy enough to interpret. Two people on the same boat, sailing for America and they get married in Boston. David even has a marriage certificate to prove it.

The true beauty of genealogical discovery however lies in the hidden stories between facts and figures. When David takes a closer look, he sees the ship his ancestors sailed on left Glasgow in 1895. Their marriage however took place on July 19<sup>th</sup> 1898. Has the couple been living in sin for three years? Or was there another reason why they waited that long?

## 1.2 How to research fact from ‘fiction’

One way for our character David to find out what *really* brought about his ancestors’ marriage-delay is to research the time period in which the sequence of events took place. Sometimes a war or economic crisis could well have hampered any plans. Or it could be something far more personal, as turns out to be the case when David gets hold of the letters written by Alexander from 1895 to 1897.

It is Wayne, a long lost cousin David reconnects with thanks to his call for help on the (existing) genealogy website ‘Genes Reunited’, who passes on the letters.

Finding and contacting long lost family members can be very helpful. Initiating talks about the subject with relatives you stayed in touch with can produce unexpected information. Harvesting old shoeboxes with photographs, certificates, newspaper clippings, medals and old letters; they might all have something to add.

Gathering information may seem like an arduous task. Try and keep it simple by sticking to your subject. Not only does each individual lifetime hold the potential of surprise; also family-lines multiply with every generation accumulating to an impressive number by the time you reach the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> lineage. In order not to lose your way in this labyrinth; use one family line only until your research feels exhausted. Later, once you’ve gained experience and know your way around, you can fill in the gaps and pick up other threads, maybe using the information you came across before but put aside for the time being.

### **Example from the personal archives of Tom McKerley:**

*‘My Auntie Nellie provided me with one of those actual old shoeboxes. The box contained copies of certificates of various types, photographs of people I did not recognise, (and neither did Nellie); a love letter to Nellie’s mother and some newspaper clippings of Nellie’s brother winning an athletic event in the 1940’s. Sadly all this information was of no consequence for my McKerley research as Nellie had married into the McKerley family line. Aunt Nellie however insisted I insert the findings into my document’.*

### 1.3 Garnish your findings with what was going on at the time.

The experience of researching family history is especially enhanced when it is recorded as if writing a personal letter or telling a story similar to the way a historical novelist would do.

Suggested leads to follow are:

- Research major or relevant events that occurred at the time in the light of your personal findings. While we tend to resort to what historians tell us, arguably their accounts are based on general consensus and can be biased. There are priceless little treasures to be found, seemingly small events with great impact, that give insight on the particular situation of your forefathers. Remember everyone in his or her own right plays a part in history.
- Research the geography, the economics, the fashion, the religious ideas etc. Uncover anything that would best describe the life and times of your ancestors. Here's an example from:

#### Chapter 43. *Bloodlines - Touch Not the Cat*

There was a lot of unrest in Europe. Italy and Turkey were on the brink of war. Alex picked up a story from his contact in The Times of London, that the British First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, had sent a controversial memorandum to Premier Asquith. He advised that British troops should be used to aid France, if Germany attacked France through Belgium. Alex developed this storyline in conjunction with the advances being made in industry and technology. He used the first non-stop crossing in a monoplane from London to Paris by Pierre Prier, in April of 1911, as an example. "Monoplanes could well be used in warfare," he wrote, "and have a significant impact on battle strategy."

- Research the history of the town your ancestors originated from. It can lead to an unexpected number of details as to what sort of environment they lived in.
- And again, talk to relatives. Too often people researching family history wished they'd asked while there was a chance. Here's an example from *Bloodlines-Traces* that highlights the importance of this:

## Chapter 16, page 57, Cathy asks her father Jim...

“Have you ever heard of an Alexandra in the family?”

“Nope, the name means nothing to me. What are you thinking Cat?”

“Grandpa Spencer or Grandma. Did they ever discuss Eddie’s background or an Alexandra?”

“Cat, my parents never discussed any family history with me and to be honest I was never interested.”

- Seek out certificates you can copy, photos, old letters, documents, newspaper clippings etc. Ask about your relatives past; what were they like, what did they do, what kind of person, who were their friends?
- Interview your relatives; record your conversations when given permission to do so.
- Research the meaning of any professions you come across. Many have long gone, but have great stories to tell about what life was like in the days back when

During his own genealogy quest, Tom found some of his ancestors in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century to be ‘Nail Maker Journeymen’. He discovered ‘Journeyman’ is defined as ‘a skilled craftsman employed by another skilled craftsman.’ Between 1700 and 1800 the most important methods of transport were with horses, hence the need for nail makers. (The most common means of transportation was walking. Famous poet Robert Burns is known for walking the length and breadth of Scotland.)

- Research the archives of local newspapers in the timeframe your ancestors lived. You’ll find many online these days. In *Bloodlines –Traces*, we have contemporary characters Cathy and John researching our feisty Victorian character Katherine Macpherson.

•

## Chapter 45, *Bloodlines - Touch Not the Cat*

Friday 14 October 2011, Edinburgh, Scotland

A short taxi ride from Morningside to Holyrood Road took John and Cathy to Barclay House, home of the Scotsman newspaper. Nothing more had been said on their brief escapade of the previous evening. Cathy went with the flow. When they arrived, John’s friend Davie Deaking took them straight to the

archive department. He sat beside them in a long narrow area of the room beside a microfiche machine. The unit was one of six available. Unlike Bobby Bell's office at the university, Deaking's workplace was immaculate. The three of them huddled around a machine, Davie in the centre, showing the visitors how it operated.

"We have many archives on digital, but the period you are researching is only on fiche." Demonstrating how to use the equipment he said, "There is no search button, you can only scroll backwards and forwards like this, so it is a bit tedious." Davie showed them how to zoom in to images and capture the index number of any pages they wanted to have printed. "Good luck, give me a shout if you need any help."

Cathy and John split up, so they could use two separate microfiches. You had to load a reel of film on the machine, each reel covering the daily newspaper for a specific time period. They agreed to start searching 1901, starting in November. It didn't take them long to find what they were looking for. It was John who made the first strike.

"Cathy, come look at this," he whispered. It was a small column on the right hand side of the front page;

- Research what went on in your ancestors' world, their country and their immediate surroundings.
- Ask yourself what innovations could have affected their lives.
- Visualize what it must have been like in those days. Hygiene, clothing, bathing possibilities aboard ships, etc.

One immigrant recalled arriving at Ellis Island:

"The boat anchored at mid-bay and then they tendered us on the ship to Ellis Island. We got off the boat (...) you got your bag in your hand and went right into the building. Ah, that day must have been about five to six thousand people. Jammed, I remember it was August. Hot as a pistol, and I'm wearing my long johns, and my heavy Irish tweed suit."

Source: <https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/immigration-timeline#1880>

All in all turn it into a life *story*. Rather than having a tree with boxes, containing names, dates of birth and death, storytelling brings the tales of your ancestors to life and more importantly takes you back to what life was like back

then. When living in the age of the worldwide web and 24/7 contact with the outside world, it can be amazingly revealing to imagine a world where news travelled at a far slower pace or sometimes not at all; the days where people could disappear in a crowd and were not constantly tracked down through cell phones, CCTV or cookies. Just imagine what that would be like...

#### **1.4 Technology enablement, the power of the Internet**

While imagining a world without all day long contact from all over the world may be very relaxing; having the web in this day and age is extremely helpful maybe even indispensable in genealogy.

There are many websites available to engage your research. Below you find some examples. More are mentioned throughout this Family History Guide.

- Ancestry.com
- Genes Reunited.com
- Scotland's People (National Records)

The above examples are 'pay sites'. One of the better free sites is the Latter Day Saints. (LDS). Although it has proved to be inaccurate on occasion and provides only minimal information, it is ideal for crosschecking.

#### **1.5 Clan research**

If you are 'lucky enough' to have Scottish ancestry you're bound to find the background of your family name on the Internet.

Clans sometimes host a wide selection of associated family names and crests.



This is the Macpherson crest used and explained in *Bloodlines – Touch Not the Cat*. The Macpherson Museum is housed at Newtonmore, a village is just off the A9 in the Highlands. It is well worth a visit.



This is the Stewart crest used in *Bloodlines-Traces*.  
(Courage grows strong at a wound).

## 2. BMD's: Births, Marriages and Death Certificates and Census Records

The following is primarily a Scottish experience. From 1<sup>st</sup> January 1855, a legal requirement for Protestants in the United Kingdom was to register all birth, death and marriages. Most registers in the Catholic Church only started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Sadly, only fragments of Irish records remain before 1901.

BMD's are historical novels in themselves. When you observe your own birth certificate and if applicable your marriage certificate, you will discover a lot of information. You will also find similar information for BMD's going back to 1855. It took many years to enforce this legal discipline. Please remember in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and earlier, many people could not read or write, so registrars simply recorded names that they *thought* they heard. Hence the many different spellings you potentially will discover. In addition, registrars had a varied quality of clarity in their handwritten certificates. Certificates will also highlight if your ancestor could read and write, with 'X' marking the spot.

Keep in mind 'middle names' can be of great value, as often these names represent a significant relationship to other family members.

1855 to present day, certificates have changed, but in general you can capture the following;

### 2.1 BIRTH – use symbol *b*

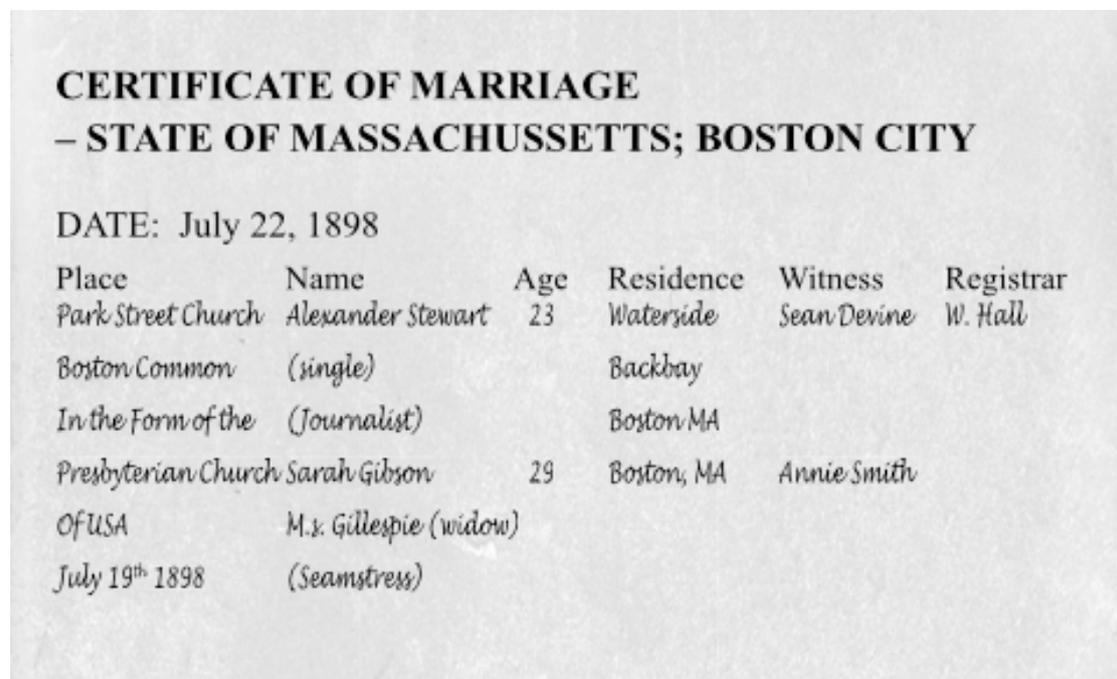
- Full name
- Gender
- Date and time of birth
- Place of birth
- Father's name, occupation, place of residence

- Mother's name, occupation, place of residence
- Signature of person registering the birth
- Name of Registrar
- Many certificates will also provide the date and place of the child's parents' marriage.

## 2.2 MARRIAGE – use symbol =

- Full name, age and residence of the bride and groom
- Occupation of the bride and groom
- Date and place of marriage and religion
- Bride and groom's and parents' names, including the mother's maiden name.
- Bride and groom's parents' occupation and if alive or deceased.
- Signatures of witnesses
- Signature of registrar
- Signature of clergyman

In Chapter 2 of *Bloodlines - Touch Not the Cat* the following (American) certificate is used:



In real life, Sarah Gibson was in fact the name of Tom McKerley's great great grandmother. While the lives and times of the real and fictitious Sarah otherwise have nothing in common, it was nice to link them together.

They were both courageous women.

## Newspaper Acknowledgements & Articles

**Chapter 39, *Bloodlines - Touch Not the Cat***, describes the lives and times of Alexander Stewart and Sarah Gibson.

As in real life, when couples marry, many place an acknowledgement in their local newspaper, in this fictitious case the Boston Globe:

### *MARRIED*

*STEWART – GILLESPIE – On Wednesday July 19 at the First Presbyterian Church, Boston, by the Rev. Dr. George S. Mutt, assisted by the Rev. Dr. John Hall, Sarah Gillespie, formerly Gibson, to Alexander Stewart.*

When you know the date on which your ancestors were married, as well as the location, it might be worth a search in the newspaper archives.

### **2.3 DEATH CERTIFICATES – use symbol *d* (INCLUDING POST MORTEM)**

- Name and age of the deceased.
- Date and cause of death.
- The name of the spouse and whether alive or deceased.
- Place of death and normal residence.
- Occupation of the deceased.
- Parents names / maiden name and whether alive or deceased.
- Witnesses and their relationship
- Signature of registrar.

### **2.4 CENSUS RECORDS**

Census records hold the details of inhabitants of a household at a given snapshot in time. The use of this information can prove to be very important.

The first Federal Population Census in the United States was taken in 1790, and has been taken every ten years since. Say you were living at 6, Church Road at a town called Springfield somewhere in the United States; regardless of

whether you owned or rented the house; were a guest or a lodger; you would be registered as living in that house when you were there during the count.

Census records are a great tool to find ancestors and can give surprising information about what was going on in their lives.

### **Restrictions on releasing census data**

In the USA there is a 72-year restriction on releasing census record data due to data protection. In the UK this is 100-years. In most countries census counts are taken every 10 years, in the UK since 1841. Exactly 100-years later the census was skipped due to the outbreak of World War II.

The following are the actual dates when the British and Irish census information was collected and is now widely available. Census information of 1921 will be released in 2021. The last census records in the UK were taken in 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2011; in the USA on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2010

1841, evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> June; people of 15 years of age and over were asked to round down their age to the nearest 5 years. Many people would have guessed their age anyway as they did not know their exact birth date / year.

1851; evening of the 30<sup>th</sup> March

1861; evening of the 7<sup>th</sup> April

1871; evening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> April

1881; evening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> April

1891; evening of the 5<sup>th</sup> April

1901; evening of the 31<sup>st</sup> March

1911; evening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> April

In early census, each dwelling would detail the number of rooms and windows. This was for tax purposes. Generally, you can obtain the name of every individual in a given household. One person is named as the head of the household (h) and every other person's relationship to the head of the household is listed. e.g. wife, son, daughter, mother, cook, housekeeper, lodger. In addition, the age of each person is captured as well as the occupation and country of origin. In Scottish records, if you were Scottish you left the country of origin box blank. If you were for example Irish, then you would use 'I'. In many examples you might also capture whether a child was lucky enough to be attending school, and, if detailed, which languages were spoken. Some census records will even detail disabilities.

When bringing up a digital record on the screen, you get a full-page extract of a given address. On many occasions you will also find details of neighbours. Scan this information as it can also prove to be helpful later.

## **2.5 Other useful sources that complement census information**

- Maps (to explore information found on census)
- Valuation roles (kept from 1855-1974, to find owners of property)
- Register of Sasines. Transfer of ownership (property).

### **Example of a possible American census record of 1910**

In *Bloodlines - Traces*, our contemporary Bloodlines character Cathy Macpherson (born 1974 in Raleigh, North Carolina) is researching her family tree and goes looking for information on her ancestor Katherine Macpherson, (born 1877 in Scotland). In our narrative, the 1910 census would have been taken while Katherine was staying with a William MacPherson. The census for William's house on Maxwell Street, Chicago, Illinois would then include the following:

- William Macpherson: H (head of household), age: 69, Occupation: Spirit Trader, Country of Origin; SCO, (Scotland).
- Katherine MacPherson: Niece, age: 33, Occupation: Artist, Country of Origin: SCO
- Richard Danaher: age: 45, Occupation: Butler, Country of Origin: I
- Clementina Dorrington: Guest; age 48, Occupation: Actress. In Clementina's case her Country of Origin would be blank, as she was born in the USA.

## **3.0 Old Parish Records (OPR)**

This section covers pre-1855 birth, death and marriages. Information shown on these records will vary, according to Parish.

### **3.1 Birth**

- The date of the baptism and/or birth
- The name of the child
- The name of the child's father

- The name of the child's mother
- Occupation of the father
- Where the family were living
- Names of witnesses to the baptism

When you are able to get all these details, you're well on your way and a very lucky person.

### **3.2 Marriage Proclamations/Marriage**

- Dates of the proclamation. BANNS: The public announcement in a Christian parish church or in the town council of an impending marriage.
- Date of the marriage
- Names of the bride and groom
- Parish of bride and groom and sometimes their place of residence
- Occupation of the groom
- Names of the witnesses

It is very rare to find the bride's or groom's parents' details. But again, you're lucky if you do.

### **3.3 Death/Burials**

When you're lucky you get:

- Name and date of burial (rather than the date of death)
- Price of the mort cloth rental

If you are exceptionally lucky you may also get:

- Name and date of burial
- Age of death
- Cause of death
- Residence and former occupation

### 3.4 Other potential sources of information

- Kirk Session Records
- Cemetery records
- Gravestone inscriptions
- (Local) Family History Societies

### 4.0 Population Shift; Scotland to North America, Ellis Island Immigration Centre – New York

#### Chapter 10, *Bloodlines - Touch Not the Cat*

Speaking of genes, John said, “Have you researched your family background at all? We did have a MacPherson from Ballindalloch that went to the USA in the early 1900’s I think. In theory you could descend from him.”

George added, “John, there must be thousands of MacPhersons in the USA ...”

“I’ve never done any research myself”, Cathy said, remembering how she had joined David on a trip to New York some years ago. They had done a boat tour to the Statue of Liberty and the old immigration building on Ellis Island. David spent a lot of time in the research centre on the island.

Ellis Island was the main point of entry for millions of immigrants into North America from 1892. It replaced the immigration station at Castle Garden, which closed in 1890. Ellis Island served for more than 60 years. It could be a trying experience, not only for the actual immigrants, but also for the immigration officers to processing the masses of people. They also inevitably faced cultural and language barriers. Lots of people had their family names accidentally changed at Ellis Island. An infamous example is in the movie, *The Godfather*. When ‘Vito’ was being processed at Ellis Island Immigration, he was asked his name and where he was born. His answer was not fully understood, and ‘Corleone’, his place of birth, was recorded as his surname. The rest is history.

It has been estimated that close to 40% of all current US citizens can trace at least one of their ancestors to Ellis Island.

## 4.1 Ship's Passenger Lists

A lot of information is available on the Internet regarding this topic. E.g. Jane's Shipping Lists is probably the most effective and it is free. Also the Ellis Island website has comprehensive details of immigrants arriving bound for North America. Trying to trace a specific name can be very challenging unless you know additional information, e.g. the month and year of the crossing, the name of the ship and its destination. Even then, what you find might not be conclusive. These lists can show the initial only for the first name, year of birth, country of origin, gender and similar details of other members of their travel group.

The Merchant Seamen Records is also useful, as it records any marriages at sea.

Here is an excerpt from **Chapter 42, *Bloodlines - Touch Not the Cat***, describing how Cathy is researching the journey of Alexander Stewart:

Cathy went straight to the computer, opened the web browser and searched for "Ships Passenger Lists Scotland / New York". Turning on her seat, she asked John, who was lying on top of his bed looking at her. "The year Gordon disappeared, it was 1895, right?"

"Yes," was all he gave her in response, producing a big yawn at the same time.

"Good. And Scottish emigrants would board their ships in Glasgow, right?"

Without waiting for his answer she swiveled back in her chair and typed 'Ships Passenger Lists Glasgow / New York 1895'. It took her a while, distracted by the noise of John snoring behind her, but she found what she was looking for.

STEWART, Alexander, Year of birth: 1875, Sex: Male, Ethnicity: Scotland

Date and Port of Departure: 3rd November, 1895, Glasgow. Ship of Travel: SS State of Nebraska, Manifest No: 0133 Date of Arrival in New York: 12th November, 1895

## 4.2 Armed-Forces Records

There are many sources for searching records of ancestors who served in the military forces. These cover War Registers from 1899, South African War (1899 – 1902), World War I (1914 – 1918) and World War II (1939 – 1945) War. Example: [www.forces-war-records.co.uk](http://www.forces-war-records.co.uk)

An ancestor of Tom McKerley served and died in Gallipoli during WWI. Through the above website, Tom found his grave number, which we used for a casualty of war in *Bloodlines-Touch Not the Cat*.

*Bloodlines-Traces*, describes the background of the disastrous Dardanelles campaign and its consequences for the British and Allies effort.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is an excellent source of information.

## 5.0 The Influence of Social Media on Family History Research.

Posting questions on social media or seeking contact can be quick to produce remarkable results. Here's another example from the personal archives of Tom McKerley.

*'It was the power of social media that reunited my family connections. The publishing of Bloodlines – Touch Not the Cat, involved a lot of promotion, Facebook being one of the resources used. Very quickly I started to receive messages from many cousins in Sydney, Australia. I could recall how many of my uncles and aunts emigrated to Australia in the 1950's and early 1960's. My cousin, Alex, gave me the postal address in London of an Uncle Paul. He is the last remaining sibling of my mother, the youngest of seventeen children. I mailed Paul a copy of the book. He responded by old-fashioned letter, thanking me. This was the first communication I had with Paul for over fifty years. He moved to London when I was a teenager and all communication between Paul and his siblings had been scant and eventually ceased. However, in the months following our social media reunion, I received more letters from Paul unfolding many events of his life, which included a major family scandal involving murder, forgery and theft. Paul, who is now in his eighties, continues to communicate mainly by email. He also gave me the opportunity to contact an Aunt Rose, widow of another brother of my mother, Robert Black, who lives in Norwich, England. I have fond memories as a young lad when Robert and Rose visited my parents in Airdrie.'*

## 6.0 How genealogy can raise interest within the family.

Initially in *Bloodlines - Touch Not the Cat*, both Cathy the Cop and her father Jim show little interest in finding out more about their roots.

### Chapter 3

When Cathy pulled into the driveway in her black unmarked Crown Vic, her father, James Macpherson, was sitting on the open porch of their tidy little bungalow, a combined brick-and-timber house built around the early seventies. James, wearing denim shorts and a check short-sleeved shirt, was a lean man in his early sixties, still tall, with a handsome face and a reassuring appearance. Even now, simply looking at him gave Cathy a feeling of safety. He was a retired cop who had taught her a lot about police work that you couldn't read in an instruction manual or receive in training. James saw his daughter and waved as she stepped out into the hot humid evening from her air-conditioned car and walked towards the house.

"Hey, Pop," she said kissing him on the cheek. "I take it Mom's out?" She gave a knowing smirk. James was enjoying a cigarette, something he would never do when his wife was around. He smiled and explained that her mother had gone with friends to visit Eileen Turner, who had been in some kind of accident and was now proudly showing off her broken leg, providing her with the attention she always craved. They sat down on the porch steps.

"Let me show you something," she said. She dug the Macpherson letter out of her bag and handed it to her father. James got his bifocals out of his shirt pocket and started to study the contents of the envelope, one by one.

"Hmm, a Macpherson clan gathering, that's interesting... Wonder why I didn't get one?"

"Because you're not married to David Stewart," Cathy mumbled.

Her father looked at her profile for a moment while she sat on the deck step, her knees tucked under her chin, staring into the distance. "Is he now researching the Macphersons?" James asked.

"No," replied an exasperated Cathy. "He discovered an ancestor from Scotland, Alexander Stewart, and believe it or not, Pop, he was born in the grounds of a Macpherson castle, the one on the invite. It drives me nuts and I don't know why," Cathy sighed.

"Well..." James began cautiously, searching for the right words. He knew all too well his temperamental daughter was easy to ignite on this subject. "Maybe you should consider accepting the invitation and go meet some more

Macphersons. To be honest, your Mom and I have been worried about you ever since the shooting. A break from the force could do you good, you know.”

She threw her father a warning look not to go there.

On his guard, he changed his strategy and looking over the edge of his glasses, said, “Unless you think the invite is from a bunch of kooks. They might be into stuff like exhibitionism in the front yard, and howling during a full moon. I remember an old movie, the ...”

“What’s the problem with the men in my life today,” Cathy exclaimed, jumping up from the porch steps. “Steve said almost exactly the same thing.”

“Always knew I liked that guy,” said James, giving his daughter a playful wink.

Cathy rolled her eyes in exasperation. “Pop, I checked it out today on the Internet, and Ballindalloch Castle is for real. It’s been the home of a Macpherson family for over four hundred years.”

James smiled affectionately at his daughter. “Your granddad used to talk about his father, Eddie, who supposedly had some old pictures of a little town in Scotland. Never found any pictures, but then again, my Pop was a great storyteller.”

She could tell her father was intrigued with the invitation.

“Cathy,” he said. “Mom and I think the shooting has taken more out of you than you realize. Maybe you should call this castle to make sure everything is above board, and if everything fits, go for it. That’s my gut feeling. How great would it be if you’d uncover some family skeletons, Cat?” he added jokingly. “Come on; give me something to boast about to my buddies at the golf club!”

Cathy gave her dad a wry smile, kissed him on the cheek, and was already walking back towards her car when her father called after her, “Can’t wait to tell your mom about this! Her family line probably goes back to some bears in the woods,” James chuckled, playfully clawing at the air.

Within two months the level of interest of both Cathy and Jim dramatically changes during a Skype call in *Bloodlines - Traces*, after Cathy had asked her father to find a birth certificate for his grandfather Eddie.

Following a visit to the local library in Raleigh, North Carolina, Jim gets back to Cathy with the following information:

## Chapter 16

“Okay, finding Eddie’s birth certificate was not easy. Eddie was born in North Carolina, on June twentieth, 1916, at 141 Newlane. He was registered Charles

Edward Macpherson. It threw me initially. For whatever reason the name Charles dropped over time.”

“And the parents were?”

“Father unknown, but the mother was one Alexandra Macpherson. She was twenty years old, her normal residence was 266 Central, Los Angeles, California, Country of Origin; Scotland. And get this. She was an actress. Let me hold up the paper to the camera.”

Cathy went silent. The name rang a bell. While crunching some dates in her head, she stared at the image of the North Carolina State Board of Health.

**BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS**

**CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH**

**County: Davidson**

**Township: Ascadia**

**Full Name of Child: Charles Edward Macpherson**

**Boy/ Girl: Boy      Number in order of birth:      Married: Y/N;N**

**Date of Birth: June 20<sup>th</sup> 1916**

**FATHER      MOTHER**

**FULL NAME AND AGE:      Unknown      Alexandra**

**MacPherson (20)**

**RESIDENCE: 266 Central, Los Angeles, CA**

**COLOR: White**

**BIRTHPLACE: Scotland**

**OCCUPATION: Actress**

**CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE**

**I hereby certify I attended the birth of this child who was: Alive**

**Dr David Stansfield**

**At: 141 Newlane Ave, NC**

**Witness: B. Connelly**

**REGISTRAR: DW Tweedie**

**DATE: 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1916**

“Cathy, are you still there?”

“An actress, wow,” Cathy paused. “Are you sure this is the same Edward?”

“It’s the only Macpherson boy born in North Carolina matching the birth period on the census using the name Edward.”

## **7.0 Family History and Personal Life Stories.**

In some cultures family history is handed down from generation to generation. The importance of this shows in the following personal example of Tom’s, who was left with many questions regarding an old shoebox picture of his father in his twenties, standing on a rope bridge with three other men. While researching his own genealogy, Tom discovered his ancestors were actually Irish and came from Broughshane in County Antrim, Northern Ireland. Further findings revealed a local tourist attraction; Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge! It brought Tom to visiting the bridge during a visit to the Titanic exhibition in Belfast. While Tom now has more pictures of himself standing on the bridge to add to his collection, he never recovered the identity of the other three men. Had his father put the photo in an album together with a date and description, Tom’s research would probably have brought him further.

In daily life we sometimes forget to ask our family members the simplest things from our family’s history. Next to telling you more about your roots, talking to family members about the family’s past also brings you closer to each other. From a personal development point of view, the family legacy, ‘Karma’ if you will, the non material life stories that ‘run in the family’, can teach you a lot about who you are and explain certain aspects of your choices

To go back to the beginning of this Family History Guide; it is the admiration of our character David Stewart for his ancestor Alexander Stewart that brought him to research his family roots. Having made a dramatic career change from being in the computer industry to following his heart and starting travel writing, David identifies with Alexander’s heroic journey into the unknown. The outcome, in its own way, is just as unpredictable as David’s career. In that context, one can draw inspiration from feats accomplished by ancestors. They can teach us things to be thankful for today. Had Alexander stayed in Scotland, David would never even have existed.

## 8.0 Family Tree Document & Archiving

You will find on the Internet many offerings on building your family tree. Some of the software is free, others you need to buy. We would recommend software that allows you to retrieve information quickly. E.g. say you have a hundred ancestors documented over many generations, all containing BMD's. You want to search the details for one individual. Using a reference approach (see below), should make it easier to retrieve information

The McKerley family tree was documented using the following reference system. Initials TM (Thomas McKerley), Father was TM1(1<sup>st</sup> generation) and the children were TM1.1, TM1.2 and so on. Grandfather would be TM2 (2<sup>nd</sup> generation) and so on.

As for archiving, scan any documents on to a hard drive (and do regular back-ups). Any documents you retrieve from the web, print and save to a hard drive. Printing is important as most people find it easier to read a printed document rather than from a screen.

## 9.0 Summary

- a) Do not rush into pay sites without doing preparation.
- b) Go talk to relatives, neighbours of relatives.
- c) Use local resources; library and newspapers
- d) Make it a fun project.

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So.... who do you think *you* are?

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**We hope you enjoyed this Family History Guide**

**P.S. We're only human ☺**

**Should you come across any misinterpretations, spelling errors or have suggestions for additions, please contact us at**

**[Info@touchnotthecat.com](mailto:Info@touchnotthecat.com)**

**Further information on Bloodlines - Touch Not the Cat & Bloodlines –  
Traces can be found on:**

**[WWW.TOUCHNOTTHECAT.COM](http://WWW.TOUCHNOTTHECAT.COM)**

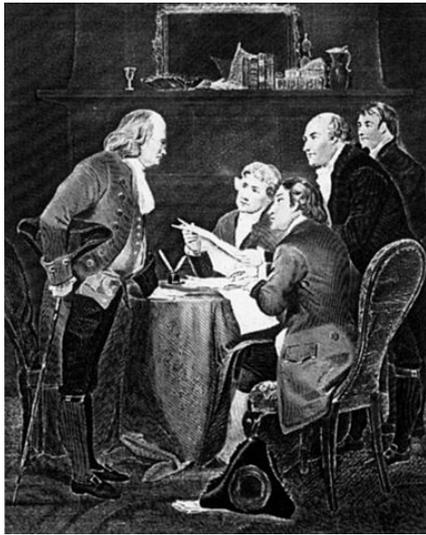
**\* Picture Gallery \* Behind the Scene Blogs \* Personal Stories &  
Pictures \* Reviews \* Where to Buy the Books Information \*  
Narrative and more Views into the Cradle of the Bloodlines Series.**

The Netherlands, November 2018,  
Tom McKerley & Ingrid Schippers

**\*Scroll down for some more titbits on family history\***

# Titbits on (Family) History

- **The American Declaration of Independence of 1776**
- **The Scottish Declaration of Independence of 1320.**



**Did you know...**that one third to half of the signatories of the American Declaration of Independence, are said to be either Scots by birth or of Scottish descent; and that the document itself was largely modelled after the Scottish Declaration of Independence signed at Arbroath on April 6<sup>th</sup> 1320.

This is confirmed by the US Senate Resolution 155 of 10 November 1997,

Franklin, Jefferson, Adams, Livingston and Sherman composing the declaration in 1776.

*Etching: Alonzo Chappel. Source: Wikipedia*

**From our personal archives: A visit to The Abbey of Arbroath, where the Scottish Declaration of Independence was signed in 1320**





- **The Times before the Census**

‘Legend has it’, in the earliest days people would pass on and memorize the life and times of their ancestors through storytelling as part of their culture. To this day this is still custom with indigenous cultures.

In medieval times it would only be noble families who kept track of their lineage and hence would know the dates of birth and given names of their ancestors and descendants. It would also be *officially* known who the father was. Of course this says nothing about the identity of the natural father.

As even the very first census records show, commoners often did not know much about their lineage or even date of birth (hence their age). Tom found an example of this in a census of 1841 where someone was marked as aged 45; while in the following census of 1851; the same man was marked as ‘51’. These sorts of findings can be very confusing.

- **Name giving.**

In ancient times people could be named after gods or goddesses or be given a name constructed from a word that had some specific meaning.

The name Richard for instance is a combination of ‘Ric’ the German word for ‘power’ or ‘rule’ combined with ‘hard’ meaning ‘brave’, this evolving into ‘Ric-hard’ .

Edwin was originally composed of the Old English words 'ead', which means 'prosperity', 'fortune', 'riches' and the word 'wine' meaning 'friend.', resulting into 'Eadwine'

Other names are still closer to their source like the old English name Wulfgar. The word may have changed spelling somewhat, but the word 'wolf' is still recognizable, while the second element, 'gar' means 'spear'.

As for family names, commoners could be named after a geographical point of recognition such as the name of the town where they were born, or a specific area like 'wood' or 'hill'.

Also sons would be named 'son of' carrying their father's first name as their family name, like Richard son of Bran. (Branson) Richardson, Johnson; Hutchinson, Pearson etc.

Men were named after their father, as 'son of'. In **Chapter 14** of *Bloodlines - Touch Not the Cat*, we have present day laird Angus Macpherson explain the origins of the name Macpherson

"You know where the name MacPherson comes from, Catherine?" Angus asked breaking up Cathy's animated conversation with Maggie.

"It is an old Gaelic name I would guess, right?" Cathy responded.

In a schoolteacher tone, Angus replied, "Well done dear, it is from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Mac-a-Phearsain, meaning son of the parson. You see at that time celibacy of the priesthood was not enforced."

Euphemia quickly added, "Nothing much has changed then," making those within earshot laugh loudly.

- **Mac or Mc.**

A lot has been said and written about the difference between 'Mac' or 'Mc'. Truth is the difference may have many origins. Perhaps its is a simple as a different way of spelling.

In general it is said that Mac is the Scottish way of saying 'son of' and Mc the Irish; or Mac is the protestant way and Mc the Catholic.

Tom is a Protestant but has McKerley spelled with an 'Mc'. As he states however (pointing his finger at Ingrid): 'You never know what happened

before 1700. My ancestors might have been forced to convert by your Dutch King Billy'. ([The 'Dutch King Billy' blog on our website will tell you more about him](#))

- **Tax**

Like many countries, one of the reasons the UK started a census capture was so they could collect tax.

- **Immigrants**

Another reason for initiating census records was to understand how many immigrants lived in the country. This is why one of the questions on the first census<sup>1</sup> of 1941 was: country of origin.

- **Afro American Heritage.**

Researching Afro American lineage is a totally different ball game. Descendants of slaves often carry the name of the plantation and/or family name of the people who owned the plantation. Often, the dates of birth were unknown.

In *Bloodlines- Touch Not the Cat*, we tell of the adoption in 1898 of an Afro American boy 'Michael'. In fact Wayne, the cousin of David mentioned in section 1.1 of this Family History Guide is a descendant of this child, adopted by Alexander and his wife Sarah. In our narrative Wayne's research probably ends with Michael, as he was adopted through an orphanage. Any records on him would be hard to trace.

While the 1870 census lists all Afro Americans; census records of 1790 – 1840 only name the head of the household, along with the number of slaves and 'free persons of colour'. The census records of 1850 and 1860 took a supplementary slave census by using the slave owner's name.

- **Personal Stories.**

Sometimes second hand bookshops can be treasure trove. Oxfam is also where Tom discovered an old American prayer book dedicated to a Miss Clementina Dorrington, in Brooklyn. We loved the name so much that Clementina became one of our characters in *Traces*.

A blog on our website titled [“The Little Wonders of Writing”](#) will give you the full story.

- **Expect to be surprised!**

In October 2017, photographer and newsreader Sacha de Boer participated in ‘Verborgen Verleden’ (Hidden Past) the Dutch equivalent of the BBC television program ‘Who Do You Think You Are’. While Sacha knew about Scottish roots running in the family; it was surprising to find her lineage could be traced back all the way to the first King of Scotland, Robert de Bruce. You might think discoveries like these only happen to other people, but then you might well be wrong!

Family research told Tom McKerley (next to discovering he is actually Irish) about a murder in his family only as recent as 1987, all the details of forgery, theft and jealousy included.

Ingrid Schippers discovered her great-great-great-grandmother, Huiberdina Schippers; single mother to her only child Huibert Schippers, was working as a servant to Dutch King William II, who was notorious, in fact almost went bankrupt because of keeping a special staff to satisfy his certain needs.

**All in all one might say:**

*The truth of Genealogy can indeed be stranger than fiction.  
It has the potential to contain plots one could never predict.*

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