

## Ancestors of Janet McIntosh

With the exception of the entry below, taken from the 1841 census, nothing is known about Janet's early life or her ancestors.

1841 census Blairgowrie 335 bk. 1 pg. 7

				born in the county? (y or n)
Blackcraig				
McIntosh	Janet	26	hand loom weaver	y
Young	Ann	9mo.		y
Young	Henry	15		y

The 1841 census, of course, does not give the relationship of the people to the head of the house. From the 1851 census we know that Ann is Jessie's daughter and from the O.P.R. in 1855 we know that she was illegitimate but we have no similar information about Henry Young. Could he be Ann's father? Ages of those over ten in the census were meant to be rounded down to the nearest five years so Henry might have been as old as nineteen although the enumerator in this district was not consistent in the rounding down process. For example, Janet's age was not rounded and in many of the surrounding homes he rounded some ages and not others.

A few lines above and in the same building but not the same household, we have:

McIntosh	Robert	55	farmer	y
McIntosh	Margaret S.	45		y
McIntosh	Robert	15		y
McIntosh	Jean	14		y
McIntosh	John	10		y
McIntosh	Ann	25	hand loom weaver	y
Soutar	Peter	5		y

There is just a possibility that this is Jessie's family

Like the rest of Scotland, Blairgowrie was dominated at this time by handloom weaving (a figure of 84,000 weavers has been suggested for the whole of Scotland in 1838). Throughout the last few years of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, handloom weavers were plagued by frequent bouts of unemployment. The parliamentary Select Committee on Hand Loom Weavers, 1834, took evidence from one James McEwan, a weaver from Perth who assessed the wage necessary to support a wife and two children at nine shillings and three pence. This covered the purchase of two and a half pecks of oatmeal, three and a half pounds of barley, three and a half pounds of beef, as well as vegetables, milk, and house rent but allowed nothing for bread, drink, tea, sugar, tobacco, medicine or clothing. (A peck was about 9 litres and three and a half pounds about 1.75 kg.)

The average weekly earnings for a weaver at the time were:

Age under 16 years	5s 9d
Age between 16 and 55	8s 9d
Age over 55	6s 0d

From each of these had to be deducted the 1s 0d cost of hiring the loom from a merchant for use in the home.