

Finlay Ferguson and Betty Baxter

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The only source where anything has been found is the Old Parish Registers and the information therein is sparse. One interesting point, however is the marriage of John's parents'. This appears in the Parish of Inchtute in Perthshire where in 1786 we see Finlay Ferguson and his wife Elizabeth (or Betty) Baxter being summonsed before the Session and questioned about their marriage. The record of this meeting is:

“Finlay Ferguson and Elizabeth Baxter produced a certificate that they were married in Edinburgh the 25th September in a clandestine manner and were declared married persons in the presence of the session. This Edinburgh marriage is not recorded in I.G.I., O.P.R.I. or the Edinburgh Register of Marriages and the term “clandestine” may simply mean that they had been married in one of the churches which had broken away from the Church of Scotland, usually over the issue of patronage. The fact that they could produce a certificate makes this the most likely explanation. Other, perfectly legal, marriages existed in Scotland at that time, and for long after. One example is “Habit and Repute” – the reputation of being married along with cohabitation. Another is “handfasting” – a contract of marriage made by a symbolic joining of hands. Each of these constitutes an irregular marriage but no certificate would be available.

All facts are summed up in the Family Tree supplemented by the Extracts from OPR's shown below.

OPR Perthshire, Perth. 13 May 1792. Was born John Ferguson, lawful son to Finlay Ferguson, quarrier, Perth and Betty Baxter his spouse and bapt. 13th May by the Rev. Mr Thomas Murray minister of the gospel in Perth.

O.P.R. Perthshire, Perth. M 13 Dec 1765 William Baxter and Janet Neathsmith both this parish. Pat Craigie, elder. Married Decr. 13 by John Jarvie minr. of Associate Congregation Perth Nov. 16.

OPR Perthshire, Perth. Fr 1545 Betty Baxter lawfully procreated betwixt William Baxter, heelmaker, and Janet Naismith his spouse baptised November 3rd 1770 by Mr Wilkie..

(A heelmaker seems to have been just that, a maker of heels for shoes, probably out of cork).