

Untangling Smiths

A Little Background

I have been researching for a number of months Major Peter Grant c.1770-1818 of the Gordon Highlanders. He appears as the father of my cousin's great grandmother Mrs Ann Hay née Grant in her Scottish death record based on information provided by her husband. The only tricky problem I have with this is that Ann seems to have been born a year after the Major died.

There is no baptism record that I can find to link Ann with the parents recorded in her death record. Her marriage to Thomas Hay took place before registrations began in 1855 and therefore, we only have the parish record and no parents' names were recorded in that.

Ann Hay had a number of children including one named Peter Grant Hay so this supports but by no means proves that her father may have been named Peter. In researching his history, I discovered that he had a number of sisters and it's one of those sisters and the rather confusing presentation of her children and grandchildren that is the subject of this paper.

The sisters reference was in a newspaper article written in 1952 by the Minister in charge of the Parish Church at Kirkmichael in which he recounted stories of Major Peter Grant and his family from 150 years earlier. He suggested that as well as Peter and a brother (that I already knew of), there were a series of Grant sisters who looked after the family farm with their parents while Peter and his brother went off soldiering. (Alas no mention of Peter having children)

As luck would have it in the grave next to the Major there are four Grant females, three which I've been able to determine were all single women who survived into the mid-1800s and I am pretty confident were sisters of Major Grant. The last of these was Miss Grace Grant buried in 1862 and the address given for her death enabled me to find the census record in 1861 where she was living with a nephew named David Smith and, also in the household that night, was David's mother Ann Smith who I now know had the maiden name Grant - and was yet another sister of Major Peter's. This paper is about those Smiths, rather than the Grants.

Mrs Smith, another Grant Sister

Ann Grant born circa 1795 married a David Smith b.1780 at Knockando, Morayshire (as was) in 1826. She was David's second wife and identifying their children was reasonably easy drawing on the baptism records of the Parish. I believe David's children from both wives to be -

David Smith mar (1) May Smith at Knockando 5 Sep 1815

- Margaret baptised at Knockando 9 Dec 1817

mar (2) Anne Grant at Knockando 9 Feb 1826

- Grace b. 30 Dec 1826 baptised at Knockando 11 Jan 1827
- Jane b.24 May 1828 baptised Knockando 28 May 1828
- William b.30 Nov 1829 baptised Knockando 8 Dec 1829
- David b.17 Nov 1834 baptised Knockando 29 Dec 1834

In addition to the above there was an Ann Smith born around 1832/3. Despite not being able to find a baptism record for this person her membership of the family is supported by subsequent census records and her death record where her parents are given as David Smith and Ann Grant.

On census night 1841 there was an Isabella Smith aged 24 with the family. I've not been able to find any other records for a person with this name and given that the age of 24 aligns with that of Margaret's, I am of the view that it's very likely that this is a record of Margaret and not another woman by the name of Isabella.

Whilst overall it was relatively uncomplicated determining the children; not so with the next generation.

In the house with David and Ann at Shian na Cannup¹, Knockado on census night 1841 were Margaret(Isabella) from David's first marriage and three from his marriage with Ann Grant; Jane (13), Ann (8) and David (5). William was not recorded and apart from his baptism record I've not been able to confidently identify any other records, so at this point I presume that he died sometime between his baptism in 1829 and the census in 1841. I've also not found a census record for Grace in 1841, she would have been 14½ at the time.

Smith Grandchild No.1 – 1851 Census

In 1851 on census night with David and Ann were Margaret (32), Ann (18), David (16) as well as a granddaughter Jane Finlay aged 4. Jane Fin[d]lay was born around 1847 and before statutory registrations started in 1855. I've not been able to find a baptism record for her however I believe she is the Jane Findlay who married John Young at Bushcrook in 1885. The marriage record gives her parents as John Findlay and Margaret Smith (deceased). I have therefore concluded Jane Findlay is the daughter of Margaret Smith, David Smith's daughter from his first wife, May.

1861 Census – It's getting Complicated

David Smith died in 1858. In the 1861 census David Jnr. is now the head of the house and on census night he was with his mother, as well as his sister Ann (28) along with three nieces, a nephew and a daughter. And, as I mentioned above, his aunt Grace Grant aged 77 who would die the following year and was buried at Kirkmichael in a grave with at least two sisters, and next to the plot where her brother Major Peter Grant was buried.

¹ There are numerous spellings of this, most often anglicised as Shian Knap. See bottom left of this 1874 map here <https://maps.nls.uk/view/74426749>

Starting with the daughter named Ann Smith, a one-year-old born in Knockando, I believe this is the Ann Farquharson born on 4 March 1860 at 'Ballandion' the daughter of Elspeth (Elsie) Farquharson. No father was recorded with the birth.

David Jnr. married the widow Mrs Marjory (May) Smith née Margach in 1869. In the 1871 census David's daughter Ann now aged 11 was with her grandmother. Her mother Elsie Farquharson was in her own mother's house at 'Ballindeen' on census night with her one-year-old son James Robertson, half-brother of 11yo Ann Smith.

Ann Farquharson/Smith b.1860 would become a domestic servant and in the 1881 census she was working for James and Eliza Hay at Monaughty in Alves. In the 1891 and 1901 censuses she was the servant of Alexander and Margaret Smith of Leitchiston, Rathven. She never married but did have two children.

Nieces and Nephews

David's nieces and nephew with him in 1861 were Jane Findlay, discussed above and Grace Grant aged 4 and Thomas Cumming aged 3. Both born after 1855 and so both should have birth registrations.

Grace Grant, I believe is the Grace Smith born at Shian na Cannup on 10 October 1856, mother Jane Smith, father unrecorded. I presume her father was a Grant which is why she went by that surname. When Grace married John Smith at Knockando in 1874 her father was recorded as William Grant, a crofter. She died aged just 17 in the same year she married and just weeks after giving birth to a boy.

Thomas Cumming was born 31 January 1858 at Shian na Cannup, Knockando. His mother was Ann Smith and his name in the register is Thomas Smith, no father was recorded. On 21 October 1862 the Sherriff-Substitute of Ross & Cromarty found that John Cumming, a gamekeeper of Allan, Parish of Fearn was Thomas' father. When Thomas married Elspeth McRae at Kinloss in 1883 he used the name Smith, and no name was recorded for his father. Though it is interesting to note Thomas had himself become a gamekeeper.

1871 – 3 more in the mix

In the 1871 census the widow Mrs Ann Smith was now head of the house at Shian na Cannup. Her daughter Ann is again living with her as are Grace Grant now 14, Thomas Cumming, 13 and Ann (Farquharson) Smith, 11 years old. And now there are another 3 grandchildren: Charles Smith (8), Jessie Donald (8) and Isabella Donald (6).

Charles was recorded as born in Knockando, but he was not strictly speaking Mrs Smith's grandson. As mentioned above David Jnr. married in 1869. His wife May Margach had married before to a William Smith in 1853. William was 25 years older than May and it seems to me not directly related to David Smith senior, father of the above family. The 2 certainly had different parents.

Charles was born 1863, ten years after his parents married and possibly their only child. Charles' father William Smith born 1802 died in 1864. His mother remarried in 1869 to David Smith Jnr. seven years younger than her. In the 1871 census Charles was with his step-grandmother (and stepsister Ann) at Shiann a Cannup.

Charles' mother was with her new husband (David Smith Jnr.) in the 1871 census in a house at Lochin with their 'two' new children, 'John' aged 3 and 'Mary' 6 months. This needs a little unpicking.

David and May did have a daughter born 1 Oct 1870 named May not Mary. They also had a son named John Allan Smith born in 1869 but he died after a few weeks, long before the 1871 census was taken.

The 3-year-old daughter in the 1871 census, name transcribed as 'John', was not the child of David and May. This girl was in fact Helen Smith a twin born, along with her sister Ann, at Shian na Cannup in 1867, the daughters of Jane Smith and John Margach. Jane was David Smith Jnr.'s sister. However, I don't believe the father John Margach was closely related to David's wife May Margach. Little Ann Smith died at 3 months. In 1881 Helen was with her father on census night and went by the name Margach not Smith.

Donalds or McDonalds?

Mrs Ann Smith's other two new grand children with her on census night 1871, Jessie and Isabella Donald, were as their names suggest sisters but, which Smith child did they hail from?

Jessie was born Jane Smith or McDonald (not Donald) at Knockando in 1862 the daughter of Ann Smith and Charles McDonald. Isabella was born Isabella Cumming 'Smith or McDonald' same parents, same place in 1864. This makes them half sisters of Thomas 'Smith or Cumming'. I think the use of the name Cumming for Isabella's middle name is a reference to Charles' mother's maiden name and not the father of Ann Jnr.'s first child Thomas. Despite having two daughters with Ann Smith born circa 1832 Charles McDonald would marry another woman in 1866.

I can't find any further census records for Mrs Ann Smith suggesting she died some time before 1881. Frustratingly though, nor can I find a death registration which I hoped would provide the names of her parents and confirm she was from the same family as the Grant's buried at Kirkmichael.

And finally

There is just one last set of Smith grandchildren. Margaret, after having Jane in 1847 with John Findlay married a James Stewart in 1851 with whom she had a further 5 children.

So, in summary the grandchildren of David Smith 1780-1858 are as follows.

David Smith mar (1) May Smith

- Margaret b. circa 1817
 - Jane Findlay 1847-1911
 - Ann Stewart 1852-1930
 - Peter Stewart 1853-1921
 - Grace Stewart b.1855
 - David Stewart b.1857
 - Margaret Stewart b.1860

mar (2) Anne Grant

- Grace b. 30 Dec 1826 mar Thomas Johnstone
 - no issue
- Jane b.24 May 1828
 - Grace Grant 1856-1874
 - Helen Smith/Margach 1867-1953
 - Ann Smith/Margach 1867-1867
- William b.30 Nov 1829
- Ann b. circa 1832
 - Thomas Smith/Cumming b.1858
 - Jane Smith/McDonald 1862-1894
 - Isabella C Smith/McDonald 1864-1958
- David b.17 Nov 1834
 - Ann Farquharson/Smith b.1860
 - John A Smith 1869-1869
 - May Smith 1870-1899

Please feel free to contact me if there are any errors in the above. As ever I am grateful for all those who share their research findings on Ancestry.com and elsewhere on the web.

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