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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

Change and Transition in a Professional Scots Family 1650-1900

Cook, Diana Helen

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Diana Helen Cook

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Change and Transition in a Professional Scots Family 1650 -1900

Diana Helen Cook

Master of Philosophy
University of Dundee
July 2013

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I am indebted to all family members, past and present; this study was only possible because of them.

Signed Declaration

I declare that I, Diana Helen Cook, am the author of this thesis. Unless otherwise stated, all the references cited have been consulted by myself, that the work of which the thesis is a record has been done by myself, and that it has not been previously accepted for a higher degree.

Signed

Summary

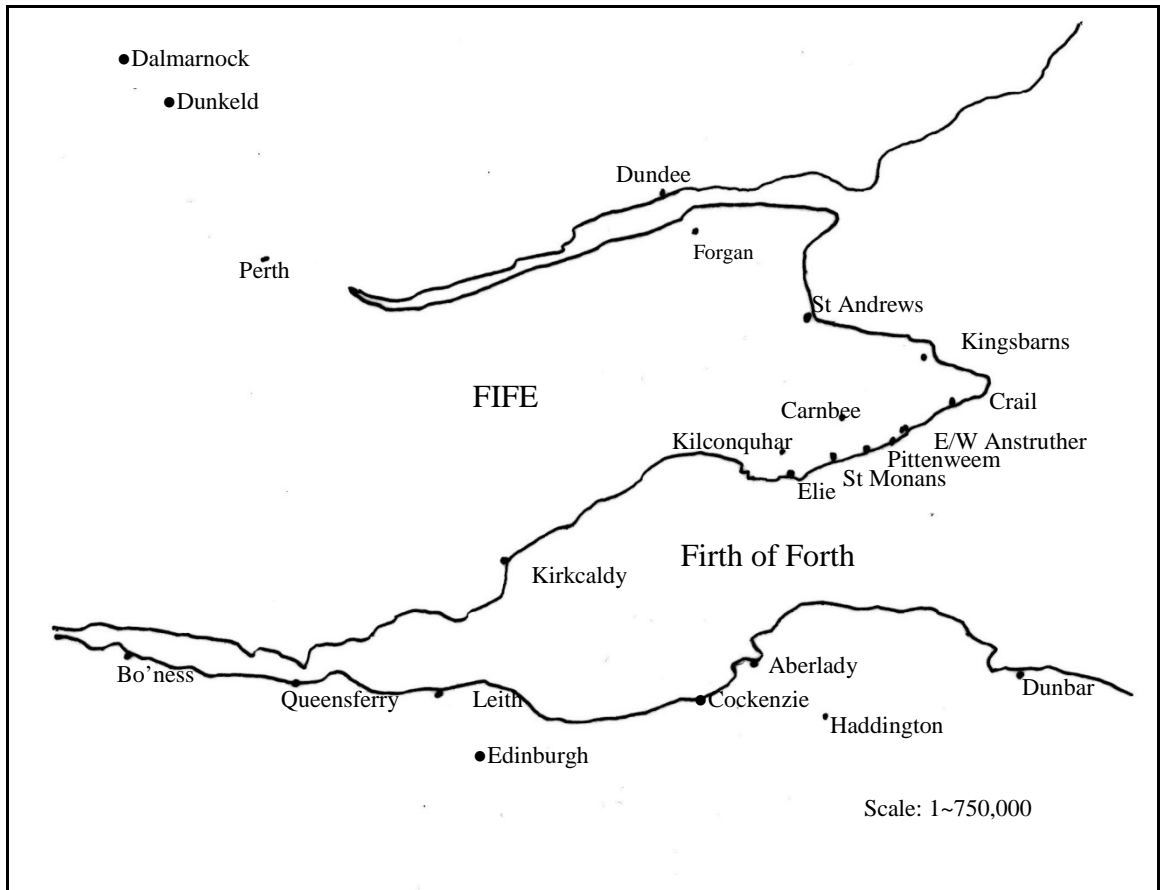
This study examined the evolution of a family from their foundations as well-placed and successful burgesses and merchants-skipper in seventeenth century coastal Fife to professionals in Scotland and the British Empire. Whilst the necessary generalisations around much of the writing of Scottish history usually refer to the particular as a source of illustration, the methodology of this study reversed that focus and linked the family experience to the high level narrative.

The research examined what factors drove the significant changes in family occupations and found that whilst family decisions were influenced by the prevailing economic, social, and political environment, personal choice and intangible benefits could be the deciding factors. Many professional family members migrated within Scotland or as temporary 'sojourners' in the British Empire, driven by the 'push' from the lack of appropriate opportunities at home balanced by the 'pull' of better earnings elsewhere. The family was generally successful in accessing the patronage that was essential to obtaining appropriate employment in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

In the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the women of the family were agents of change. Girls from merchant backgrounds began to marry professional men, making it easier for their menfolk to enter new occupations by creating contacts and role models. Whilst by the mid-nineteenth century, some of the women were fully engaged with the British Empire through their husbands' employment, for others the empire was of minor significance as they pursued their goals of higher education for women.

Although the families enjoyed a relatively comfortable lifestyle, they suffered, like their contemporaries, significant early mortality amongst both adults and children and used family networks and re-marriage to look after under-age children. As the families increasingly became involved in the British Empire, they, like many Scots, managed a dual identity as both Scots and citizens of the British Empire. Their strong religious beliefs reflected the norms of Scottish society and sat quite comfortably with the value they placed on establishing social status, respectability, and achieving upward social mobility. Overall they were broadly representative of contemporary Scots families of similar occupation and social background and thus provide a more personal insight into Scottish history.

Map of eastern Scotland showing places relevant to the study



Introduction

Whilst there is academic literature on the generic history of the family in Europe at the macro level and considerable interest in individuals researching their genealogy at the micro level, there are no known studies that aim to analyse the history of individual related professional Scottish families within the context of the contemporary Scottish and British history.¹ The period of this study saw Scotland's economy transformed from subsistence agriculture, minimal manufacturing, and the export of primary products to the export of sophisticated technological goods world-wide underpinned by an efficient, modern agriculture. The process was accompanied by an increase in population from around 1.265 million in 1755 to 4.472 million in 1901 with the attendant upheavals in where people lived and what they did for a living.² For educated families with aspirations, the changes brought an expansion in demand for their talents and abilities, initially at home, and increasingly, opportunities within the British Empire.

The professional classes in Scotland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were a very small percentage of the total Scottish population. Christopher Whatley estimated that in the mid-eighteenth century, the middle classes, of which professional people were a subset, accounted for 'only 10-15% of the population of some towns'.³ By 1867 Dudley Baxter assessed there were 4,100 'productive persons' in Scotland who earned between £1,000 and £5,000 per annum with a further 13,900

¹ This study was partly inspired by the possession of a modest family archive in which a late Victorian genealogy of the family of Cook formed the core document. Appendix 1 contains an outline family tree and appendix 2 describes the family archive's contents and provenance.

² T.C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People 1560-1830* (London, 1969), 241 and B. R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1988), 8-9.

³ Christopher A. Whatley, *Scottish Society 1707-1830* (Manchester, 2000), 133.

on 'middle incomes' from £300-£1,000.⁴ Tom Devine interpreted these two groups in Baxter's statistics to represent 'the prosperous middle classes ... from highly paid professionals to small businessmen' and it was to these ranks that the Cook families belonged.⁵

A detailed study of a group of related professional families would add to the understanding of how the professional classes grew in Scotland and the manner in which transitions were made from other occupations. Exploring what tactics were employed to make that transition and once achieved, elucidating whether the changes were maintained or not, might inform on aspects of social mobility and the beliefs and values associated with such mobility. John MacKenzie and Devine argued for further research on the 'Scottish contribution to professionalization both within the British state and the empire', pointing out that the 'professional bourgeoisie' supplanted 'much of the power and influence' previously the prerogative of the 'landed aristocracy and gentry'.⁶ Thus professional families may have formed a tiny proportion of the Scottish population, but they were in a potentially powerful position to shape Scotland's transformation from a relatively poor independent nation to a highly industrialised partner in the British Empire.

Three key aspects of the Cook families formed the research imperatives for this study. Firstly, it sought to identify the factors that drove significant changes in family occupations, for instance the initial move from merchant skippers into the professions. It sought to explore the extent to which such changes were the result of proactive

⁴ R. Dudley Baxter, *National Income. The United Kingdom*. (London, 1868), 56.

⁵ T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000* (London, 1999), 262. The population of Scotland in 1861 was 3.062 million, from which it can be inferred that the higher earners of these two groups: the 'highly paid professionals' were only some 0.13% of the total population (Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, 8-9).

⁶ John M. MacKenzie and T. M. Devine, *Scotland and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2011), 19.

choices or whether they were more evolutionary and/or a reaction to external circumstances. Secondly, it sought to elucidate family identities, values, and beliefs, in order to understand what was important to them and how their view of the world influenced the manner in which they conducted their lives and the decisions they made. The third component ran in parallel throughout the study: revealing the role of the largely forgotten half of the family, the womenfolk. Although no women in the Cook families entered the professions in their own right until the final decades of the nineteenth century, their contributions to family changes should be equally explored and evaluated. The apparent discontinuities and changes in the family's activities and practices were studied more than generations who broadly retained similar professional occupations.

Chapter one reviews the relevant literature concerning the history of the family. It also establishes the methodology and identifies three main approaches to the history of the family: demographic, sentiments, and that of the household's economics. These approaches will be used to structure the study and demonstrate different facets of family life.

Chapter two explores the history of the Cook family in the latter half of the seventeenth century predominantly using a household economics historical approach and from the perspective of the menfolk of the family. It examines the strategies and resources used by the family to survive and prosper within the contemporary political, economic, and social contexts. It traces how the family emerged as merchant skippers in the Fife coastal burghs where they were well-positioned in the burgh trading and political structure. Their trading voyages around the North Sea, Baltic, and south to the Mediterranean establish how they ran their business, their attitude to business risk

and how they adapted to changing economic and political circumstances. With the removal of the Stuart monarchy in 1689, it is clear that the family were staunch supporters of a presbyterian settlement and, whilst this did not mark them out as different from their fellow citizens, it set the scene for a long and vigorous family association with the Church of Scotland. Overall it evokes a picture of a family living in comfortable circumstances with a high social position in their community and with a close supportive family network.

Chapter three also uses a household economics historical approach to investigate the family's change and transition from merchant skippers to the professions. Whilst some family members continued in their traditional occupations, the first family member to become a professional, Robert Cook, qualified as an advocate in 1677 which would have been a highly unusual move for the son of a burgh shipmaster at that time. The change did not appear to have been an easy one for this individual: he had difficulty penetrating the centre of legal activity (Edinburgh) to get work, some of his family and business relationships turned sour and he had financial problems. The transition to professional occupations was completed in the next generation when an only surviving son, John, became a Church of Scotland minister in 1734. The analysis suggests that personal choice and intangible social benefits were probably as, if not more, important than external political and economic circumstances in influencing the family decision not to continue as merchants and shipmasters.⁷

Chapter four examines how young men like John Cook became ministers in the Church of Scotland in the first half of the eighteenth century and what parish life might

⁷ Examples of such events are the Union of the Parliaments in 1707 and the shift of trade from east to west coast burghs.

have been like for rural ministers at a time when the Kirk was still integral to the functioning of small communities in education and poor relief as well as religious matters. From the family's professional foothold in the Kirk ministry, the narrative then traces the movement of subsequent generations into academia and other professions. It explores the family's level of success in utilising the power and patronage networks essential to obtaining professional employment in later eighteenth and early nineteenth century Scotland particularly through family connections with Henry Dundas, generally regarded as the most powerful man in Scottish politics in the latter part of this period. It thus represents a further use of the household economics historical approach.

Whilst earlier chapters examine the history of the Cook family from the perspective of the menfolk and economics, Chapter five examines a similar period from the perspective of the womenfolk and family issues. The historical approach used in this chapter rests more on the sentiments and demographic approaches and the analysis seeks to understand what life might have been like at the family level for the women and men who sought to bring up families and survive and prosper. The chapter explores family marriage practices in a period when marriage was as much about economic as romantic considerations and amongst these families there are clear indications of both aspects. There are examples where the women of the family had a significant input into the economics of family life through their husband's work as the family home also formed part of the workplace. Whilst the Cook families were relatively well-off, they too suffered high mortality rates across all family members. What happened to orphans and whether a parent remarried after the loss of a spouse gives some indications of family strategies for coping with these disastrous events.

Chapter six examines the relationship of the Cook families to the British Empire in the nineteenth century. Whilst nobody in the Cook families in this study chose permanent emigration within the empire, many earned their living through the empire, particularly one family where all five sons had almost exclusively military careers. Household economic and demographic historical approaches have been used to investigate which social, economic, and political events might have influenced this family's choices and what this might reveal about their sense of identity. This male focus has been balanced by an examination of the nature and extent of the Victorian Cook women's interaction with the empire. This varied from those whose lives were intimately bound up with the empire through their husbands' employment to those for whom the empire was largely incidental as they pursued their aspirations for full access to tertiary education for women of their background. It extends the understanding of what the women of the family achieved in their own right, rather than as adjuncts to the men.

Whilst some individuals within the Cook families had some remarkable achievements, they were, like most families, unremarkable, conducting their lives like many others of their background and times. Their lives provide the detail to the way in which many of the principal events in Scottish social, economic, and religious history were experienced by ordinary families of their class and aspirations. It is through exploring the personal and every day that this study aims to deepen the understanding of professional Scottish families and provide an alternative viewpoint to the high level narratives that form a major part of much of the writing on Scottish history.

Chapter 1 Literature review and methodology

From an academic perspective the terms ‘history of the family’ and ‘family history’ concern the study of the family through history: its evolution, form and practices and how it interacts with its contemporary political, economic, and wider social dimensions. The populist understanding of the term ‘family history’ is more precisely termed genealogy: ‘the direct descent of an individual or group from an ancestor’.¹ The ‘history of the family’ and genealogy are interconnected and each informs the other. The study of individual families provides the detail that contributes to the understanding of the whole whilst an appreciation, for instance, of family demographics can add context to the genealogy.

Literature review

Numerous popular works such as that by Alwyn James are aimed at assisting amateur genealogists trace their ancestors, construct a family tree, and establish some basic facts about their family background.² Whilst these works may be invaluable for their intended market, they are not appropriate for academic research. David Moody takes amateur genealogy one step further by suggesting approaches that could be used to broaden the investigation by, for instance, taking account of principal historical events.³ Rosemary Bigwood however offers a more thorough semi-academic approach to genealogical research from a Scottish perspective. The author guides the reader through primary sources, research strategies and offers an accessible description in layman’s terms of complex legal sources.⁴ The National Archives for Scotland provide

¹ *Collins Dictionary of the English Language*, (London, 1979), 605.

² Alwyn James, *Scottish Roots: from gravestone to website* (Edinburgh, 2002).

³ David Moody, *Scottish Family History* (London, 1988).

⁴ Rosemary Bigwood, *The Scottish Family Tree Detective* (Manchester, 2006).

an authoritative guide to documents relevant to family historians.⁵ Published genealogies often contain anecdotal evidence that can add richness to the straightforward genealogical data of the individual families though such sources have to be treated with caution.⁶ A detailed study of Cook's text revealed much that the author left out in order to present a gratifying account to his Victorian audience and one that matched the contemporary view of societal norms.⁷ On the other hand anecdotal evidence from such sources cannot be dismissed as it was often written some 100 years ago and in some respects is a version of oral tradition. Studies of particular localities, for instance the East Neuk of Fife, also contain considerable information on local family histories.⁸ Keith Middlemas's work provides a rare example where a largely genealogical study has been combined with some elements of a history of the family. His narrative on a Scottish Border family included some pertinent analysis on the strategies the families used to survive and make transitions at key points.⁹

Both Michael Anderson and Eleanor Gordon argued that the history of the family was complex. The form of the family varies across nation and region, between

⁵ National Archives of Scotland *Tracing your Scottish Ancestors: The Official Guide*, 5th edition (Edinburgh, 2009).

⁶ See for instance Edward G. Weaving compiled, *Genealogical Memoranda relating to the Family of Schank or Shank of Castlerig in the County of Fife* (London privately printed, 1885), "C.C." [Charles Cook], *Genealogical Notes on the Family of Cook* (Edinburgh printed for private circulation, 1891), Elizabeth Rodger, *A Book of Remembrance: the descendants of the Rev. George Hill* (Glasgow Printed for private circulation, 1913), James Arnott, *The House of Arnot* (Edinburgh, 1918) and Thomas Willing Stirling, *The Stirlings of Cadder* (St Andrews, 1933).

⁷ Cook's references to the women of the family are a good example. Whereas the menfolk were numbered in strict primogeniture order, their occupations and achievements catalogued, the womenfolk were known solely by their relationship to their fathers and husbands. This was despite the fact that he would have known far more about the achievements of his contemporary female relatives.

⁸ Walter Wood, *East Neuk of Fife: its history and antiquities, geology, botany and natural history in general* (Edinburgh, 1862).

⁹ Keith Middlemas, *Kinship and Survival: The Middlemas Name through 600 Years* (Glasgow, 2009).

classes and time periods.¹⁰ Scotland retained its different legal system and a different form of the Protestant religion with its related commitment to education after the Union of the Parliaments. Rab Houston and Ian Whyte argued that in contrast to Scotland, in England 'kinship was unimportant as an organising principle in economic and social relations'. Kinship in Scotland is agnatic, based on descent from a common male ancestor whereas English kinship is cognatic, based on descent from both sides of the family.¹¹ Furthermore the English yeoman had no real equivalent in seventeenth century Scotland and the profile of the 1690 Scottish hearth tax was 'more reminiscent of 18th century Ireland than lowland arable England'.¹² Even within Scotland the history of the family was likely to be different between Highland and Lowland families because of differences in language, culture, and societal structure until around the turn of the twentieth century. Extrapolating studies of the history of the family from other parts of the United Kingdom to Scotland is thus likely to be valid only for comparative purposes. Similarly, the relevance of material on family issues for the Scottish nobility is restricted to that particular class and time period.¹³

Even though some works may have limited direct relevance to a study of the history of the family in Scotland between approximately 1650 and 1900, there are numerous texts that provide invaluable background to a broader understanding of the topic. By restricting the scope of such background material to Western Europe and a similar time period, it is possible to review appropriately. For example Jack Goody studied how the origins of European family and marriage from its earliest beginnings

¹⁰ Michael Anderson, *Approaches to the History of the Western Family 1500-1914* (Cambridge, 1995), 2 and Eleanor Gordon, 'The Family' in Lynn Abrams, Eleanor Gordon, Deborah Simonton and Eileen Janes (eds), *Gender in Scottish History since 1700* (Edinburgh, 2006), 235.

¹¹ Introduction in R. A. Houston and I. D. Whyte (eds), *Scottish Society 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 1989), 21.

¹² Houston and Whyte, *Scottish Society*, 10.

¹³ Keith M. Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland: Wealth, Family and Culture from Reformation to Revolution* (Edinburgh, 2004), chapter 5.

influenced its later developments. He compared his analysis with the more usual approach that looked backwards as it tried to interpret the family's involvement in major events such as the industrial revolution.¹⁴

Gordon argued that there was 'no dominant narrative of the history of the family in Scotland' with much of the material contained within other works.¹⁵ For the early-modern period Patricia Dennison and Margaret Sanderson's work provides background material on rural and urban society whilst Smout gives, for instance, a more detailed overview of the various strata of burgh society.¹⁶ Post 1707, Whatley offers good coverage of the early period of the Scottish working class, Smout supplies views on 'sex, love and getting married' and aspects of recreation, whilst Devine devotes a chapter specifically to Scottish women and family issues in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁷ Billy Kenefick and Arthur Mclvor provide useful chapters on demographics and 'women and gender relations'.¹⁸ In all these standard texts there is much else of relevance but scattered throughout narratives written primarily from a political, economic, and/or sociological perspective rather than that of the study of the history of the family. The family issues are the incidentals rather than the focus.

¹⁴ Jack Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge, 1983).

¹⁵ Gordon, *Gender*, 235.

¹⁶ E. Patricia Dennison and Margaret H. B. Sanderson in Bob Harris and Alan R. MacDonald (eds), *Scotland: The Making and Unmaking of the Nation c.1100-1707*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 2007), chapters 9 and 10 respectively and Smout, *History 1560-1830*, chapter 7.

¹⁷ Whatley, *Scottish Society*, T. C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People 1950-1830* (London, 1986), chapters 6 and 7 and Devine, *Scottish Nation*, chapter 22.

¹⁸ Billy Kenefick and Arthur Mclvor in Cooke *et al*, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 2, chapters 18 and 21 respectively.

Approaches to the history of the family

Whilst the content of research that is not specifically Scottish may not be of direct relevance, the different approaches used by authors are pertinent. Anderson identified three main approaches to the history of the Western family:

Demographic: uses quantitative techniques to analyse data on matters such as birth and death rates, trends in population statistics

Sentiments: examines the 'soft' issues associated with family behaviour such as changes in attitudes to conjugal love or child rearing practices.

Household economics: studies the strategies and resources used by families to survive in their contemporary economic and political context

The arguments against the use of a demographic approach centre on the problems associated with incomplete primary data, poor use of statistics, and drawing inappropriate conclusions, particularly where the author has assumed that his/her value judgments were appropriate to past societies.¹⁹ However, demographic summaries such as Kenefick's on the trends in Scottish fertility, mortality, and population movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century provide essential background to understanding the major social and economic changes that Scotland underwent in that period.²⁰ Similarly Leah Leneman and Rosalind Mitchison provide a balanced review of Scottish illegitimacy ratios by combining the use of a rigorously defined primary data set with an open-minded interpretation of the findings which do not assume simplistic cause and effect relationships. For instance the authors stated that there was 'no reason to associate the areas of relatively high illegitimacy in eighteenth-century Scotland with economic growth'.²¹ In contrast Gordon appeared

¹⁹ Anderson, *Approaches*, 4-24.

²⁰ Kenefick, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 2, 95-118.

²¹ L. Leneman and R. Mitchison, 'Scottish illegitimacy ratios in the early modern period' in Cooke *et al*, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 3, 94-122 and *ibid*, 114.

quite exasperated when she commented that from the work of demographic historians it would appear that ‘regions not people had babies’ reiterating the perception that demographic analyses can feel cold and impersonal.²²

Whilst demographic historians start with obvious sources of primary data such as parish registers or census returns, sentiments historians have to look across a wide range of primary sources to find evidence that might illuminate issues such as changes in approaches to the selection of marriage partners or the role of parenting.²³ Leonore Davidoff *et al* cited John Gillis’ study of the rituals and practices of British marriages as an example of the use of the sentiments historical approach.²⁴ Such studies can add richness to demographic statistics.

When Anderson updated his work concerning approaches to the history of the family, he noted that the sentiments approach had had ‘a greater infusion of feminist ideas’ in the update period from 1980 to 1994.²⁵ Gordon similarly argued that there was considerable overlap between family history and the history of gender and consequently some of the material relevant to the history of the family is contained within works more specifically aimed at women’s history.²⁶ For instance, Davidoff’s essays examined the minutiae of everyday life in an English context with a particular Victorian emphasis and established the principle that a history of who did the washing

²² Gordon, *Gender*, 236.

²³ Anderson, *Approaches*, 25-36.

²⁴ L. Davidoff, M. Doolittle, J. Fink and K. Holden, *The Family Story: Blood, Contract and Intimacy 1830-1960* (London, 1999), 44 and John Randall Gillis, *For Better for Worse: British Marriage 1600 to Present* (New York, 1988).

²⁵ Anderson, *Approaches*, 68-72.

²⁶ Gordon, *Gender*, 235.

up was as valid a perspective as the grander issues of politics and economics.²⁷ Megan

Doolittle summed up the differences between family and gender historians:

While historians of the family looked for strategies employed by families to cope with industrialisation and to challenge the harsh relations of the market, historians of women sought out struggles for recognition and equality...

Doolittle was thus arguing that 'historians of the family' concentrated on using a household economics approach. She also argued that research that addressed 'both family and gender [was] still limited', citing the work of Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall as one example.²⁸

Devine's analysis of the Scottish merchant community between 1680 and 1740 is a good example of a household economics approach to the history of the family. Devine provided a deep insight into the major influence that family networks had on the economic models and perpetuation of the burgh power structure in that period and demonstrated the strategies and resources that these merchant households used in order to prosper. Devine's work integrates family and economic issues, illustrating the interactions and iterations between the two.²⁹ Smout also covered elements of family behaviour of this particular class of Scottish society. Smout interpreted what other economic writers had dismissed as 'clannish' and 'conservative' behaviour more as an example of merchants being 'too poor to be bold' because they had access to insufficient capital resources to undertake risky ventures.³⁰

²⁷ Leonore Davidoff, *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class* (Cambridge, 1995).

²⁸ Megan Doolittle, 'Close relations? Bringing together gender and family in English history' in Davidoff, Leonore, McClelland, Keith and Varikas, Eleni (eds), *Gender and History: Prospect and Retrospect* (Oxford, 2000), 125, Doolittle, *Gender and History*, 131 and Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* revised edition (London, 2002).

²⁹ T. M. Devine, 'The Scottish Merchant community 1680-1740' in R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner (eds), *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1982), 26-37 and T. M. Devine, *Exploring the Scottish Past: Themes in the History of Scottish Society* (East Linton, 1995), 17-32.

³⁰ T. C. Smout, *Scottish Trade on the Eve of the Union 1660-1707* (Edinburgh, 1963), 78 and 80.

Ian Whyte and Kathleen Whyte's interpretation of the reasons underlying the geographical mobility of women in early-modern Scotland is an aspect of family household economics. The young daughters of cottars typically had to find work away from home and, as it was not generally acceptable for young girls to live independently, they commonly worked as either domestic or farm servants where they became part of the economy of another household. By the end of the eighteenth century, it became easier for young single women to set up their own homes and support themselves by activities such as yarn spinning. Whyte and Whyte also examined vagrancy as a cause of geographical mobility - the situation where the economy of the family has broken down completely.³¹ Whyte and Whyte's work also illustrates that the history of the family is not just confined to households consisting of parents and children. Approaching the history of the family through the economy of a household, however, makes it less easy to include the more intimate social dimensions.

Some authors provide studies whose content, whilst written principally using one approach to the history of the family, also contains elements of another. For instance Whyte and Whyte predominantly used a sentiments approach in a study of the issues surrounding the marriages of women to Church of Scotland ministers up to around 1800 in which they observed that family connections and geographical closeness were probably the principal ways that the couples met each other. However, they also used some aspects of demography in their quantification of the social origins

³¹ Ian D. Whyte and Kathleen A. Whyte, 'The Geographical mobility of women in early modern Scotland' in Leah Leneman, *Perspectives in Scottish Social History: Essays in honour of Rosalind Mitchison* (Aberdeen, 1988), 83-98.

of the ministers' wives.³² Similarly Gordon covered the role of women jute workers in Dundee where they were frequently the sole family breadwinners and the effect this had within both the family and the workplace, providing an example where a gendered approach has been overlaid with elements of household economics.³³

Other authors make use of all of Anderson's approaches. Gordon and Gwyneth Nair provide an example of a detailed study of middle-class women and their families in a Victorian Glasgow suburb and aim to impart 'the diversity of middle class women's lives, roles and identities'.³⁴ They demonstrated the use of a sentiments approach in their exploration of the notion of 'separate spheres' and concluded that whilst it had some relevance to understanding middle-class Victorian family life, it was not the whole picture.³⁵ The authors made frequent use of demographic data to establish their arguments, for instance in relation to the make-up of families but also explored the economic strategies used by single and widowed women when they formed households independent of men or were heads of households that also included adult men.³⁶ Gordon and Nair's work is another example of research that meets Doolittle's criterion for studies that examine 'both family and gender' and it also demonstrates that the distinctions between the approaches can be fluid, serving as a particular emphasis, rather than being proscriptively rigid.

³² Ian D. Whyte and Kathleen A. Whyte, 'Wed to the manse: the wives of Scottish ministers c.1560-1800' in Elizabeth Ewan and Maureen M. Meikle (eds), *Women in Scotland c.1100-1750* (East Linton, 1999), 221-9.

³³ Eleanor Gordon, 'Women and the labour movement in Scotland 1850-1914' in Cooke *et al*, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 4, 207-19.

³⁴ Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair, *Public Lives: Women, Family and Society in Victorian Britain* (London, 2003), 7.

³⁵ Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, 7. The 'separate spheres' paradigm used by Davidoff and Hall in *Family Fortunes* argued that women were largely confined to the private sphere of home and family and men to the public domain with little interaction between the two.

³⁶ Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, 34-46 and 167-98.

Anderson made the point that all the approaches have made significant contributions and should be used, adding that the differences are 'oversimplified'.³⁷ The methodology of this study will use the approach(es) most appropriate to the particular research question. Thus the narrative concerning the women of the family largely uses a sentiments approach whilst that concerning changes in occupation makes greater use of the household economics approach. Quantification and demographics underpin the whole narrative, providing context to the families' activities in relation to the population as a whole or to similar groups of people. Anderson's approaches will be combined with a more traditional political, economic, and social analysis which will be used to provide the historical context against which the family played out their lives.

³⁷ Anderson, *Approaches*, 3.

Chapter 2 Survival and prosperity in seventeenth century Fife

The Cook family had its foundations as burgesses in the royal burgh of Pittenweem. Whilst all burghs were communities which had been granted privileged trading rights by the Crown and some rights to govern themselves internally, only the royal burghs initially had the right to carry out foreign trade and be represented both in Parliament and at the Convention of Royal Burghs. Thus the royal burghs formed the more powerful communities in seventeenth century urban Scotland. Royal burgh society was hierarchical and rigidly structured. The merchant burgesses formed the elite and could trade but not carry out a craft whilst craftsmen burgesses were limited to carrying out their craft and trading what they had made. Only burgesses could take part in the election of burgh officials making non-burgesses merely inhabitants of the burgh. Unsurprisingly, admittance as a burgher was tightly controlled through entry to the merchant's guild or various craft guilds. Entry required a combination of financial payments, the appropriate apprenticeship, and usually membership of existing burgher families by birth or often through marriage.¹

In the earlier decades of the seventeenth century, Pittenweem was relatively prosperous, despite its small size. Its economy was based on exporting local agricultural products, fish, coal, and salt around the North Sea and the Baltic and importing timber, iron, wine, and manufactured goods. As well as importing to Fife ports, these goods might be taken to Leith or Dundee which offered larger markets than the Fife burghs and their 'sparsely populated' countryside.²

¹ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 146-50. Pittenweem became a royal burgh in 1541.

² Colin J. M. Martin, 'Seafaring and Trade in East Fife' in T. R. Lyszka and L. E. M. Walker (eds), *The North Sea World in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 2001), 166 and references to 'Jn. Cook's ship' importing wine, raisins etc. into Leith around 1669 (NAS, E72/15/9 and 10, Leith: Accounts (Customs) Imports and Accounts (Excise) Imports, 1668-1669). The Cook family in this study certainly exported from Leith (see note 22) so it is reasonable to propose that they may also have imported to Leith.

Foundations in Pittenweem

The family founder John was probably born in Pittenweem around 1620, the son of a Pittenweem burghess (see appendix 1 for family tree).³ He became a merchant burghess himself in 1648, shortly after his marriage to Christian Steinstoune/Stevenson.⁴ His wife's family name was also part of Pittenweem's privileged ruling elite: a William Stevenson, bailie, signed John's burghess ticket and was described in the burgh minutes as a merchant.⁵ John's name appeared continuously in various official capacities in both the town council and the Sea Box minutes throughout the period from about 1650 until his death in 1685.⁶ John was well-positioned at the pinnacle of the burgh power structure by virtue of his own family connections, his

³ This individual has been regarded as the progenitor of the core family for this study because he was the earliest member of the family whose identity can be fully authenticated. His Patent of Arms, first matriculated in 1675, was re-matriculated in 1876 by John Cook, father of Charles Cook (*Genealogical Notes* and GROS, Coats of Arms, 16th April 1675, vol. 1, 554 and 1st July 1876, vol. 10, 11). The re-matriculation process required documentary evidence to prove the ancestral connection and thus authenticated the core data in Cook's work (Sir Thomas Innes, *Scots Heraldry* (Edinburgh, 1956), 89).

⁴ Transcript burghess ticket for John Cuik, 9th September 1648, Cook, *Genealogical Notes*, Appendix xi and GROS, Pittenweem, marriage 19th August 1647. Although Christian Steinstoune did not appear on the genealogy attached to the 1876 re-matriculation, a William Stevensone was described as cousin german to the Cook father at the baptism of one of John's grandchildren (GROS, Pittenweem, baptism Christian Cook, 8th January 1686).

⁵ David Cook edited, *Annals of Pittenweem. Being notes and extracts from the ancient records of that burgh 1526-1793* (Anstruther, 1867), 46. Cook's *Annals* are mostly transcriptions of extracts from Pittenweem Town Council minutes plus a few earlier miscellaneous documents. David Cook (1831-1897) came from Pittenweem and spent his working life as a bank manager in Anstruther but was *not* related to the Cook families in this study (see chapter 3, note 69). However, Charles Cook referenced David Cook's work in his *Genealogical Notes* and it is quite possible that given their interests and backgrounds, the two men knew each other, as Charles Cook and his brother William had a summer house near Kennoway in Fife (about twenty-five km from Pittenweem) from about 1880 to 1922 (*The Edinburgh Academy Chronicle*, vol. 35, no. 5, June 1928 (Edinburgh, 1928), 91). The original Pittenweem Town Council records have also been consulted for this study. John Cook's and William Steinstoune's stent were amongst the highest recorded in 1658 (USASC, B60/6/1/1, Pittenweem Town minutes 1629-1727, January 1658). The stent was "the valuation of land or property as a basis for a person's rights or liability for tax" (*Dictionary of the Scots Language*, www.dsl.ac.uk accessed 23rd September 2010).

⁶ USASC, B3/7/4, Minute Book and Accounts of Pittenweem Sea Box Society 1633-1757. Sea Box societies were early examples of friendly societies which raised funds by, for example, taxing shipmasters each time they sailed, lending money on interest etc. The money was then used to help members in times of poverty and distress (*Resources for Learning in Scotland* available <http://www.rls.org.uk/database/record.php?usi=000-000-001-375-L> accessed 23rd September 2010). The Cooks were involved in running the Pittenweem Sea Box Society in the 1640s with Thomas and Frederick Cook appearing regularly. Thomas (died 1654) was most likely John's uncle and Frederick (died 1644), Thomas's eldest son. John appeared to have taken over from Thomas after his uncle's death, emphasising the hereditary nature of many of the burgh organising roles. If Frederick had survived, John might not have had such easy access to positions of power.

status as a merchant burgess rather than a craftsman and because he had married the daughter of a merchant burgess.

As John came to manhood, Pittenweem's comfortable prosperity came to an abrupt end with the depredations of the Covenanting movement and the Civil War.⁷ The Fife burghs supported the Covenanters, and the battle of Kilsyth in August 1645, won by the Royalists under Montrose, proved particularly calamitous for Pittenweem. The burgh was 'left destitute of men' with no means 'for helping the present indigencie of fourty-nine widows and ane hundredth and threttie [130] fatherless children', as well as an unquantified loss of single men.⁸ The burgh also suffered heavy material losses to its economic infrastructure with six ships either wrecked or being sold at considerably less than their real value because all the masters and crews were dead.⁹ Sibbald observed that 'most of the principal traders and shipmasters [on the Fife coast]... were engaged in that most disastrous enterprise' and further noted the long term adverse effects of 'the loss of the activity and wealth, and commercial and naval skill of its principal merchants and mariners'.¹⁰

Very few men from the Fife regiments survived the slaughter which suggests that for some reason John was one of the few who was not involved; he might have, fortuitously, been away at sea at the time.¹¹ It might be construed from the perspective of market economics that minimal local competition would be advantageous to the survivors. However, as Smout pointed out, 'thrusting competition

⁷ Martin, *North Sea World*, 170.

⁸ Cook, *Annals*, 55.

⁹ Cook, *Annals*, 54.

¹⁰ Robert Sibbald, *The History, Ancient and Modern, of the Sheriffdoms of Fife and Kinross*, 3rd Edition (London, 1803), 339-40.

¹¹ Cook (*Annals*, 55) described the three Fifeshire regiments as 'almost entirely annihilated' at Kilsyth whilst Smout stated that 'two generations of fisher captains and their boys from the prosperous little burghs of east Fife perished at the battle of Kilsyth' (*History 1560-1830*, 107).

was looked at askance by the merchant guild' and the reduction in potential for business partners and shared risk would be a weakness rather than a strength.¹²

Living still had to be made despite severely disrupted trading patterns and civil strife. In his introduction to his listings of seventeenth century East Neuk mariners, Dobson stated that 'several skippers were licensed as privateers to attack enemy vessels during periods of warfare'.¹³ John was one such skipper, obtaining a letter of marque from Charles II in 1650.¹⁴ To ensure he followed the remit of his commission, John had to provide £1,000 sterling up front as a bond - an enormous sum. Smout noted that most business ventures at that time were joint enterprises with no individual merchant able or willing to risk the initial investment on his own account.¹⁵ Some seventeen years later another Pittenweem captain, John Aitchison, future father-in-law of one of John's sons, also held letters of marque and his frigate was owned and fitted out by several members of the nobility. Graham commented on the 'relatively high costs' for such 'opportunist armed traders' that 'prohibited most from speculating in such ventures'. It would seem likely that a similar consortium funded John's earlier enterprise.¹⁶ The fact that John was one of the skippers able to obtain letters of marque suggests he held considerable status at the highest level in Scotland and was politically acceptable at state level. It implies his seafaring, warfare, and

¹² Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 157.

¹³ David Dobson, *The Mariners of St Andrews and the East Neuk of Fife, 1600-1700* (St Andrews, 1992), introduction.

¹⁴ Letters of marque are 'a licence granted by a state to a private citizen to arm a ship and seize merchant vessels of another nation' (*Collins Dictionary*, 844). Cook's transcript, dated 19th November 1650 at Perth, was signed by 'Lothian' (*Genealogical Notes*, appendix xii) and the authenticity of John's letters of marque can be corroborated indirectly from a draft letter entitled 'Directions to Holders of Letters of Marque' written at Perth by William, 3rd earl of Lothian, secretary to Charles II (NAS, GD40/12/35, 3rd October 1650). Unfortunately Lothian's letter contained no indications of who the skippers were. It is simply addressed 'Loving friend'.

¹⁵ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 157.

¹⁶ Eric J. Graham, *A Maritime History of Scotland 1650-1790* (East Linton, 2002), 20-23.

merchant skills were held in high regard and he was viewed as someone who was likely to give a good return on a significant financial investment.

Pittenweem's period of economic impoverishment continued until the Restoration, to the extent that John was one of the bailies in September 1659 who refused to accept office because of the burgh's destitution and by implication it would have meant taxing a population who could not pay. Pittenweem had no town council until February 1661 when the bailies accepted their offices back.¹⁷ Thereafter Pittenweem's economy experienced a slow recovery to its 'former prosperity'.¹⁸ Indeed Smout asserted that the 1670s had something of a 'commercial boom' with 'an exceptional participation in the carrying trade'.¹⁹

Graham noted for the same period that the 'Southern European trades offered the best prospect for high value-added trading' and John took early advantage of these opportunities.²⁰ Over a period of several weeks in the autumn of 1667 John and three other Forth skippers were loading their ships in Leith with a variety of goods bound for Tangier.²¹ John took on board the *James of Pittenweem* a mixed cargo including wheat, salmon, tallow, and iron from five different merchants.²² Graham described this 'armed venture' as 'an adventurous undertaking' and 'an impressive piece of opportunism', but related John's opportunism to Admiral Blake's successful actions around 1654 against the Barbary pirates.²³ However, the pirates were active again by 1661 and it seems more likely that the opportunism was related principally to the

¹⁷ Cook, *Annals*, 83.

¹⁸ Martin, *North Sea World*, 170.

¹⁹ Smout, *Scottish Trade*, 241.

²⁰ Graham, *Maritime History*, 30.

²¹ Charles II had acquired Tangier in 1662 as part of his Queen's dowry (G. M. Marcus, *A Naval History of England (1) The Formative Centuries* (London, 1961), 177).

²² NAS, E72/15/6, Leith Customs Books 1666-67.

²³ Graham, *Maritime History*, 144.

conclusion of the Second Dutch War in August 1667 and on-going attempts to defend British trading interests in the area against pirates thus reducing the risk of capture.²⁴ John also went to Cadiz in 1672.²⁵ These voyages demonstrate that both skippers and merchants were prepared to take considerable risks for new markets and high profitability ventures. Although Smout regarded 1680-88 as 'definitely less prosperous', he did not feel that it was a general recession.²⁶ Pittenweem, however, was citing poverty and losses of some of its magistrates at sea to the Privy Council in 1682 as a reason for a reduced tax liability.²⁷ However, John and his son James must have felt reasonably sure of finding markets for the luxury goods they had just imported, for in 1682 they were sorting out paying customs duty on 'fyve tunes of French wyne' stored in Kirkcaldy Customs.²⁸

John probably made his money in the relative boom years of the 1670s so that by the time of his death, aged about sixty-five, in March 1685, he was comfortably off: his 'free gear' or net worth amounted to some £1,880 Scots (£157 sterling) before tax.²⁹ The relative value of this sum adjusted by the retail price index (RPI) up to 2011 is around £21,800 or, using average earnings, around £276,000.³⁰ Any financial statement is necessarily a snapshot in time rather than representative of how John conducted his merchant business. However, it is possible to learn something of his

²⁴ Graham recorded several Forth skippers though not John Cook with letters of marque during the Second Dutch War of 1666-67 including one of John's close associates, John Aitchison, in the *Bruce of Pittenweem*, 'one of the most active flotillas' (*Maritime History*, 20 and 24) and Marcus, *Naval History*, 148-154 and 177.

²⁵ Martin, *North Sea World*, 170.

²⁶ Smout, *Scottish Trade*, 243-44.

²⁷ P. Hume Brown (ed. and abridged), *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, vol. vii 1681- 1682 (Edinburgh, 1915), 589.

²⁸ NAS, RD2/57/524, 1682.

²⁹ NAS, CC20/4/15/7-8, testament dative John Cook, 13th January 1686 and two eiks CC20/4/15/19 16th February 1686 and CC20/4/15/518, 11th November 1691. An eik is an addendum to the testament added at a later date (Bigwood, *Scottish Family Tree*, 106).

³⁰ Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, *MeasuringWorth* available at www.measuringworth.com accessed 14th January 2013.

attitude to financial risk from the distribution of the financial value of his moveable assets at the time of his death:

- i. Around 25 per cent in physical assets: a sixteenth part of two ships (the *Marie of Pittenweem* and the *Leven*) and commodities such as iron, salt, and tar
- ii. Around 25 per cent in ready cash in the house
- iii. Around 50 per cent in outstanding debts both from customers for goods (members of the nobility) and loans of money (to local lairds, a doctor, and other traders)

John's financial portfolio was thus relatively liquid with more than enough readily realisable to pay his greatest outstanding liability: the money he owed under the terms of his second marriage contract.³¹

John's 'free gear' (his net moveable property once debts had been deducted) was divided into two equal parts and was also liable for a 'quot'; or bishop's portion.³² The quot was only payable on the 'deid's pairt' as this was the only part of the testament that had to be confirmed; thus although John died a widower and intestate and the 'deid's part' by default would go to his children, the free gear would still be divided into two parts to allow for the calculation of the quot.³³

As well as his moveable assets, John was also a substantial property owner in Pittenweem and nearby localities.³⁴ Indeed Martin claimed that John Cook probably owned and 'almost certainly' lived in the 'fine merchant's house' on the East Shore in

³¹ John's testament referred to a marriage contract with Susanna Turnbull rather than Christian Stevenson, (his first wife). See chapter 5, note 13 for further explanation.

³² The deceased's 'free gear' was divided into three: one part to a surviving spouse ('jus relictæ'), one part to the children ('bairn's pairt') and one part (the 'deid's pairt') belonged to the deceased to dispose of as he/she wished. If there was no surviving spouse, then the 'free gear' would be divided in two (Bigwood, *Scottish Family Tree*, 106-107 and George Ross, *A Dictionary and Digest of the Law of Scotland by the late William Bell, revised by George Ross ['Bell's Dictionary']* (Edinburgh, 1861), 249, 498, 524 and 682).

³³ The Stair Society, *An Institute of the Laws of Scotland (Bankton's Institute)*, vol. 2 The Stair Society No: 42 (Edinburgh, 1994), 387 No: 41 and 388 No: 42.

³⁴ For Pittenweem, see the sale of various properties inherited by two of John's granddaughters (NAS, RD2/93/693, 1707). John Cook and Christian Steinstoune also appeared to have property interests adjoining Pittenweem (NAS, Fife and Kinross Sasines, RS31/17/253 (December 1649) and RS31/20/75 (1655)).

Pittenweem known as Gyles House though Martin did not cite any evidence for his assertion.³⁵ If in fact John did own Gyles House, and had bought it himself, it suggests the status and security of investing some of his capital in such a magnificent house was attractive to him. Alternatively if he had inherited it from his father or another relative, it suggests considerable wealth had already been accumulated within the family in the early decades of the seventeenth century.³⁶

John's long term debtors included two generations of the Arnot family of Balcormo. In the feudal equivalent of a mortgage lender, John was termed a wadsetter and would be infeft in the Balcormo lands until the loan was redeemed with the lands themselves acting as the heritable security for his loan. John collected rents from the lands equivalent to the payment of the interest on his loan until the loan was repaid.³⁷ The two families appeared to have had a close relationship. John Cook's contemporary John Arnot was the master of the *Leven* and in later generations the two families intermarried. With no banks or stock market, John Cook was able to find a secure investment for his excess capital without necessarily having sufficient capital or the desire to enter the landowning classes by outright purchase. It also was probably a reflection of the fact that 'property had become the basis of power' following the reduction in power of the traditional feudal nobility during the Commonwealth

³⁵ Martin, *North Sea World*, 170-71. Gyles House, dated 1626, is also known as the Sea Captain's House (private communication, Ian Riches, National Trust for Scotland, 24th August 2009). Note: there is another property in Pittenweem with a similar name, known as 'The Gyles'. See appendix 3 for photographs of Gyles House and The Gyles.

³⁶ Gyles House was built in 1626 and John's father was dead by 1648. Allan Little stated that a Captain James Cook built The Gyles but again did not cite any evidence (G. Allan Little, 'The people who live by the sea', *Scottish Field*, March 1973, 122). It is beyond the scope of this study to verify whether John Cook owned and/or lived in Gyles House.

³⁷ Bigwood, *Scottish Family Tree*, 174 and 207. 'Infeft': invest a person with legal possession of a heritable property" (www.dsl.ac.uk accessed 23rd September 2010). NAS, SIG1/26/45, Signature of Confirmation, 4th April 1683.

period.³⁸ John also used this mortgage to secure income for his three daughters, a further indication of the importance of such an undertaking.³⁹

Merchant burgesses and shipmasters in early-modern Fife

Two of John's sons, James and Thomas, continued their father's occupation as merchant skippers.⁴⁰ Whereas James, like his father, was always associated with Pittenweem, Thomas lived and operated out of Elie, marrying a daughter of Alexander Gillespie, an Elie skipper.⁴¹ Thomas and his father-in-law certainly had a close working relationship. In April 1684 Alexander took salt on the *James of Elie* to Danzig and three years later, Thomas himself was master of the same ship.⁴² It is possible that the relationship had evolved from one of master and apprentice - Smout observed that an apprentice marrying a daughter of his master was a common occurrence and one that suited all the parties.⁴³ It may not have been feasible for Thomas's father John to train more than one son at once and it might also carry an element of spreading risk and cementing relationships.⁴⁴ It was thus quite possible that Thomas, as the second

³⁸ Rosalind Mitchison, *Lordship to Patronage: Scotland 1603-1745*, (Edinburgh, 1983), 67.

³⁹ John conferred income from Balcormo on Helen, his eldest daughter and her husband James Allan, skipper burgess of Queensferry (NAS, SIG1/3/22, Signature of Confirmation, 4th April 1683). Mary and Susanna, his second and third daughters respectively, benefited after John's death (NAS, SIG1/26/45, same date).

⁴⁰ There were subtle and important distinctions between the master, skipper, or captain of a vessel particular to Scotland which help illuminate the role and standing of the individual. A *skipper* was defined as a 'part owner of a boat responsible for its upkeep, the *master* as 'the seaman placed in command of a ship and its crew'. Further, the master 'in a warship [was] the first officer responsible for navigation, there also being a captain in charge of warfare' (www.dsl.ac.uk accessed 14th January 2013) Thus James was both a master and a skipper whilst his father John was described as 'captain' in his letters of marque.

⁴¹ There is no OPR data for Thomas's marriage to Christian Gillespie but a Pittenweem Sasine (NAS, B60/1/1, 25th March 1686) and a bond (NAS, RD2/83/283, 1699) confirmed the relationship.

⁴² NAS, E72/9/17, Customs Books, 2nd series, Kirkcaldy, Entry books, exports 1st Nov 1683-1st Nov 1684 and NAS, RD4/61/599 12th October 1687.

⁴³ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 154.

⁴⁴ Smout (*History 1560-1830*, 154) quoted periods of five years for apprenticeships so James (born December 1653) may not have completed his apprenticeship by the time Thomas (born ~1657) was ready to start. This might not have been an issue for another brother, John, born in April 1660, who also appeared to have been a skipper in Pittenweem. Captain John was described as 'elder' in 1682 (note 28)

skipper son, served his apprenticeship with Alexander Gillespie in Elie rather than with his father in Pittenweem.⁴⁵

Thomas's voyage in 1687 as master of the *James of Elie* is a good example of a trading voyage of the period. Thomas had signed a deal in Edinburgh with Captain Robert Colinson, chamberlain to the earl of Wintoun, to load the *James*, then in Elie, with the earl's 'small salt' from his Cockenzie salt works and take it to 'to the river of Clyd to ... Lochryon'. Thomas then had to wait at 'Lochryon' [Loch Ryan] to find out if he had to sail further up the Clyde or go to Irvine.⁴⁶ Captain Colinson's accounts described Thomas's undertaking as a voyage to Greenock, with another party recorded as selling the salt for the earl.⁴⁷ This voyage may also have been connected to another around five months later when Thomas and the *James* were at Paimbeuf at the mouth of the Loire having arrived from 'Galeot' and en route for Danzig.⁴⁸

Thomas's charter emphasised that in late seventeenth century Scotland transporting bulky and heavy goods by sea was considered preferable to attempting transport over land across the narrow waist of Scotland. Thomas could have sailed to Greenock either south via the English Channel or taken a northerly route. However James Miller argued that 'many captains and ship owners preferred to make long

and a bond registered in 1698 referred to 'John Cook burgess of Pittenweem part owner ... master of the *James of Pittenweem* (RD4/82/1874, 1698). There was no evidence of another John Cook old enough to be in such a position at that time. Thomas himself took on an apprentice for five years (NAS, RD2/82/991, 1699).

⁴⁵ Alexander was engaged in foreign trade on similar routes to John Cook despite operating out of a burgh of barony. In April 1671 Alexander recorded in his journal returning from Yarmouth 'John Cook in company' (USASC, ms 38352 and Colin and Paula Martin, unpublished transcript of Alexander Gillespie's journal 1662-85, 33).

⁴⁶ NAS, RD4/61/599, 1687. 'Small salt' described salt typically made in Scotland by boiling sea water to yield small salt crystals as oppose to the evaporation of sea water in sunnier climates such as the Bay of Biscay to produce larger salt crystals known as Bay or 'great salt' (Christopher A. Whatley, *The Scottish Salt Industry 1570-1850 an economic and social history* (Aberdeen, 1987), 6 and 34). Loch Ryan was known as an anchorage (Graham, *Maritime History*, 308).

⁴⁷ NAS, RH9/1/176, accounts of Captain Robert Colinson, servant to the earl of Wintoun, 1684-89.

⁴⁸ Transcript for the payment of harbour dues, April 1688 (Cook, *Genealogical Notes*, appendix xv). The location of 'Galeot' is not known.

detours north of Orkney or south by the English Channel' in order to avoid the Pentland Firth which was extremely dangerous for sailing ships because of tidal surges.⁴⁹ Additionally the southerly route would offer more and larger ports for intermediate trading, illustrated by one of the masters for the Cooks calling at Plymouth with goods for English merchants whilst returning to Pittenweem from St Malo.⁵⁰ Thus overall it would appear more likely that Thomas arrived at Loch Ryan from the south rather than the north, from which direction he would have already sailed past both potential destinations.

William of Orange's wars with France did not stop James's (John's other skipper son) trade through St Malo with William Bell, master of the *Marie of Pittenweem*, arriving at Kirkcaldy customs with bay salt, wine, vinegar, raisins, figs, and writing paper for James in January and July 1689.⁵¹ In March 1689 James was loading the *George of Pittenweem* back in Kirkcaldy with white fish from Crail and Pittenweem for Stockholm.⁵² James himself was master and by August he was back to Kirkcaldy from Stockholm with a mixed cargo of iron, tar, pitch, hemp, deals, and some consumer goods. James returned from another Stockholm run the following August with a similar cargo.⁵³ There was also some re-exporting of goods: John Aitchison set off from Kirkcaldy for Cadiz in September 1689 in the *John of Pittenweem* with Swedish iron and

⁴⁹ James Miller, *A Wild and Open Sea: the Story of the Pentland Firth* (Kirkwall, 1994), 15, 55 and 82. Mikkel Thomsen (*Viking Ship Museum*, Roskilde, Denmark) made the same point in <http://www.vikingskibsmuseet.dk/en/the-sea-stallion-past-and-present/the-vikings-in-the-west/scotland/pentland-firth/?sword%5B0%5D=pentland&sword%5B1%5D=firth> accessed 25th June 2012.

⁵⁰ NAS, E72/9/26, Kirkcaldy Customs Books, 17th July 1689.

⁵¹ NAS, E72/9/24 and 26, 1689.

⁵² There is a single page of the log book for the *George of Pittenweem* for this voyage in April 1689 from Crail to Stockholm (USASC, MS 37022/15). It took fifty days of sailing for the whole trip. See also NAS, E72/9/25, Kirkcaldy Customs Books, 1689.

⁵³ NAS, E72/9/26 and 27, Kirkcaldy Customs Books, 1689 and 1690. Deals were a certain size of fir or pine planks (www.dsl.ac.uk accessed 14th January 2013).

French wine for James that had been brought in on earlier shipments.⁵⁴ Meanwhile in May 1690 Thomas was unloading a cargo in Kirkcaldy from Rotterdam, including flax goods, vinegar, starch, iron, raisins, and cheese from the *Christian of Elie*, though it is not clear if Thomas himself was master or another.⁵⁵ Their trading activities in the late 1680s demonstrate a flexible business model with varying degrees of sophistication ranging from the brothers working as masters for their own goods and those of other traders to employing another master on their behalf.⁵⁶

By September 1691 James portrayed a somewhat different picture of Pittenweem when, as a bailie, he signed off Pittenweem's account to the Convention of Royal Burghs.⁵⁷ The account summarised the state of the burgh's economy and infrastructure and even allowing for vested interest (by emphasizing its poverty, Pittenweem hoped to minimise its tax bill), it makes dire reading. There were only two ships of any size, predominantly owned by their masters, William Bell (*Mary*, 90-100 tons) and Thomas Whyt (*Sophia*, seventy tons) mostly working on behalf of merchants elsewhere and 'ane little catch' of about fifty five tons (*George*) owned and skippered by James Cook. There was no foreign or inland trade, 'the poor fishers in winter live on charitie', the harbour was in 'a most lamentable conditione' and the housing 'ruinous'.⁵⁸ Whatley's comments on Scottish shipping tonnage at that time benchmarked Pittenweem's three named ships - Dundee had only three ships out of twenty-three that were above 100 tons so Pittenweem's tonnage in relation to the size

⁵⁴ James's father-in-law or brother-in-law. NAS, E72/9/25, Kirkcaldy Customs Books, 1689.

⁵⁵ NAS, E72/9/27, Kirkcaldy Customs Books, 1690.

⁵⁶ Smout, *Scottish Trade*, 96.

⁵⁷ James was elected a burghess 1st August 1683 and thereafter and until his father's death, both father and son appeared in the council minutes (USASC, B60/6/1, Pittenweem Town Council minutes). The Cooks were also frequent representatives for Pittenweem at the Convention; for instance John 1677, James 1685, 1686, 1691-94, Robert 1703, 1705 in *Extracts from the Records of the Convention of Royal Burghs of Scotland, 1677-1711* (Edinburgh, 1880).

⁵⁸ *Convention of Royal Burghs 1677-1711*, 621. In contrast, the *James of Elie* was around 140 tons (RD4/61/599).

of the burgh was comparable. It emphasised that the east coast burghs were under-resourced to take full advantage of the fisheries' potential.⁵⁹

Smout recognised one underlying cause of the apparent contradiction between profitable trading by East Neuk merchants on the one hand and the ruinous state of Pittenweem on the other. Merchants like the Cooks or others based in Edinburgh were exporting 'cheap and bulky goods' produced in Fife (fish, salt, coal) but importing high value goods from the continent back into other larger ports such as Kirkcaldy and Leith where the demand was greater. The main beneficiaries of this trade cycle would appear to be the owners of the salt pans and coal mines and the merchants in the carrying trade and none of these parties would appear to have wanted or been able to invest in fishing.⁶⁰ Intervention by the state attempted to break this cycle with the creation of the Board of Trustees for Manufactures and Fisheries in 1727.⁶¹

The royal burghs frequently sniped about the burghs of barony encroaching on their trading privileges, but even allowing for such complaints the brief comparison with Elie at minimum recorded the perception that Elie was more prosperous - its housing was 'pretie good' and it had 'a good harbour, some shipping, and trade'.⁶² By the time Thomas was trading, in theory the burghs of barony were able to participate in the vast majority of foreign trade previously restricted to the royal burghs.⁶³ However, Smout argued that in practice most of the foreign trade still remained with

⁵⁹ Whatley, *Scottish Society*, 18.

⁶⁰ Smout, *Scottish Trade*, 137. This issue is explored further on p. 35.

⁶¹ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 22.

⁶² E. Patricia Dennison 'Urban society and economy' in Harris and Macdonald, *Making and Unmaking* vol.2, 146 and *Convention of Royal Burghs 1677-1711*, 621. In contrast, the *James of Elie* was around 140 tons.

⁶³ The royal burghs lost most of their trading privileges in 1672 (Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 147.) Elie became a burgh of barony in 1599 (G.S. Pryde, *The Burghs of Scotland: a Critical List* (Glasgow, 1965), 63).

the royal burgh merchants.⁶⁴ For James and Thomas their joint partnership in a ship was perhaps one way of getting round this.⁶⁵ This implies that James's loyalty to family business interests outweighed his loyalty to royal burgh trading strictures which did not countenance their burgesses having trading partnerships outwith the burgh structure.⁶⁶ It suggests a contentious picture of James on the one hand representing a run-down burgh yet on the other contributing towards its decline by ignoring the procedures designed to protect the privileged and profitable trading position of the royal burghs. Devine used such evidence to demonstrate that the royal burghs were open to change and indicates that the Cooks were prepared to change tactics in order to ensure the continuation of their livelihoods.⁶⁷ Thomas's admittance as a burgess of Pittenweem in September 1692 was thus probably politically motivated and would have been sufficient to satisfy any complaints on this score and avoid the fines.⁶⁸

As well as his involvement in local burgh politics, James also represented Pittenweem in Parliament in 1685 and 1686.⁶⁹ Such a public office required James to sign the controversial Test Act of 1681, confirming that he accepted that the monarch was absolute even in matters of religion. Whilst Alastair Mann has argued that the Test Act was 'a weapon of state oppression and recruiting sergeant for dissent',⁷⁰ the commissioners were loyal and 'deferential' to their new monarch James VII in his first

⁶⁴ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 147.

⁶⁵ In 1691 James was the only person in Pittenweem recorded to own shares in other vessels: 'ane sixteenth pairt' with Thomas (*Convention of Royal Burghs 1677-1711*, 621.)

⁶⁶ *Convention of Royal Burghs 1677-1711*, 133.

⁶⁷ Devine, *Scottish Enlightenment*, 28.

⁶⁸ USASC, (B60/6/1), Pittenweem Town Council minutes, 6th September 1692.

⁶⁹ Margaret D. Young (ed.), *The Parliaments of Scotland Burgh and Shire Commissioners* vol.1, (Edinburgh, 1992), 141. See also NAS, PA7/25/88/6, 16th February 1685 and B60/6/1, 14th April 1685.

⁷⁰ Alastair J. Mann, 'James VII, King of the Articles' in Alastair J. Mann and Keith M. Brown (eds), *The History of the Scottish Parliament*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 2005), 196.

Parliament in 1685.⁷¹ Mann also argued that such loyalty was bought from the royal burgh representatives with a 'vague promise of crown support' for them against the encroachment of the burghs of barony.⁷² As both an elected commissioner and an interested party, James had every reason to support moves that might improve the economy and general well-being of Pittenweem and its inhabitants. However, he had also hedged his commercial bets with his business interest in a burgh of barony.

The Scottish Parliament was less accommodating to James VII in 1686, when the king attempted to gain religious freedom for his fellow Roman Catholics, this time using the lure of free trade incentives with England to try to overcome the obduracy of the royal burgh commissioners to a Toleration Act.⁷³ The Cook family's personal view of religious toleration can be inferred from a 'Decreet of Deprivation' brought in 1689 by Thomas Cook 'skipper in Elie' against the incumbent minister of Elie because the minister 'continued to be disaffected from the present government'.⁷⁴ Such decreets were common against 'recalcitrant Episcopalians' and support for a presbyterian settlement was clearly more important to Thomas than being responsible for depriving someone of making a living.⁷⁵

There is also other evidence that the Cook brothers were supportive of the Revolution settlement of 1689. The 'Act in favour of some noblemen and gentlemen in the shire of Fife' of May 1689 recorded peacekeeping proposals involving the 'raising

⁷¹ Derek J. Patrick, 'Restoration to Revolution: 1660-1690' in Harris and Macdonald, *Making and Unmaking*, vol. 2, 63.

⁷² Mann, *History of the Scottish Parliament*, 196.

⁷³ I. B. Cowan, 'The Reluctant Revolutionaries in Scotland', in Harris and Macdonald, *Making and Unmaking*, vol. 4, 65 and Clare Jackson, *Restoration Scotland, 1660-1690. Royalist Politics, Religion and Ideas*, (Woodbridge, 2003,) 158.

⁷⁴ Henry Paton (ed. and abridged), *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland 3rd series*, vol. xiv 1689 (Edinburgh, 1933), 218-19.

⁷⁵ Jackson, *Restoration Scotland*, 213.

of such fencible men ... as are known to be well affected to the present government' and named amongst others Captain Aitchison and Captain Cook in Pittenweem, and Thomas Cook in Elie as 'empowered' to raise such a force.⁷⁶ The actions of James and Thomas aligned them with Smout's analysis of the Revolution in Scotland as a 'frenzied popular rejection' of anything to do with the potential that the Roman Catholic faith might be reintroduced and overrode any previous loyalties to the Stuart monarchy.⁷⁷

James's testament provided good evidence of his economic circumstances.⁷⁸ Whilst his 'free gear' at £208 Scots was considerably less than his father's, James was at the peak of his business career rather than approaching its end and could be anticipated to be running his business interests with different objectives. Similarly Devine recorded instances of merchants some thirty or so years later whose net worth might have appeared insignificant but whose inventory indicated a far more lavish lifestyle and the ability to undertake quite significant business deals.⁷⁹

James's business activities reflected in his testament did however indicate a significant shift in focus from those of his father recorded just ten years previously. Out of some seventeen debtors, only one was named for goods (timber); the rest were for a variety of bonds, decrees etc though these might represent outstanding trade debts. The inventory recorded no ship ownership, household goods, ready cash, or

⁷⁶ *The Records of the Parliaments in Scotland to 1707* available at www.rps.ac.uk accessed 9th October 2009.

⁷⁷ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 196.

⁷⁸ NAS, CC20/4/16/144-146, James Cook, testament dative, 3rd July 1697. James died in December 1695 aged forty-two. Unlike his father's testament, there was no calculation for a quot and no division of the 'free gear' in James's testament dative. The subsequent evidence of the survival of James's widow Anna (rather than assuming she too had died) suggests that Anna may have renounced her right to 'jus relictæ' and the 'free gear' went solely to the children. The phrase 'and to pay the quote' in James's testament probably referred to the payment of other commissary dues following the Revolution settlement of 1689, although the bishop's quot was not abolished until 1701 (Ross, *Bell's Dictionary*, 498 and 682).

⁷⁹ Devine, *Scottish Enlightenment*, 33.

commodities.⁸⁰ However James had moved capital into property shortly before his death by adding to the block of property he had inherited from his father.⁸¹ Like his father, James was also a wadsetter to the estate of Rires.⁸² Whereas his father had acquired the mortgage by lending his own money, James acquired the heritable bond through his wife (and cousin) Anna Aitchison; his parents-in-law, John Aitchison and Elizabeth Cook had followed the same practice as John Cook for securing income for their daughters by conferring the interest from a wadset on them. Overall, James's assets were highly illiquid.

Sometime between 1691 (as recorded in the report to Convention of Royal Burghs) and 1695 James's business appeared to have undergone a major strategic shift when he may have sold his shipping interests, probably reduced his trading in goods and concentrated on acting as a moneylender.⁸³ His creditors were a range of mainly Fife based folk and Pittenweem Town Council. Such a change mirrors the initial 'severe slump' of 1689-91, a 'severe liquidity crisis', and subsequent decline in trade in the final decade of the seventeenth century noted by Smout in general and by Richard Oram in Fife in particular.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ It is possible that James was between ship purchases or ownership was deliberately omitted to reduce payment of commissary dues; inventories were 'notoriously defective' and often only covered those parts of the estate 'for which confirmation was necessary for its recovery' (NAS: Notes to Commissary Court records CC20). If James still had a part share in Thomas's ship and Thomas gave up the testament, then issues of recovery might not be a problem. For comparison, the joint testament of Helen Cook (their sister) and her husband James Allan, skipper in Queensferry, the only moveable asset recorded is the sale of a part share in a ship as the buyer had never paid for his purchase (NAS, CC8/8/81/420, testament dative, James Allan and Helen Cook, 27th July 1702 plus eik, 13th September 1706).

⁸¹ NAS, RD4/74/574, 1694. Another deed recorded the subsequent sale of property in Pittenweem on behalf of James's surviving daughters and co-heiresses (RD2/93/693, 1707).

⁸² NAS, SIG1/27/4, November 1692. Rires is about eight km from Pittenweem.

⁸³ In contrast, John Aitchison appeared to have retained his shipping interests: when he made provision for his wife and other children, he mentioned 'our ships' (NAS, RD3/86/590, 1697).

⁸⁴ Smout, *Scottish Trade*, 244-256 and Richard Oram, 'From the Union of the Crowns to the Union of the Parliaments' in Donald Omand (ed.), *The Fife Book* (Edinburgh, 2000), 83.

James's business model was entirely consistent with the financial structures being developed by merchants during this period, with a 'flexible system' of bonds, a 'primitive overdraft facility', and the payment of annual interest rather than paying off the original loan. Devine also observed that 'often lawyers acted as intermediaries [helping] to steer funds from points of surplus to areas of need'.⁸⁵ The Cooks even had their own in-house family legal professional in the form of Robert, an advocate and the middle brother.⁸⁶

Some merchants invested some of their surplus cash in land rather than in further entrepreneurial deals. Devine argued that this represented a sound business decision to spread risk across different classes of assets and maximise overall returns. There was also the desire to acquire the status associated with land ownership and the ability to pass something tangible on to future generations.⁸⁷ Smout recorded the alternative view of some economists who criticised such investments because it withdrew money from the potential commercial development of Scotland.⁸⁸ Devine's view explained better the reasons for Thomas's purchase of several portions of the 'toun' of Newburn in 1694.⁸⁹ It was modest in value, accounting for around 4 per cent

⁸⁵ Devine, *Scottish Enlightenment*, 33.

⁸⁶ There are several instances of Robert acting for family members in a legal capacity (NAS, AC7/5 1678, AC7/18 1687, and AC9/29 1703) and also deeds recording financial deals involving Robert (GD29/1542, 1683, RD4/57/826 and RD2/67/184 both 1686), or acting as a factor for a Pittenweem skipper (RD3/43/295, 1677). AC records are available on CD at NAS reference: L032.000 (Sue Mowat and Eric J. Graham, *High Court of Admiralty Scotland Records 1627-1750*).

⁸⁷ Devine, *Exploring the Scottish Past*, 30 and Devine, *Scottish Enlightenment*, 37.

⁸⁸ Smout, *Scottish Trade*, 78.

⁸⁹ See NAS, SIG1/27/20 Signature of Confirmation, 28th December 1694. Thomas's Newburn later known as Easter Newburn totalled a half of the 'toun' plus two acres of arable from the 'Muirhead of Newburn' and is a good example of the consolidation of holdings occurring at the end of the seventeenth century (Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 128). Easter Newburn, contiguous with his brother James's wadset at Rires, is about three km north east of Largo at 160 m half way up a steep hillside. From the sales of Easter Newburn around 1779 by Thomas's grandson John, it appeared that the original parcel of land had been added to, making a holding of about fifty acres split between several 'inclosures' (NAS, CC20/11/12, St. Andrews Commissary Court Register of Deeds and Protests, 14th April 1780 and SC20/34/31, fo.150-152, Cupar Sherriff Court, Register of Deeds, 2nd series, 18th September 1855, though it refers to a sale conducted around 1778).

of the whole of Newburn parish in the 1695 land valuation and of unprepossessing agricultural worth. Thomas's interest in status was also reflected in the witnesses recorded at the baptisms of some of his children. As well as family members, he also managed to have 'my Lord Anstruther' and a local laird present. Middlemas similarly noted that 'Scottish baptism defined the social, legal as well as the spiritual status of the father' and its role in enhancing kinship ties.⁹⁰ Thomas however continued in ship ownership into at least the early eighteenth century and in 1712 had to pursue a co-owner (an Aberdeen merchant) for the latter's share of a ransom payment, vindicating his asset risk management strategy.⁹¹

Relative family wealth and social position

The late seventeenth century hearth tax and land valuation data gave some indication of the family's relative wealth and social standing.⁹² The Cooks and their kin had an average of around seven hearths each, ranging from three to twelve. Houston and Whyte's analyses of the West Lothian and Dumfriesshire hearth tax records showed that only between 7 and 10 per cent of the assessed population had four or more hearths.⁹³ Family members appeared at the top of the hearth tax lists in Pittenweem, Elie, and Newburn carrying with it a further implication of status.

Pittenweem had a highly fragmented valuation structure with thirty-four individual valuations and a top valuation of around 14 per cent of the total. James'

⁹⁰ Middlemas, *Kinship and Survival*, 113.

⁹¹ NAS, AC8/140, 1712 (Mowat and Graham, CD at NAS reference: L032.000). The master of the ship in which Thomas was a co-owner had been taken hostage for a ransom by French privateers.

⁹² The hearth tax was levied on all houses with a hearth, whether owned or tenanted. The poor living on parish charity were exempt. Land valuations were carried out infrequently and provide only a snapshot of land ownership and value at the date of the valuation (Bigwood, *Scottish Family Tree*, 144-45). See appendix 4 for Cook family data and others in the family network.

⁹³ Houston and Whyte, *Scottish Society*, 9.

valuation (closely followed by that of a maternal relative) ranked third highest behind two members of the nobility. Newburn (where Thomas had purchased land) was also characterised by a relatively large number (sixteen) of small portions with the top valuation only around 18 per cent of the total. By contrast, in Elie, there were only four land valuations with one accounting for nearly 77 per cent of the total.⁹⁴ This was probably the reason why Thomas bought land in Newburn rather than Elie because a small portion within his means was more likely to be available. Thus in terms of both numbers of hearths and land valuation the kin network was relatively wealthy and of high status within their parishes. It corroborates Houston and Whyte's view that 'Scottish society was ... differentiated by wealth and status at an early date'.⁹⁵

Office holding in the Kirk provided another measure of social standing. All three brothers appeared frequently in kirk session minutes over a long time period: as elders, appointed to attend the synod or delegated to speak to sinning parishioners. In both Elie and Pittenweem elders were self-electing with the same individuals appearing year after year indicating that the family was part of the accepted ruling hierarchy.⁹⁶ By the late seventeenth century the Cook family and its associated marriage kinship groups appeared at the wealthier end of the social spectrum, well-embedded in the royal burgh power structures and where magistrates were 'people of consequence who expected to be treated with great respect'.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Sibbald, *History*, appendix vii.

⁹⁵ Houston and Whyte, *Scottish Society*, 9.

⁹⁶ NAS, CH2/833/3 and 4, Pittenweem Kirk Session minutes, 1685-1723 and CH2/1581/1/3, Elie Kirk Session minutes, 1702-31. In Elie in 1708 and 1718, the existing kirk session suggested names for new elders and then requested the minister to approach the individuals for their acceptance. The congregation appeared to have a right of veto as the names of those selected were proclaimed at the church door asking for any objections before they could be admitted as elders. In Pittenweem there was no recording of how elders were elected, for instance, to replace James Cook following his death in 1695.

⁹⁷ A. J.S. Gibson and T.C. Smout, *Prices, Food and Wages in Scotland 1550-1780* (Cambridge, 1995), 21.

John Cook and his two merchant skipper sons survived and prospered by utilising a range of strategies and resources. First, they assiduously exploited their membership of the royal burgh hierarchy as merchant burgesses through existing Cook family membership, enhanced by whom they married. They made full use of their position to fulfil office-bearing roles in both the town council and other power structures. Closely associated was a second strategy of utilising close family and kin in business dealings. Devine pointed out that 'in an era of developing communications, it was entirely sensible to favour dealing with kin and trusted acquaintances'.⁹⁸ Thirdly, they worked to spread business risk by owning land either by acting as mortgage lenders or by outright purchase. In these three respects they were little different to their contemporary fellow merchant burgesses, but John differentiated himself to a certain extent from some of his peers in his willingness to undertake new ventures. His voyage to Tangier was a good example of the common strategy of selling existing products into new markets.

Evidence of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century core Cook family behaviour does reveal something of their beliefs and values. One clear belief was that as far as the Cooks were concerned, presbyterianism and the Revolution settlement were non-negotiable for Scotland. There were never any hints that they may have toyed with episcopalianism or been Jacobite supporters. Their values rested on notions of preserving the immediate kinship network coupled with mutual support from a family and business perspective. Ensuring financial security for the immediate family was also highly valued. Whilst the family used the larger ports of the Forth, they did not move their business base. Loyalty to their home burghs would appear to have

⁹⁸ Devine, *Scottish Enlightenment*, 29.

been valued more highly than any economic advantage gained by moving to a burgh with a wider market.⁹⁹ Better, perhaps, at this juncture, to stay rooted in their home burghs, able to pass the benefits of established status and business contacts down the generations.

⁹⁹ There would also have been entry fees to become a merchant burgess in a different royal burgh (Devine, *Exploring the Scottish Past*, 24-5).

Chapter 3 Change and transition in early modern Scotland

Whereas aspects of John and his merchant skipper sons James and Thomas typified East Neuk business folk of the period, Robert (the middle surviving son) presented a somewhat different figure. As far as is known, Robert was the first family member to enter the professions and whether Robert's training as an advocate was a farsighted business move of his father's or an expression of Robert's personal preferences and aptitudes, will never be known. There might also have been limited room in the family business for apprentice skippers and an element of a desire for upward social mobility and business diversification.

Early family entry into the professions

By the late sixteenth century advocates were some of the best-educated Scots. Their university education, often on the Continent, had been combined with learning 'native law' as a 'servant' to an established advocate.¹ However, during the period when Robert undertook his education, Scottish legal education and status underwent some significant changes.² The 'apprenticeship' element likened to 'a mechanical art ... learnt by tradesmen' moved to an 'extensive academic training'. Scots attended Leiden University in considerable numbers with the 'Netherlands presenting Scots with polite enlightened legal education of a type suited for the learned gentleman'.³ Robert's

¹ John Finlay, *Men of Law in Pre-Reformation Scotland* (East Linton, 2000), 6-14.

² Robert attended St Andrews University 1669-73 (Robert N. Smart, *Alphabetical Register of the Students, Graduates and Officials of the University of St Andrews 1579-1747* (St Andrews, 2012), 126,) and Leiden University in 1675 (Edward Peacock, *Index of English Speaking Students who have Graduated from Leyden University* (London, 1883), 58 for the matriculation of "Kuck, Robertus, Scotus" 3rd May 1675). He qualified as an advocate in 1677 (Francis J. Grant (ed.), *The Faculty of Advocates in Scotland 1532-1943*, Scottish Record Society, No. 76 (Edinburgh, 1944), 40). Cook also stated that his father held a copy of Robert's thesis published in Leiden around 1676 (*Genealogical Notes*, 8).

³ John W. Cairns, 'Importing our Lawyers from Holland: Netherlands Influence on Scots Law and Lawyers' in Grant G. Simpson (ed.), *Scotland and the Low Countries 1124-1994* (East Linton, 1996), 142, 145 and 151.

father would have been well placed to support a son in Holland through his business connections. Mitchison observed that in this period that it was 'common for the [able] eldest son of a landowner [to become] an advocate'.⁴ However, in the period 1650-80 only a known handful of men entered the profession as sons of burgesses. Thomas Rae also commented on the quite sudden drop in the 1670s in sons with commercial fathers entering the Faculty of Advocates versus those from the aristocracy.⁵ Thus Robert's choice of profession was unusual.

Whatever the family's social ambitions might have been, Robert soon found himself up against some formidable barriers to practising as an advocate. In 1681 Robert wrote 'Robert Cook's Petition to the Lords of Session against the Peats' described by James Maidment as a pasquil or Scottish satirical poem.⁶ Maidment also explained the term 'Peat' as a judge's 'pet': 'a favoured individual attached to or hanging on a judge, through whom suitors might influence his decisions'. The 'Peat' was also open to bribery.⁷ Robert's pasquil did not mince words and he appeared thoroughly disgusted with the working practices of the Scottish legal system. He explained his predicament:

Having spent all his money in following his book
... That he's likely to starve unlesse made a Peat

⁴ Mitchison, *Lordship*, 80.

⁵ Thomas I. Rae, 'The Origins of the Advocates Library' in Patrick Cadell and Ann Matheson (eds), *For the Encouragement of Learning: Scotland's National Library 1619-1989* (Edinburgh, 1989), 3 and Table 1 and John Macpherson Pinkerton (ed.) *The Minute Book of the Faculty of Advocates*, vol. 1 1661-1712, The Stair Society No: 29 (Edinburgh, 1976), 36.

⁶ James Maidment (ed.), *A Book of Scottish Pasquils, 1568-1715* (Edinburgh, 1868), vii. This study consulted two known versions of Robert's pasquil: NAS, papers of the earls of Marchmont, GD158/485, 'Rhyming petition of Mr Robert Cook', nd and NLS, Adv.ms.19.1.35., 'The Humble Petition of Mr Robert Cook', 1681. Both are shorter versions than Maidment's, have subtle differences in the wording, and the hand-writing on the two versions is considerably different.

⁷ Maidment, *Scottish Pasquils*, 222.

And further:

He doth humblie crave to be a peat to some peat,
Or, in Pittenweem's language, to make his peats meat.⁸

John Pinkerton supported Robert's view of a corrupt and incompetent judiciary, and Jackson argued that by '1677 any remaining pretensions to integrity on the judicial bench vanished' when all appointments became controlled by the king.⁹

Unlike his brother James, Robert refused to sign the 1681 Test Act and thus was 'laid aside': debarred from public office. He was, however, reinstated in June 1687 along with another advocate on the removal of the Test Act 'without so much as ather a dispensation from the King, or application by a bill to the Lords, for the President [Lockhart] said to them, they needed not'.¹⁰ It is unclear why Robert was accorded this privilege. Perhaps he was insufficient of a political threat coupled with friends in the right places.¹¹ Although Robert may not have been able to penetrate the closed circles of Edinburgh advocacy, he was able to make use of his skills and training more locally.¹² Advocates were often employed in 'what there was of a civil service', and once he became politically acceptable again following the Revolution settlement, Robert was appointed admiral-depute in East Fife in 1690.¹³

⁸ Maidment, *Scottish Pasquils*, 224-25. In GD158/485 'peats meat' reads 'peats pake' and in Adv.ms.19.1.35., 'peat's mate'. The use of the word 'pak(e)' in this context is derived from 'pack of merchandise' as an allusion to a 'means of living' or 'wealth, fortune' (www.dsl.ac.uk accessed 20th December 2012).

⁹ Pinkerton, *Faculty of Advocates*, vol. 1, xiii and Jackson, *Restoration Scotland*, 86.

¹⁰ *Historical Notices of Scottish Affairs selected from the manuscripts of Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall*, Bannatyne Club, vol. ii (Edinburgh, 1848), 796.

¹¹ As Robert was admitted in July 1677, there was no direct connection between Robert and Sir George Lockhart's withdrawal from the Faculty of Advocates; Lockhart was readmitted in January 1676 (Pinkerton, *Faculty of Advocates*, xiv). Lockhart had also been a member of the Scottish Parliament 1685-86 so perhaps brother James was able to plead Robert's cause (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 34, (Oxford, 2004), 241).

¹² Robert was recorded as one of the private examiners in 1689 and fined for being absent 'when the Roll called' in 1695 so he did maintain some links with the Faculty early in his career (Pinkerton, *Faculty of Advocates*, 87). There was also a business deal recorded between 'Robert Cook Advocate in Edinburgh' and a burghess of St Andrews (NAS, RD2/82/802, 1699).

¹³ Mitchison, *Lordship*, 80 and NAS, GD26/11/50 and GD1/357/1.

Problems with relationships and finance

Whilst Devine's analysis appropriately recognised the vital role played by the merchant's business and kinship networks in his economic and political prosperity, his work does not address the fact that there could be plenty of scope for relationships to sour and for the parties to feel the need to use legal means to sort out the mess.¹⁴ In 1686 Robert, in his role as his father John's executor, was accused by his Anderson first cousins of duplicitous behaviour in relation to money purportedly promised to the cousins by his father John. It appeared that Robert filled in his own name on a blank bond that was understood to be intended for the Anderson cousins.¹⁵ This was not the only incident in which Robert may have acted dishonestly. Around 1702 he was employed as advocate for St Andrews and some six years later was embroiled in a financial dispute with the town's treasurer. Whilst Robert stated he had returned some money to one of the town's bailies and had a receipt for it, the treasurer did not believe him, especially as Robert claimed he had lost the receipt and the relevant bailie was dead.¹⁶ In both affairs Robert was perhaps echoing the behaviour of his advocate contemporaries renowned for their dishonest behaviour and which he himself had complained about in his pasquil.

Robert experienced severe financial problems later in life and a number of factors, his difficulties in being able to benefit fully from his professional training, his behaviour, as well as Scottish economic circumstances, all probably contributed. Pittenweem Town Council minutes did not expand on what caused the 'high ryot' in 1715 between Robert (by then aged about sixty) and William Bell younger, in which

¹⁴ Devine, *Scottish Enlightenment*, 29 and *Exploring the Scottish Past*, 25.

¹⁵ NAS, Court of Session, CS181/1078, 19th July 1686. A blank bond for George Anderson was recorded in John's eik of February 1686.

¹⁶ NAS, CS181/1280, 1709.

Robert called William ‘mad, light in the head, and that his pericranium was wrong’.¹⁷ As a result of the fracas, the bailies recommended that Robert’s burgess ticket should be torn up and that he be dismissed as a councillor. Whereas Robert’s name appeared frequently as a bailie or councillor in the town council minutes from 1702 (when he was admitted as a burgess) to 1715, his name and any official functions disappeared for five years.¹⁸ By 1717 Pittenweem Kirk Session found itself having to:

... consult the Presbytery about the proper measures to be taken with Mr Robert Cook’s Bonds in order to getting payment, and whether they will allow any abatement of his annual rents in regard of his circumstances.¹⁹

As Robert had been an elder since at least the early 1690s and frequently elected to go to the synod, this must have been an awkward and embarrassing situation for all the parties. Robert’s proposal to avoid legal action and clear these debts must have required significant heart searching as he offered to sell the kirk session his lands at Arncroach.²⁰ By such a deal, Robert would get ready cash but lose his long term capital investment and rental income and his wife had to agree to give up her right to liferent. The kirk session readily agreed to the proposal, by implication viewing a longer term investment and rental income as sufficient satisfaction for Robert’s debt. The deal was swiftly concluded with the kirk session ensuring Robert was paid promptly and the payment of ‘bygone annual rents’ and other sums cancelled, ‘considering the present circumstances of that family’.²¹ The 1721

¹⁷ It was clear from Pittenweem Kirk Session minutes (various dates 1712, CH2/833/3) that by 1715 ‘William Bell younger’ was Agnes Binning’s husband as opposed to Robert’s niece’s husband ‘William Bell elder’ or Captain Bell. Note 57 in chapter 5 detailed these family connections. USASC, B60/6/1, 23rd Feb 1715. ‘High ryot’: breach of the peace, possibly involving physical assault (www.dsl.ac.uk accessed 23rd September 2010).

¹⁸ USASC, B60/6/1, Pittenweem Town Minutes, 7th September 1702.

¹⁹ NAS, CH2/833/3, 26th July 1717.

²⁰ Like his brothers, Robert had invested in a small portion of land and owned six acres of arable and a house at Arncroach, about eight km north-west of Pittenweem. This was probably the land in Carnbee parish recorded in the 1694 land valuation (appendix 4), suggesting it had been a long term investment.

²¹ NAS, CH2/833/3, Pittenweem Kirk Session minutes, 17th May 1719.

Pittenweem stent roll further underscored Robert's relative position as his dues were only about a quarter of those of several family members of the younger generation.²²

As an advocate, Robert did not require burgess status to practise his profession but his delayed entry as a Pittenweem burgess until his late forties suggests a desire to become involved in running Pittenweem with its accompanying status but possibly also a wish to conduct trade. Devine argued that in Aberdeen and Glasgow the burgess system had broken down by the 1720s and that burgesship 'was a mark of social distinction rather than a necessary qualification for trade'.²³ In the struggling smaller burghs like Pittenweem, the 'protectionism' which Devine saw as 'a response to rather than a basic cause of economic difficulties' may well have lasted longer and Robert's loss of his burgess ticket could have been a root cause of his financial problems.²⁴ It illustrates the serious repercussions from a row between members of a small community where both family and business relationships were closely linked.

Although Robert reappeared in an official capacity between 1720 and 1725 in Pittenweem Council minutes, suggesting some level of reinstatement, it was not the end of the family's financial problems. Robert's daughter Mary inherited via her brother her father's considerable debt to the Sea Box of Pittenweem with the Pittenweem family property mortgaged to the Sea Box.²⁵ Mary, by then widowed, was forced to renounce her ownership to the property to pay off the debts and accept the sale that the boxmasters had organised.²⁶ Like the kirk session elders, the Sea Box masters dealt fairly and sympathetically with Mary's predicament, recording that

²² USASC, B60/6/1, Pittenweem Town minutes, 1721.

²³ Devine, *Exploring the Scottish Past*, 20.

²⁴ Devine, *Ibid*, 18.

²⁵ NAS, GD62/331 & 332, 1734 and GD62/334 & 335, 1735.

²⁶ NAS, GD62/358, 1746. The role of Sea Boxes was explained in chapter 2, note 6. The boxmasters managed the assets of, and disbursements from, the Sea Box.

because she had moved out of the property at their behest some three years previously, the Sea Box would continue to pay the rent on her current home.²⁷

Robert was not the only one of the well-established and related Pittenweem burgess families whose financial problems were inherited by the next generation. The Sea Box had also acquired Bailie Melville's house by 1739, Bailie Borthwick's heirs were creditors (1741) and Jean Cook or Allan relied on a son-in-law to negotiate an abatement on the remainder of her husband's debt (1751).²⁸ These events were probably as much a reflection of Scotland's continued economic problems in the first two decades after the Union from which these families did not recover rather than solely because Robert was an irascible and argumentative individual who did not always think through the consequences of his actions.²⁹

Witchcraft in Pittenweem

Pittenweem had a history of witchcraft accusations, which, Christina Larner argued, were particularly common in fishing villages and at times of economic decline.³⁰ People accused of witchcraft could be brought to trial and, if found guilty, still legally executed until 1736 although by the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the Scottish authorities' 'revulsion' and changes in the law resulted in far fewer successful prosecutions.³¹ In June 1704 accusations of witchcraft were made against several local people in Pittenweem. Robert, as a councillor, was elected with one of the bailies to go to Edinburgh to make an 'application for a commission to try

²⁷ USASC, B3/7/4, Pittenweem Sea Box minutes, 14th March 1746.

²⁸ USASC, B3/7/4, Pittenweem Sea Box minutes. May 1739, 23rd March 1741 and 23rd May 1751.

²⁹ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 226.

³⁰ Christina Larner, *Enemies of God* (Baltimore, 1981), 82.

³¹ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 184-92.

witches' but by late October the authorities had dismissed the charges against one and bailed the rest.³² In another incident the same year, Robert and a local Writer to the Signet were reported to have visited another woman accused of witchcraft whilst she was imprisoned in Pittenweem where Robert supposedly asked her 'if she had not renounced her baptism to the devil'.³³ Whilst the substance of any conversation is debatable, the visit and Robert's participation overall were probably factual, suggesting that Robert, like the minister, believed in witchcraft.³⁴ Examples of Robert's behaviour cited above do not suggest that he could be coerced into taking such proactive steps to prosecute individuals for witchcraft unless it was his genuine belief.

On the one hand, Robert's apparent belief and support for 'trying witches' is unsurprising. Witchcraft beliefs were not confined to ordinary people and Smout noted that 'it was many years after 1662 before even the intellectuals of Scotland' gave up their witchcraft beliefs.³⁵ On the other hand, as an advocate he would have been aware of the changes in thinking concerning the law and witchcraft. Similarly the Pittenweem witchcraft accusations were some of the last in Scotland. Thus Robert appears still firmly rooted in traditional Pittenweem society where he was accepted and had status, power, and respect. After all, his attempts to penetrate his profession and a different society had been rebuffed and he was never quite able to make the transition from provincial oligarch to urbane professional.

³² Cook, *Annals*, 109-18.

³³ Anon., "A Gentleman in Fife" letter dated 5th February 1705 in *A Collection of Rare and Curious Tracts on Witchcraft and the Second Site with an Original Essay on Witchcraft*, (Edinburgh, 1820), 74-75. The accused woman was also supposed to have been visited by several curious dignitaries.

³⁴ This woman was eventually brutally murdered by a Pittenweem mob in January 1705. Although the bailies, who included 'Cousin James' Cook, attempted to intervene, they did not prevent the murder. No one was put on trial either for the actual murder or, in the case of the bailies, for dereliction of duty, despite a swift investigation of the case by the authorities (Anon., "Gentleman in Fife", *ibid*, Cook, *Annals*, 109-28, NAS, PC12/1705 Privy Council Minutes, papers dated 14th, 15th February, 8th March 1705 and PC12/1706/1 dated 2nd Oct 1705).

³⁵ Smout, *ibid*, 192.

Breakdown of burgess structure

Other family changes were more subtle and less radical than embarking on a new profession. In April 1720 Thomas became an honorary burgess of St Andrews.³⁶ Whereas the political and economic drivers for Thomas becoming a burgess of Pittenweem could be readily explained, the reasons behind the St Andrews membership are less obvious. One explanation for Thomas's action lay in the general move of burgess status around the 1720s from an essential for doing business to more an issue of social standing.³⁷ The records of St Andrews for burgess entry reflected this change. Ministers from the East Neuk and local landowners are examples of men who were associated with the town and became burgesses but who were not resident or intending to carry out merchant or tradesmen activities.³⁸ It is unlikely that there were any tangible privileges associated with being an honorary burgess and membership conveyed solely the intangibles of status, recognition, and 'citizenship'.³⁹

Even if Thomas had had full trading privileges, it was unlikely that St Andrews would have had much to recommend it in terms of trade over Elie or Pittenweem. Following the Revolution settlement of 1689, St Andrews lost its pre-eminence as an ecclesiastical centre.⁴⁰ These factors, coupled with the general overall decline of the east coast trade, led Smout to observe that by 1705 'no other community in Scotland

³⁶ USASC, B65/8/5 fo. 168, St. Andrews Court Books 1710-1721, April 19th 1720. 'Mr Thomas Cook of Newburn' appeared in a list of names headed 'List of Honorary Burgess created since the 5th Day of April 1719'. There were similar lists of names of new burgesses from outwith St Andrews scattered throughout the Court Book which were not specifically headed 'honorary' but who probably were. See also Latin transcript of burgess ticket (Cook, *Genealogical Notes*, appendix xvii).

³⁷ See p. 45 in relation to Robert.

³⁸ USASC, B65/8/5,6 and 7, St Andrews Court Books and David Dobson, *Burgess Roll of St Andrews 1700-1750* (St Andrews, 1994). Dobson did not distinguish honorary burgesses.

³⁹ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 164.

⁴⁰ R.G. Cant, *The University of St Andrews- a Short History* (St Andrews, 1992), 91.

had decayed as much as this'.⁴¹ There had even been attempts in 1697 to move the university from St Andrews to Perth because St Andrews was considered out of the way, poor, dirty, and expensive.⁴² Of the state of the university, although Ronald Cant claimed that until around the 1730s 'if far from satisfactory, it was not unduly serious', contemporary commentators regarded it as mediocre and struggling to survive.⁴³ Whatever the realities of the situation were, noticeable numbers of the local embryonic middle classes felt that St Andrews retained sufficient beneficial prestige and cachet to warrant their becoming burgesses.

The timing of Thomas's membership coincided with localised food riots early in 1720 and these may have been sufficiently unsettling to provide a further potential reason for his membership. In Whatley's analysis, the riots were caused by merchants exporting basic foodstuffs for considerable though risky profit in preference to selling them in the burgh market places for ordinary people to buy. Thus it was aspects of emerging market economics that incensed people to riot and violence rather than a shortage caused by a poor harvest.⁴⁴ Whether Thomas was exporting grain or not, as a merchant such events on his doorstep would have been intimidating - Whatley quoted a Dundee merchant 'in fear of his life'.⁴⁵ The riots would be an uncomfortable

⁴¹ Smout, *Scottish Trade*, 140.

⁴² Charles Jobson Lyon, *History of St Andrews*, vol. II (Edinburgh, 1843), 119-22.

⁴³ Cant, *University of St Andrews*, 99 and Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 77.

⁴⁴ Whatley, *Scottish Society*, 189-94 and 'The Union of 1707; Integration and the Scottish Burghs: The Case of the 1720 Food Riots' in *The Scottish Historical Review*, vol. 78, 2: 206, 1999, 192-218. For detail of events in the East Neuk, see NAS, High Court Records, Minute Book, 30th March-2nd September 1720 JC7/10/55-57 and 121 and JC7/10/321-23.

⁴⁵ The finger is pointed much more closely at the Cooks in Pittenweem as grain exporters. Whatley (*Scottish Society*, 204) quoted one Pittenweem councillor who 'had refused to assist in dispersing the crowd' and who 'looked upon some of the Magistrates as partys'. Pittenweem Town Council minutes (USASC, B60/6/1 23rd February 1720) revealed that only one of the four magistrates had no known connections with the Cook network. The other three, all shipmasters, were James Cook (son of 'Cousin James'), James Melvill married to Thomas's niece and William Bell junior. Whatley, *Scottish Society*, 192.

reminder that the existing status quo could be challenged and might encourage obtaining new symbols of status with a different foundation.

Thomas was the first person in the family network known to have obtained burghship of St Andrews in the 1720s.⁴⁶ A combination of reasons probably prompted Thomas to be the ‘first mover’ in acquiring the new status symbol. More importantly, it illustrated the family’s implicit recognition that the burgh trading structure had started to break down and that the old ‘mercantile controls ... [were] ... rapidly being abandoned in the late 17th and early 18th century’. As Scotland’s economy started to grow, it required different ways of doing business from those that had operated in a more static economic environment.⁴⁷

Drivers for change in the next generation

The decisive break with the merchant skipper tradition took place in the next generation around 1720 with Thomas and Robert’s sons.⁴⁸ It was perhaps not surprising that Robert’s surviving son William became a writer and there is a suggestion, but no proof, that William was university-educated.⁴⁹ Ultimately, Thomas’s

⁴⁶ See appendix 5 for others associated with the network who also became burghesses.

⁴⁷ Devine, *Exploring the Scottish Past*, 20 and 32.

⁴⁸ Although Captain John had at least thirty-six grandchildren there were only three surviving Cook grandsons who might have carried on the family traditional occupation.

⁴⁹ William was designated ‘Mr’ in B65/8/6 (appendix 5). Smart stated that the honorific title of ‘Mr’ was usually reserved for graduates in this period though William does not appear in any Scottish university records (*Alphabetical Register*, introduction, ix). William was described as a writer in Pittenweem and Edinburgh and it is said that he worked abroad (NAS, GD62/331, 332 and 334, 5th October, 4th December 1734 and 22nd January 1735). Writers were the equivalent of modern solicitors and worked in the lower courts whereas Writers to the Signet had been admitted to the College of Justice (Bigwood, *Scottish Family Tree*, 186). An elder brother, James, of unknown occupation, survived into adulthood but predeceased Robert (NAS, B60/1/1 Register of Sasines (First Series 1669-1732) Pittenweem, 11th September 1723).

son John also moved into the professions and by 1720 he was probably attending St Andrews University.⁵⁰

Unlike his father's generation where there were at least three if not four sons to place in careers, young John was Thomas's only surviving son. Thus there was no competition from siblings had he wished to follow his father as a merchant skipper. An analysis of the internal strengths and weaknesses of the Cook brothers' business and the external opportunities and threats of the wider contemporary political and economic environment gave some insights into the possible drivers for change.

The Cook brothers had built up considerable internal strengths in their personal business skills, networks, and partnerships. Their dealings encompassed coast-wise and export trade to traditional Baltic, North Sea, and other European destinations. They had established a good social and power position in the East Neuk, and Thomas at least had relatively comfortable circumstances with a house and small land ownership.⁵¹

However, the brothers also had internal weaknesses. Whilst Thomas was relatively well-off, Robert's financial position was dire. Overall, they were probably 'too poor to be bold', and had limited access to sufficient capital to undertake any radical shift in business direction.⁵² The inherited wealth from their father John had moved out of the core Cook family and had been split between two daughters' husbands' families. The past vagaries of the economic environment, pirate activity, and

⁵⁰ Chapter 4 analyses John's education and subsequent career, including the timing of when he attended St Andrews University.

⁵¹ Thomas's son John was a 'potens' student at St Andrews University meaning that he paid the higher scale of fees typical for the sons of 'the landed and higher professionals', emphasising the family's comfortable circumstances (Smart, *Alphabetical Register*, x and 126).

⁵² Smout, *Scottish Trade*, 80.

the need to support the careers and marriages of the next generation had resulted in a fairly high level of risk aversion. Whereas Thomas's father had been able to profit from a first mover competitive advantage in the late 1660s, it is unclear what Thomas might have been trading in by the 1720s.⁵³ Finally, the brothers may have had local power and influence but they were unable to shape events beyond local confines.

However, there were external opportunities presented by the potential economic benefits of union with England from access to new markets in England and her colonies. Merchants who traded in grain by sea were in a particularly strong position.⁵⁴ Although Devine argued that the economic benefits from the Union were delayed until the 1730-40s, he also made the point that the immediate pre-Union period provided Scotland with the 'commercial structure' required for it to be able to benefit in the longer term.⁵⁵

Significant external threats offset the available opportunities. Although the concept of commercial competition was anathema to the old established burgh trading system, competitive rivalry was inevitable because of the large number of both small burghs and small traders.⁵⁶ There is also a contradictory aspect as Smout argued that the *lack* of competitive rivalry was in itself a detriment to trade.⁵⁷ Pittenweem and St Andrews continued to decline though Smout also argued that 'the trading burghs of the east coast did not all decay on the morrow of the Union'.⁵⁸ Geographical location

⁵³ The sources that might have indicated what business Thomas was engaged in during the later stages of his life are not readily available: Scottish customs records end in 1707 and there are no indices to surviving bonds between 1715 and 1770.

⁵⁴ Whatley, *Scottish Society*, 53. Note 45 assessed the likelihood of the Cooks trading in grain.

⁵⁵ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 53.

⁵⁶ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 157 and Oram, *Fife Book*, 82.

⁵⁷ Smout, *Scottish Trade*, 99.

⁵⁸ Oram, *Fife Book*, 83 and Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 226.

also contributed to the decline of the east coast burghs because of the growth of trade from the west coast.⁵⁹

The business scenario that emerged suggests that one of the processes driving the change from Pittenweem skippers to the embryonic professional classes lay in the fact that it was not economically attractive to continue in the merchant skipper business. Demographics were also against the family as there were few boys who might run the business in the next generation.⁶⁰ Although there is no way of knowing whether the initial marriage of a Cook daughter to a professional man rather than a skipper was driven more by economics or romantic considerations, once the process had started, it accelerated until professional men became the partners of choice, creating avenues into the professions for male relatives.⁶¹

Comparisons with other families

Another merchant skipper family who made the move into the professions in the same generation was Thomas's in-laws, the Gillespie family of Elie.⁶² John Gillespie senior (Thomas's brother-in-law) was also a merchant in Elie. In the early modern period, the Gillespies and the Cooks appeared to have been broadly of comparable wealth and status. Although the Gillespies did not have as early an introduction to formal higher education as the Cooks did through Robert, the serious commitment of Alexander Gillespie senior to the Kirk indicated a man significantly self-educated. That

⁵⁹ Oram, *Fife Book*, 83.

⁶⁰ One of Thomas's grandsons, Thomas Meek, became a merchant in Dunbar (see chapter 5, note 82).

⁶¹ Chapter 5 explores these aspects in more detail.

⁶² See appendix 6 for a summary of the family relationships and background to the Gillespie family. John Gillespie junior, John Cook's first cousin, became a doctor of medicine. He attended St Andrews University 1722-23, Leyden 1728 and was listed as MA/MD by examination in 1753 (Smart, *Alphabetical Register*, 217). Devine recorded that the renowned medical school at Leyden was used by Scots in this period (*Scottish Nation*, 71).

one of his sons would also have made the Kirk his calling had he survived provided further such evidence. Devine argued that despite the puritanical presbyterianism of the 1690s, 'religious belief could actually stimulate an interest in moral, philosophical and scientific questions' and thus the Gillespie household may well have been as intellectual as it was commercial and seafaring.⁶³ Two of Thomas's sisters-in-law married professional men and the period around 1720 also appeared as a breakpoint amongst the Gillespies when the family moved away from the East Neuk to north Fife. Thus the two families had a similar response to the contemporary economic environment.

Whilst rational argument points to adverse economics as the most logical reason for a shift to the professions, it is equally possible that the actual reason was more emotional and personal. The simple answer may be that young John Cook had no interest or aptitude for seafaring or trading and this, coupled with less favourable trading circumstances, tipped the balance in favour of change. The sense that the economic rationale was not so clear cut comes from comparing the choices made by the family of 'Cousin James', a contemporary cousin of Thomas's, with those of the core Cook and Gillespie families, as the external political and economic issues impinged equally on 'Cousin James' and his activities.⁶⁴

'Cousin James' was also a Pittenweem skipper and in many respects his life and activities in Pittenweem paralleled those of the two seafaring Cook brothers. He became equally involved in the Pittenweem governing hierarchy and was similarly survived by more daughters than sons. His three daughters' marriage partners were

⁶³ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 69.

⁶⁴ Appendix 7 documents the relationship between the core Cook family and that of 'Cousin James'.

not dissimilar to those of the core Cook family.⁶⁵ However, there were some significant differences. ‘Cousin James’ was not as wealthy at the time of the 1694 hearth tax returns as the core Cook family and did not appear to have bought property in Pittenweem until the early years of the eighteenth century.⁶⁶ The family had no strong connection to the ministry, nor were any close family members university-educated. Regardless of the similarities between the two branches of the family, ‘Cousin James’s’ only surviving son (yet another James) chose to continue the family line as a shipmaster in Pittenweem, despite the uninviting economic circumstances, rather than move into a different occupation.

There is evidence to suggest that ‘Cousin James’s’ son, James was engaged in export trade of some distance and complexity. A legal case of around 1730 over an unpaid bill indicated that young James operated with an expatriate merchant in Bordeaux and his St Andrews factor, sailed to Danzig and that the bill in question was payable at the ‘Exchange Coffee House in Edinburgh’.⁶⁷ There was also mention of a ‘Captain Nairn of Elie’ and ‘supercargos’ in a case drawn on for reference purposes.⁶⁸ All these points imply that both young James and other East Neuk shipmasters of the period were operating to a similar degree of sophistication as their fathers and

⁶⁵ All his three daughters married Pittenweem men active in the burgh hierarchy. One married a writer, another a shipmaster, and the third, a man of unknown occupation.

⁶⁶ See appendix 4 for data on 1694 hearth tax returns and appendix 7 for property and land information for ‘Cousin James’.

⁶⁷ The Exchange in Edinburgh, rebuilt around 1702, had been designed for merchants to conduct their business. The plan for the next version in 1753 included a coffee house (Robert Millar, *The Municipal Buildings of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1895), 111).

⁶⁸ James Cook, *Answers for James Cook shipmaster in Pittenweem to the petition of Robert Gordon merchant in Bordeaux and his factor* (Edinburgh, 13th July 1732). NLS, mf.134, reel 12756, no: 44. There do not appear to be any other shipmasters named James Cook of Pittenweem in this period. Graham defined a supercargo as a ‘person appointed by the owners of a cargo to trade on their behalf’. The supercargo was not concerned with sailing the ship, though ‘usually decided which ports would be visited’ (*Maritime History*, glossary). ‘Captain Nairn’ was no doubt related to the Captain Robert Nairn who acted as a witness at the baptism of Thomas’s first grandchild (Elie OPR, Christian Meek, 6th March 1715).

grandfathers. These points add more weight to the premise that drivers other than economics were more important in encouraging Thomas and his son John to choose university over a seafaring apprenticeship. Overall, early exposure to higher education and close contact with professional people appear as the most significant differences between the two branches of the family, widening horizons and fostering aspirations beyond the known. The Cooks and the Gillespies had more choices and options open to them, from a combination of greater financial security and knowledge of alternatives.

Young James also took over the Cook tradition of membership of Pittenweem's ruling elite but if any of this James's sons or grandsons remained in Pittenweem, they did not hold positions of authority in either the council or Kirk after his death around 1745.⁶⁹ Devine observed that some families 'retained their leading position' in the burghs whereas others were replaced though old families could well have been 'perpetuated through the female line'.⁷⁰ This was indeed the case for the old Cook line.⁷¹

⁶⁹ USASC, B60/6/1, Pittenweem Town Council minutes, 1629-1727. Young James first appeared alongside his father 'Cousin James' following his admission as a burgher in September 1708. Thereafter young James appeared regularly until his death sometime between the council elections of September 1744 and September 1745 (B60/6/2, 1727-1776). He also appeared in the Pittenweem Sea Box minutes from 1709 until 1742 (B3/7/4 1633-1757). The Town Council minutes for 1776-1795 (B60/6/3) are missing but B60/6/2 and 4 (1745 onwards-1776 and 1795-1821) do not mention any Cooks. As the OP records for Pittenweem are patchy from around 1745 to 1780, it is unknown whether any male members of this branch of the family remained in Pittenweem (V. Ben Bloxham compiled in consultation with Derek F. Metcalfe, *Key to Parochial Registers of Scotland, from the earliest times through 1854* (Provo, Utah, 1970)). John Cook, shipmaster, who married in Pittenweem in 1830 is unlikely to be related as he was the son of David Cook a maltman from Dundee (OPR 15th January 1830 and testament, NAS, SC20/50/6, 8th August 1832). These two men were however the father and grandfather of David Cook, the author of *Annals of Pittenweem*.

⁷⁰ Devine, *Exploring the Scottish Past*, 26.

⁷¹ James Melville, husband of Anna Cook (core family James's daughter) appeared in the Town Council minutes throughout the period and topped the stent roll in 1721.

The family appeared to have been subtly aware of the economic changes affecting Scotland in the immediate post-Union period. Their response to those changes was principally reactive, opportunistic and dictated by circumstances (international politics, economics, and demographics) over which the family had no control and virtually no influence. It was the result of contingency and unforeseen events. In their own small way the East Neuk seafaring families who decided to move on physically and mentally were part of the virtuous circle that was the prelude to the Scottish Enlightenment. Devine was at pains to point out that whilst 'intolerance' and 'conformity' might seem to typify Scotland in the pre-Enlightenment period, the country was not a 'cultural backwater'.⁷² The Enlightenment would not have flourished if it had not been for the earlier achievements of a strong existing 'tradition of scholarship' and the 'social and material environment' created by a merchant class prepared to accept change.⁷³

It is only through a detailed investigation at a family level, stripping away the rather bland exterior suggested by traditional economic analysis, that we can reveal the more emotional, irrational, and realistic side to working and family relationships in early-modern Scotland. Business and merchants may have depended very heavily on kinship networks but they were operated by people whose decisions were not always rational by the standards of today.

⁷² Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 65 and 67-72.

⁷³ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 70 and Devine, *Scottish Enlightenment*, 35.

Chapter 4 Professional life in eighteenth century Fife

Changes in the Kirk

Chapter three explored the economic and family demographic reasons that may have led to John, Thomas's son, moving away from the traditional family merchant skipper occupation. It also highlighted that personal preference might outweigh purely economic considerations and, given that John ultimately earned his living as a minister in the Established Church of Scotland, his personal religious calling could well have been the deciding factor. The influence of minister-husbands of several close contemporary female relatives was also probably significant.¹

The Kirk itself was changing in the period when John and his family would have been making decisions about his future. Devine commented on the change in the Kirk from 'repressive puritanism' immediately following the 1690 Revolution settlement to a more relaxed and less rigid interpretation of presbyterianism around the second decade of the eighteenth century. Devine argued that to a large extent the vehement backlash against episcopalianism had been power politics as presbyterianism reasserted itself.²

The early eighteenth century was a period of change in terms of who had the right to select a new minister. Following the 1690 Revolution settlement, the hereditary patrons' right to select a minister passed by default to the parish heritors and elders but patrons regained their hereditary rights with the 1712 Patronage Act.³

¹ See chapter 5, Pp 96-7.

² Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 72.

³ Patronage was the right of hereditary patrons to appoint parish ministers. There was a distinction between the 'heritors' and 'patrons' of a parish. The parish heritors were the local landowners who were responsible by law for church matters such as the provision and upkeep of the parish church, manse, and minister's stipend. Heritors might also be patrons but patrons included the Crown and

John Burleigh, however, pointed out that whilst the Patronage Act restored the patrons' rights, it did not 'explicitly deny the rights of the congregation to object or the Presbytery to adjudicate [in the choice of minister]'.⁴ In other words, the congregation had at least the right of veto if not of outright selection. The change was not instantaneous as Devine noted that it was not until the 1730s that patrons 'first started to enforce their powers'.⁵

Smout added another dimension when he argued that as Scottish landowners became increasingly influenced by the way English landowners acted, they wanted 'to see someone in the manse as polite and friendly to the laird as the average Anglican parson was to the squire'.⁶ Thomas had already aligned himself with the local gentry by at least 1704 such that 'my Lord Anstruther' and 'the laird of Samford' were prepared to be baptismal witnesses for his children.⁷ Status was important to Thomas and having his son in an occupation where there were harmonious relations and mutual respect with the local power magnates would be attractive. There is a good contrast here with the situation a generation earlier when Uncle Robert Cook, also university-educated, qualified as an advocate in 1676. Then, Jackson argued, 'the nation had little respect for churchmen'.⁸ The ministry was probably never a choice for Robert any more than it would have been for John had the same social view and religious contentions prevailed. Overall John's profile matched that described by

universities (Andrew Herron, *A Guide to Congregational Affairs* (Edinburgh, 1978), 38, Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707* (Edinburgh, 1997), 18) and Callum G. Brown, 'Religion' in Cooke *et al*, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 1, 70.

⁴ J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (London, 1960), 337.

⁵ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 89.

⁶ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 216.

⁷ Elie OPR various dates 1702-8. From Wood, *East Neuk*, 175, this property is Sandford, now St Ford on current Ordnance Survey maps, about two km north-west of Elie.

⁸ Jackson, *Restoration Scotland*, 166.

Whyte and Whyte for ministers in this period as 'relatively well off financially' and 'often upwardly mobile'.⁹

Training for the ministry

John followed the route of typical candidates for the Kirk ministry.¹⁰ He entered St Andrews University aged about fifteen around 1717 and studied for an M.A.¹¹ John's connection with the Kirk appeared immediately after he completed his initial four years of university education when he obtained a 'Certificate of Church Commission' from the minister of his home parish of Elie.¹² By 1723 John was studying for the next academic requirement, two years' study of divinity which he undertook at Edinburgh University.¹³ Once he had completed his divinity education, John did not immediately progress to the next stage of his training - 'tryalls' with a presbytery.¹⁴ This may have been partly to do with the fact that he was still a couple of years below the minimum

⁹ Whyte and Whyte, *Women in Scotland*, 221.

¹⁰ It was also possible to reach the required standards by private study supervised by a Presbytery (Nigel M. deS. Cameron (organising ed.), *The Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* (Edinburgh, 1993), 280).

¹¹ John most likely first matriculated at St Andrews University in 1717, although Smart listed John with a birthdate of c. 1711, obtaining an M.A. in 1732, implying he was an undergraduate c. 1728-32 (*Alphabetical Register*, 126). However from subsequent documented events in John's life, he was the son John, born to Thomas and Christian 22nd December 1702 (Elie OPR). This agreed with Cook's birthdate for John of 'about 1700' (*Genealogical Notes*, 8). The only university document in which John appeared was the 'Faculty of Arts Bursars Book 1456-1853' (UY 412) when he paid his M.A. dues in November 1732. He did not appear on first matriculation in 'Acta Rectorum 1578-1738' (UY 305/3) or in the graduation roll. Smart commented that some of his birthdates were 'certainly wrong', that graduation was often seen as a 'needless ceremony', and that M.A. dues were 'sometimes paid late' (*ibid*, ix, xvii and vii).

¹² NAS, RH16/190/4, c. 1842. Item 4 in this bundle of documents is a list of family documents dating from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, probably compiled by one of John's grandsons. Document no. 7 in this list is a 'Certificate of Church Commission to John Cook from Ja. Chalmers minister Elie, Elie Dec 3rd 1722'. James Chalmers was minister of Elie 1701-38 (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 5, 198). The location of the actual documents on the list is not known.

¹³ NAS, RH16/190/4, Document no. 27 is a 'Discharge James Bell periwig maker burgess of Haddington to Tho. Cook whose lawful daughter Anna he had married Feb 5th 1723 - John Cook then studying Divinity Edinbr.' See also NAS, Haddington Presbytery Minutes, CH2/185/12 April 27th 1731 recorded a Certificate in Divinity for John from 'Professor Hamilton'. William Hamilton was Professor of Divinity at Edinburgh University 1709-1732 (Cameron, *Dictionary*, 391).

¹⁴ Cameron, *Dictionary*, 280 and Walter Makey, *The Church of the Covenant 1637-1651* (Edinburgh, 1979), 102.

age requirement of twenty-three although rules such as these were frequently bent.¹⁵ It was also possible that he had problems finding a presbytery prepared to accept him for trials or chose to earn his living, perhaps by tutoring in the meantime.¹⁶ There was a period of around five years in the late 1720s when it was not clear how he supported himself.

'Tryalls' were a programme of training supervised by a presbytery, the successful completion of which gave the candidate his 'licence' as a preacher of the gospel.¹⁷ John undertook his 'tryalls' with Haddington Presbytery perhaps because he already had a married sister living in Haddington.¹⁸ Haddington had an ancient charter which granted the town free access to the harbour at Aberlady allowing trading with the ports around the Firth of Forth.¹⁹ The proximity of Aberlady to ports such as Cockenzie where John and Anna's father Thomas Cook certainly had trading contacts at least earlier in his merchant career, suggests this might be the route through which Anna found her marriage partner. In April 1731 John and another young man, Matthew Reid, were recorded for the first time in Haddington presbytery minutes seeking 'tryalls'.²⁰ Over the following eight months both men's names appeared regularly in the presbytery minutes as they progressed through their 'tryalls', with John receiving his licence early in 1732.

¹⁵ Andrew Herron, *A Guide to the Ministry* (Edinburgh, 1987), 28-30.

¹⁶ Young graduates destined for the ministry could earn a living tutoring the sons of the gentry before undertaking their 'tryalls'; see for instance George Hill in appendix 9.

¹⁷ Cameron, *Dictionary*, 483 and Makey, *Church of the Covenant*, 102.

¹⁸ See note 13 above which also implied an early link between John and his sister in Haddington. Although there was no OPR entry traceable for Anna's marriage, there were OPR entries for two children born to this couple in Haddington in February 1724 and May 1727.

¹⁹ Haddington History Society and Haddington Remembered, *Haddington Royal Burgh - A History and Guide* (East Linton, 1997), 17.

²⁰ Matthew, born 1707, was the son of the previous, deceased minister at North Berwick (Scott, *Fasti* vol. 1, 390). NAS, CH2/185/12, Haddington Presbytery Minutes, April 20th 1731 and CH2/252/10, 27th April 1731 for the approval by the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale. John's documented presence in Haddington between at least April 1731 and February 1732 is the evidence that he could not have been a student at St Andrews at this time. His M.A. graduation date of 1732 was probably more to do with the need to document his educational attainments.

Finding work as a minister

If a licensed minister wished to become a parish minister, then there was a further period as a 'probationer', during which he acted as a 'supply' minister or schoolteacher to vacancies within the presbytery parishes. John and Matthew both undertook 'supply' work in the Haddington area.²¹ The stumbling block for many in obtaining a permanent post as a parish minister was the usual supply and demand inherent in any job market and how well they used their networks and contacts both to find out about vacancies and to secure the equivalent of an interview for the job. Candidates could wait six or seven years before securing a permanent parish and some never made it, remaining as the faintly ridiculed figure of the 'stickit minister'.²²

John's family in Elie probably let him know that the incumbent of St Monans had died early in 1733. Thus the final entry in Haddington Presbytery minutes that related to John was a request for an 'Extract of Mr Cook's Licence'.²³ By the end of September 1733 St Andrews Presbytery had been approached by the elders of St Monans 'for a hearing of Mr John Cook Probationer' and John was allowed to preach after he had shown his licence to one of the presbytery ministers.²⁴ A couple of weeks later some members of St Andrews Presbytery were appointed 'to meet with the heritors, elders and people of the parish of St Monance [to] converse about settling a minister.'²⁵ It was ten months before the outcome was reported, during which time John had gained the overt support of one of the heritors, Lady Newark, who let it be

²¹ NAS, CH2/185/12, Haddington Presbytery Minutes, 29th February 1732.

²² Makey, *Church of the Covenant*, 102, Cameron, *Dictionary*, 797, Andrew Herron, *A Guide to the Presbytery* (Edinburgh, 1983), 1-2 and 106.

²³ NAS, CH2/185/12, Haddington Presbytery Minutes, 1st September 1733. The 'Extract' was the proof that the person had obtained his Licence (Herron, *Guide to Presbytery*, 109) and served the same function as a modern degree certificate. St Monans is about four km along the coast from Elie.

²⁴ NAS, CH2/1132/3, St Andrews Presbytery, 30th September 1733. One of those named was Walter Wilson minister at Kilconquhar, who was a witness at John's baptism and in time his father-in-law.

²⁵ NAS, CH2/1132/3, St Andrews Presbytery, 17th October 1733.

known to the presbytery that 'it was her earnest desire that Mr John Cook Probationer might be appointed to preach' in St Monans on two Sundays.²⁶ The elders of St Monans asserted their rights at this point by putting forward the names of two other candidates to preach. The balance was tipped in John's favour as he was awarded two Sundays whilst the other two were only allowed one each.²⁷ However, John did not rely on success at St Monans as he was also actively seeking a church near Glasgow in the intervening period.²⁸

The concept of the Call and the right of the congregation to have a say in the choice of minister was deeply rooted in the foundations of the Kirk and could evoke passionate feelings amongst the parishioners to the extent that ultimately differences of opinion concerning patronage were the future basis for splits in the Kirk.²⁹ John's Call to St Monans in August 1734 offers a good illustration of the delicate balance between heritors, elders, and congregation at this very critical point for the unity of the Kirk. All three heritors and two of the three elders present voted for John. The third elder 'had no objection to Mr Cook'. The consent of the parishioners was also asked 'who cheerfully consented thereto' with a 'great many others of the parish were

²⁶ NAS, CH2/1132/4, St Andrews Presbytery, 5th June 1734.

²⁷ The other candidates were William Dall, (licensed Arbroath 1727) and then an assistant at Monifieth (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 5, 363) and Andrew Reid, (licensed Wigtown 1722) but without a parish (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 2, 401). Based on Scott's data, it took Dall about ten years between gaining his licence and obtaining his own parish, and Reid about fourteen years whereas John Cook and Matthew Reid (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 1, 390) only took about three years. The biggest factor working in John and Matthew's favour might be that they both originated from the respective localities where they got their first parish with the implication of good connections.

²⁸ NAS, RH16/190/4, Document no. 30 is a 'letter John Cook to Tho. Cook his father Glasgow November 5th 1733. Speaks of his affair going on well at St Monance and his chance for another church near Glasgow'.

²⁹ Brown, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 1, 73 and Burleigh, *Church History*, 280-83. The first Secession was 1733-34. Spiritually the most important part of the process was the Call, the document signed by the heritors and members of the parish kirk in which they invited the person they had chosen to become their minister (Cameron, *Dictionary*, 119).

willing to sign the call if need be'.³⁰ Thus although there had been a very strong indication that John was the heritors' choice, the language used by Lady Newark was neither premonitory nor demanding and it had been the elders themselves who had first asked for John to preach. The parishioners had been consulted, due process had been seen to be done, and John's ordination went smoothly with 'none compearing to object' at the church door.³¹

Although patronage was highly contentious and divisive, the Kirk also realised that it would be impossible to achieve unanimous agreement amongst a congregation on the choice of a minister, especially where 'presentees were not always objected to for faults of their own'.³² Herron took a very pragmatic view of the patronage system and concluded that it worked as well 'as any subsequent system of popular election' and 'at its worst ... was probably responsible for a few serious misfits'.³³ He summed up a system that, whilst it could not satisfy the purists, functioned, as in John's case, adequately for the bulk of the time.

Overall the process dictated that aspirants were academically able, assiduous, and committed. The evidence from John and his fellow applicants for St Monans also indicated that these three young men were prepared to move to obtain work, contributing to the overall migration patterns within Scotland. It also helped if they

³⁰ NAS, CH2/1132/4, St Andrews Presbytery, 21st August 1734. The three heritors were Lady Newark, her son 'the Honourable the Master of Newark' and Sir Robert Anstruther of Balcaskie. Thomas Cook had laid good foundations thirty years previously with earlier generations of Anstruthers. The Crown was the patron of the parish (Donald J. Withrington and Ian R. Grant (eds), *The Statistical Account of Scotland (1791-1799)*, vol. 10 (Edinburgh, 1978), St Monance, 748.)

³¹ NAS, CH2/1132/4, St Andrews Presbytery, 31st October 1734. Thomas Cook, John's father, was present at his son's ordination, officially as an elder of Elie but no doubt as a proud father in reality.

³² Burleigh, *Church History*, 282.

³³ Herron, *Congregational Affairs*, 74.

were well connected, had some level of financial backing and sufficient interpersonal skills to read the balance of power between the parties in this period of change.

Life as a minister

The Kirk in mid-eighteenth century Scotland was integral to the functioning of a small community like St Monans, with its statutory responsibilities for education, poor relief, and jurisdiction over some civil as well as ecclesiastical offences.³⁴ St Monans Kirk Session minutes allowed a more personal insight into John's ministry and some understanding of his values and beliefs, albeit coloured by the clerk and the session elders themselves.

As the eighteenth century progressed, Smout argued that the more puritan aspects of Kirk discipline (for instance the use of the kirk stool) began to disappear.³⁵ At St Monans in 1736, a couple confessing to 'fornication before marriage' had to 'compear before the congregation upon the repenting stool' but thereafter although people confessing to similar sexual 'scandals' were publically rebuked, the repentance stool was not mentioned. John and his kirk session also tried to bring to task a member of the Anstruther family who had been named by a St Monans girl as the father of her illegitimate child - Whatley suggested that such an attempt at church discipline of a member of the gentry would have been very unusual.³⁶

³⁴ Brown, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 1, 63-6. Examples of the diversity of John's involvement in the day to day life of the community included acting as a bank for the Kirk session and helping to sort out the affairs of deceased parishioners when there were no adult family members.

³⁵ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 219.

³⁶ Whatley, *Scottish Society*, 148. NAS, CH2/1056/6, St Monance Kirk Session minutes, various dates 1739.

A 'horrid profanation of the Lords Day' in 1745, involving smuggling by a large group of St Monans men, also attracted the penalty of a public rebuke whereas a woman who 'took up lint on Sunday' got away with a sessional rebuke, the penalty also used for name calling and family fights.³⁷ Both incidents of profanation gave some indication of the levels of poverty amongst John's parishioners. Smuggling in Scotland in the first half of the eighteenth century was connected 'with subsistence' rather than organised crime and the lint picker argued it was a 'necessity'.³⁸

How much John had in common with most of his parishioners is a moot point.³⁹ He may have shared some understanding of their seafaring lifestyle but social divisions were apparent even when children died. Whereas John's child had the 'Best Little Mortcloth' for £1 4s, some of the other children whose deaths were recorded that day had to make do with the 'Old Little Mortcloth' for 8s.⁴⁰

It is clear from the minutes that John held some basic puritanical beliefs to the extent that he was prepared to challenge the heritors to whom at least in part he owed his employment. He may have received his divinity training from a professor known for his more moderate and liberal thinking, but both John and the session still appeared relatively conservative.⁴¹ Not all of his parishioners accepted old fashioned 'godly discipline' with some refusing to appear publically to be rebuked. St Monans Kirk Session continued to use public rebukes for some years after John's death in 1751,

³⁷ NAS, CH2/1056/6, St Monance Kirk Session minutes, 1734-1751.

³⁸ Whatley, *Scottish Society*, 195.

³⁹ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 218.

⁴⁰ NAS, CH2/1056/6, St Monance Kirk Session minutes, 5th March 1749.

⁴¹ Cameron, *Dictionary*, 391.

reflecting the nature of the society itself as much as the influence of an individual minister. Smout stated that a 'sharp decline' in public rebukes took place after 1760.⁴²

The values for the annual stipend in 1792 gave an indication of John's likely income some fifty years previously. St Monans was not a rich living and commanded around £64 compared to Pittenweem at £82 and Elie at £100. Although the manse was included, as the St Monans author stated, it was in a 'bad condition' and he had been unable to get all the money he was entitled to from the heritors.⁴³ Employment may have been secure but payment might not have been and the secondary source of income that John had from his inheritance from his father of land at Easter Newburn and property in Elie was no doubt welcome security.⁴⁴ Makey's view of the lives of rural ministers a century earlier probably still had some echoes for John's existence - '[the minister] spent his working life as the missionary of an intellectual elite in a rural outpost which was at best half literate. It was a lonely life'.⁴⁵

The loneliness for John would have been mitigated by his wife and family and also close Cook family members in Elie. There were presbytery meetings in St Andrews where John worked with colleagues whose descendants intermarried with his own in subsequent generations and he could keep in contact with his brother-in-law Walter Wilson.⁴⁶ Through the routines of his daily work and family contacts, John laid the

⁴² Smout, *History*, 219.

⁴³ Withrington and Grant (eds), *Statistical Account*, vol. 10, St Monance, 748-749, Pittenweem, 697 and Elie, 347. The minister's stipend was different to a salary in that 1) it belonged to the benefice and 2) the minister had to meet all the expenses of doing the job from it before it could be used to support himself and his family (Andrew Herron, *A Guide to Ministerial Income* (Edinburgh, 1987), 13-5.

⁴⁴ Barring bad behaviour such as drunkenness, once the minister was in post, he was there until he died. He might chose to translate to another parish, probably one offering better pay and conditions. John sold property in Elie to a brother-in-law in July 1743 (NAS, GD1/27/45, 23rd May 1761). The sale probably followed the death of his father Thomas in January 1743.

⁴⁵ Makey, *Church of the Covenant*, 103.

⁴⁶ See appendix 8 for the family relationships between John's colleagues: Principal Joseph Drew, Rev. John McCormick, and Rev. John Hill, and the Cook family. Walter was Professor of Greek at St Andrews

foundations for relationships that would be important for his own children. John did attach some value to social standing itself, illustrated by his becoming a burgher of St Andrews and Pittenweem but did not appear to have used any level of political involvement as an avenue for increased social standing and advancement.⁴⁷ He made good use of family and kin networks but probably no more or less than any contemporaries. Whilst he was entirely typical of many other rural mid-eighteenth century Kirk ministers in background, beliefs and lifestyle, in terms of the Cook family transition he was the nexus between the past and the future.

Development of patronage in eighteenth century Scotland

The 1707 Union had not defined how Scotland should be governed within the new British state and in the following decades the political system that developed operated through a succession of Scots who were left to manage the country broadly as they liked as long as the country behaved itself.⁴⁸ Fry argued that it was the first ‘manager’, the second duke of Argyll, who ‘made patronage the central activity of Scottish politics’, pointing out that the existing ‘hierarchical’ nature of Scottish society made such arrangements seem quite acceptable.⁴⁹ However, by 1763 the Argyll dynasty of Scottish managers had ended and the country had no political leadership or central ‘distributor of patronage’.⁵⁰ Murdoch also argued that by this stage, the ‘semi-independent’ managerial system that had preserved the ‘old Scottish social order’

1748-69 (Robert N. Smart, *Biographical Register of the University of St Andrews 1747-1897* (St. Andrews, 2004), 646). John baptised Walter’s first child (St Andrews OPR, Margaret Wilson, 7th September 1750).

⁴⁷ John became a burgher of St Andrews on 23rd April 1739 (Dobson, *Burgess Roll*, 10). He also became a burgher of Pittenweem in circumstances that emphasised social importance and ritual. When the new minister was ordained into Pittenweem Kirk on 7th May 1741, John, several other local ministers and St Andrews University dignitaries who were attending the ordination, all became burghers (USASC, B60/6/2, Pittenweem Town Council minutes, back of volume).

⁴⁸ Michael Fry, ‘Politics’ in *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 1, 46-57.

⁴⁹ Fry, *ibid*, 52.

⁵⁰ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 197.

seemed less appropriate as the Scottish ruling classes woke up to the potential offered by the British state and empire.⁵¹ It was Henry Dundas, an advocate from the Arniston Midlothian family of lairds rather than the nobility, who moved in to fill the political vacuum with his appointment as Solicitor General in 1766 followed by Lord Advocate in 1775. Dundas's eventually pervasive control over the entire Scottish patronage system established 'a complex network of clients, voters, and local interests who depended on him for favours, places, promotions and pensions'.⁵² When Dundas added senior appointments in the East India Company to his portfolio, his influence extended into patronage of British India and its lucrative posts and he was able to gain the Scots 'a piece of the imperial pie'.⁵³

McGilvary argued that Walpole had realised in the early days of the Union that ensuring that the Scots had a significant share of British patronage would contribute to the survival of the new British state by providing employment opportunities and much needed money in an impoverished country.⁵⁴ Similarly Devine argued that at the end of the eighteenth century, any reduction in opportunities might have 'destabilized' the government.⁵⁵

Patronage in the Kirk had evolved as well. The fine balance between legal patrons, heritors, and parishioners apparent when John Cook became minister of St Monans in 1734 had moved by the 1740s to the highly contentious system in which

⁵¹ Alexander Murdoch, *The People Above: Politics and Administration in mid-18th century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1980), 124-25.

⁵² Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 198. Henry Dundas became the first Viscount Melville, followed by his son Robert as second Viscount Melville. Robert also added the name Saunders on his marriage. In this study, the Melville nomenclature has been used to distinguish Robert Saunders Dundas, 2nd Viscount Melville (1771-1851) from his cousin and brother-in-law Robert Dundas (1758-1819), the Laird of Arniston and Chief Baron of the Exchequer from 1801 (Michael Fry, *The Dundas Despotism* (Edinburgh, 1992), vi and *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 17, 291-94).

⁵³ Murdoch, *People Above*, 133.

⁵⁴ George K. McGilvary, *East India Patronage and the British State* (London, 2008), preface.

⁵⁵ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 216.

the rights of the congregation were largely reduced to a formality and the legal patron of the parish alone ‘presented’ new ministers to parish vacancies.⁵⁶ The disputes over patronage led to the formation within the Kirk in the early 1750s of two broad groupings or ‘parties’. Whilst the ‘Moderates’ were pro-Establishment and upheld patronage because it was the law, they were also associated, at least initially, with the Scottish Enlightenment, toleration and rational debate.⁵⁷ The ‘Evangelicals’ in contrast believed in the basic right of the congregation to appoint their minister, were more fundamentalist Calvinists and adopted a much more fervent and emotional expression of their religious beliefs.⁵⁸ The power balance between the two parties was a major part of Scottish life from the 1760s until well into the nineteenth century with the divisions becoming increasingly political rather than based around different views on ‘religious practice and doctrine’.⁵⁹

Initial family entry to patronage networks

John, son of John Cook, minister of St Monans, would have had a good understanding of academic life at St Andrews University where his maternal uncle and curator, Walter Wilson, was professor of Greek.⁶⁰ Ironically, it was Walter’s death in

⁵⁶ Brown, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 1, 70-2.

⁵⁷ William Ferguson, *Scotland 1689 to the Present* (Edinburgh, 1968), 227-28 and Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 75-81.

⁵⁸ Brown, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 1, 68.

⁵⁹ Iain F. Maciver, ‘Moderates and Wildmen: Politics, Religion and Party Division in the Church of Scotland, 1800-1843’ in Alexander Murdoch (ed.) with Edward J. Cowan and Richard J. Finlay, *The Scottish Nation: Identity and History, Essays in honour of William Ferguson* (Edinburgh, 2007), 107. The Evangelical party had more Whig or Liberal views whilst the Moderates were Tories.

⁶⁰ John attended St Andrews University 1754-59. He graduated M. A. in 1758 and studied Divinity 1758-59 (Smart, *Biographical Register*, 186) but neither Cook in *Genealogical Notes* or Scott in *Fasti* record him anywhere as a parish minister. He is however described as a ‘Preacher of the Gospel’ i.e. having completed ‘tryalls’ and having been licenced by an (unknown) presbytery but without a parish (USASC, UYUC 400/2, Minutes of United College, 9th October 1769) and having been a preacher ‘[for] several years’ (USASC, MS 4782, letter George Hill to Henry Dundas, 1st March 1799). See note 46 for Walter Wilson and figure 3.

February 1769 that created the opening for John's first professorship at St Andrews in October 1769.⁶¹

To obtain the professorship John accessed a patronage network that pre-dated all the post-Union patronage developments in Scotland. The family of Scot of Scotstarvit in the parish of Ceres in Fife held the right to appoint people to a chair at St Andrews University usually as Humanists.⁶² Whilst the Scots of Scotstarvit certainly 'presented' John to be the professor of Humanity, Emerson's explanation for the manner in which John accessed the patronage was partly erroneous.⁶³ Emerson stated that John was then 'minister of Kilmany [whose] Patrons were the Principal and Professors of United College [who] persuaded the Scots of Scotstarvit to choose Cook as the new humanist'.⁶⁴ This John Cook was never minister of Kilmany or a parish minister.⁶⁵ Elsewhere, Emerson's study contained another potential reason for the connection when he stated that such 'private patrons rewarded old tutors and clerics ... [and] sometimes looked after those of their friends'.⁶⁶ It may also have helped that a Simpson in-law of Walter Wilson's, a medical professor, was one of those deputed to discuss the 'presentation' with the Scotstarvits.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Walter was replaced by the existing Humanities professor thus creating the Humanities vacancy for John (USASC, UYUC 400/2, 15th May 1769).

⁶² Roger L. Emerson, *Academic Patronage in the Scottish Enlightenment: Glasgow, Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities* (Edinburgh, 2008), 370 and 451. The 'Humanities' in this context is the 'study of Ancient Greek and Roman language and literature' (*Collins English Dictionary*).

⁶³ USASC, UYUC 400/2, Minutes of United College, 9th October 1769.

⁶⁴ Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 475. Emerson's reference for this statement (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 7, 422) refers to George Hill not John Cook.

⁶⁵ Kilmany Kirk Session Minutes (NAS, CH2/1546/2) confirmed the succession of ministers. Emerson probably confused this John Cook with his son John who was minister of Kilmany 1793-1803. See also note 60.

⁶⁶ Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 12. John may have been a private chaplain and/or tutor to local members of the gentry in the preceding years. Whyte and Whyte referred to licensed ministers without a parish acting as tutors, similar to note 16 (*Women in Scotland*, 226).

⁶⁷ USASC, UYUC 400/2, 15th May 1769.

Whilst Devine suggested that even in the pre-Dundas political era men who supported the political and religious status quo were more likely to be appointed to university posts, Emerson thought it 'unlikely' that there had been any political interference in John's appointment because 'no politicians dominated Scottish politics'.⁶⁸ Reality was probably somewhere between the two - there may have been no overt high level interference but members of the landed gentry like the Scotstarvits would be unlikely to patronise a political maverick.

With a job for life and a salary estimated at £115 to £155 per year plus substantial extras, John could consider marriage and the following year married Janet Hill.⁶⁹ John's academic career was eclipsed by the subsequent far greater success of his younger brother-in-law George Hill (George was eleven years younger than John) and it could easily be concluded that John owed his position to George Hill's impeccable patronage connections.⁷⁰ However John had secured his first academic post *before* George Hill was appointed at St Andrews as professor of Greek in 1772.⁷¹ George Hill's biographer, his nephew George Cook, stated that Hill was supported in his application by John Cook and another professor 'both with a view to his own [Cook's] comfort and the good of the college'.⁷² In 1773 the College masters appointed John to the better paid professorship of Moral Philosophy on the death of the incumbent. This allowed the Scotstarvit family to 'present' another protégé, John Cook's half brother-in-law John Hill, into the vacant Humanities professorship.⁷³

⁶⁸ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 81 and Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 475.

⁶⁹ Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, appendix 1, table 3 and appendix 8.

⁷⁰ Appendix 9 documents how George Hill acquired his position of power and influence.

⁷¹ USASC, UYUC 400/2, 19th May 1772.

⁷² George Cook, *The Life of the late George Hill* (Edinburgh, 1820), 240.

⁷³ USASC, UYUC 400/3 Minutes of United College, 15th May and 2nd November 1773. Emerson (*Academic Patronage*, appendix 1, table 3) estimated that the professor of Moral Philosophy earned £135-171 per year. As well as George Hill, John Hill and John Cook, Henry David Hill took over as professor of Greek

Thus in the early stages of his academic career, John Cook was able not only to access useful patronage channels in his own right but also help members of his wife's family get a foot on the academic ladder. After 1780 (when George Hill took over leadership of the Moderates from Principal William Robertson of Edinburgh University) Hill's uniquely powerful access to Henry Dundas's patronage machine meant that the Cooks were the junior partner in the nepotism stakes.⁷⁴ Whilst kinship and patronage accounted for some of the association of the Cooks with the Moderates, Devine's suggestion that the conservatism of the Moderates was partly related to new prosperity amongst Scotland's middle classes in the later part of the eighteenth century is also pertinent.⁷⁵ Having acquired some measure of affluence and security, the family wanted to hang on to it and the most obvious way to achieve this can often seem to be by perpetuating the status quo.

Career progression

John did not progress any further in academia, gain other government posts, and had no known publications. Whilst the Chief Baron dismissed him as 'a weak silly sort of Body', implying some degree of inadequacy, political manoeuvring was certainly involved.⁷⁶ In 1799 when Uncle Joseph McCormick (Principal of United College) was dying, Henry Dundas presumed that Hill would want to succeed McCormick in a

(1788-1820) when George Hill became professor of Divinity. By 1802 John's eldest son, John, was professor of Hebrew, then Divinity in 1808, both through Henry Dundas's patronage (USASC, MS 4488, letter John Cook to Henry Dundas, 28th September 1808). As a young man, John junior had been a tutor to the Balgone family, East Lothian, a post acquired through his father and Uncle McCormick (NAS, GD357/43/19 copy letters from John Cook senior and Principal McCormick probably to Lady Hyndford, 5th August 1789).

⁷⁴ Dundas had a particularly close connection with St Andrews University as its chancellor between 1788 and 1811 (Stewart Brown, *Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth in Scotland* (Oxford, 1982), 5).

⁷⁵ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 81-2. The Cooks were also distant cousins of Principal Robertson (Constance Pitcairn, *History of the Fife Pitcairns* (Edinburgh, 1905), 502a and Robertson certainly acknowledged friendship with John Cook (Cook, *Life*, 237).

⁷⁶ USASC, MS 4513, letter Robert Dundas, Chief Baron to second Viscount Melville, 18th November 1811.

position that was 'superior in rank and in emolument'. Hill refused the principalship for himself on the grounds that overall he would be worse off financially and that he preferred, as a churchman, to remain as Principal of St Mary's Divinity College. Hill also provided Dundas with his assessment of the internal alternatives to himself: John Cook and another professor also with (other) family connections. Ultimately Hill recommended that neither of these men should get the job and that it would be better for the public interest that it go to someone with no family connections.⁷⁷

Hill's letter of 1799 showed that he knew that the patronage system had trapped him - whichever candidate was promoted would in turn create awkward expectations for the subsequent vacancy. But there was also an element of disingenuity in Hill's behaviour. Both he and his two brothers had attained their university positions through family connections and George Hill would try again in the future.⁷⁸ Hill may genuinely have preferred his current job for all the best reasons, but it is possible he was not prepared to countenance John Cook in a more prestigious position to himself. No other family members in the university threatened his power by seniority.

Whilst Hill effectively stopped John's promotion, he did position John favourably with Dundas as 'an honest intelligent man, of the soundest principles' who had 'been of great use to the College' by his beneficial management of (mainly English) students boarded in his house - perhaps this is evidence that John preferred developing young people rather than climbing the promotional ladder. More

⁷⁷ USASC, MS 4782, 1799. James Playfair, minister of Meigle, succeeded McCormick as Principal (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 7, 414). MS 4513 implied Playfair was the Chief Baron's nominee.

⁷⁸ In 1805 Hill unsuccessfully proposed a brother-in-law, Rev. James Macdonald, for a Chair (Fry, *Dundas Despotism*, 296 and NAS, GD51/5/672/1, letter from Principal Dr George Hill to Lord Melville, 3rd March 1809).

importantly for the patronage scoreboard, Hill pointed out that John had voted for Dundas as chancellor, even though John was under no 'personal obligation' to do so - John was a Scotstarvit, not a Dundas, nominee. Thus in the short run, John himself may have missed out, but perhaps this complex balance and exchange of favours and obligations gave him the patronage capital for future positions for his sons.⁷⁹

Modern authors' views of the calibre of St Andrews University in the Cook-Hill period differ considerably. Emerson dismissed it as a 'bastion of reaction and mediocrity' whilst Fry argued that Hill was a 'considerable scholar and ecclesiologist' who 'raised the academic standards of his previously moribund university'.⁸⁰ Cant observed that whilst there was 'much to criticise' he also judged that 'academic standards seem to have been well enough maintained ... both within and without the ranks of the dynasty'.⁸¹ As an organisation, power within the university rested principally with men who had connections to those with the power to reward rather than because they were experts in their field.⁸²

Overall five of Professor John Cook's six sons benefited directly from the Cook-Hill patronage network as churchmen, professors at St Andrews, lawyers, and civil servants.⁸³ Even Joseph Cook who had a largely independent commercial career came

⁷⁹ USASC, MS 4782. It is noteworthy that the other contender received no such positive positioning. On the negative side, John was described as 'deficient only in manner' - perhaps he lacked the 'polite and social' skills that Emerson concluded a Moderate professor of Theology required (*Academic Patronage*, 496). A year later John was writing to thank Henry Dundas for appointing his son James as a clerk in the Navy Pay Office in London, noting that 'I [have] little claim to your patronage' and that it 'leaves me under obligations which though I may never be able to return I never can forget' (USASC, MS 4477, letter Professor John Cook to Henry Dundas, 21st June 1800).

⁸⁰ Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 513 and Fry, *Dundas Despotism*, 179.

⁸¹ Cant, *University of St. Andrews*, 119.

⁸² Charles Handy, *Understanding Organizations* 4th edition (London, 1999), 127-31.

⁸³ See notes 73 and 79. Walter (the third son) qualified as a W.S. in 1801 (*Register of the Society of Writers to Her Majesty's Signet* (Edinburgh, 1983), 66) and was agent for St Mary's College. In a letter to Henry Dundas, George Hill positioned Walter as a 'sharp intelligent man' (NAS, GD51/5/672/1). Other

close to having to call on the Dundas connection. Joseph was also the only son to take advantage of Scotland's initial industrial expansion with his training and subsequent career in Paisley's fine textile trade.⁸⁴

Changes in patronage

Henry Dundas's impeachment in 1806 was a watershed between the previous acceptance of political corruption and the development of greater 'probity' in British political behaviour.⁸⁵ The opening lines of a letter from the Chief Baron to the second Viscount Melville recorded his disgust that the Hills had made St Andrews University 'an asylum for their Family and dependents, without regard to merit of any sort' and his repugnance at the 'mortal Hatred and antipathy of Messrs. Cook and Hill' that had been incurred when their candidate had not been appointed to a medical vacancy.⁸⁶

Although on Henry Dundas's death in May 1811, management of Scotland passed to his son Robert, Fry claimed that Robert was far less accepting of 'jobbery' than his father and this became apparent to the Cooks and Hills when the professorship of Church History at St Andrews became vacant in 1811.⁸⁷ The Chief Baron believed that the Hills had done a deal with their opponents to get a recommendation for George Cook, then minister at Laurencekirk, for the vacancy.⁸⁸

sons benefited because St Mary's Divinity College held the patronage rights to Kilmany (Henry David) and Laurencekirk (George).

⁸⁴ NAS, GD51/4/1165 letters George Hill to Lord Melville: (1) 13th April 1807 and (3) 26th June 1807 in which Hill requested a 'situation' for Joseph following the collapse of Joseph's business interests in Hamburg due to the Napoleonic wars. Joseph subsequently found himself a job as a purser through his own contacts. (2) Letter Joseph Cook to George Hill 13th April 1807 is an interesting C.V. detailing the various stages in Joseph's career.

⁸⁵ Fry, *Dundas Despotism*, 275.

⁸⁶ USASC, MS 4513.

⁸⁷ Fry, *Dundas Despotism*, 294 and *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 1, 58.

⁸⁸ USASC, MS 4516, letter from the Chief Baron to second Viscount Melville, 27th November 1811. George Hill recommended George Cook for the vacancy in MS 4892, 21st November 1811 and John

However, Melville made it clear that in his view it was ‘essential to the interests of the Crown and of the public’ that such vacancies ‘should not be suffered to become the objects of canvas or favor amongst the professors’.⁸⁹ The job itself went to Melville’s preferred candidate, someone completely outwith the family network.⁹⁰ Similarly when John Cook junior made a direct request in 1819 to become principal of St Mary’s Divinity College following George Hill’s death, he was unsuccessful. John had wasted no time in making his approach as the letter was written five days after George Hill’s death.⁹¹

George Cook’s name was mentioned at least twice for subsequent vacancies at St Andrews before he was finally appointed as professor of Moral Philosophy in 1828.⁹² Whilst the fact that George’s eldest brother John was also a professor was one barrier in 1820 (‘it would not be very becoming to appoint two brothers to a College consisting of only four men’), following his death, George was still unsuccessful. Although the college principals with whom he would have to work did not doubt George’s academic fitness, they were not comfortable with his personality and behaviour. Principal Haldane (St Mary’s College) perceived him as ‘turbulent, conceited and ill-tempered and would keep us all in hot water and his politics are not to be depended upon’.⁹³ Five years later, Principal Nicoll (United College) thought George ‘a man of restless ambition and not scrupulous as to the means of gratifying it’ also

Cook’s recommendation for his son was mentioned in NAS, GD51/6/1796, draft letter second Viscount Melville to Duke of Cambridge, Chancellor St Andrews University, 9th December 1811.

⁸⁹ NAS, GD51/6/1796.

⁹⁰ Rev John Lee (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 7, 432).

⁹¹ NAS, GD51/6/2056, letter John Cook to the Chancellor of St Andrews, 24th December 1819.

⁹² George was named for Church History (USASC, MS 4634, letter from the Lord Advocate to the second Viscount Melville, 20th October 1820) and Divinity (MS 4663, letter from Principal Haldane, St Mary’s College to second Viscount Melville, 19th August 1825). USASC, UYUC 400/8, 8th November 1828.

⁹³ USASC, MS 4634.

distrusting George's ambitions for another 'family compact'.⁹⁴ Both principals had political agendas of their own, not least maintaining a quiet life for themselves, but there was a consistent theme to George's delayed progress as in such a small society, the professors had to be able to work together, despite differences.⁹⁵ Principal Haldane surmised what was driving George - it was the 'advantage of being at the seat of a University' as well as educating his family.⁹⁶

By 1837 George Cook found that his university and Crown appointments were actually a barrier in trying to place one of his sons in a Scottish church living.⁹⁷ His initial attempts via an intermediary were unsuccessful and his son had to settle for a church living in India accessed through a new family source of patronage.⁹⁸

Overall the Cooks made a success of accessing the patronage that was 'essential for any gentleman who aspired to a position of significance'.⁹⁹ They may not have reached the heights of their ambitions, but John and all his sons became securely placed in professional or commercial roles and his daughters married men from similar

⁹⁴ USASC, MS 4662, letter from Principal Nicoll to second Viscount Melville, 15th August 1825.

⁹⁵ Haldane and Nicoll were still principals when George was eventually appointed in 1828 so for whatever reason, the parties were prepared to accommodate each other by then. A more detached perception of George from another contemporary and political opposite described George as a mediocre leader and author, but someone who was 'sensible and industrious free of violence and bitterness ... open and fair' and who stood by his principles (Henry Cockburn, *Journal of Henry Cockburn* vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1874), 108).

⁹⁶ USASC, MS 4661, letter Principal Haldane to second Viscount Melville, 14th May 1825. George had a long list of erudite publications reflecting both academic inclinations and a source of extra money (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 5, 477).

⁹⁷ George had the Crown appointments of Dean of the Thistle (1830) and Chaplain Ordinary to William IV (1831) (Cook, *Genealogical Notes*, 11 and NAS, GD1/1047/2, 8th January 1831).

⁹⁸ NAS, GD224/688/8 letter George Cook to Dean of Faculty [of Advocates John Hope] 16th July 1837. George used Henry Shank, his wife's brother and a director of the East India Company, to place this son as Government chaplain in Bombay and another son as a Madras civil servant. Appendix 10 details the family connections. In 1834 Elisabeth Hill, widow of John Cook junior and one of George Hill's daughters, used her brother David, another senior employee of the East India Company, to help secure entry to the Madras Infantry for one of her sons (Charles Campbell Prinsep, *Records of Services of the Honourable East India Company's Civil Servants in the Madras Presidency 1741-1858* (London, 1885), 74 and BL, IOR/L/MIL/9/180, Walter Cook). Another Hill brother, a W.S., trained and worked for Walter Cook (*Register Society of Writers*, 147).

⁹⁹ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 216.

occupations. The family appeared to have concentrated on patronage as the means to their ends rather than attempting to enter the landowning classes.¹⁰⁰ They were comfortably off - John senior could afford to buy a house in St Andrews and in 1825 George was described as 'rich'.¹⁰¹ When sources of patronage changed, they found new ones. Family networks interlinked, intermarried, and were mutually supportive.

The overriding factor in the patronage game was the interpersonal relationships between the players and the ability to read and manage these relationships secured success. The organisation worked to fit the job to the person rather than the person to the job, thus ensuring the continuity and stability of its internal culture. Although the machinations of patronage appear repellent and iniquitous in the twenty-first century, Fry pointed out the inappropriateness of judging past behaviour against modern standards.¹⁰² Similarly late eighteenth century patronage had many features in common with some modern organisations where power is controlled through a web of contacts by one individual at its centre.¹⁰³

Although Emerson stated that John Cook, professor at St Andrews between 1802 and 1824, was 'modern and principled enough to have become by then [when Moderator in 1816] a follower of Thomas Chalmers', he did not provide any evidence for this assertion and other authors and sources do not support this view.¹⁰⁴ Instead the Cook

¹⁰⁰ John senior sold Easter Newburn around 1777 (NAS, CC20/11/12, 14th April 1780, SC20/34/31/150-152, 18th September 1855).

¹⁰¹ NAS, RD5/1816/85/496-504, 1816 and USASC, MS 4661. By this date the source of George's wealth was probably his wife's inheritance from her brother Alexander Shank. Fortunes could change however. By 1841 when George was preparing his testament, he commented 'we were once much richer'. The difference was due to the expenses from his family and the fall in bank stock (NAS, SC20/50/16, 18th July 1845).

¹⁰² Fry, *Dundas Despotism*, 179 and 275.

¹⁰³ Handy, *Understanding Organizations*, 183.

¹⁰⁴ Emerson, *Academic Patronage*, 505. Contemporaries appeared to view this John Cook as a more restrained and discreet member of the Moderates but as Maciver pointed out in relation to Minto's letter, 'Cook, though politically adroit was, in most fundamental respects, a very traditional and

families remained aligned with Moderate Church politics and the Established Church throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁵ Whilst Chalmers and his Evangelicals urged the spiritual independence of church from state and tended to more liberal political views, the Cooks remained wedded to the existing civil and political order.¹⁰⁶ Thus the Cooks and Thomas Chalmers may have had similar backgrounds and employment, but the manner in which they experienced their religious faith and politics was very different, emphasising the individual and personal nature of these matters.¹⁰⁷

conservative Moderate' (NLS, Minto Papers, ms.11805, fos. 149-150, draft letter Lord Minto to Lord Lansdowne, 10th January 1828 and Maciver, *Scottish Nation*, 111). Minto's letter referred to the period when Peel was Home Secretary (1822-1827) so 'Dr Cook' was more likely John, professor at St Andrews until his death late in 1824 rather than George, then a less influential minister; Maciver made that interpretation.

¹⁰⁵ George and his elder brother John were moderators of the General Assembly when the Moderates were in control (1816 and 1825 respectively Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 7, 444). Once the Evangelicals led by Thomas Chalmers took control of the General Assembly in 1834, the Moderates reformed around the issue of patronage with George as their leader throughout the period known as the 'ten year conflict' leading up to the Disruption of 1843 (Brown, *Thomas Chalmers*, 302). All the Cooks who were ministers at the Disruption remained with the Established Church. There is an extensive literature surrounding this period in the history of the Church of Scotland, including George Cook's role, but it is beyond the scope of this study.

¹⁰⁶ Maciver, *Scottish Nation*, 104-19.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Chalmers originated from Anstruther where his father had been in business and his grandfather a shipowner and he too had a close association with St Andrews University. Thomas Chalmers replaced John Cook as minister of Kilmany in 1802, whilst George Cook followed Chalmers as professor of Moral Philosophy at St Andrews in 1828 (Brown, *Thomas Chalmers*, 4, 20 and 182).

Chapter 5 Family practices 1650-1800

Women and economic society

In a society where power rested primarily with the menfolk and the law was 'starkly patriarchal' it is not surprising that there is less documentary evidence for the lives of the women in the family. However they were by no means silent players subsidiary to the activities of the menfolk and Gordon argued that there was probably a high degree of 'economic interdependence ... [and] ... mutuality' in pre-modern marriages.¹ Smout emphasised the central role that merchants' wives played in the family business: when her husband was away the wife had to combine running a home and family with managing the business.² Martin concluded that Alexander Gillespie's wife Christian was 'probably an equal partner in the business'.³ Women were sometimes admitted as burghesses - Pittenweem elected at least two widows as burghesses.⁴ However Simonton pointed out that the role of the man and woman were not 'interchangeable' as the wife only did the work if her husband was not there.⁵ When 'Cousin James' turned up to pursue payment of a debt from a Bo'ness merchant he demanded payment from the merchant's wife 'in her husband's absence'.⁶

Two generations later, Janet Hill, wife of Professor John Cook, was running a boarding house for students in St Andrews along with managing her own family. Her household in 1789 comprised at least eleven young people plus no doubt live-in

¹ Gordon, *Gender in Scottish History*, 240.

² Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 154.

³ Martin, *North Sea World*, 171. See appendices 1 and 6 for links between the Cook and Gillespie families.

⁴ USASC, B60/6/1, Pittenweem Town Council minutes, 16th October 1683 and 7th April 1685.

⁵ Deborah Simonton, 'Work, Trade and Commerce' in Abrams *et al*, *Gender in Scottish History*, 209.

⁶ NAS, RD2/103/2/605, 1714.

servants and must have required considerable managerial skills.⁷ Her contribution to the household's budget could well have been crucial as Fry argued that since around 1784, professorial incomes had been 'squeezed'.⁸ Just because society declared that women only had a secondary role in economic enterprises, did not necessarily mean that this was always the case within individual marriages. Although Gordon and Nair were studying a significantly later period (Victorian Britain), their point that 'power relationships within marriages did not necessarily reflect culturally sanctioned authority relations', was probably just as apposite in previous centuries.⁹

Cook family marriage practices from around 1650 to 1800

Such practical and economic considerations were a significant driver for the high incidence of remarriage and were no doubt part of the reasoning for John and Thomas's second marriages.¹⁰ Many women were able to enter second and subsequent marriages from a much stronger position of freedom of choice and independence than was possible in their first marriage.¹¹ The same date in 1673 appeared in both John Cook's testament as the date of his marriage contract to Susanna Turnbull and on a document signed by Susanna in which she acknowledged receipt of liferent payments due to her from her first marriage.¹² Susanna was thus a widow of independent financial means who brought with her access to a considerable

⁷ NAS, GD357/43/19 copy letters from Professor Cook and Principal McCormick to Lady Hyndford, 5th August 1789. There were at least two students who 'endeared' themselves to the Cook family by their 'kind affectation' when the Cooks' youngest child died, indicating that the student: housekeeper relationship could be quite close.

⁸ Fry, *Dundas Despotism*, 296.

⁹ Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, 105.

¹⁰ W. D. H. Sellar, 'The Common Law of Scotland and Common Law of England' in R.R. Davies (ed.), *The British Isles 1100-1500: Comparisons, Contrasts and Connections* (Edinburgh, 1988), 181.

¹¹ Simonton, *Gender in Scottish History*, 210.

¹² NAS, back-bond signed 20th January 1673 in bundle GD29/888. See also NAS, CC20/11/5, 17th December 1672 in which a burgess of Pittenweem paid money to Susanna.

sum of money on her marriage to John which John's estate had to pay back on his death.¹³

As Brown pointed out in relation to noble society, marriage was 'a public institution, not a private relationship' and whilst the comparison is not exact, the basic premise is relevant.¹⁴ This did not exclude affection as even in formal legal documents, there are examples of another side to relationships - John Aitchison recorded his 'singular love and affection' for his wife Elizabeth Cook and children when making provision for them after his death.¹⁵ Gordon recognised the presence of romance but concluded that 'in the pre-modern family, the balance was tipped towards the more practical considerations rather than romantic ones'.¹⁶

The complexities of intermarriage between the Cooks and Arnots provide some good examples of both the romantic and the economic/political drivers in marriage. Christian Cook of Pittenweem was only eighteen when she married Dr Hugh Arnot of Balcormo and died by twenty-six, having had at least five children. There had been a longstanding close association between the Cooks in Pittenweem and the Arnots of Balcormo (see chapter two) with Christian jointly inheriting, via her father, the wadset agreement on Balcormo. As part of her marriage contract, the ownership of the

¹³ Old parish records confirmed that James, Robert, John, and Helen were all Christian Stevenson's children. As Thomas was described as brother german to James in James's testament this confirmed that Thomas was also Christian's child. Christian probably died around 1665-70 and John probably married his second wife Susanna Turnbull around 1673. It was a second marriage for Susanna as well. She married William Hamilton in Elie in 1645, widowed 1671. The Turnbells and Hamiltons were small landowners in Elie and Pittenweem respectively (Wood, *East Neuk*, 205 and 291). It is possible that Susanna, John's youngest daughter, was Susanna's child rather than Christian's. If so Susanna must have been well into her forties when any child was born. Susanna predeceased John and interestingly the entry in Pittenweem parish register (incorrectly ascribed to 1679) for John's burial on 28th March 1685 reads 'John Cook spous to umquille Christian Stevenson was buried', suggesting that John's second marriage was very short lived perhaps related to childbirth.

¹⁴ Brown, *Noble Society*, 113.

¹⁵ NAS, RD3/86/590, 1697.

¹⁶ Gordon, *Gender in Scottish History*, 240.

Balcormo lands finally returned to the Arnots in 1713 following Christian's death the year before.¹⁷ Thus the Arnots' mortgage to the Cooks was redeemed by virtue of a Cook daughter marrying the Arnot heir to the Balcormo property.¹⁸

If Christian Cook felt she was somewhat of a pawn in relation to securing the ownership of Balcormo, then her daughter Christian Arnot and her husband might have had similar feelings in relation to the issue of securing an heir for Balcormo. Marriage and motherhood in her late thirties may not have seemed too attractive to Christian Arnot. Not only had she lost her own mother when very young, she had also lost her stepmother in childbirth but with her only brother unmarried, perhaps remaining single was not an option.¹⁹ The choice of husband, Duncan Pollock, a Pittenweem merchant, is noteworthy (figure 1). Duncan was the widower of Christian Arnot's first cousin Anna Melvill (a Cook descendant) and romantic drivers were clearly behind Duncan's first marriage to Anna Melvill. Both were only aged about twenty when they were 'clandestinely married' and Duncan's claims that they had been properly married were dismissed as 'downright perjury' by Pittenweem Kirk session.²⁰ However the couple's tactic to secure their relationship worked despite the strong words from the Kirk session as the issue was solved by an 'official' marriage.²¹

¹⁷ NAS, Signature of Confirmation, SIG1/4/24, 11th January and 12th February 1713.

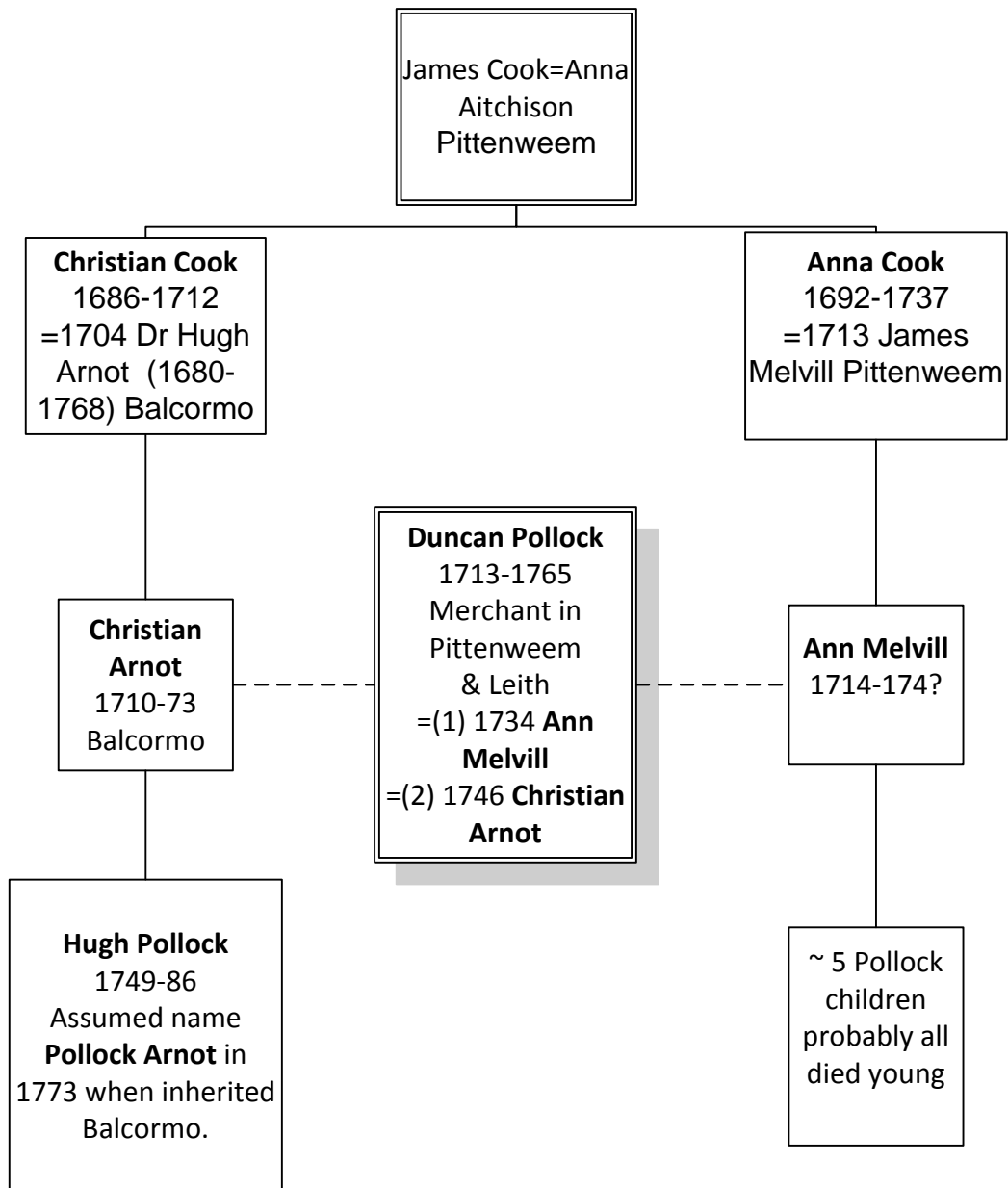
¹⁸ John conferred the income from Balcormo among his three daughters but his eldest son James would have inherited the ownership of the original capital lent to the Arnots. It is possible that James following his father's death then consolidated his ownership by buying out his sisters' rights to the income generated from Balcormo. James's testament recorded money (in Scots pounds) owed to Susanna (~£1000), Mary's possible husband William Chalmer (~£866) whilst an eik to Helen's testament recorded James owed ~£726 to her and her husband. Consolidated ownership would be much more attractive as part of a marriage contract than a situation where rights to the estate's income were split among several parties.

¹⁹ Arnott, *House of Arnot*, 151-55.

²⁰ Irregular or clandestine marriages, where the couple were married by someone other than their parish minister, were relatively common in Scotland (Bigwood, *Scottish Family Tree*, 83).

²¹ NAS, CH2/833/5, Pittenweem Kirk Session minutes, 27th June, 15th August, and 5th Sept 1734.

Figure 1 Securing succession: Cook, Pittenweem and Arnot of Balcormo



Sources: CC20/6/16/1176, testament for Ann Cook, 1737, CH2/833/5, 1734, Arnott, *House of Arnot* and OPR. (Pertinent family members only shown).

Duncan and his second wife spent the early years of their marriage in Leith and a break with the past would seem very understandable in such circumstances.²² Thus merchants might move their businesses for affairs of the heart as much as economics and marriage was the tactic used by the Arnots in their overall strategy of securing the ownership and succession of Balcormo even though it took three or four generations to achieve. Revealingly, Duncan Pollock asked to be buried back in Pittenweem, rather than in the Arnot burial place at Carnbee.²³

Another example of a courtship from the same period and family background, driven by romance rather than economics, was contained in the sorry tale of a young woman who fell in love with John McCormick, one of the ministers of St Andrews.²⁴ When her affection was not returned, the woman claimed that John was 'guilty of uncleanness with her and that he had given her promises of marriage'.²⁵ John strenuously denied the accusations and scathingly describing them as the 'malicious and revengeful resentments of an impudent foolish woman' who solicited him to marry her and when he refused 'threatened to ... blacken my character and ruine my reputation'.²⁶ Hidden behind the thwarted love and attempted blackmail was the implication that it was quite acceptable for a woman in the early decades of the

²² There was no indication that any of the children from Duncan's first marriage survived and his first wife would have been barely thirty when she died. In January 1746 Duncan gave up renting half of his first father-in-law's house in Pittenweem (USASC, B3/7/4, Pittenweem Sea Box minutes, 17th January 1746), married Christian Arnot in March 1746 in Carnbee (OPR) and before moving to Leith to carry on trade as a merchant where two children were born. Duncan died at Balcormo indicating a return there at some point.

²³ Arnott, *House of Arnot*, 153.

²⁴ John McCormick was related to the Cook family via the marriage of one of his granddaughters (see appendix 8).

²⁵ The events were supposed to have taken place in the house of her father (the Dean of Guild), where John was lodged. Her story fell to pieces when she claimed her sisters heard what was going on but yet did not come to her assistance when she claimed she was 'struggling for her honour'! (NAS, St Andrews Presbytery Minutes 1723-1733, CH2/1132/3 various dates April –September 1724) and NAS, CH1/2/49, Papers of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland main series, fo.152-163, 8th April 1724.

²⁶ NAS, CH2/1132/3, May 1724.

eighteenth century to initiate a romantic relationship with a man from a comparable social background, as long as it did not cross the boundaries of perceived sexual misconduct.

The use of marriage contracts by those who were better off, with the payment of a tocher (dowry) and financial provision for the wife and children, meant that there was a significant legal side to such marriages.²⁷ The legal proceedings linking the Cook and Allan families with the Binnings of Dalmarnock (near Dunkeld) is a good illustration of what might happen if these arrangements did not work smoothly. In essence Thomas Binning (who married Helen Allan, one of John Cook's granddaughters) had to pursue his wife's first cousins for payment of a debt that quite likely equated to his wife's tocher (figure 2).²⁸

A Court of Session Decision of 1714 on the case contains the rather confusing preamble:

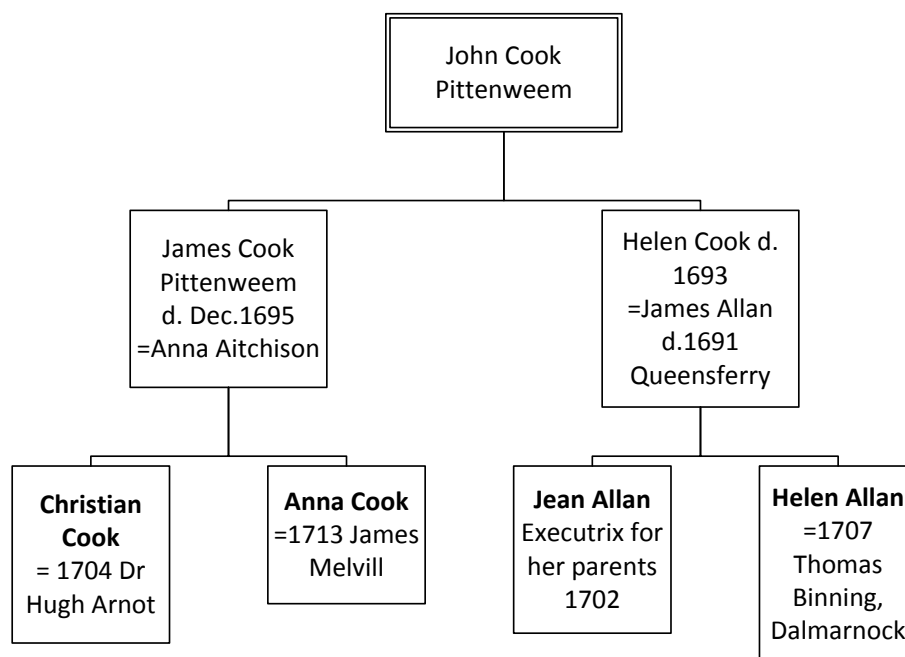
Christian and Anna Cooks, daughters to the deceased James Cook in Pittenweem, being daughters to Mr Thomas Binning at Dalmarnock, in the sum of 1100 mercks principal, and several bygone annual rents ... against them as heirs portioners to their father²⁹

²⁷ Bigwood, *Scottish Family Tree*, 84-85.

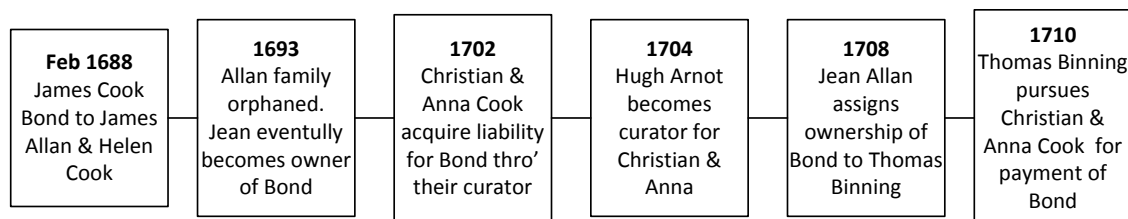
²⁸ Note 18 suggested why the Allan family may have acquired the money from the Pittenweem Cooks in the first place. Pittenweem Town Council minutes and John Cook's 1686 testament indicated that Binning families were associated with Pittenweem and they also appeared to have been associated with land ownership around Dalmarnock since at least the middle of the seventeenth century (John Hunter, *The Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld 1660-1689*, vol.1 (London, 1918), 193). However any relationship between the two sets of Binning families is unknown.

²⁹ *Morison's Dictionary of Decisions: The Decisions of the Court of Sessions*, vol. XII (Edinburgh, 1811) O-P, 9425-10,317, 9998. The reference is in the section called 'Payments'.

Figure 2 A tale of debt and kinship: Cook, Allan and Binning c. 1700



Bond Timeline



Sources: CS271/16649, *Christian Cook or Arnot v. Thomas Binning, 1710*, CC8/8/81/420, testament James Allan and Helen Cook, 1702 and 1706, and *Morison's Dictionary*. (Pertinent family members only shown).

It is highly unlikely that the literal interpretation of a stepfather - stepdaughter relationship was the case; it more likely simply implied a kinship link.³⁰ Such a court action may not be as strange as it might superficially appear as Thomas Binning was owed the money. James Irvine Robertson recorded a similar situation in 1752 when a widow of a small Perthshire laird sued her own young son in order to ensure their livelihood and her son's eventual inheritance.³¹ Other evidence left the impression that Hugh Arnot (by then curator for the two Cook sisters) was possibly not the best financial manager and someone who took every opportunity to delay settling his financial obligations rather than deliberately trying to defraud his cousin-in-law; Hugh had 'never, to this day, cleared his curatory accompts'.³² In his defence by 1714 Hugh was a widower with two small children and probably a medical practice.

Several women in the family married at a noticeably older age than the typical age of mid-twenties noted by authors such as Houston.³³ Two Cook women only married for the first time a few years after their fathers had died and by which time Mary Cook of Pittenweem (1738) and Janet Cook of Elie (1745) were thirty-nine and forty-one respectively.³⁴ There were numerous potential reasons why both women

³⁰ This would have implied that Thomas Binning first married the widowed Anna Aitchison, then a 'stepniece'. There is no evidence of such a marriage, or that his putative 'stepdaughters' moved away from Pittenweem. Thomas Binning was consistently described as 'Mr', implying he was a graduate and was probably the Thomas Binning who first matriculated from St Andrews University aged about fifteen in 1699/1700 (Smart, *Alphabetical Register*, 57). He would thus be too young to marry Anna and aged about twenty-two when he married Helen Allan.

³¹ James Irvine Robertson, *Out of Atholl* (Edinburgh, 2008), 43.

³² *Morison's Dictionary*, *ibid*. A decret arbitral between Hugh Arnot and James Melvill, by then husband of Anna Cook, detailed a final reckoning up Hugh's curatorship of Anna's considerable financial affairs (NAS, RD4/116/1331, 1715). Hugh also ended up in an argument over money and paperwork with Pittenweem Town Council in relation to Christian and Anna's affairs and eventually he had to pay up (USASC, B60/6/1 various dates 1707-14 and NAS, GD62/297, 1713).

³³ Houston, 'Women in the Economy and Society' in Houston and Whyte, *Scottish Society*, 127.

³⁴ Both women had one recorded child each. Mary was forty when her son Robert Cossar (OPR, Pittenweem, 5th August 1739) was born and Janet forty-three when her son Thomas Allan (OPR, Anstruther Easter, 3rd December 1747) was born. Both mothers survived but it is not known if the children did. Further examples of women who are also known to have had children at the end of the

married relatively late with one possibility involving a caring role for elderly parents. There were also issues of financial security and how easy and acceptable it was to be a single woman notwithstanding any romantic considerations. Simonton has argued that widows in post-1700 Scotland were often at an advantage over single women in trade or commercial situations because of their better networks although it is not known whether either woman worked in any capacity outside the home.³⁵ Because of her late father Robert's significant financial problems (explored in chapter three), Mary may well have judged that marriage to a Crail merchant offered a better chance of future financial security than relying on Cook resources. Nothing is known of what financial security Janet's husband, described variously as a mariner and a dyer in Anstruther, may have offered her. At the other extreme Janet Hill was only sixteen when in 1770 she married Professor John Cook, who was nearly twice her age. Again, economics and romance may have been mixed as the Hill family was in straitened financial circumstances.³⁶

Merchant skippers' daughters, even from relatively small ports such as Pittenweem, had a wide choice of marriage partners. Across three generations of the family between around 1650 and 1715, the merchants themselves almost exclusively chose merchants' daughters for partners, reiterating the responsibilities a merchant's wife had in the business. It is less easy, for instance, to envisage a minister's daughter from an inland parish adapting quickly to such requirements. There was the access it may have given some non-Cook merchant husbands to becoming burgesses and also the restricted choice of acceptable partners some may have faced in a small

childbearing age range included Christian Small/Gillespie (appendix 6) and Christian Arnot/Pollock (fig. 1).

³⁵ Simonton, *Gender in Scottish Society*, 210.

³⁶ See appendix 9.

community.³⁷ Whatley noted the ‘willingness’ of Scots to move in this period, including for marriage, as one of the factors contributing to Scotland’s economic strengths.³⁸ From their signatures on surviving documents, the girls were well-educated and, coupled with some business experience, were in a strong position to contribute to the economy in their new localities. The daughters were also attractive partners for professionals, for example, ministers and also doctors and writers, giving the Cook clan entry into the emerging ranks of the professional middle classes. The girls may well have perceived life in the manse to have been preferable to life as a seafarer’s wife, not least because of the potential loss of a husband and father at sea.³⁹

Mortality, widows, and orphans in the early-modern period

Whilst the Cook families were sufficiently well-off not to have suffered actual starvation during the ‘ill years’ of the 1690s, they and their children could well have succumbed to accompanying disease and generally high mortality. Only two out of a family of seven recorded children born to James Cook and Anna Aitchison survived to adulthood whilst Robert Cook and Christian Dewar fared even worse with only three out of nine surviving with one of those dying as a young man.⁴⁰ Thomas Cook and Christian Gillespie probably had a similar level of losses.⁴¹ Chapter three discussed the effects of few boys surviving to adulthood on the family’s economic choices. Linda

³⁷ One of the William Bells gained admission to Pittenweem’s burgh structure through his marriage to Marjorie Cook, ‘a burgh daughter’ (USASC, B60/6/1, 2nd August 1683). Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 154. Whyte, ‘Population Mobility in Early Modern Scotland’ in Houston and Whyte, *Scottish Society*, 48.

³⁸ Whatley, *Scottish Society*, 29.

³⁹ As the Cooks found out to their cost, the ministry could also be a risky occupation (see below).

⁴⁰ The Arnotts of Balcormo had a similar problem. Arnott noted that John Arnot had many children but most ‘were cut off by fevers when about 19’ (*House of Arnot*, 153). Thus infant mortality alone did not account for all the losses.

⁴¹ Although Thomas and Christian were married about 1686, the first recorded child was 1702. There is evidence that at least two or three children were born between about 1686 and 1700, but given the regular appearance of children every two years after 1702, it would seem highly likely that this couple also suffered a high mortality rate during this period.

Colley also noted that the British landed classes in the same period suffered similar problems, with landed families dying out because there were no male heirs.⁴² Whilst the Cooks were certainly not landed gentry, the overall effect was similar. Colley does not offer any possible explanation, observing only that the reasons were 'still unclear'.

Part of the explanation may lie in the historically higher rate of infant mortality for boys than girls, typically 10-15 per cent, until around 1930.⁴³ At a time when most deaths were from infectious diseases, the fact that females have 'more vigorous immune responses and greater resistance to infection' meant that female infants were less likely to die from 'infections and respiratory ailments'. Additionally, boys are more likely to suffer the consequences of a difficult birth (because they tend to be larger) and to be born prematurely.⁴⁴ Girls continued to have marginally better rates of survival between the ages of one and four but for older children and adolescents, girls generally lost their biological advantage, particularly amongst working class girls. The authors argued that this could only be explained by the differential treatment of girls within the family (such as inferior healthcare, nutrition, and education) and society (such as conditions of work).⁴⁵

⁴² Colley also noted that 'many landowners did not marry', although this did not appear to have been an issue for these merchant-skipper families (Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London, 2003), 156-157).

⁴³ Infant mortality is defined as death in the first year after birth. Dominique Tabutin and Michel Willems, 'Differential mortality by sex from birth to adolescence: the historical experience of the West 1750-1930' in United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Too Young to Die: Genes or Gender?* (New York, 1998), 20. The phenomenon is starkly illustrated by seven families in this study where only eight out of thirty sons born between 1665 and 1750 survived to adulthood compared to a survival rate of fifteen out of twenty-five daughters (appendix 11).

⁴⁴ Greg L. Drevenstedt, Eileen M. Crimmins, Sarinnapha Vasunilashorn and Caleb E. Finch, 'The rise and fall of excess male infant mortality' in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, vol. 105, no.13, April 1st, 2008, Pp 5016-21 accessed on 21st November 2012 at <http://www.pnas.org/content/105/13/5016.full>

⁴⁵ Tabutin and Willems, *ibid*, 21-31 and 47.

The daughters in this study were unlikely to have done arduous industrial or agricultural work and would have had similar education at least until adolescence. That more daughters survived to adulthood than sons thus suggests that daughters received similar standards of nutrition and healthcare to sons. However, there is an important caveat to this argument. Mitchison considered that one of the contributory factors to the particularly high levels of infant mortality at the end of the seventeenth century was 'pernicious ideas on infant feeding' (such as giving new born babies wine or whisky), to which the rich, who could afford doctors, were particularly 'susceptible' and testamentary evidence shows that the Cooks could afford doctors.⁴⁶ Paradoxically if boys were preferentially afforded such treatments, this could have exacerbated the mortality differences between the sexes and unwittingly contributed to the appalling levels of loss.

Gillis commented that in pre-modern society British marriages typically lasted less than twenty years because of 'high adult mortality' and thus the chances of children being orphaned were considerable.⁴⁷ The early-modern Cook families were no exception and the fates of the orphaned children gave some indication of how such circumstances were handled. Helen Cook or Allan in Queensferry was widowed after about twenty years of marriage and two years later in 1693, Helen herself died, leaving Jean aged about twenty, John eighteen and at least two other very young children. The continued strong links between the orphaned female members of the Allan family in Queensferry and the Cook families in Pittenweem suggest that it was more likely that Jean Allan and the remaining very young Allan children became the responsibility of Cook relations in Pittenweem rather than Allan relations in Queensferry. It might seem

⁴⁶ Mitchison, *Lordship to Patronage*, 112 and Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 258.

⁴⁷ Gillis, *For Better*, 11.

unusual that the mother's relatives took responsibility rather than the father's but there may not have been any Allan relatives able to look after several children.⁴⁸

It was likely that James became the responsible adult both from testamentary evidence and the fact that James was their eldest Pittenweem Uncle Cook and probably had the deepest pockets by virtue of his inheritance. James himself died around two years after the Allans were orphaned, leaving a wife and two surviving daughters of his own as well as any responsibilities for his nieces. Testamentary evidence gave some indications of the subsequent lives of the Allan girls. James's testament recorded a bond for a considerable amount of money granted to William Chalmer, minister at Monzie in Perthshire, and there is a strong possibility, though not proven, that William Chalmer was married to James's second sister Mary.⁴⁹ Scott recorded William Chalmer moving around a variety of Perthshire parishes, most significantly the parish of Dunkeld between 1705 and 1718.⁵⁰ It was from Dunkeld parish that the two younger Allan girls, Helen and Christian, were married in 1707 and 1712 respectively to men from nearby parishes.⁵¹ As girls were usually married from their home parish, this strongly suggests that both had been living in Dunkeld for at least some time.⁵² Both Helen and Christian remained in the Dunkeld area and the testament of Helen's husband also contained a bond granted to the same minister, William Chalmer.⁵³ It is certainly plausible that the orphaned Allan sisters went to live

⁴⁸ Adamson (*Hearth Tax Records*, 37) for Queensferry lists four Allan(e) households in 1691, three who were not well-off and a John Allane with three hearths. James Allan had a brother John, also a skipper in Queensferry (Bo'ness baptism John Allan, 5th August 1675). John Allan senior may have been the girls' uncle but could have died before Helen Cook's death in 1693.

⁴⁹ James's only other significant long term creditors were his sister Susanna and a Dundee merchant. Note 18 suggested the family reasons behind the bond.

⁵⁰ Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 4, 155 and 168.

⁵¹ OPR Dunkeld, marriage Helen Allan and Thomas Binning, 26th August 1707, Christian Allan and Patrick Stewart, minister Auchtergaven/Bankfoot, 1st April 1712.

⁵² Bigwood, *Scottish Family Tree*, 80.

⁵³ NAS, CC7/6/2, testament Thomas Binning, 28th April 1715.

with Aunt Mary Cook and Uncle William Chalmer as it would seem unlikely that an unrelated single professional man would take responsibility for bringing up young children in his own home.⁵⁴

Jean Allan however remained strongly connected to Pittenweem. Despite the fact that her brother John was probably alive, Jean was named as the only executor dative in her parents' joint testament of 1702 with Uncle Robert Cook as her cautioner.⁵⁵ Jean had to contend with the non-payment of the sale of her father's share of the *George* with Robert Cook again involved in a legal capacity to help Jean recover the money she was owed.⁵⁶ Jean herself did not marry until she was in her early thirties and the date, 1707, suggests she had to wait until the family finances were sorted out and she had access to the money for her tocher of 1500 mercks and also for Helen's tocher, married the same year but at the much younger age of twenty.⁵⁷ How much direct involvement Jean had in sorting out the family's affairs and how much was done for her with Jean as the signatory is unclear but she does appear to have played a central role in managing the family when she was barely out of her teens. Her level of education evidenced by her signature on her marriage contract and upbringing would have meant that she would have had the skills to do it.

⁵⁴ William appeared to have had a penchant for marriage in later life with three recorded marriages: Agnes Lindsay of Errol 1719, Elizabeth Campbell, Lady of Drumellie 1731 and Katherine Murray, Kinloch 1737. It would seem quite feasible that he had an earlier unrecorded marriage probably around 1690 when he would have been about thirty. It is not known how William Chalmer was connected with the East Neuk of Fife. Scott recorded him as a son of the 'town clerk' of Aberdeen and a graduate of 'Aberdeen University' (*Fasti*, vol. 4, 155 and 168). He may have been known through Cook trading connections.

⁵⁵ See bond from John Allan, master of the *George* of Queensferry, to his sister Jean Allan (NAS, RD4/98/58, 1706). The *George* was the name of the ship in question in their parents' testament: CC8/8/81/420-421, 27th July 1702 and eik in the margin of this document 13th September 1706.

⁵⁶ See note 80, chapter 2 and Mowat and Graham, *High Court of Admiralty* AC9/29, 1703.

⁵⁷ NAS, RH9/7/152, marriage contract William Bell and Jean Allan, 10th July 1707. There were two sets of 'William Bell elder and younger' in Pittenweem around this period: in Jean's marriage contract she agreed to marry William Bell, only lawful son of William Bell. Father and son were both skippers in Pittenweem and her husband was also described as 'Captain' at the births of some of her children. In the second set, William Bell younger, son of Bailie William Bell and Marjorie Cook, married Agnes Binning in 1701 (OPR, 1701 and marriage contract, NAS, RD3/143/443-460, 1714).

There were no migratory moves for James's own two young daughters. His wife Anna Aitchison probably survived him and continued to bring up her daughters in Pittenweem and both married local men.⁵⁸ The fact that the Allan girls' main migratory move was made *before* marriage rather than *at* marriage accorded with the comments of Whyte concerning the mobility of women in early-modern Scotland.⁵⁹ An uncontrollable life event had precipitated a migratory move that shaped the lives of future generations. In contrast, their mother Helen Cook was more likely to have moved to Queensferry from Pittenweem *at* marriage as a planned event and no doubt found her husband through her father's Forth trading links as 'mobility was channelled by topography'.⁶⁰ Similarly, once the Perthshire link had been established by William Chalmer (even if not married to a Cook daughter, he was sufficiently close to the family), a further Cook cousin/niece, Christian Cook of Elie, also moved *at* marriage in 1714 to Redgorton about eight km from Cousin Christian Allan, the kinship link further enhanced by the occupational link of the ministry. Yet another younger first cousin Mary Lindsay married the next minister of Dunkeld.⁶¹ These family moves reflect Whyte and Whyte's comments that the Church of Scotland ministry in this period formed an 'organised, tight-knit professional elite' who typically found their spouses through family contacts.⁶² These early eighteenth-century marriages provided a

⁵⁸ The Pittenweem OPR marriage record (22nd August 1704) for Anna's elder daughter stated 'parents consenting' whilst that for the younger daughter (16th May 1713) stated 'none of their parents being alive'. Both girls were of Pittenweem parish.

⁵⁹ Whyte, *Scottish Society*, 46.

⁶⁰ Whyte, *Scottish Society*, 38.

⁶¹ Christian Cook's husband, George Meik, came from a farming family in Bendochy, Coupar Angus about fifteen km from Dunkeld. The link between the Bendochy family of Meik and Christian's husband was confirmed through one of George's great-grandsons civil engineer Thomas Meik (1812-96) (*The Gazetteer for Scotland* (2013) accessed 22nd March 2013 at <http://www.scottish-places.info/scotgaz/people/famousfirst3722.html> and Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 4, 141 and 242). For Mary Lindsay's husband Alexander Stoddart, see OPR, Newburn, Fife, marriage Mary Linds[a]y and Alexander Stodard, 20th December 1723, birth of a son in Falkland 1726, Alexander's subsequent parish, and *Fasti*, vol. 5, 153.

⁶² Whyte and Whyte, *Women in Scotland*, 221 and 226.

network of role models and potential contacts within the ministry for future generations.

As tactics for coping with what was probably a significant family disaster that had led to two sets of fatherless children to support within a couple of years, it had the advantage of spreading the responsibilities across a broader base. Whilst the emotional impacts cannot be judged, it is clear from subsequent marriages across two generations that the Fife and Perthshire families maintained contacts.⁶³

Thomas Cook's in-laws, the Gillespies of Elie, also made provision for older orphaned unmarried daughters. When Thomas's widowed mother-in-law, Christian Small, was dying she ensured that there was a legal agreement drawn up between her surviving son and four daughters 'for the keeping of love and friendship one with another'.⁶⁴ Whilst it was clear that the son got his rightful inheritance, he renounced any claim to the money from certain lands in favour of his sisters. There was money 'sett appart' for the two unmarried sisters who were in their early twenties 'for taking up of a house' and one daughter also got 'as much money as buy a silk gown and petticoat', perhaps for her wedding the following summer. Unlike a latterwill, all the beneficiaries were involved in making the agreement and it thus had a better chance of achieving Christian's desire for harmonious family relationships and support for her unmarried daughters after her death.

⁶³ Nellie Bell of Pittenweem (daughter of Jean Allan and William Bell) married James Scott in 1742, the minister who followed her Uncle Patrick Stewart at Auchtergaven (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 4, 141 and 285).

⁶⁴ NAS, CC20/11/7 11th June 1706. See appendix 6 for the Gillespie family.

Mortality, widows, and orphans in eighteenth century Fife

An almost exact replica of events that overtook the Queensferry family of Helen Cook and James Allan occurred some sixty years later for the family of John Cook, minister of St Monans and his wife Ann Wilson.⁶⁵ A relatively comfortable existence in the manse was no safeguard against nasty diseases in mid-eighteenth century Scotland. St Monans Kirk Session baldly recorded John's impending death: 'No sermon The minister being on death bed'.⁶⁶ Cook recorded that John died 'from a fever caught when visiting a poor parishioner' and given the implications in the session minutes of a sudden illness and death within days, this is a plausible piece of oral tradition.⁶⁷ This marriage had only lasted some twelve years.

Following her husband's death, Ann would have had to move out of the manse with her young family, ranging in age from a baby to an eleven-year-old, probably to Elie.⁶⁸ The curatorial documents for Ann's eldest son John allowed for some understanding of which family members took what responsibilities.⁶⁹ Ann provided the inventory of her son's inheritance and was by implication a curator.⁷⁰ Figure 3 identifies the men named in the curatorial documents as 'nearest of kin' and shows that two were married to blood relations rather than themselves being the blood relative.

⁶⁵ See chapter 4, Pp 60-8 for John's life. Ann was a daughter of the Rev. Walter Wilson, minister of Kilconquhar and a good illustration of the practice of clergymen marrying clergymen's daughters.

⁶⁶ NAS, CH2/1056/6, St Monance Kirk Session minutes, 23rd and 27th June 1751.

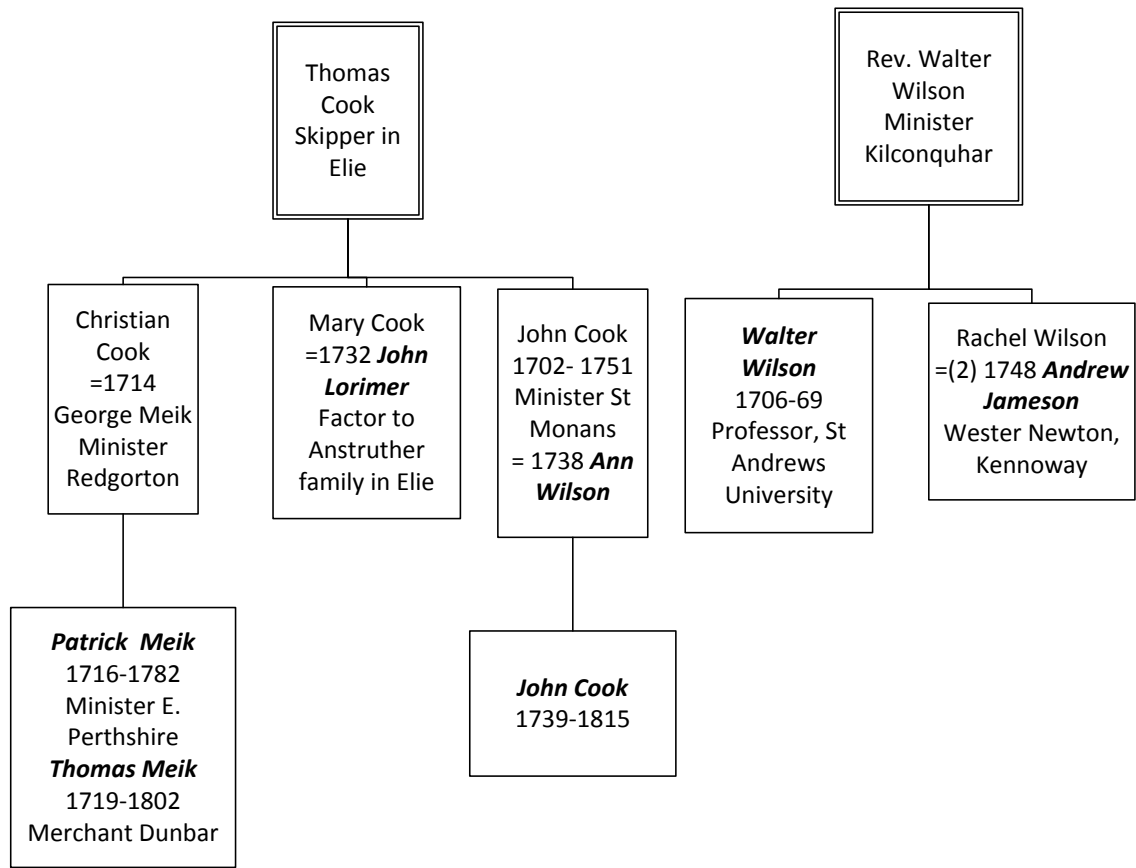
⁶⁷ Cook, *Genealogical Notes*, 8.

⁶⁸ Ann herself died in Elie (see note 72) and she signed the documents in note 69 in Elie.

⁶⁹ NAS, in bundle CC20/10/1, St Andrews Commissary Court Warrants of Tutorial and Curatorial Inventories 1750-1799, 1755 John Cook. Curators looked after the 'affairs of 'pupils' - fatherless boys under fourteen or girls under twelve - or tutors for children between pupillarity and full age at twenty one'. Representatives from both sides of the family were usually chosen as curators and tutors (Bigwood, *Scottish Family Tree*, 109).

⁷⁰ The only heritable item due to young John was Easter Newburn.

Figure 3 John Cook Curators c.1755



Sources: Scott, *Fasti*, CC20/10/1, St Andrews Commissary Court Warrants of Tutorial and Curatorial Inventories 1750-1799, 1755 John Cook and OPR. (Pertinent family members only shown).

Although the two Meek cousins were named as curators for the father's side, Thomas Meek subsequently assigned his authority to the advocate in charge of the legalities, probably because of the logistical difficulties of being able to attend to the business from Dunbar.⁷¹ This perhaps accounts for the inclusion of John Lorimer on the later dated documents because he was more local. Apart from young John Cook's mother, it would appear that in this family's circumstances, men were preferred for the role.

The fact that Ann's signature on the curatorial documents appears somewhat illiterate may reflect that by 1755 she was dying of consumption.⁷² Ann's death orphaned three children and at the time of his mother's death, the teenaged John was attending St Andrews University.⁷³ Given John's subsequent university career it would seem probable that he lived with his uncle, Professor Walter Wilson, whilst studying. Homes would have to have been found for the two younger children, Ann and James, both under ten, but there is little evidence to suggest which family(s) might have taken on this responsibility.⁷⁴ Ann may have lived as a young woman in a Pitcairn cousin's household with her brother John taking at least some responsibility for her financial

⁷¹ Thomas Meek, another Dunbar merchant, and the master of the local linen works were named in sexual scandals involving two sisters who were domestic servants in Dunbar. Thomas fathered a son and provides the only known example of illegitimacy in the families descended from Captain John Cook. Thomas was able to name his terms – 'a sessional rebuke' and '2 guineas to the poor' for his misdemeanour - but insisted that this 'offer' was not 'an acknowledgment of guilt', indicating that the Kirk session was limited in what penalties it could impose on men of this social class. The behaviour of these three Dunbar men illustrates some of the baser treatment of women and children in eighteenth century Scotland e.g. threats against the women and their illegitimate children and coercive removal of one woman from Dunbar (NAS, CH2/647/4/261-271, Dunbar Kirk Session minutes, 20th December 1741-9th December 1742).

⁷² OPR deaths, Elie 12th Feb 1756.

⁷³ Smart, *Biographical Register*, 186.

⁷⁴ James also went to St Andrews University 1763-66 (Smart, *Biographical Register*, 185). NAS, RH16/190/4 (scrap of paper, ~1840) lists the birth and death dates of this family and indicates that James died in the 1770s, but nothing else is known about him.

support.⁷⁵ Ann died in St Andrews where she was associated with her brother John, suggesting in later years she may have been a member of his household.⁷⁶

For the Cooks, child mortality in the manse showed little improvement over their parents' generation. It was the next generation with the family of Professor John Cook and Janet Hill born in St Andrews between 1771 and 1791 that reflected the nationwide improvement in child mortality.⁷⁷ The sudden population growth as part of the wider demographic changes affecting Scotland in the later decades of the eighteenth century and continuing into the nineteenth century are well documented. Neil Tranter stated that the 'rise in average standards of nutrition' made the most significant contribution to increased life expectancy in the period. Vaccination against smallpox from 1798 onwards and, to a much lesser extent, the earlier practice of inoculation, also contributed to decreased child mortality.⁷⁸ For the family of John Cook and Janet Hill, vaccination came too late to have accounted for their improved child survival rates compared to their parents' and grandparents' generations. Smout made clear that the effect of a better diet was more significant for the overall well-being of the peasantry rather than relatively well-to-do academics.⁷⁹ However, Smout did offer a further explanation for the decrease in infant and child mortality that was more likely to have affected the middle and upper classes: the improvement in child

⁷⁵ NAS, B21/5/2, 71-72, Burgh records of Dysart, 1st January 1777. The bond describing the financial arrangements between John and his sister was signed in Carnbee manse with one of the witnesses Rev. Joseph Pitcairn who was minister of Carnbee from 1742 until his death in 1780 (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 5, 189). The other witness was John Jameson, town clerk of Dysart. John Jameson was the son of Andrew Jameson (one of the curators in figure 3) from Andrew's earlier marriage. Rev. Joseph Pitcairn was a first cousin once removed to John and Ann Cook (Pitcairn, *History*, 502a). If Ann had been living in St Andrews, where John himself lived, then the bond would have more likely have been signed there.

⁷⁶ OPR, St Andrews, deaths, Anne Cook, 13th January 1813.

⁷⁷ See chapter four for Professor John Cook. This couple had thirteen children. Two died in infancy and a further two aged seven or eight. Two men died as young adults but many of the remainder survived to old age.

⁷⁸ Neil Tranter, 'Demography', in Cooke *et al*, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 1, 124-6.

⁷⁹ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 250-2.

rearing practices that replaced 'witchcraft' (such as the practices described above) with the 'common sense and good advice' contained in Dr Buchan's 'Domestic Medicine' first published in 1769.⁸⁰ Given the added potential for family contact with medical academics, this may be the main reason for the Cooks' comparative success in raising their enormous family compared with their forebears.

Across four generations of the family, the home and the workplace remained largely interchangeable. Whether it was the merchant's counting house, the legal professional, the manse or the students lodging in Professor Cook's boarding house, the family enterprise, and the family itself must have interacted on a daily basis. The women of the family may not have been directly concerned in their husbands' occupations or had independent occupations (even if they had had the time and energy in between pregnancy and child rearing), but they must have been significant contributors to the household economy.

The mobility within Scotland amongst the women of the family was notable, forming part of the 'significant, if statistically elusive component of population change'.⁸¹ Whereas the women of other families in this study (for instance those of Gillespie and 'Cousin James') found local marriage partners, Captain John's female descendants were more migratory. The principal reason lay with the initial kinship link between the East Neuk and east Perthshire coupled with husbands who were ministers in the Kirk. In contrast, whilst men like Robert Cook and his son William worked away from Pittenweem for some of the time, Thomas Meek was the only male family member

⁸⁰ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 258.

⁸¹ Marjory Harper, *Adventurers and exiles: the great Scottish exodus* (London, 2003), 4. As an illustration, around nine out of sixteen female, but only one out of ten male, family members are known to have migrated within Scotland pre-1800 (appendix 12).

known to have migrated permanently from his birthplace near Perth. Thomas's choice of Dunbar might be through family contacts or through the business contacts of his apprenticeship master.⁸²

It took three generations before the mortality amongst the Cook families' infants and young children recovered to the levels that Captain John experienced in the mid-seventeenth century. Whilst Captain John and his great-grandson Professor John suffered roughly 25-30 per cent losses amongst their children, the generation brought up in the 'ill-years' and Rev. John in the middle of the eighteenth century lost 60-70 per cent of theirs. These losses reflect the grim statistics for Scotland in general.⁸³

⁸² Thomas Meek completed his apprenticeship to a merchant in Perth in 1739 and became a burgher of St Andrews in 1741 - no doubt through his grandfather Thomas Cook (PKCA, B59/29/45 (59), *Indentures of Apprenticeship between James Darling and Thomas Meik*, 1734 and Dobson, *Burgess Roll*, 26). By 1741 he was a merchant in Dunbar (see note 71) and later a manager and shareholder in the East Lothian and Merse Whale Fishing Company of Dunbar founded in 1752, and the co-owner of a ship (*The Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 19, 1802, 240 and *The petition of Thomas Meek, merchant in Dunbar*, NLS, mf.134, reel 12762, no: 11, 1762).

⁸³ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 248.

Chapter 6 The Cook family and the British Empire

Scots and the British Empire

Chapter four identified the political changes that provided the background to entry of the Scots into the British Empire in the eighteenth century. From an economic perspective, Devine argued that the enthusiastic involvement of the Scots was due to limited prospects at home for the inhabitants of a smaller, poorer country and was an extension of the centuries old mobility of Scots across Europe as traders and mercenaries. But these aspects were not peculiar to Scotland and cannot on their own explain why a disproportionate number of Scots acquired influential positions in the British Empire in the eighteenth century.¹ For example, Niall Ferguson stated that in 1782, fifty-six out of a total of 116 candidates who were recruited as officers in the Bengal Army of the East India Company (EIC) were Scots when the population statistics suggested this should have been more like eleven or twelve.²

In looking for an explanation Devine singled out the contribution of the Scottish secondary education system with its 'rigorous curricula ... [and] truly draconian hours of work and study'. The greater availability of university education in Scotland also increased the pool of professional qualified individuals.³ More crucially, Allen pointed out the necessity of patronage.⁴ Even such well-educated individuals were unlikely to get anywhere unless they had access to patronage, just as important in the empire as at home, and vital to securing a post in which they could utilise their education and attributes. In this respect, Mackillop argued that Scottish networks were particularly effective at connecting between Scottish localities, London, and the Asian empire,

¹ T. M. Devine, *To the Ends of the Earth – Scotland's Global Diaspora* (London, 2011), 23-9.

² Niall Ferguson, *Empire* (London, 2004), 39-40.

³ Devine, *Ends of the Earth*, 30-31.

⁴ Charles Allen, *Soldier Sahibs* (London, 2000), 10-11.

highlighting the networks' distinctive 'blurring of locations, social affiliations, and identities'.⁵

Analyses of career choices

The Edinburgh Cook family whose sons principally chose military careers were a product of the Scottish education system, attending Edinburgh Academy.⁶ In order to gain an understanding of whether this family's choice of careers in the military was unusual, their actions have been examined in the context of both the immediate family network and the contemporary external political, social, and economic environment. As Edinburgh Academy has extensive records it was possible to analyse the career choices of the target family, compare them against cohorts of boys from similar social and economic backgrounds, and examine any trends in career choices between 1848 and 1868.⁷

The analyses showed that the most popular choices were military service, law, commercial/manufacturing, land, and finance whilst medicine, the church, civil service, and engineering attracted only a handful of boys every year. Military careers were extremely popular at the start of the twenty year period peaking with the 1849-56 class at 34 per cent, dropping to 12 per cent by the class of 1855-62 and stabilising to around 5 to 10 per cent by the latter half of the study period (figure 4). As the military

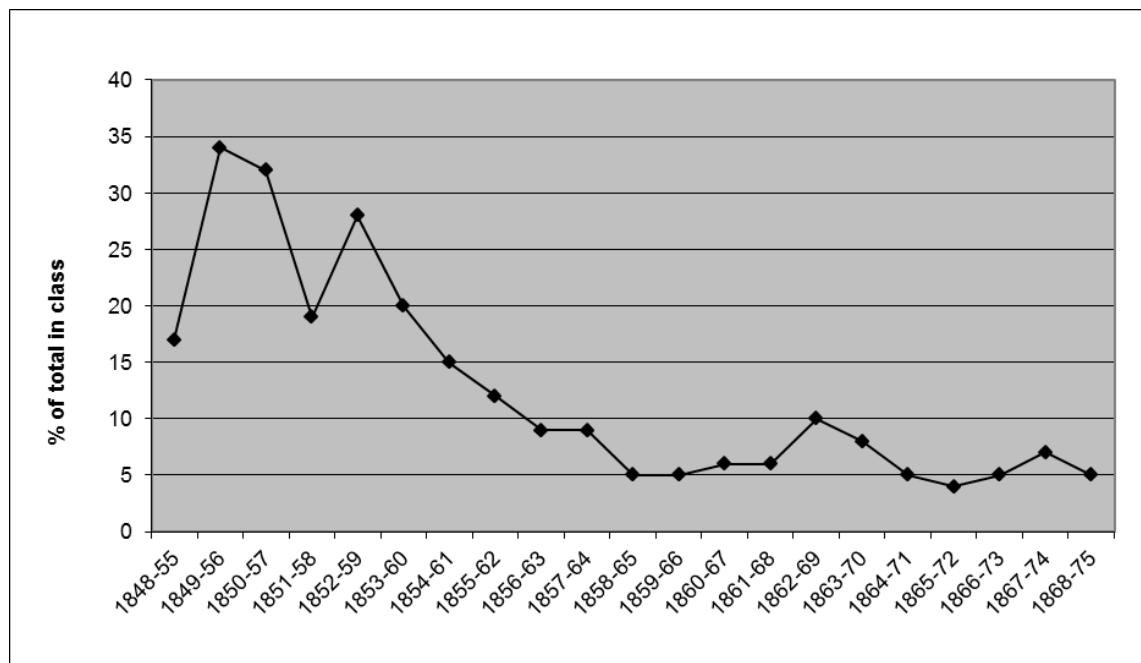
⁵ Andrew Mackillop, 'Locality, Nation, and Empire - Scots and the Empire in Asia, c.1695-c.1813' in MacKenzie and Devine (eds), *Scotland and the British Empire*, 64.

⁶ The boys were the sons of Alexander Shank Cook (an advocate and Sheriff of Ross and Cromarty 1859-69) and Jane Stirling. Jane's family were from Lanarkshire with business interests in London. Her father, John Stirling, had married his American cousin Elizabeth Willing and eventually moved to St Andrews (Pamela Statham-Drew, *James Stirling: Admiral and Founding Governor of Western Australia* (Crawley Western Australia, 2003), 5-40.

⁷ See appendix 13 for an outline of the methodology and results.

option dropped in popularity, law, commercial/manufacturing, land and finance grew but no one choice dominated.

Figure 4 Edinburgh Academy: per cent choosing military as first career choice



Source: *The Edinburgh Academy Register 1824-1914 and War Supplement* (Edinburgh, 1914 and 1921).

The results have to be interpreted with caution as there was insufficient data to be able to categorise around 25 per cent of each class. Checking for extra boys choosing a *military* career using the *London Gazette* showed that at least for George and John's class of 1852-59, the analysis was broadly valid.

The lure of the military

The military were crucial to the British Empire with the army as the offensive force constantly fighting violent if limited wars whilst the navy was the defensive force in Europe and protector of the trade routes.⁸ It was probably the Crimean War that

⁸ Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society* (Hull, 1993), 18 and Ferguson, *Empire*, 170.

was the single most important external factor influencing the peak years of military popularity at Edinburgh Academy and George and John's choice.⁹ The war was 'immensely popular' and 'war fever gripped the nation at the end of 1853'.¹⁰ Within the family, two Stirling uncles died in the Crimean War. Although uncles, they were only seven to ten years older than the two eldest Cook boys and could have acted as role models.¹¹ Similarly three older cousins had already moved into the military in the EIC Army and away from the traditional Cook family professional careers explored in chapter four.¹² Spiers further argued that the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58 gave the Army an 'enhanced image' although he also pointed out that the 'appeal of the Army as a career was not suddenly transformed'. People distinguished between 'the army as a popular national institution' versus a 'worthwhile career'.¹³

Closer to home, the rector of Edinburgh Academy at the time was James Hodson, whose brother was an EIC Army hero and whose 'daring exploits on the North-West Frontier were eagerly discussed in the school Yards'.¹⁴ There were established connections with India through two paternal uncles.¹⁵ Both these uncles were back in Edinburgh on leave between 1848 and 1850 and there was a selection of contemporary cousins returning to Edinburgh for their education, with two of these

⁹ John was initially nominated for the EIC Army when he was eleven (August 1854) (Sir O'Moore Creagh and E. M. Humphris (eds), *The VC and DSO*, vol. 1 (London, 1924), 88).

¹⁰ Edward M. Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914* (London, 1980), 97.

¹¹ Stirling, *Stirlings of Cadder*, 70. The 'dashing heroes' fiction and non-fiction that might have acted as role models is of a later Victorian period (Anthony Bruce, *The Purchase System in the British Army, 1660-1871* (Royal Historical Society London, 1980), 11). Indeed John's Victoria Cross action features in a chapter entitled 'Captain Cook's Struggle with the Duranee' in W.W. Knollys and W.J. Elliott, *Battlefield Heroes* (London, 1895).

¹² BL, IOR, L/MIL/9/180 ff.215-17, Walter Cook and brothers Walter Cook BL, IOR, L/MIL/9/203 ff.351-55 and Alexander Chrystie Cook, BL, IOR, L/MIL/9/197 ff.118-24).

¹³ Spiers, *Army and Society*, 135 and 140.

¹⁴ Magnus Magnusson, *The Clacken and the Slate* (London, 1974), 190 and Allen, *Soldier Sahibs*, 262.

¹⁵ See chapter 4 note 98 for further detail on these two uncles.

cousins attending Edinburgh Academy.¹⁶ There was thus ample scope to learn something of what life was like in India and what opportunities there might be. The broader horizons of the Stirlings (note six) may also have provided further encouragement to look beyond Scotland.

The boys' own interests and aptitudes would have had some role to play. None of the boys were prizewinners under Edinburgh Academy's predominately classical system of education. John was described as an 'immensely powerful man' [who] crossbuttocked the Afghan and would have succeeded in strangling him had not somebody else - quite unnecessarily - interfered by shooting the man through the head'.¹⁷ Naval cadets like Alex, aged thirteen, 'had to go over the topmast head every morning' and underwent a 'spartan regime of hard exercise and fierce discipline' which did not get any easier once they became midshipmen.¹⁸ Harry chose occupations involving horse riding whilst Walter was a 'really good [rugby] forward' and had an extremely active early army career.¹⁹ These suggest a preference for the physically active rather than the desk bound.

A contemporary account in which the author and John got leave to watch the British Army take formal possession of Kabul in October 1879 during the Second Afghan War, added a further dimension to the attractiveness of the military. The two

¹⁶ *Edinburgh Academy Register*, 207 and 214 and notes 77 and 78 for details on the uncles' travels.

¹⁷ O'Moore Creagh and Humphris, *VC and DSO*, 88. A 'cross-buttock' is a 'wrestling throw in which the hips are used as a fulcrum to throw an opponent' (*Collins English Dictionary*, 356).

¹⁸ Edward Philips Statham, *The Story of the 'Britannia'* (London, 1904), 66 and J. Winton, 'Officer Entry and Training 1815-1855' in J.R. Hill (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Navy* (Oxford, 2002), 267-68.

¹⁹ Harry was both a Queensland stockman and South African mounted police officer (*Edinburgh Academy Register*, 250) whilst Walter's service in the Second Afghan war included the forced march from Kabul to Kandahar (Cook, *Genealogical Notes*, 20 and Brian Robson, *The Road to Kabul - The Second Afghan War, 1878-1881* (Staplehurst, 2003), 248-49. See also *The Fettes College Register 1870-1932* (Edinburgh, 1933), 1 and 393.

men, with a small Gurkha escort, explored the Amir's palace, evoking a picture of school boys having a wonderful adventure:

While awaiting the arrival of the procession we proceeded to examine a door on the right of our room, the hasp of which yielded to a little gentle manoeuvring, and we found ourselves in a well furnished drawing room ...evidently used by the ladies ... on a side table were two singing-birds in a gilt cage, which we vainly endeavoured to wind up.²⁰

Duke was at pains to record that:

... Captain Cook would allow nothing to be removed, with the exception of a bottle of English sweetmeats, which the Goorkhas ate with much relish. A set of curious ivory chessmen much excited my cupidity, as a china set did Cook's, but we took nothing.

Duke's whole book conveyed the sense of excitement, exploration, and wonder that for many young men must have been part of the irresistible attraction of the empire, especially compared to gloomy lawyers' offices in Calvinistic and rainy Edinburgh.

Two of the younger Cook boys, Alex and Walter, still chose the military even though more of their Edinburgh Academy classmates had reverted to careers in law, commerce, manufacturing, and finance from around 1856. For Walter, orphaned at twelve, the manner in which he recorded events relating to John, fourteen years his senior, suggested he looked up to John, probably making the military the obvious choice.²¹ However, the Cook family did not lack appropriate contacts and knowledge in other occupations.²² Indeed, it appeared that initially Harry was destined for a non-

²⁰ Joshua Duke, *Recollections of the Kabul Campaign 1879 and 1880* (London, 1883), 158-60. Duke, a medical officer, and John Cook were evidently friends.

²¹ Author's private collection, Walter Cook, 'Narrative of Events at Kabul in December 1879 in connection with the death of Major John Cook VC', 20th February 1940.

²² The wider Cook families were still active in the law, church, and academia.

military career and his entry into the military was opportunistic rather than planned, as clearly was the case with his brothers.²³

The maternal side of the family had a considerable commercial and manufacturing tradition, suggesting that career openings here would most likely have been straightforward through an uncle in the Manchester cotton business.²⁴ Spiers commented on the 'relative lack of career opportunities for self-assigned gentlemen' and the social bias against commercial business for 'gentlemen'.²⁵ Overall it meant that men often ended up in the military because they were not interested in or capable of the other options. Thomson summed up the contemporary view of business versus a professional career with the observation that 'The objects of a profession are nobler, more intellectual, of wider range, and confer more happiness than those of a business'.²⁶

Thomson may well have been writing from an essentially English point of view. The analyses in this study showed that, amongst the Edinburgh Academy families as a whole, the bias against commercial careers appeared to have been less of an issue, with a steady and comparable number of boys taking up manufacturing and commercial work at home and in the empire as in finance and law.

²³ Harry attended St Andrews University 1865-69 (Smart, *Biographical Register*, 185). Between 1869 and 1874 there is no record of Harry's activities. In 1874 he went to Queensland, followed by Natal in 1878, becoming an officer in the South African Mounted Police at the outbreak of the 1879 Zulu War. His life suggests a restless individual who did not want the family norm of a planned and settled career, supported by a comment about him in a letter between two of his brothers 'if he did go a little wrong now and then, it was through goodheartedness' (Author's private collection, Letter Alex on board the *Sirius* to probably John in Afghanistan, 28th November 1879).

²⁴ Stirling, *Stirlings of Cadder*, 71.

²⁵ Spiers, *Army and Society*, 10.

²⁶ Henry Byerley Thomson, *The Choice of a Profession. A Concise Account and Comparative Review of the English Professions* (London, 1857), 17.

Entering the military

In the same way that the eighteenth and early nineteenth century Cooks had to have access to ‘interest’ and patronage to secure appointments in the Church and academia, so too did their mid-Victorian descendants wishing to earn a living through the military. George entered the Crown Army as an officer by the same route as most young men: by purchasing a commission. Only a few groups such as the sons of existing officers could enter ‘without purchase’. But money alone was not enough and candidates had to be nominated by someone who demonstrated the candidate’s connection with the politically dominant landed classes.²⁷ It was highly probable that the connection for George and his school mate was provided by one of the majors in the Regiment, George C. Miller. Major Miller was the son of a titled Scottish landowning, military, and legal family and had also briefly attended Edinburgh Academy in the 1820s. The evidence strongly suggests that the Edinburgh professional circle provided the entrée with Ensign George Cook’s great-uncle Walter Cook acting as the lynchpin between the generations.²⁸

For John entering the EIC Army as a cadet, he had first to be nominated (in his case by his father) to an EIC director for the EIC Military College at Addiscombe.²⁹ Another person then procured the nomination from the director and gave it to the potential cadet, vouching for the young man’s ‘Character, Family and Connexions’. It was Henry Shank as a director of the EIC who again provided the vital ‘interest’ for the

²⁷ George joined the 77th Regiment of Foot as an ensign (Cook, *Genealogical Notes*, 15 and NA, WO 65/134, War Office: printed annual army lists, 1859-60, 428). Bruce, *Purchase System*, 42 and 45. Another boy from Edinburgh Academy, William Samuel Henderson, joined the same regiment in the same year as George. William was the son of a medical professor at Edinburgh University (WO 65/134, 1859-60, 428 and *Edinburgh Academy Register*, 174).

²⁸ Appendix 14 provides the evidence for this connection.

²⁹ John joined the EIC’s Army at the point of its transition into the British Indian Army following the takeover by the Crown of the Government of India from the EIC in 1858 (Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game* (Oxford, 1990), 291).

Cook family, and his barrister son James Shank procured the nomination and gave it to John.³⁰ The purchase system had been abolished under the Cardwell reforms of 1871 by the time Walter, the youngest son, went to Sandhurst in 1875 though Harries-Jenkins argued that this did not necessarily result in a less exclusive entrance system.³¹

Royal Navy officer entry tended to be the preserve of existing naval families and, like the Army, required an 'influential person' to request a nomination from the Admiralty - Alex's nomination papers simply stated on a pre-printed letter that he had been nominated by 'My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty'.³² Davenant felt that 'strong political influence is the most weighty' but failing sufficient 'interest', parents would be left with the privilege of nomination of cadets available to flag officers and captains on commissioning a ship.³³ Whilst the Cooks themselves had no naval connections, the Stirlings had a strong naval tradition and great-uncle Admiral James Stirling was one potential source of patronage.³⁴

The outright 'jobbery' from earlier in the century may have disappeared but there were still subtle political payoffs for nominators. Alexander Shank Cook was in a position of influence in the establishment having been appointed by the Tories to his legal positions and as procurator of the Kirk.³⁵ Feelings of self-importance and kinship might also be motivators. The entry systems for all three organisations were designed

³⁰ BL, IOR, L/MIL/9/250 ff.218. See appendix 10 for further details of the Shank family connections and chapter 4, note 98 for Henry Shank's earlier provision of 'interest' to the Cooks. Henry Shank had also nominated the older cousins who were brothers (note 12) for the EIC army.

³¹ Harries-Jenkins, (1993), 18.

³² Winton, *Illustrated History*, 274 and Statham, '*Britannia*', 79. Author's private collection, *Alexander Cook (1847-88), naval records*.

³³ Francis Davenant, *What Shall my Son be?* (London, 1870), 57-60.

³⁴ Stirling, *Stirlings of Cadder*, 70. The naval member of the Miller family was also sufficiently senior in 1860 to have assisted.

³⁵ *The Scotsman*, 18th January 1869, 2.

to perpetuate the existing political power structures and to ensure that the military continued to recruit into its ranks men with similar outlooks, values, and beliefs.

George had only to pass a minimal entry examination for the Crown Army. He did not have to demonstrate aptitude or intelligence, just that he was a 'gentleman' with the right connections.³⁶ In contrast, both John and Alex attended specialist military education to enable them to pass the much more rigorous examination to gain their cadetships.³⁷ By the time they were seventeen or eighteen, both George and John were in India, John already earning accolades for his bravery when he was twenty.³⁸ At a similar age Alex was a midshipman and 'a promising officer and a good boat-sailor'.³⁹ Walter's preparation was lengthier as he was around twenty before he left for India.⁴⁰

George's purchase of a commission in a regiment of line infantry would have cost £450 with a further £250 at least for his lieutenancy.⁴¹ The relative value of this

³⁶ Bruce, *Purchase System*, 42-4.

³⁷ After leaving Edinburgh Academy, John attended the Scottish Naval and Military Academy in Edinburgh (1856-58) followed by Dr Greig's School in London (1858-59) before joining Addiscombe (1859-60) (BL, IOR, L/MIL/9/250 ff.218). Alex left Edinburgh Academy in July 1860 and is probably the 'A. Cook' aged thirteen and born in Scotland recorded in the April 1861 census as a pupil in a school run by a Mr Knight in Portsea. The name Knight appears annotated on Alex's nomination papers. This was probably one of the port schools specialising in training boys for naval cadetships (Davenant, *What Shall my Son be?* 60).

³⁸ George probably did not see active service and died of cholera in Peshawar in 1867 (Cook, *Genealogical Notes*, 15 and Gregory Blaxland, *The Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own and 77th of Foot* (London, 1977), 60). After initial service with various regiments in India, John transferred to the 3rd Sikhs in 1862 and the 5th Gurkhas in 1873. Shadbolt contains the best summary of John's service record (Sydney H. Shadbolt, *The Afghan Campaigns of 1878-1880 – Biographical Division* (London, 1882), 52-54).

³⁹ Alexander Cook, Naval records, 31st October 1865. Although Alex 'saw no actual fighting', he did see active service. In 1865 he was involved in events surrounding an insurrection in Jamaica and was Commander of the 'Iris' in the Egyptian War of 1882 (Author's Private Collection, Alexander Cook (1887-1974), Family notes). See Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (London, 1998), 193 and 271-72 for background to events in Jamaica and Egypt respectively.

⁴⁰ Walter served in various regiments in India before transferring to the 3rd Sikhs and seeing much active service in the Second Afghan War. He spent the latter half of his career in the Military Police in Burma (*Edinburgh Academy Register*, 302).

⁴¹ NA, WO 65/142, 1863-64, 459. There was a defined scale of charges for the purchase of initial commissions and subsequent promotions (Harries-Jenkins, (1993), 1 and *Report of the Commissioners*

sum adjusted by RPI up to 2011 is around £53,800 with the lieutenant receiving annual pay less expenses of about £5,000.⁴² Despite the cost it was the cheapest possible 'by purchase' entry that the family could have chosen. Similarly Spiers stated that officers from 'less or marginally wealthy families' often served in India (like George) where the regimental expenses were less.⁴³ Harries-Jenkins noted the predominance of recruitment from the aristocracy and the landed gentry, but also established military families and that the system 'did not exclude entirely' the sons of professional families.⁴⁴

Although Thomson stated that the EIC's army officer enjoyed better pay, promotion, and employment prospects than an officer in the Crown Army, the EIC Officer was 'looked down upon' by his Crown Army colleague, despite, in Thomson's judgement, being the equal in 'military qualities' and in 'military science even superior'.⁴⁵ Naval cadets and midshipmen received a small amount of pay, but it was insufficient to cover all the expenses and parents were involved in considerable expenditure to outfit the boy initially and to maintain him until he reached lieutenant at the age of at least nineteen.⁴⁶

Contemporary sources repeatedly stressed the necessity to continue to support young men establishing themselves in any professional career, citing the need for private means of around £100-300 per annum for the young man whilst modern

appointed to inquire into the System of Purchase and Sale of Commissions in the Army (HMSO, London, 1857), appendix 1, 19, 335).

⁴² Officer and Williamson, *Measuring Worth*, accessed 15th January 2013 and Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society* (London, 1977), 87. The base year for the RPI computation was taken as 1860. Although this is a large sum of money, it is not dissimilar to the cost in 2013 of supporting a British citizen studying at an institution in England, Wales, or Northern Ireland for a similar period.

⁴³ Spiers, *Army and Society*, 20 and 23.

⁴⁴ Harries-Jenkins, (1977), 43 and 46.

⁴⁵ Thomson, *Choice of a Profession*, 202-3.

⁴⁶ John M'Neill Boyd, *A Manual for Naval Cadets*, 2nd Edition (London, 1860), 510-14.

scholarship concluded that all professional education in Victorian society was expensive and the costs of training for the military were similar to other occupations.⁴⁷ Thus the family must have had access to sufficient financial resources to support professional training and a large household in Edinburgh New Town which in 1851 included a cook, housemaid, and governess.⁴⁸

Identity, values, and beliefs

The families' choices of how they lived provided some evidence of how they saw themselves (identity), what beliefs they held, and the standards against which they made their decisions (values). An individual's beliefs are not quantifiable and may appear irrational to others but they can exert a powerful effect on how people conduct their lives and make their decisions.⁴⁹

At the time that the decisions to join the military were made, high status and intangibles rather than financial reward appeared to have been more important to the family. Spiers argued that military service could 'confirm social status' whilst Harries-Jenkins commented that naval officers and country clergy had 'comparable social status' to army officers although the 'average income of other professional groups was far higher'.⁵⁰ However, money was tight after the boys' father died and such circumstances could dictate a more pragmatic approach. John commented in a letter to his sister Liz on his promotion to major in 1879:

⁴⁷ See for instance Davenant, *What Shall my Son be*, 26 and Harries-Jenkins, (1977), 99.

⁴⁸ 1851 census, Jane Cook and five children, 51, North Castle Street, Edinburgh and Alexander S. Cook (with a Hill cousin), Morley's Hotel, Trafalgar Square, London. The family bought 35 Great King Street, Edinburgh around 1853 (NAS, RD5/1869/1338/679, 1869).

⁴⁹ Sue Knight, *NLP at Work* (London, 1997), 166-167.

⁵⁰ Spiers, *Army and Society*, 8 and Harries-Jenkins, (1993), 8.

You will have seen that I have been made a Major a most respectable rank but at present it doesn't give me any more pay. However that will come too time enough.⁵¹

Boyd offered some pertinent contemporary comment on the attitudes of young men recruited into the military, Indian service and attending universities.⁵² Boyd quoted from an article of 1856 in *The Times* which maintained that 'every boy between the ages of 14 and 21, votes himself an aristocrat and grandee of the first water'. Despite the journalistic generalisations, the fact that the perception of *The Times* was that this behaviour occurred, revealed something of what membership of these institutions meant to the identity of those who joined them and why they might be attractive career choices.

The evidence suggests that within the 'military' Cook family there was a strong desire for upward social mobility into, and need to identify with, the ruling classes. As the nineteenth century progressed, the British state became increasingly professionalised. Aristocratic ideals of how society should be run, based on property and hereditary rights, changed gradually to include those of the professional classes based on merit, though as Perkin observed, 'some acquire merit more easily than others' through 'family wealth or privileged education'.⁵³ The Cooks were thus well-

⁵¹ Author's private collection, letter Walter Cook to his nephew Alexander Cook, London 21st August 1927 and extracts from letter John Cook to his sister Liz Houston, Kabul, 27th November 1879 reproduced by kind permission of the Ashcroft Trust V.C. Collection. Walter moved from Edinburgh Academy to Fettes in 1870, where he was a 'foundationer' i.e. he benefited from Fettes' endowment for boys whose parents had died leaving insufficient funds for their education (*Fettes College Register*, 1 and xvi).

⁵² Boyd, *Manual*, 512.

⁵³ Penelope J. Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Britain 1700-1850* (London, 2000), 201-13, Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society – England since 1880* (London, 1989), xii-xiii, 3-4 and 117-20 and Andrew Thompson, 'Empire and the British State' in Sarah Stockwell (ed.), *The British Empire - themes and perspectives* (Oxford, 2008), 39 and 46-8. Perkin and Thompson linked the change to industrialisation which afforded professionals more business opportunities rather than being largely dependent on aristocratic patrons for work (Perkin and Thompson, *ibid*). However Corfield argued that this was not solely the case as the aristocrats were too few to support the numbers of professionals. She viewed the change as a more complex issue, which, although it included supply and demand, also

placed to access the power and status structures through their professions and thus become part of the 'professional bourgeoisie' who Devine stated 'took over much of the power and influence' previously the preserve of landed interests.⁵⁴

James Parker argued that for many Scots who went out to India their 'Scottishness was never under threat' as their working life in India was 'temporary exile' and they did not 'identify wholeheartedly with Indian interests'.⁵⁵ Richard Finlay argued that 'the Imperial Partnership encouraged a sense of Scottishness and Britishness which reinforced one another'.⁵⁶ John's will, made with his thoughts focused 'in time of War', gave a strong indication where his sense of identity lay when he asked his sister Diana 'if she see fit to put up a small tablet with my Coat of Arms on it, to my memory, in the College Church at St Andrews'.⁵⁷ Like most sojourning Scots who were 'temporary migrants', John's eyes were 'firmly fixed on the homeland'.⁵⁸ Alex similarly identified with St Andrews and asked to be buried there.⁵⁹ Their father's intense relationship with the Scottish institutions of the law and the Kirk had been perhaps balanced by their mother's family who combined a strong Scottish background with a much wider *British* outlook. The family vividly illustrates the value

encompassed 'political acceptance, cultural promotion ... and social mobility' and the demise of patronage (Corfield, *Power and the Professions*, 213).

⁵⁴ MacKenzie and Devine (eds), *Scotland and the British Empire*, 19.

⁵⁵ James G. Parker, 'Scottish Enterprise in India 1750-1914' in R. A. Cage (ed.), *The Scots Abroad: Labour Capital and Enterprise 1750-1914* (London, 1985), 203.

⁵⁶ Richard J. Finlay, 'National Identity: from British Empire to European Union' in Cooke *et al*, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 2, 31.

⁵⁷ Author's private collection, copy will, Major John Cook V.C., Camp Shutagurdun Pass, Afghanistan, 23rd September 1879. The wording on the memorial reinforced the evidence of family identity: it was erected 'in a place long associated with his race and name'. See appendix 15 for a photograph of the tablet.

⁵⁸ Harper, *Adventurers and exiles*, 282-83 and 287.

⁵⁹ Author's private collection, letter Fanny Cook to Walter Cook, Clifton, 8th December 1888.

of networks linked to London and which ‘combined local allegiances with British associative culture and an ethos of imperial service’.⁶⁰

There are some indications of John’s beliefs and values from Walter’s record of the events surrounding John’s death. John, on being told that he was dying, used the quote: ‘*Dulce et decorum est pro Patria mori*’.⁶¹ Allen interpreted other British officers using the same quote as they lay dying on imperial battlefields as evidence that their deeply held religious beliefs and sense of duty were the rationale underpinning their actions and almost reckless bravery in battle. The eye witness account of John’s actions for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross described exactly such behaviour.⁶² Walter displayed similar behaviour in an engagement the following year in Afghanistan for which he was recommended for the Victoria Cross, but was not awarded the medal.⁶³ Strength of religious belief was understandable in a family with a long history of clerics, headed by a man who was procurator of the Kirk for many years and whose obituary commented that ‘he was much more of a clergyman in

⁶⁰ Mackillop, *Scotland and the British Empire*, 72.

⁶¹ John was mortally wounded near Kabul on 12th December 1879 and died five days later. Walter had himself been seriously wounded the day before and had himself carried down on several occasions to see his brother and was with him when he died (Walter Cook, Narrative of Events). See Robson, *Road to Kabul*, 154-58 for the actions in which the brothers were involved.

⁶² Allen, *Soldier Sahibs*, 11. In the action (at Peiwar Kotal on 2nd December 1878) preceding John’s hand to hand fight with an Afghan, John ‘charged out of the entrenchment with such impetuosity that the enemy broke and fled’. He also got a bullet through his helmet (NA, WO 32/7381). Walter noted that this ‘initial scrummage was touch and go’ and that the ‘saving of Major Galbraith’s life was merely the official peg to hang the VC on ... the real service was the instant, and successful, onslaught on the breastworks. On this depended the safety of the whole Force and ... the whole future [of] Fred. Robert’s subsequent career as a great and successful General’. Walter also judged that Roberts ‘never forgot the great service he [John] rendered on this occasion’ (author’s private collection, letter Walter Cook to his nephew Alexander Cook, 14th September 1926, transcribed by Alexander in his ‘Family notes’). See Robson, *Road to Kabul*, 85 for a description of events at Peiwar Kotal. John’s medal is currently in the Ashcroft Gallery of the Imperial War Museum, London.

⁶³ *The Historical record of the 3rd Sikh Infantry* (Lahore, 1887), 46.

mental constitution than a lawyer'.⁶⁴ The family was one of many in Scotland 'reared in a domestic atmosphere of religious duty and educational endeavour'.⁶⁵

Overall at the time that career decisions were being made, the Cooks appear to have had sufficient 'interest' in their own right and/or access to patronage to enable boys from a Scottish professional rather than military or landowning family to gain entrance into exclusive British institutions. Compared to their direct Edinburgh Academy peers, the Cook boys were not unusual in their choices of career. However, compared with all their contemporary cousins, they were quite distinct; out of sixteen cousins born between 1840 and 1860, only one (with an army father) joined the military. The rest were all primarily sedentary professionals, working mainly where they were brought up. This suggests that the desire for an active, outdoor lifestyle and a certain curiosity about the unknown were the main factors distinguishing the 'military boys' from their cousins.⁶⁶

Cook women and the British Empire

Whereas for some of the women in the mid-Victorian Cook families, the empire was central to their lives, for others it was just the accepted background to their everyday domestic circumstances.⁶⁷ The greatest impact was on those women who married and raised families in India. This was still relatively uncommon before the

⁶⁴ *The Scotsman*, 18th January 1869, 2.

⁶⁵ Devine, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 190. Not that religiosity implied temperance amongst the Cook men. Alex, anticipating shore leave, wrote to one of his brothers: 'I have wired Muff [Mary Cook, a first cousin and eldest daughter of Rev. John Cook of Haddington] to order in two dozen of whiskey and to hire a man to carry me to bed every night' (letter Alex. Cook to John, 28th November 1879). Perhaps this was an antidote to the 'sobriety' certified at the end of each period of a Victorian naval officer's service.

⁶⁶ This curiosity was epitomised by John at sunrise as the 'first on the summit' of the Shutagarden Pass as the British advanced on Kabul, watching a few Afghan horsemen disappearing quickly far below (Duke, *Recollections*, 103).

⁶⁷ Kathleen Wilson, 'British women and the Empire' in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds), *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850: an Introduction* (London, 2005), 262.

1850s as there were fewer than 500 'respectable' Europeans in Bombay in the 1840s.⁶⁸ Whilst the family circumstances of both Catherine Home and Jane Pattullo implied they met their prospective Cook husbands (brothers living in St Andrews) in Scotland, and then went out to India to get married, this cannot be assumed.⁶⁹ Barr cited the practice of sending 'spare young ladies' out to India to find husbands and Jane's family already had strong connections with India.⁷⁰ Thus Jane had at least second hand acquaintance, if not first-hand knowledge of life in India. Catherine's family, however, had no known connections with India.⁷¹

For both women, the overriding impact of their relationship with the empire lay in its disruptive effect on family life. Jane was relatively lucky in that her husband George remained in Bombay throughout his career and in the early years she had the company of a sister.⁷² However, George was frequently away from Bombay for periods

⁶⁸ Joanna Trollope, *Britannia's Daughters - Women of the British Empire* (London, 1983), 117-18 and Pat Barr, *The Memsahibs - The Women of Victorian India* (London, reprint 2011 from 1976), 81. Matthew quoted 938 European residents in Bombay [in 1829] of whom about a third were children. By 1855 there were 492 *Presbyterians*, mostly military (John C. Matthew, *The Story of St Andrew's Church, Bombay* (Bombay, 1913), 57 and 60).

⁶⁹ Catherine married civil servant Henry David Cook in Madras in December 1836. They may have met through Catherine's brother, Rodham, who was a student contemporary of Henry's at St Andrews University (Smart, *Biographical Register*, 401). Jane, whose family lived in St Andrews, married Rev. George Cook in Bombay in June 1842. Whilst George was at home in St Andrews in June 1841, six months before he sailed for India, Jane was not, nor apparently anywhere else in Britain (1841 census, George Cook, Market Street, St Andrews, Fife).

⁷⁰ Barr, *Memsahibs*, 85. Although the Pattullos were a Fife landowning family, Jane's maternal grandfather served in the EIC (GROS, marriage Robert Pattullo and Charlotte Stewart, Edinburgh, 6th July 1799). Two brothers were also employed in the Asian empire (NAS, GD2/404/part 1 1831-1838 and part 2, 2nd January 1850, Robert Pattullo, captain in the EIC maritime service and BL, India Office Family History Search, *Biographical notes for John Pattullo*, writer 1817, Bencoolen [Sumatra] Establishment).

⁷¹ The Homes were a Berwickshire landowning family. Both Catherine's grandfathers were naval officers based around Leith whilst her father lived off his investments (John Home Home, will, SC70/4/106, 24th October 1866).

⁷² Emily Guthrie Pattullo married Lieutenant Harvey W. P. Welman in Bombay in 1845 but died some six years later at Chatham, Kent (Fibis, *Bombay Almanac*, marriage, 5th June 1845 and death, 19th February 1851). Emily's son subsequently lived with a Pattullo aunt in Edinburgh and attended Edinburgh Academy - a good illustration of the problems faced by empire widowers and who might take on the responsibility of rearing the children (1861 and 1871 census, Wellesley Welman with Aunt Charlotte Pattullo at 38 Ann Street, Edinburgh and *Edinburgh Academy Register*, 247).

of six or seven weeks ministering to 'outstations'.⁷³ Although Barr described European life in Bombay in the 1840s as 'very expensive', 'notoriously staid,' and 'dull for women', Bombay did have an attractive setting and a range of European amenities making for a lifestyle that could be enjoyable.⁷⁴ Life for Catherine must have been much more trying, crisscrossing southern India in a state of almost perpetual pregnancy and coping with the climate and 'repetitive and boring' life of rural postings.⁷⁵ Additionally, contemporary opinion held that children should be sent back to Britain for medical and social reasons somewhere in the age range of five to eight and both families would have had to face this disturbing decision.⁷⁶ In 1848 Catherine, Henry, and family came back to Edinburgh to stay with Catherine's father. Catherine was subsequently away from India for around five or six years and for half that time she and the children were separated from Henry.⁷⁷ Jane returned to Scotland in 1849 for about four years with a somewhat shorter separation from George.⁷⁸ Both families left at least one child and most likely all but the youngest, behind in Edinburgh when

⁷³ Matthew, *Story of St Andrew's Church*, 29.

⁷⁴ Barr, *Memsahibs*, 78-87.

⁷⁵ During Catherine's marriage her husband had some seven different appointments plus any travel between seasonal homes (Prinsep, *Records of Service*, 34). Catherine, married at twenty-three, had ten children in seventeen years of married life whereas Jane, married at thirty-one, had five in her child-bearing years. Barr, *Memsahibs*, 148.

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford, 2004), 29.

⁷⁷ Fibis, *Bombay Calendar*, departures, H. D. Cook, Madras Civil Service, and Mrs Cook, three children and one servant, 1st February 1848 and 1851 census, Catherine Cook and seven children at 13, Inverleith Row, Edinburgh). Henry returned to India in December 1850 (Fibis, *Madras Almanac 1851-1853*, arrivals, H. D. Cook, Civil Service, 31st December 1850) whilst Catherine must have returned by late in 1853 with her last child born in India in August 1854. This was the second period of separation for the family. Catherine and probably two surviving children were away from India for around two years between 1843 and 1845. This trip was possibly prompted by the death of an infant son. Within two weeks of the child's death, Catherine had left for Britain (Fibis, *East India Register*, death, George Henry Cook, son of H. D. Cook, 3rd January 1843, *Madras Almanac*, departures 1842-1844, Mrs H. D. Cook to London, 19th January 1843 and birth of child in Edinburgh, September 1843). By early 1845 Catherine must have returned to India where her next child was born in October 1845.

⁷⁸ Fibis, *Bombay Calendar*, departures, Rev. Mr Cook, Mrs Cook, three children and one European female servant, 3rd April 1849. George returned to India at the same time as his brother (Fibis, *Bombay Calendar*, arrivals, Rev. G. Cook, 29th December 1850). The family stayed with Jane's parents and sisters (1851 census, Jane H. Cook and three children, High Street, Musselburgh). Jane must have returned to India by about May 1853 with the birth of her last child in February 1854.

they returned to India.⁷⁹ The choice for women like Jane and Catherine lay between a lengthy separation from either the husband or the children and, as Trollope argued, most women chose the husband to avoid any potential marital problems.⁸⁰ Catherine appeared however to have favoured the children.

The issue of family separation may have been one of the reasons prompting Jane and family's permanent return to Scotland by 1860.⁸¹ It was certainly a key point in the household of Walter Cook's future wife Mary Simson. In an emotional and stormy late night encounter between Mary and her father, her father declared that one of the reasons 'he gave up India' was 'to prevent his daughters bones from lying there' and his regret 'of our having seen so little of each other'. Because of Walter's career in the Indian Army, Henry Simson knew the difficulties his daughter would face if she married Walter.⁸²

Catherine never returned, dying within days of her one-year-old daughter.⁸³ Faced with the dilemma of work and family responsibilities, Henry was remarried within six months to Elizabeth Searle whom he must have met in India.⁸⁴ Elizabeth may have been one of the British women who were 'intrigued' by India even if they did not

⁷⁹ See note 16 and Buettner who argued that once children were back in Britain, they rarely returned to India until they were adults (*Empire Families*, 117). Jane's children probably formed part of the Pattullo household of note 72 (by 1854 at Ann Street in Edinburgh) with the Cook and Welman first cousins both attending Edinburgh Academy.

⁸⁰ Trollope, *Britannia's Daughters*, 127.

⁸¹ George retired from Bombay in July 1859 and the family lived in the same street in Edinburgh as the Pattulos of note 72 (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 7, 571 and 1861 census, Rev. George Cook and family at 23 Ann Street, Edinburgh). George then became parish minister in Bathgate then Borgue (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 2, 397).

⁸² Mary's father, Henry, had retired to Fife following a career in the Indian Civil Service. The row between father and daughter was prompted by Walter's visit to ask for Mary's hand in marriage (Author's private collection, Mary Simson, 'Courtship diary', April 1890).

⁸³ Fabis, *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, deaths, Catherine Cook, 10th August 1855.

⁸⁴ Elizabeth, the daughter of an English landowner, married Henry in Madras (Fabis, *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, marriages, Elizabeth Searle, 23rd February 1856).

like the country in which they spent a large part of their lives.⁸⁵ Her will contained vivid descriptions of the Indian cultures behind artefacts she bequeathed to Charles Cook 'for his ever readiness to help or advise me'.⁸⁶ In contrast to Catherine, Elizabeth had a settled family life in India with the family retiring to Edinburgh around 1870.⁸⁷

Although Gordon and Nair argued that it was relatively common for middle class families to travel independently of each other for lengthy holidays and visits in later Victorian Britain, the separation of empire families would seem too extreme to constitute a positive experience.⁸⁸ Wives, however, were expected to give unquestioned support to their husbands in their service to the empire, putting up with the 'demoralizing effects of being the slave to someone else's duty'.⁸⁹ Even the philanthropic work, which at 'home' was an outlet for the skills and drive of middle class women, was not available to them.⁹⁰

For all the problems and anguish endured by women who followed their husbands in the empire, they might have been viewed by some of their contemporaries as the lucky ones. For many Victorian women, Trollope argued, marriage itself was not an option simply because so many men had left for the empire and only some had the opportunities of the 'spare young ladies' cited above. The issue was compounded by the middle class view of the necessity for a particular level of

⁸⁵ Trollope, *Britannia's Daughters*, 118.

⁸⁶ Elizabeth Cook, will, SC70/4/328, 19th March 1901.

⁸⁷ Prinsep, *Records of Service*, 34.

⁸⁸ Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, 104.

⁸⁹ Trollope, *Britannia's Daughters*, 124.

⁹⁰ Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, 226. Aunt Emma Stirling was a good example of a religious middle class woman of independent means who pioneered care for destitute children in Edinburgh, including successfully petitioning Parliament in 1888 to get the law changed. She was not popular however, being regarded as 'imperious, self-righteous and prickly' but as Girard pointed out, a man acting in the same manner would have 'easily qualified for hero status' (P. Girard, 'Victorian philanthropy and child rescue: the career of Emma Stirling in Scotland and Nova Scotia' in Marjory Harper and M.E. Vance (eds), *Myth, Migration and the Making of Memory* (Edinburgh, 1999), 223 and Emma M. Stirling, *Our Children in Old Scotland and Nova Scotia* (Coatesville, Pa, 1898).

income to support the trappings of family life.⁹¹ Walter Cook delayed marriage until his early thirties because he considered himself 'too poor to think of marrying ... or even [to ask a girl to] wait for him' when he was in his mid-twenties.⁹² Gordon and Nair's study in middle class Glasgow found that 'the percentage of all women of 26 and over who were never married rose ... from 35.3% in 1851 to 50.9% in 1891'.⁹³ The experience of Walter's sisters and contemporary cousins born between 1840 and 1860 and surviving beyond their mid-twenties was not dissimilar as around 35 per cent never married.⁹⁴ There were also reasons other than the empire and lifestyle expectations behind why some women did not marry. As Gordon and Nair pointed out, 'some women *chose* not to', perhaps because of the 'loss of independence' and 'uncertainty'.⁹⁵ Similar mixed emotions were evident for another (very excited) Cook bride who, as she approached marriage and a new life in Jamaica declared in her diary 'This is my last day before I am married. My last day of freedom, pip! pip!'⁹⁶

For Liz and Diana, the sisters of the 'five military boys', their relationship with the empire was primarily emotional, awaiting the safe return of their brothers between lengthy periods of service overseas. The sisters became the focus for 'home' for the unmarried brothers - both parents were dead by 1869. Diana, single and living independently in St Andrews was probably home for adolescent Walter and for all the

⁹¹ Trollope, *Britannia's Daughters*, 23. Gordon and Nair also cited higher rates of emigration for men than women (*Public Lives*, 173).

⁹² Mary Simson, 'Courtship diary'.

⁹³ Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, 172.

⁹⁴ This estimate covered twenty-three girls of whom eight never married. Of the fifteen girls who did marry, only two married men employed in the empire. Both of these marriages involved Cook daughters, born in India, and who returned to India as adults. Their marriages were examples of the trend noted by Buettner of marriage between such girls and the 'large pool' of British men in India (*Empire Families*, 183).

⁹⁵ Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, 174.

⁹⁶ Author's private collection, Annie Dora Dunning, 'Jamaica diary (1)', 9th October 1913.

brothers when on leave in Britain.⁹⁷ When Harry came home to die of tuberculosis in 1879 he went to Liz's house in Kirkcaldy and as two of his brothers agreed 'it was a mercy that he was allowed to die among his own folk instead of among strangers in South Africa'.⁹⁸ Amongst the heated military action around Kabul in November 1879, John was looking for presents for his sisters 'I am getting something nice I think for you and Di', and observing that 'Walter and I have been seeing a lot of each and a very nice young chap he is'.⁹⁹

The mutual support extended between in-laws as well. When Alex died suddenly in 1888, Cousin Charles Cook travelled immediately from Edinburgh to Southsea, where Alex was based, to help Alex's widow, Fanny.¹⁰⁰ Diana 'kindly' helped Fanny look after her children in St Andrews and that support was reciprocated two years later with Fanny looking after Diana throughout her 'trial' [labour].¹⁰¹ Walter made sure that Fanny was financially secure whilst Fanny recognised Walter's sense of loss after the death of his last surviving brother: 'Your sorrow must be second only to mine'.¹⁰² This close knit and mutually supportive network amongst the Cook siblings

⁹⁷ 1871 census, Diana and Alexander Cook and housekeeper, 3 Dempster Terrace, St Andrews, Fife. Alex was home on leave. In 1879 Alex, keen to hear from his brother in Afghanistan, wrote 'St Andrews would be the best address' (letter Alex. Cook to John, 28th November 1879). St Andrews became even more of the 'home' focus after Liz and her family moved there following her husband's death in 1883. She married Patrick Houston, a G. P. in Kirkcaldy, in 1869 (Cook, *Genealogical Notes*, 15).

⁹⁸ Harry was invalided out of the Mounted Police and was dead within six weeks of returning to Britain (note 23 and Cook, *Genealogical Notes*, 16). Alex put the blame for Harry's illness squarely on the empire authorities who, he thought, sent units such as Harry's out patrolling the Cape ill equipped, commenting that more died from 'chest complaints brought on by exposure during bad weather' than died from military action (letter Alex. Cook to John, 28th November 1879).

⁹⁹ Extracts from letter John Cook to Liz Houston, Kabul, 27th November 1879, reproduced by kind permission of the Ashcroft Trust V.C. Collection. It is unlikely that Walter and John had met since 1870 when Walter was thirteen and John twenty-seven so this was a rare opportunity to get to know each other as adults.

¹⁰⁰ Alex married Fanny George, the daughter of a Bristol brewer, in 1883 (Cook, *Genealogical Notes*, 19). They may have met through one of Fanny's sisters, already married to a naval officer. See note 86 for another Cook widow's appreciation of Charles.

¹⁰¹ Author's private collection, letter Liz Houston to Walter Cook, 9th October 1890. Diana married late (forty-three) and died within days of giving birth to a stillborn child.

¹⁰² Letter Fanny Cook to Walter Cook, 1888.

and in-laws reflected the observations of Davidoff and Hall and Gordon and Nair that the relationship among Victorian brothers and sisters was often intense and close, and in this case, probably deepened by the scattering of the siblings across the empire.¹⁰³

In addition, the empire had a particular financial relevance for Diana. John had made her an allowance of around £100 a year from his pay. John, on his death bed, requested that Diana might receive this as a pension instead and General Roberts, mindful perhaps of the debt he owed John, ensured this happened.¹⁰⁴ John's financial support was probably significant because, as explained above (note 51), the Cook siblings did not have much financial security at this point.

In contrast to the Cook women's relationship with the empire discussed so far, the empire appeared largely incidental to the lives of four contemporary female Cook cousins of the military boys and the girls' mother, also living in St Andrews.¹⁰⁵ Instead these women devoted themselves to the mid-Victorian women's movement which had evolved through a network of middle class friends and families. Although Barbara Caine argued the women's movement was 'always centred on England' and Scottish involvement relied on branches, Leneman argued strongly that the Scottish movement was independent, particularly because the different legal and educational systems required separate legislation.¹⁰⁶

Harriet, Professor Cook's middle daughter, was able to access this network through Elizabeth Garrett, who was in St Andrews in 1862, attempting to attend

¹⁰³ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 351 and Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, 57.

¹⁰⁴ Walter Cook, 'Narrative'. Diana kept this pension until she received a 'considerable legacy' related to her maternal grandmother.

¹⁰⁵ These girls were the daughters of Rev. John Cook, initially a parish minister, then professor of Ecclesiastical History at St Andrews, and Rachel Farquhar.

¹⁰⁶ Barbara Caine, *English Feminism 1780-1980* (Oxford, 1997), 86-90 and Leah Leneman, *A Guid Cause: the Women's Suffrage Movement in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1995), 12.

university medical classes. The Cook family, and particularly Harriet, became friendly with Elizabeth and through her, Harriet probably met Emily Davies, a woman instrumental in promoting the contemporary arguments of access for women to university education and the same voting rights as men.¹⁰⁷ Although Elizabeth could not persuade Harriet to study medicine, she did persuade her that 'she must have some purpose in life'.¹⁰⁸

By 1865, Harriet was in London, helping to organise and acting for a time as a paid secretary on work relating to the women's suffrage petitions of 1866-67. Indeed, Harriet's family connections with London would have made her involvement with *British* networks much easier.¹⁰⁹ Work on founding a higher education college for women progressed in parallel and Harriet wanted to be one of its first students. In February 1867 Emily Davies wrote 'Miss Cook [Harriet] and I talk about it [the college] continually. She is very anxious that it should be begun before all her young friends are too old to go to it'.¹¹⁰ Harriet's dream of becoming one of the college's first students never materialised. She died in London of tuberculosis in May 1869, a matter of months before the college, which in time became Girton, opened in Hitchin.¹¹¹ It was

¹⁰⁷ Elizabeth Garrett was the first woman in Britain to qualify in medicine. Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: a Reference Guide 1866-1928* (London, 2001), 138 and Ann B. Murphy and Deidre Raftery (eds), *Emily Davies: Collected Letters, 1861-1875* (London, 2004), xix-xlii and Julia M. Grant, Katherine H. McCutcheon and Ethel F. Sanders (eds), *St. Leonards School, 1877-1927* (London, 1927), 4.

¹⁰⁸ Elizabeth Crawford, *Enterprising Women - The Garretts and their Circle* (London, 2002,) 31 and 163.

¹⁰⁹ Murphy and Raftery, *Emily Davies*, xxxiii-xxxvii and Crawford, *Women's Suffrage Movement*, 138. Harriet's maternal Farquhar grandparents, although from Kincardineshire, were based in London where her grandfather was a merchant and a great-uncle an M.P. (William Johnston, *Descendants of James Young and Rachel Cruickshank* (Aberdeen, 1894), 87-94). In 1861 Harriet and her mother were visiting Hill relations in London (1861 census, Harriet and Rachel S. Cook, 22 Sussex Square, Paddington). Crawford (*ibid*) quoted Harriet's address in London as 16, Cambridge Square, Paddington - this was the home of the same Hill relatives in 1871 (1871 census, Letitia, Matilda, Madeline and Eliza Hill).

¹¹⁰ Murphy and Raftery, *Emily Davies*, 225 and 235.

¹¹¹ Murphy and Raftery, *Emily Davies*, xlii and Crawford, *ibid*.

Rachel, the youngest daughter, who became one of the first six students at the college completing an honours classics degree.¹¹²

Rachel's achievements were remarkable at a time when there was great hostility to educating girls, especially in subjects such as mathematics and classics.¹¹³ She must have been focused not just on her academic studies but also on the logistics of achieving her ambitions. One of the major problems Rachel had to overcome was finding someone to teach her Greek as no school would do so. She started her classics degree after only a few months tuition. From her perspective, the empire appeared of minor significance, including its soldiers: 'John and Harry were both in love with her [Rachel], but she thought of no-one, not even Uncle John. Soldiers were not in her line'.¹¹⁴ Rachel's subsequent focus is best summed up by a contemporary's comment that she 'spent herself for girls and women'. After her marriage in 1874 to Charles Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, she was instrumental in founding secondary schools for girls and particularly arguing for women's access to higher education in Manchester.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Rachel had been due to start in October 1869 but her entry was delayed by illness until January 1870 (Murphy and Raftery, *Emily Davies*, 325 and 326 and Louisa Innes Lumsden, *Yellow Leaves Memories of a Long Life* (Edinburgh, 1933), 46.

¹¹³ Grant *et al*, *St. Leonards School*, 6 and 14.

¹¹⁴ John and Harry were uncles to the writers of the 'Family notes of Alexander Cook'. John had limited opportunities to succumb to Rachel's 'romantic beauty and natural charm' (B. Megson and J. Lindsay, *Girton College 1869-1959 An Informal History* (Cambridge, 1960), 6). He left India in the first quarter of 1869 for furlough on a 'medical certificate', the timing almost certainly related to his father's death in January 1869, and was back in April 1871 (*Historical record 3rd Sikhs*, 21). Rachel would have been at college for a significant portion of John's furlough rather than St Andrews. Harry, as a St Andrews student for the previous four years, would have been better placed.

¹¹⁵ Rachel met her husband, well-known for his radical views and social commentary, through friends in the women's movement. Both were strong Liberals, Rachel campaigning for her husband when he stood for Parliament: he was successful in 1895. Rachel also worked as a journalist with her husband on the *Manchester Guardian* (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 49, 453, J. L. Hammond, C. P. Scott of the *Manchester Guardian* (London, 1934), 40-1 and Obituary Mrs C.P. Scott, *The Scotsman*, December 1st 1905, 10).

Back in St Andrews, Rachel's mother and sisters Elizabeth and Isabella were busy on similar ventures. During 1876 plans for founding a girls' school in St Andrews were being 'eagerly discussed' even though the 'difficulties ... seemed very formidable'.¹¹⁶ Elizabeth ('Mrs Rodger') was heavily involved, along with Isabella and mother, in the preliminary work and, following the foundation of St Leonard's school in 1877, both Elizabeth and her husband served on its council for forty years with Isabella as honorary secretary.¹¹⁷ When St Andrews University opened to women in 1892, one of Liz Houston's daughters was one of the early women to matriculate.¹¹⁸ Liz Houston herself was also involved in the later stages of the women's suffrage campaign.¹¹⁹ The empire may have been the 'context' for the organised British women's movement but the commitment and dedication of these Cook women suggest that such projects were of far greater importance to them in their daily lives than the empire.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Grant *et al*, *St Leonards School*, 7 and Lumsden, *Yellow Leaves*, 61. This was part of the trend to provide more academic education for girls in Scotland in the 1870s, twenty years behind England (Robert Anderson, 'Education' in Cooke *et al*, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 2, 245).

¹¹⁷ Grant *et al*, *St Leonards School*, 7-13. Elizabeth, the eldest daughter, had married Rev. Mathew Rodger, one of the St Andrews ministers, in 1870. The school's first headmistress, Louisa Lumsden, was a fellow student of Rachel's and a lifelong friend of the Cooks (Lumsden, *Yellow Leaves*, 64).

¹¹⁸ Although Smart only recorded Elizabeth Cook Houston as matriculating 1895-96, her gravestone in the East cemetery in St Andrews designates her as 'M.A.'. She taught classics at schools in England as well as St Leonard's (Smart, *Biographical Register*, 406). Another Houston daughter and a Cook first cousin trained as nurses and worked in St Andrews. A more distant cousin, Janet Spens, one of Walter Cook's granddaughters graduated from Glasgow University in 1899, co-founded Laurel Bank Girl's School in Glasgow in 1903 and became a literary critic and Fellow of an Oxford College (*Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 51, 912). These four single women, born between 1876 and 1884, were amongst the first able to earn independent livelihoods in professional occupations. Family correspondence shows that the Cook and Spens' families kept in contact and Louisa Lumsden was a common acquaintance (*Laurel Bank School, 1903-1953* (Glasgow, 1953), 1).

¹¹⁹ Lumsden, *Yellow Leaves*, 170-72. Around 1909 Lumsden described 'Mrs Houston' in St Andrews as one of the 'strong supporters of our cause' by which she meant the women's 'constitutional' suffrage movement. Louisa was clearly unimpressed with militant suffragettes. Given the close relationship between Louisa and the Cook families, it is very likely that this 'Mrs Houston' is Liz Houston rather than any of the other unrelated Mrs Houstons recorded in St Andrews in the 1901 and 1911 census who were from different social backgrounds.

¹²⁰ Caine, *English Feminism*, 123.

The empire certainly pervaded many aspects of Scottish society, its 'ideas central to the formation of middle-class identity in Scotland' and the Cook menfolk who worked in the empire gained prestige and no doubt personal satisfaction from their employment.¹²¹ In contrast, for their womenfolk living in India, it was the context for their daily lives, not the driver. For the other Cook women, passionate about women's issues, the empire was peripheral. They were more concerned with influencing issues of British significance within their own localities. Rather than 'unambiguous ... engagement' with the empire, their lives had more in common with Bernard Porter's thesis that the empire 'did not require the involvement of any large section of British society'.¹²² For the Cook families overall, it is John Darwin's more balanced argument that the empire was 'understood in a variety of ways by people in Britain' that has the greatest resonance.¹²³

¹²¹ Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, 26.

¹²² Devine, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 261 and Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists - Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford, 2004), 307 and xiv. Although Porter's study title is Britain, he used English sources but did specifically recognise that the Scots were 'keener on the imperial enterprise' than the English (*ibid*, 147).

¹²³ John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire - the Global Expansion of Britain* (London, 2012), 291-93.

Conclusion

One of the principal aims of this research was to discover what factors drove the significant changes in family occupations over the past few centuries. Whilst family decisions were influenced by the prevailing economic and political environment, this study has shown that personal choice and intangible benefits could be the deciding factors whether it was the skipper's son who was the first family member to become a minister or his military descendants. This reflected Devine's emphasis on the 'central importance of individual human choice' in decisions made by Scots concerning a related important life event: emigration. Devine argued that Scots chose to emigrate not so much because of basic poverty but rather from a desire for greater 'opportunity' and to 'get on'.¹ The Cooks would appear to have made many of their decisions on employment for similar reasons.

The theme of mobility underpins many aspects of employment. Much has been written concerning the mobility of Scots within Scotland in relation, for instance, to the migration of people from the countryside into the towns during the industrial revolution or seasonal shifts of labour between the Highlands and Lowlands.² Although Jeanette Brock and Harper discussed the movement of professional people from Scotland to England, neither of these authors commented on the mobility of professionals *within* Scotland, which has been highlighted by this study.³ For ministers, especially at the start of their careers, they often had to move to where the vacancies might be rather than where they might perhaps prefer. The Cook ministers moved, for

¹ Devine, *Ends of the Earth*, 105-106.

² See for instance Jeanette Brock, *The mobile Scot: a study of emigration and migration 1861-1911* (Edinburgh, 1999), chapter 1, Devine, *Ends of the Earth*, 98-100, and Harper, *Adventurers and exiles*, chapter 1.

³ Brock, *Mobile Scot*, 149 and Harper, *Adventurers and exiles*, 10. Only one early nineteenth century Cook is known to have moved to England for work (see chapter 4, note 79).

instance, from St Andrews to Laurencekirk and East Lothian and married local women. Their sisters who married ministers moved with their husbands from Fife to Perthshire and Glasgow. Later in their careers some 'translated' to larger parishes.⁴ In contrast, for the four Cook academics gaining professorships at St Andrews University required migration *away* from St Andrews as ministers before achieving the step up into academic life. Only one is known to have subsequently looked beyond St Andrews.⁵

Both the two Cook legal professionals who moved from St Andrews to Edinburgh, Walter around 1812 and Alexander around 1840, had prior connections with the city but wider macro-economic reasons probably also contributed to their migration.⁶ Clive Lee argued that the low wage economy of the Victorian industrialists resulted in a depressed consumer demand, including the market for professional services and the effect was particularly pronounced in Fife, the central belt, and Strathclyde.⁷ Whilst both men moved before the peak of Victorian industrialisation, there is little to suggest that Fife's early nineteenth century economy, based on coal, iron, and linen would provide sufficient demand for the services of an aspiring advocate.⁸ As Corfield pointed out, 'access to a sufficiently affluent clientele was the

⁴ See for instance cousins John (1807-74) and George (1809-80) both born in St Andrews and educated there. John's first parish in 1832 was the small rural Fife parish of Cults followed by the second charge of Haddington in 1833, then gaining its first charge at the Disruption. George started as an assistant in Ceres in Fife in 1832 before achieving his first parish in Midmar in rural Aberdeenshire in 1837 followed by Kincardine O'Neil in 1854 (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 9, 568 and vol. 6, 102). Although the stipends of the parishes cannot be directly compared because of the variable 'victual' element, a step up in responsibility can be inferred from the increasing population of the parish.

⁵ John (1807-69) put himself forward (unsuccessfully) for the principalship of Edinburgh University (*The Scotsman*, 9th September 1859, 2).

⁶ Both attended Edinburgh University as law students 1795-96 and 1830-33 respectively (Smart, *Biographical Register*, 184 and 187).

⁷ Clive H. Lee, 'Modern economic growth and structural change in Scotland - the service sector reconsidered' in *Scottish Economic and Social History*, vol. 3, no: 3, 1983, Pp 5-35 and *The British Economy since 1700: a macroeconomic perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), 137-38.

⁸ Paula Martin, 'Industries in Fife' in Omand (ed.), *The Fife Book*, 181-92.

key'.⁹ The means of livelihood may have been different but professional Scots were migrating within Scotland for the same reasons. The 'push' from the lack of appropriate opportunities at home balanced by the 'pull' of better earnings elsewhere encouraged the change, though as Harper argued, 'push' and 'pull' were 'rarely mutually exclusive'.¹⁰

Temporary migration was another route to advancement. Whilst some of the families into which the Cooks intermarried such as the Hills and the Shanks had taken advantage of opportunities in the British Empire by the latter part of the eighteenth century, it was well into the nineteenth century before the Cooks felt the squeeze because Scotland had 'produced too many trained professionals for too few jobs at home'.¹¹ Only one of Professor John's six surviving sons briefly earned his living around 1806 as a direct consequence of the empire. By the time Professor John's surviving grandsons and great-grandsons were earning a living, around half in both generations earned their living for a significant proportion of their working life away from Scotland in the Asian regions of the British Empire.¹² In contrast only one grandson and one great-grandson looked for employment in countries of the empire associated with permanent emigration. As Harper pointed out, 'sedentary occupations' like those favoured by the Cooks were of less use in a frontier colonial environment than those with practical, non-specialist skills.¹³ For the significant majority of the Cook family members, they appear to have been able to meet their aspirations either in Scotland

⁹ The local market for basic legal work was probably saturated - Corfield quotes the presence of thirty lawyers in Dundee in 1818 (*Power and the Professions*, 214-15).

¹⁰ Brock, *Mobile Scot*, 10 and Harper, *Adventurers and exiles*, 32.

¹¹ Devine, *Ends of the Earth*, 29.

¹² Seven out of fourteen grandsons and thirteen out of twenty-four great-grandsons depended on the empire in the period 1830 to around 1900.

¹³ Harper, *Adventurers and exiles*, 26. Thus great-grandson Harry (1851-79) could find work as a Queensland stockman and similar activities in South Africa (chapter 6, note 23) whilst grandson Henry David (1841-1918) probably a banker, settled in urban south Australia around 1870 (Cook, *Genealogical Notes*, 18, and Smart, *Biographical Register*, 185).

or as 'sojourners' whose return to Britain at the end of their working lives was part of 'a carefully planned ... emigration strategy'.¹⁴

This study also sought to discover the largely hidden role of the women of the family and has shown that they were agents of change. In earlier generations, girls from merchant backgrounds started to marry professional men, making it easier for the menfolk to enter new occupations by creating contacts and role models. Across all the generations, marriage brought Cook men access to new networks.¹⁵ Whilst these links always appeared advantageous to the Cook men, it was certainly not the case that political and economic drivers rather than the romantic were the reasons for the marriages. For instance in the cases of both Professor John (1739-1815) and the Hills and Rev. George (1773-1845) and the Shanks, the political and economic success of the Hills and the Shanks occurred *after* the marriages had taken place. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, Cook women were making significant contributions to the British state in their own right.

Whilst the education of boys from professional Scottish families was commonplace across the study period, the education of girls, beyond the basics or more domestic subjects, was less so. Lindy Moore argued that the 'the tradition of a democratic, co-educational and classless system' of education obscured the paucity of provision for women and girls and the middle classes only started to press for more academic secondary education for their daughters around 1870. Moore also made the point that mothers were often more conservative with respect to the education of

¹⁴ Harper, *Adventurers and exiles*, 282.

¹⁵ Mackillop quoted an early nineteenth century example of a woman whose marriage 'opened up opportunities for her own male relatives' (Mackillop, *Scotland and the British Empire*, 76).

their daughters than the menfolk.¹⁶ Thus the mothers of girls who did succeed in accessing the extremely limited provision of academic education were likely to have been fully supportive of their daughters' aspirations.¹⁷ The fact that at least two girls from the Cook families had achieved tertiary level qualifications before 1900 and that at least four women were also instrumental in founding girls' schools suggests an intense family belief in the intrinsic value of education for both sons and daughters that went beyond the Scottish norms of 'educational endeavour' noted by Devine.¹⁸ When the core Cook families were no longer supplying university professors, one family member revealed the value she still placed on academic achievement when she observed 'Spens is the most intellectual family we are connected with in the present day'.¹⁹ Like the power that the nineteenth century Cooks accrued to themselves by their connection to powerful individuals, the kudos of intellectual ability could also be acquired by family connections.

The final research question aimed to explore the Cook families' identity, values, and beliefs. It is clear that family members had a strong and proud sense of identity with the family itself and its origins.²⁰ Devine suggested that Walter Scott's novels

¹⁶ Lindy Moore, *Bajanellas and Semilinas: Aberdeen University and the education of women 1860-1920* (Aberdeen, 1991), xi and 23 and Anderson, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 2, 245.

¹⁷ The positive input of Rachel Cook's mother was explored in chapter 6.

¹⁸ To put the numbers in context, the total number of students matriculated at the four Scottish Universities 1895-1896 was 5654 of whom 481 were women, around 8.5 per cent (estimated from Moore's figures in *Bajanellas and Semilinas*, 43). However, the numbers of women rose quickly to around 23 per cent of the total by 1914 (Anderson, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 2, 245).

¹⁹ Note Iris Cook to her brother Alexander late 1950s in 'Family notes'. Iris was referring to the Spens families mentioned in chapter 6, note 118. From Iris's descriptions the four Spens cousins who met her criteria of 'intellectual' can be identified as Janet (1876-1963) Oxford academic, William (1882-1962), Cambridge academic and (William) Patrick (1885-1973) M.P. (*Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 51, 912, 916 and 914). The fourth, Maisie (Margaret Gladys, 1904-94) Iris declared, wrote 'clever' books on theology, which 'even clergymen couldn't understand'. Maisie Spens is described as an 'Anglican contemplative writer' (Lambeth Palace archives, record description for MS 3997 ff.130-178 - full reference not consulted).

²⁰ NAS, RH16/190 contains, amongst other material, early sketches of family trees and family legends recorded by John Cook (1807-69), around 1840 perhaps as part of his role as 'head of the family'.

'satisfied the powerful emotional needs for nostalgia in a society experiencing unprecedented changes' and it is possible that such nostalgia partly explained the fascination with family origins, both for the Cooks and their contemporaries.²¹ Their sense of family and its strong bonds is also reflected in their typically Scots 'clannish' behaviour in relation to their use of patronage to gain employment for family members both in Britain and the empire.²² As the family increasingly became involved in the British Empire, they, like many other Scots, managed a dual identity as both Scots and citizens and supporters of the British Empire, with the potential for each identity to 'reinforce' the other.²³

The formation of Cook family professional dynasties, particularly in the church and law, suggests that their profession was also a major part of their identity. The legal firm founded by Walter Cook around 1812 operated in Edinburgh with direct Cook family descendants until 1983.²⁴ The church dynasty lasted a similar length of time whilst the academic tradition survived 100 years.²⁵ Thus existing family norms could be a significant factor in decisions concerning which profession to follow. Corfield noted the tendency for occupations to be hereditary in professional families, arguing that this was common in 'prestige occupations with a strong sense of identity'. Their profession defined the Cooks' status in society and allowed them increasingly to access political power structures, becoming 'power-brokers and opinion formers within ... [a] plurality

Charles Cook's father re-matriculated the Coat of Arms of John Cook of Pittenweem originally obtained in 1675 (GROS, Coats of Arms, 1st July 1876, vol. 10, 11).

²¹ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 292. See also other mainly Victorian genealogical studies cited in this research.

²² John M. MacKenzie, 'Essay and Reflection: On Scotland and the Empire' in *The International History Review*, vol. 15, No: 4, November 1993, 719.

²³ Darwin, *Unfinished Empire*, 294.

²⁴ W. and J. Cook, *The Scottish Law Directory 1983* (Glasgow, 1983), B37.

²⁵ Rev. John of St Monans was the first minister in 1734 whilst Rev. George, minister of Longformacus from 1871 until his death in 1891, was the last (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 2, 26). The first Professor John at St Andrews was appointed in 1769 and the last, his grandson, died in 1869.

of elites'.²⁶ Additionally, as professionalisation progressed, it became increasingly difficult to continue to exclude women from professions where selection was based on merit by examination, providing further encouragement for the education of the women in the family.²⁷ Thus in terms of identity, the Cooks were broadly representative of Scots professional families.

Brown noted the central importance of religion to life in Scotland in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and the Cook families' evident religious beliefs were thus unsurprising.²⁸ Such beliefs underpinned their involvement with the Kirk both as ministers and elders and their adaption to military occupations. Because of the families' staunch support for Moderate church politics, their religiosity would have been expressed in a rational and conservative manner that eschewed any emotional or evangelical expression of their faith. In terms of values associated with Protestantism, Whatley cited 'thrift, industry, tenaciousness, and self-sacrifice' in eighteenth century Scotland whilst in the later Victorian period, Devine also noted 'self-help and temperance'.²⁹ In addition, Perkin and Thompson both quoted professional values that overlapped with the religious, providing the Cooks with a doubly reinforcing set of values.³⁰ Whilst there was plenty of evidence that the Cooks were prepared to work hard, help each other, and sacrifice themselves for their country, there was less evidence that they valued temperance.³¹ Thrift is trickier to assess as the comfortable life style which most members of the family appeared to

²⁶ Corfield, *Power and the Professions*, 229 and 213.

²⁷ Corfield, *ibid*, 213.

²⁸ Brown, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 1, 63.

²⁹ Whatley, *Scottish Society*, 167 and Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 366. Perkin (*Rise of Professional Society*, 120) and Thompson (*British Empire*, 47) noted virtually identical contemporary values for professionals.

³⁰ Perkin, *Rise of Professional Society*, 120 and Thompson, *British Empire*, 47.

³¹ See chapter 6, note 65. Similarly Rev. George Cook left a considerable cellar including six gallons of whisky (SC20/50/16, 18th July 1845).

have enjoyed over the centuries did not necessarily imply that they were ostentatious or lavish.³² Their standards of living were probably those expected of persons in their professional positions.

Their religious beliefs would certainly have influenced their attitudes to education because basic education for all was fundamental to Presbyterian doctrine as the means to promote a godly population.³³ By the nineteenth century churchmen recognised the value of 'secular' subjects as well as the overtly religious and also thought that the 'process of an academic education' was as valuable in promoting 'mental discipline' as the content studied. In short, Moore argued, Presbyterians felt that 'educational success proved the individual's moral worth'.³⁴

Their religious beliefs would also have sat quite comfortably with the value they placed on establishing social status, respectability, and achieving upward social mobility. Gordon and Nair recognised the conflation of the religious and class aspects in the desire of 'the upper reaches of the middle classes ... to affirm and legitimate their moral authority and superiority, by assuming positions of moral and political leadership in the community'.³⁵ Charles Cook was simply voicing aspirations common across the Victorian middle classes when he concluded the preface to his genealogical study with the remark that:

³² Whilst allowing for underplaying the value of household contents for tax purposes, the detailed inventory for Rev. George Cook (SC20/50/16) described a household of well-used ordinary effects with the most valuable items being the silver plate and George's library. Fanny and Alec 'were always careful to have no debts and to live well within our income'. Fanny's 'very small income ... about £480 a year' after Alec died would have placed her at the lower end of the middle income bracket (Letter Fanny Cook to Walter Cook, 8th December 1888 and Baxter, *National Income*, 56).

³³ Smout, *History 1560-1830*, 68.

³⁴ Lindy Moore, 'Educating for the 'Women's Sphere': Domestic training versus intellectual discipline' in Esther Breitenbach and Eleanor Gordon (eds), *Out of Bounds: Women in Scottish Society 1800-1945* (Edinburgh, 1992), 12.

³⁵ Gordon and Nair, *Public Lives*, 32.

As will be noticed from the following Notes, the family of Cook has maintained much the same position in life socially for nearly four centuries; and if the family level has not been raised, it is at least satisfactory that it has been maintained respectably and honourably for so long a period of time.

These comments might jar in a twenty-first century context, but as this study has not revealed any family members who acted dishonourably by the standards of their day, Charles's observations were a genuine reflection of what actually happened to the Cook family.³⁶ Thus their religious and professional beliefs and values were the key to much of their behaviour.

Space precluded examining several areas where further research at a family level would provide an alternative view to the tendency to generalisation in Scottish history. The key theme lies in the rise and role of professionals in Scotland and the broader British state and empire and, as MacKenzie and Devine query, the significance of the Scots' contribution to this process.³⁷ Corfield, Perkin, and Thompson all offer high level analysis and comment on professionalisation and what it meant for the British state and empire.³⁸ However, they provide less insight into how individual Scottish professionals, once patronage was less acceptable, actually acquired positions of power and influence that went beyond the day to day practice of their profession.

This study only briefly covered how the Cooks participated in professionalisation during the nineteenth century.³⁹ The evidence that they did so

³⁶ Cook, *Genealogical Notes*, iv. Had Charles published his work some fifteen years later, he could also have claimed an enhancement in family status as his elder brother became Sir Henry in 1904. Henry's knighthood was conferred in recognition of his services to the Royal Company of Archers, the monarch's bodyguard in Scotland (Obituary Sir Henry Cook, *The Scotsman*, 10th March 1928).

³⁷ MacKenzie and Devine (eds), *Scotland and the British Empire*, 19-21.

³⁸ Corfield, *Power and the Professions*, Perkin, *Rise of Professional Society* and Thompson, *Empire and the British State*.

³⁹ The initial transition of other families from Fife seafaring backgrounds into the professions might also be examined and their strategies compared with those of the Cooks. The Gillespies (appendix 6), for instance, entered the medical profession around 1720. Two Shank brothers entered the Kirk ministry around 1700, thirty years earlier than John Cook and then furnished several generations of ministers

comes from their frequent appearance in significant and/or powerful positions within the hierarchy of the Church of Scotland from about 1815 until 1876 and also memberships of government level bodies.⁴⁰ As the General Assembly functioned in lieu of a Scottish parliament, even after the Church was split by the Disruption, the Cooks' power and influence were not limited to church matters.⁴¹ Some of the committees in which they were involved were a direct result of the state taking over the functions of welfare (1845) and education (1872) previously the remit of the Church.⁴² Whilst contemporary writers were well aware of the long involvement of the Cook families in church affairs, recent scholarship is largely focused on the events themselves rather than how one family acquired and maintained its position in church and Scottish politics.⁴³

Brown provided some indications of such pathways when he linked the control by the Moderates of the General Assembly until 1833 to their good organisation 'through a nexus of Edinburgh lawyers who acted as lay commissioners selected by landowning clients for faraway presbyteries'.⁴⁴ Similarly Maciver identified a key stage

(Weaving, *Genealogical Memoranda* and Alan Reid, *Kinghorn: a short History and description* (Kirkcaldy, 1906), 18, 22 and 37).

⁴⁰ In this period, the Cook families provided five moderators, leadership of the Moderate party at the time of the Disruption, a procurator, and a principal clerk to the General Assembly. There was also membership of various committees for the General Assembly, for instance two Rev. John Cooks (1807-69) and (1807-74). Rev. George Cook (1773-1845) was a member of the Royal Commission on the State of the Universities and Colleges of Scotland, 1836 and Alexander Shank Cook, advocate, member of The Board of Supervision of Scottish Poor Law (*Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 13, 112-113 and Cooke *et al*, *Modern Scottish History*, vol. 5, 167).

⁴¹ Devine, *Scottish Nation*, 367.

⁴² Devine, *ibid*, 365 and 397.

⁴³ For contemporary comments see anonymous letter, *The Scotsman*, 9th September 1859, 2, obituary, Alexander Shank Cook, *The Scotsman*, 18th January 1869, 2, obituary, Rev. John Cook, *The Aberdeen Journal*, 16th September 1874 and obituary, Rev. George Cook, *The Scotsman*, 1st March 1888, 4. See chapter 4 for comments by Emerson (*Academic Patronage*) on the Cook family in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. George Cook's role in church politics appears, for instance, in Burleigh, *Church History*, 371-74 and Brown, *Thomas Chalmers*, 316, 321, and 327-28.

⁴⁴ Callum G. Brown, *The People in the Pews - Religion and Society in Scotland since 1780* (Dundee, 1993), 10-11 and Iain F. Maciver, 'The Evangelical Party and the Eldership in General Assemblies, 1820-1843' in *Records of the Church History Society*, 20 (1), 1978.

in professionalisation in Scotland when he noted that the legal professionals moved into the General Assembly as the landed gentry moved out, 'no longer attracted to a body of waning political influence'.⁴⁵ As Walter Cook was almost certainly one such Edinburgh lawyer with a life-long involvement with the Church, this provides an initial indication of one avenue by which the Cooks were part of the process of professionalisation.⁴⁶

MacKenzie and Devine also questioned whether there was potential discrimination in favour of those educated at English public schools and Oxbridge in the professionalisation process.⁴⁷ Again, the families in this study could provide a basis for qualitative research on this issue. A brief examination of the family background, education, and professional careers of twenty-one of its men and women born between 1873 and 1911 provided examples of the diversity of the lives and experiences of these individuals.⁴⁸ It has shown that an English public school or a mix of English and Scottish schools might be followed by a Scottish university or Oxbridge and wealth was probably the greatest influence on where sons were educated. The resultant career might be anywhere in Britain or the empire and, whilst some appeared to have simply practised their profession, others reached the highest echelons of the British state. However, as this study has highlighted, personal choice

⁴⁵ Maciver, *ibid.* Maciver's comment on the influence or otherwise of the General Assembly is not necessarily at odds with Devine's - the landed gentry may have moved their focus elsewhere, but this did not preclude a highly influential Kirk body.

⁴⁶ See chapter 4, note 83 and appendix 14 which included reference to Walter as an elder of Fordoun Presbytery, Kincardineshire with the connection no doubt through his brother George, then minister of nearby Laurencekirk.

⁴⁷ MacKenzie and Devine (eds), *Scotland and the British Empire*, 19-21.

⁴⁸ All were born in Scotland or the empire to Scottish 'sojourners'. The choice of time period resulted from the fact that families in this study did not send their sons to English public schools or Oxbridge until the very end of the nineteenth century. This was also found by Gordon and Nair (*Public Lives*, 25). At least eleven of the men served in an active military capacity in World War One, five of whom are known to have been killed and thus never achieved their full potential.

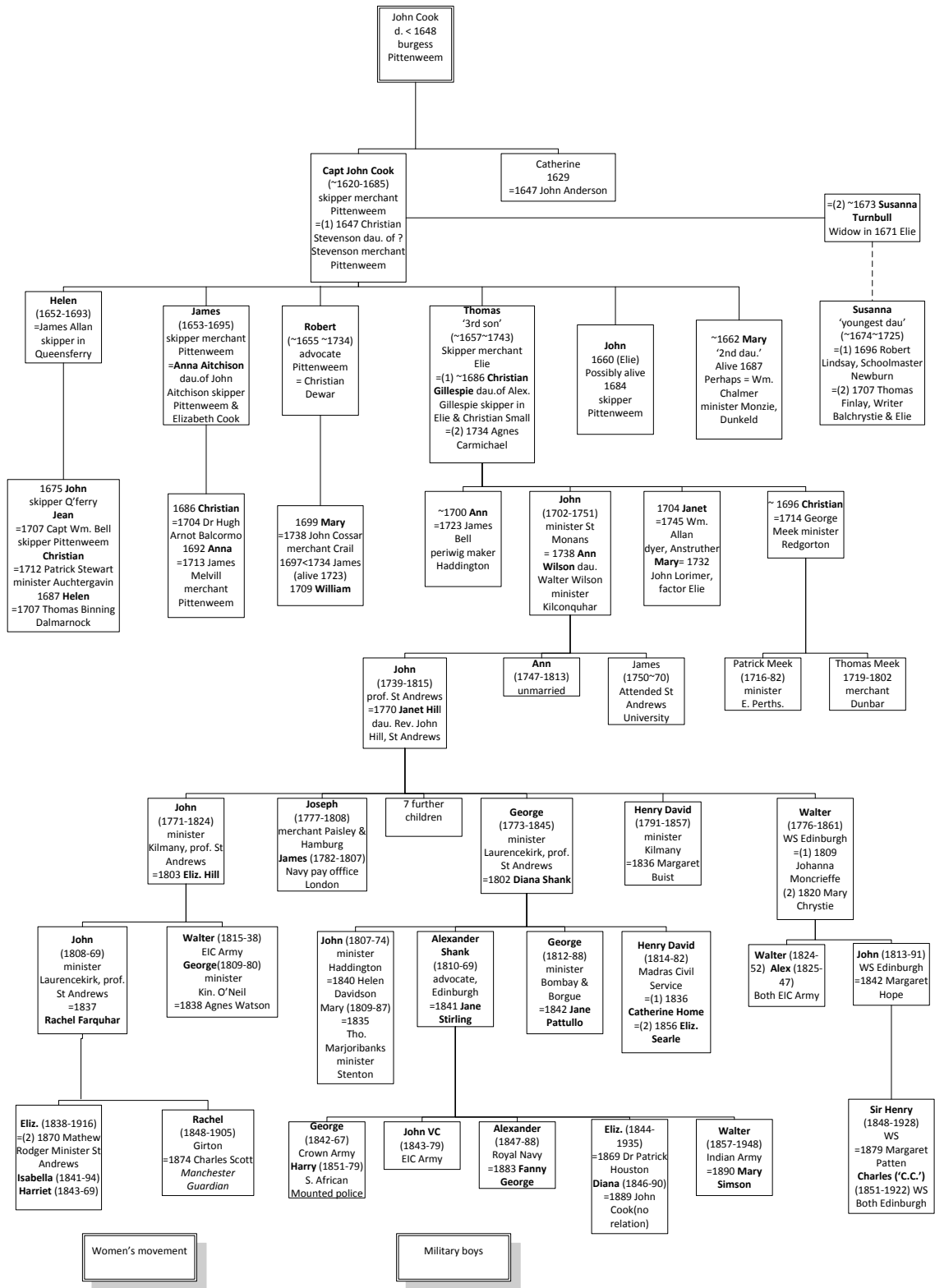
and family tradition may have had as much to do with career decisions as any real or perceived discrimination.

Overall, the Cooks and related families could provide qualitative case studies illustrating how individual Scots contributed to professionalisation. It might discover the channels they used to access influential positions, the extent of their contribution beyond Scotland, and any evidence of potential discrimination. It might also reveal any involvement in the promulgation of the 'professional ethos' that was part of the complex professionalization process.⁴⁹

Whilst the necessary generalisations around much of the writing of Scottish history refer to the particular as a source of illustration, the methodology of this study has reversed that focus and linked the family detail to the high level narrative. The richness that such an approach can add to the understanding of Scottish history provides some justification for this and subsequent studies.

⁴⁹ Corfield, *Power and the Professions*, 201.

Appendix 1 Cook family 17th-19th centuries, principal family members



Appendix 2 Cook family archive

The modest Cook family archive is a miscellaneous collection of material handed down by the author's family over four generations. The core document is a genealogy of the Cook family and covers the period from the early sixteenth century to the late nineteenth century. Written by Charles Cook (1850-1922), an Edinburgh Writer to the Signet, it contains, as well as standard genealogical data, considerable detail on occupations, achievements, and several appendices that are transcriptions of earlier historical documents.¹ The original of one (and possibly all) of the seventeenth century transcriptions was in the possession of the late Victorian 'head of the family' John Cook of Aberdeen, around 1903, strongly indicating that the early documents are genuine.² It was possible to verify much of Cook's base genealogical data for the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries using standard demographic sources, demonstrating that within the limitations of nineteenth century research, Cook's work was rigorous.³ It is also relatively well referenced. However, like all historical documents, it was written from the author's perspective and would, consciously or unconsciously, have been intended to present a particular picture of the family. Therefore any anecdotal 'family legends', gaps in base data, and referencing were verified as required for this study.

Other documents in the archive are family letters, photographs, military records, personal diaries, eye witness accounts, and genealogical notes spanning the period from around 1880 to the middle years of the twentieth century.

¹ "C.C.," *Genealogical Notes*. Charles' identity is confirmed by his kinswoman Elizabeth Rodger in *Descendants of the Rev. George Hill*.

² Sir James Balfour Paul, *An ordinary of arms contained in the public register of all arms and bearings in Scotland 2nd edition* (Edinburgh, 1903), 28.

³ See for instance the General Register Office for Scotland for records of births, marriages and deaths, testaments and census data. The pre-seventeenth century content of Cook's study is rather sketchy and tenuous and it has not been possible to verify or add to it as part of this study.

Appendix 3 Photographs of Pittenweem

Gyles House, Pittenweem.



The Gyles, Pittenweem.



The Gyles (white property) and Gyles House (cream property), Pittenweem.



Source: all author's collection taken 31st January 2010.

Appendix 4 Relative Cook family wealth and social position, late seventeenth century

Name	Parish	1694 No. of hearths ¹	1695 valuation ² ~ % of total
James Cook 'Elder'	Pittenweem	10	8.9 ³
Mr Robert Cook	Pittenweem	7	0.8
Mr Robert Cook	Carnbee	-	0.3
James Cook 'Younger' ['Cousin James']	Pittenweem	5	-
John Acheson	Pittenweem	6	-
Thomas Acheson (son of John)	Pittenweem	-	2.5
William Stevenson	Pittenweem	12 (max. no) in Pittenweem	8.8
Alexander Gillespie ⁴	Elie	7	-
Alexander Gillespie	Pittenweem	-	0.3
Thomas Cook	Elie	3	-
Thomas Cook	Newburn	-	4.2
Thomas Cook ⁵	Pittenweem	-	0.9
Mr Robert Lindsay ⁶	Newburn	8	1.3
Helen Cook	Queensferry	6	unknown

James Cook 'elder' and 'younger' both appeared in the 1694 Hearth Tax records. The minutes of Pittenweem Sea Box confirmed the identity of the higher status (in terms of number of hearths and land valuation) James 'elder' as the James belonging to the core family whereas James 'younger' was 'Cousin James'.⁷

¹ NAS, E69/10/2, Hearth tax for Fife parishes, 1694. For Queensferry see Duncan Adamson (ed.), *West Lothian hearth tax 1691 with County abstracts for Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1981), 37.

² Sibbald, *History*, appendix vii.

³ Only 'James Cook' appeared in the land valuation records. The core family James is known to have owned extensive property in Pittenweem whereas 'Cousin James' did not appear to buy property until the early eighteenth century.

⁴ Alexander Gillespie, Thomas's father-in-law, was also responsible for hearths in two other properties in Elie. The land in the 1695 valuation for Elie was split among four relative large estates.

⁵ NAS, B60/1/1, Register of Pittenweem Sasines (1st series) in 1680 and 1686 confirmed that Thomas did own property in Pittenweem as well as Easter Newburn.

⁶ Susanna Cook's first husband.

⁷ USASC, B3/7/4 for 1695. Appendix 7 documents the relationship between the core Cook family and 'Cousin James'.

Appendix 5 Persons in the Cook family network who became honorary burghesses of St Andrews, early eighteenth century

Name	Date of St Andrews burghership and family association ¹
Thomas Cook ²	April 1720, core family member
'Mr Hugh Arnot of Balcormo'	December 1720, local landowner. Linked to Cook family by marriage and financial matters.
'Mr William Cook'	1727 'lawful son to Robert Cook lawyer' probably Thomas's nephew.
James Nairn	1727 'merchant in Elie' a relative of Thomas's wife by marriage and business associate
'Mr Walter Brabaner', elder	1729 Writer, Largo linked by marriage and features in family civil court case.
John Aitchison	1730 'skipper in Pittenweem' probably grandson of Aitchisons related by marriage and business dealings
Duncan Pollock	1730 husband to Thomas's grand nieces, merchant in Pittenweem and Leith

¹ USASC, B65/8/5, 6 and 7, St Andrews Court Books and Dobson, *Burgess Roll*.

² Dobson did not list Thomas but neither did he claim that his list was definitive.

Appendix 6 Gillespie family of Elie

Alexander Gillespie's seafaring career and links to the Cooks were covered in chapter two. Whilst he was a skipper, Thomas's father-in-law Alexander Gillespie had interests beyond the sea as he was briefly minister of Elie between 1677 and 1678.¹ Alexander Gillespie senior died in March 1692.² However a 'Mr. Alexander Gillespie student in divinity' was preaching in Kilconquhar Kirk several times in 1699 whilst the parish was vacant and was subsequently called to that parish and it is highly probable that these two were father and son.³ Alexander junior declined the call due to ill health and had died by late 1705.⁴ Alexander Gillespie senior was also survived by only one son, John, who was described as a merchant in Elie but also by four daughters.⁵

Alexander senior acquired land at Wester Newtown of Rires in Kilconquhar parish, at least some of which was via inheritance through his wife.⁶ He also had a small amount of property in Pittenweem listed in the 1695 land valuation and appeared as responsible for various properties in Elie and Newton in Kilconquhar parish for the 1694 hearth tax.⁷ By 1695, after his father's death, his son John's name was linked to Newton and again in 1704.⁸ The Gillespies' Newton at £300 was a more

¹ Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 5, 209 and Wood, *East Neuk ...*, 203.

² *Decennial Index to the Service of Heirs in Scotland January 1st 1700-December 31st 1859*, vol. 1, 1700-1709 (Edinburgh, 1863), 10 'John Gillespie to his father Alexander Gillespie of Newton Rires'.

³ NAS, CH2/210/4, Kilconquhar Kirk Session minutes, various dates December 1699. Smart linked the Alexander Gillespie who graduated M.A. 1697 and was a divinity student 1698-99 with the preacher of the same name at Kilconquhar (*Alphabetical Register*, 217).

⁴ Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 5, 209. NAS, CC20/11/7 agreed 16th November 1705 between the surviving five Gillespie siblings made reference to 'the deceast Mr. Alexander Gillespie their brother'.

⁵ NAS, RD2/85/77, 1701. There are two separate bonds, one after the other. One was for Mr John Gillespie of Newtown and the other recorded goods bought by John Gillespie, merchant in Elie, from a St Andrews skipper.

⁶ NAS, SIG1/64/72, 23rd February 1677, NAS, SIG1/65/3 25th February 1687 and NAS, RS73/2, Fife Sasines, 13th April 1687 and 18th December 1689. See also Wood, *East Neuk*, 203.

⁷ Sibbald, *History*, appendix vii, NAS, B60/1/1, Pittenweem Sasines, July 1687 and NAS, E69/10/2 Hearth Tax returns.

⁸ John was listed as one of the Fife landowners responsible for payment of a land tax http://www.rps.ac.uk/search.php?a=fcf&fn=anne_trans&id=id25567&t=trans accessed 2nd January 2011. Thomas Cook did not appear in this listing, implying he did not own sufficient to be liable.

valuable property than Thomas Cook's Newburn at £192 in the 1695 land valuation.⁹ John senior's marriage in 1704 to a woman from a family of substantial landowners continued the growing focus on landownership.¹⁰ In 1720 John senior sold the original land around Kilconquhar and bought the estate of Kirkton in Forgan parish (near Tayport in north Fife).¹¹ Finally Mountquhanie, also in Forgan parish, was added in 1776.¹²

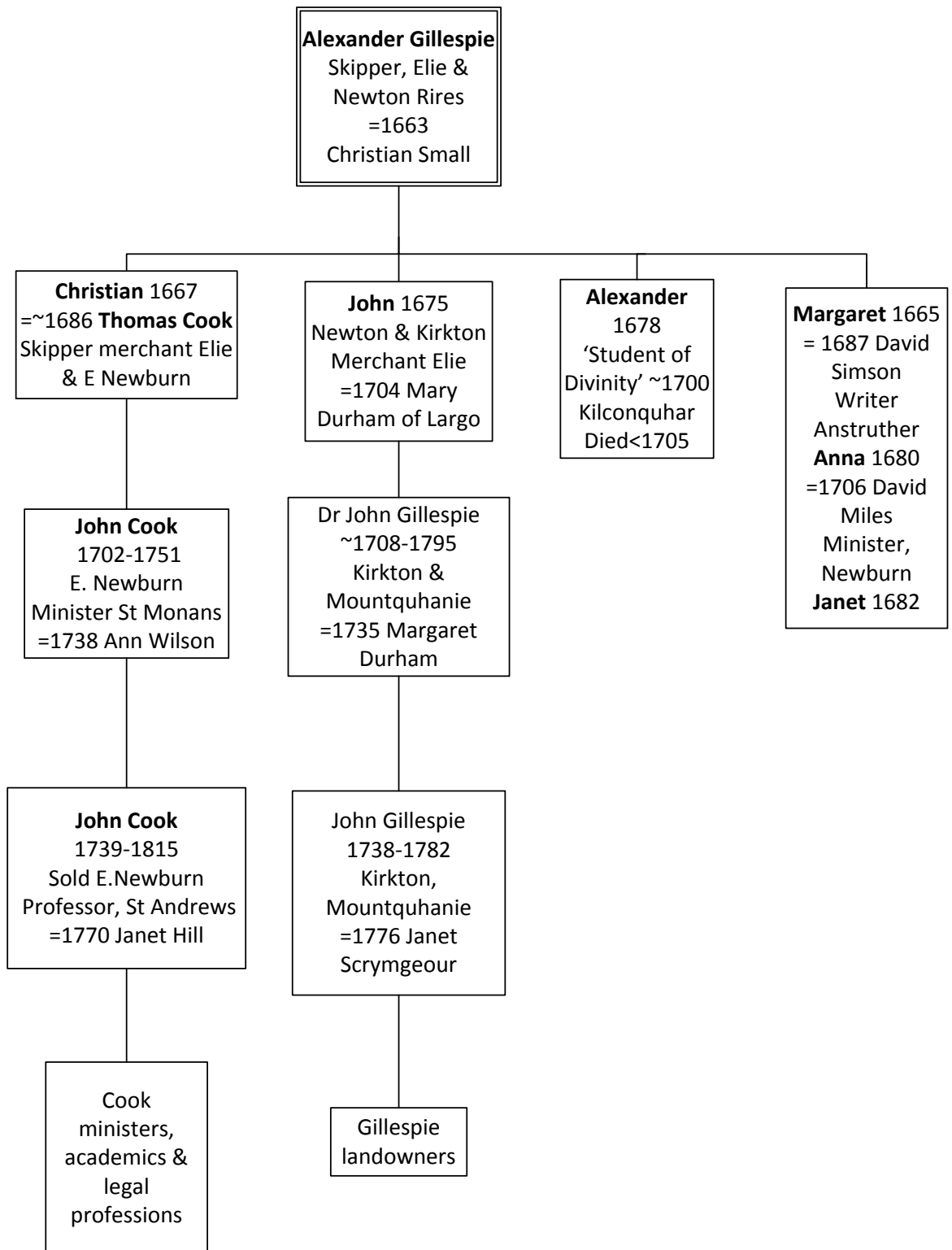
⁹ 'John Gillespie's Newtowne' was worth ~3 per cent of Kilconquhar parish (Sibbald, *History*, appendix vii).

¹⁰ The Durhams were substantial land owners around Largo. John junior continued the link when he married a Durham cousin (Wood, *East Neuk*, 82-3).

¹¹ NAS, SIG1/67/63, 22nd June 1720. This was a substantial property with some eight to ten touns or parts thereof, salmon fishing on the Tay etc. It probably represented pre-enclosure land consolidation. See also Wood, *East Neuk*, 203.

¹² NAS, SIG1/74/28, 6th August 1776.

Gillespie family Elie, main descendants only



Sources: Wood, *East Neuk*, 82-83 and 204, Smart, *Alphabetical Register*, Scott, *Fasti*, CC20/11/7 and OPR

Appendix 7 Relationship between the core Cook family and 'Cousin James' Cook

Data from the old parish registers indicated that Cousin James and his family originally lived in West Anstruther. In 1690, Cousin James was admitted as a Pittenweem burgess and thereafter lived in Pittenweem.¹ Cousin James may have moved to Pittenweem around 1690 because conditions in West Anstruther appeared to have been even worse than Pittenweem: 'There are no mortifications, no publict fairs, or weekly mercats, no shipes, no fish boats except one, no merchants, noe trade'.² James Cook 'elder' and 'younger' (Cousin James) both appeared in the council minutes until 1695.³

Although Cousin James appeared to have inherited some property in Pittenweem around 1667, it was not recorded on the land valuation of 1695, suggesting that it had been sold.⁴ In the early years of the eighteenth century Cousin James bought a house that had belonged to the deceased core family James and several sasines recorded further ownership of property and land in Pittenweem around the same period.⁵

¹ USASC, B60/6/1, Pittenweem Town Council Minutes, January 13th 1690.

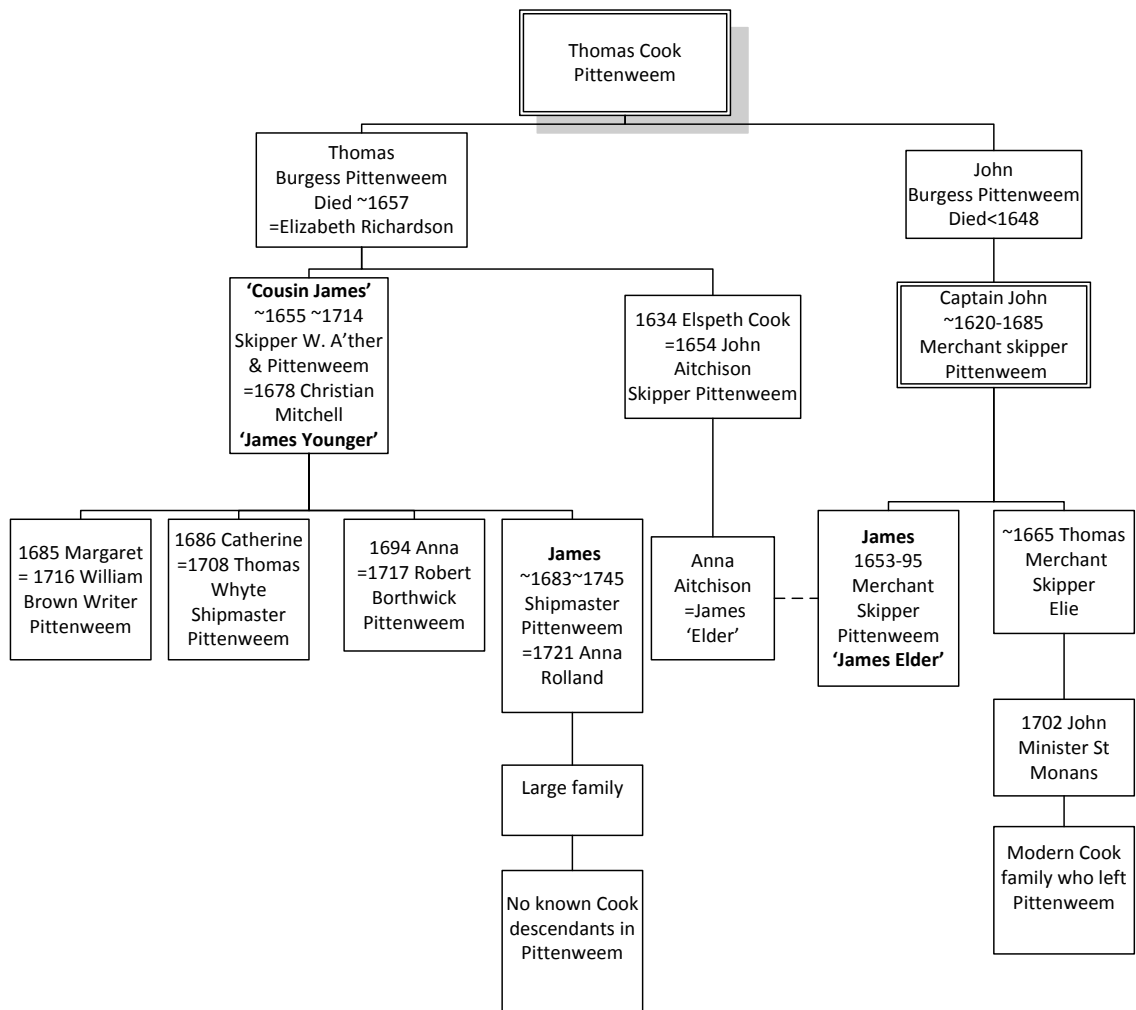
² *Convention of Royal Burghs* report for West Anstruther, 1691 vol. iv, 624.

³ See appendix 4 for proof of the designation of 'elder' and 'younger'.

⁴ *Extracts General Retour of Service, Fife, Inquistiones Speciales*, vol. 1, 1811, nos. 1014 and 1015, 6th July 1667.

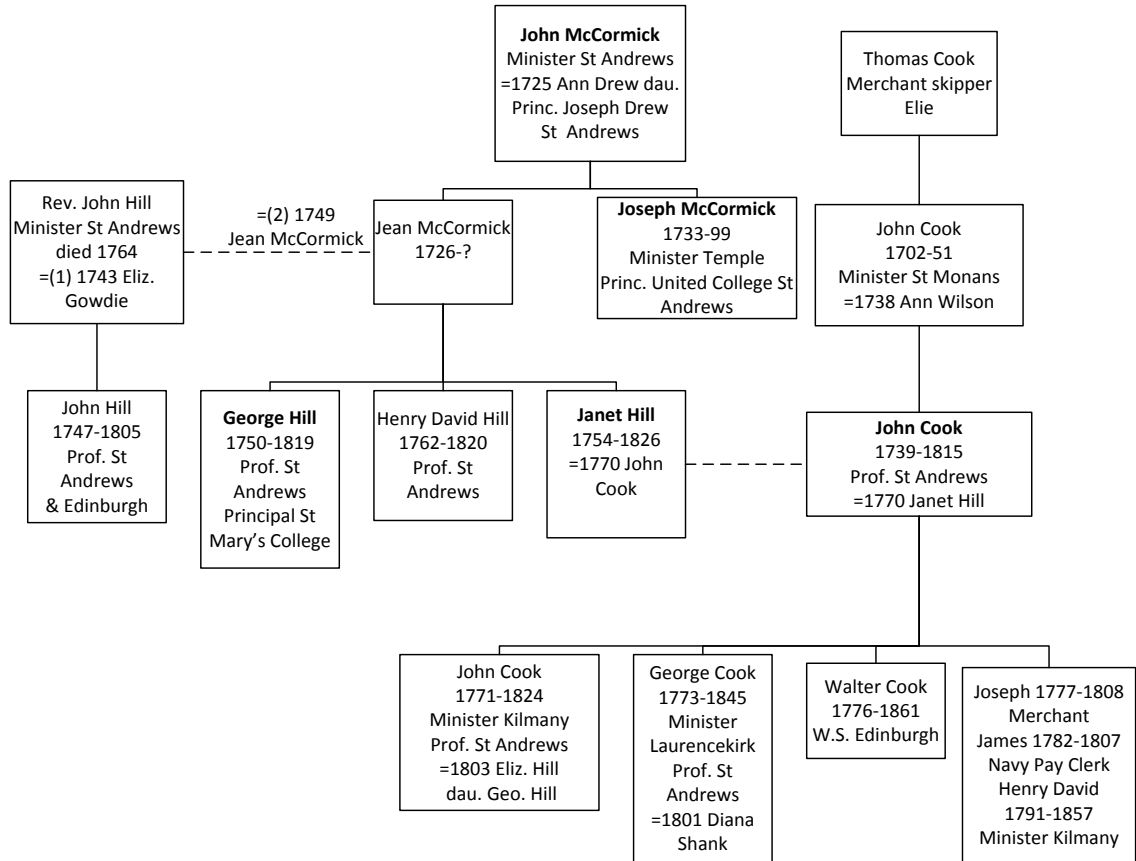
⁵ The bond was a final reckoning up the money owed to one of the two daughters of the deceased James and included '£552 16s as the halfe of the pryce of the house in Pittenweem disponed to Baillie James Cook in Pittenweem' (NAS, RD4/116/1331, 1715). NAS, B60/1/1, Pittenweem sasines, 2nd March 1705 and September 1713.

'Cousin James' and core Cook family



Sources: RD2/2/290, 1661, Extracts General Retours of Fife, July 6th 1667, no: 1015 and OPR. Pertinent family members only shown.

Appendix 8 Cook-Hill family connections, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries



Sources: Scott, *Fasti* and OPR.

Appendix 9 Development of George Hill's routes of patronage¹

George Hill was the eldest child of the Rev. John Hill, one of the ministers of St Andrews, and Jean McCormick.² George's father died when he was fourteen, leaving his mother with a limited income and six other young children to bring up. As a young Divinity student at St Andrews University, he attracted the attention of Lord Kinnoull, then chancellor of the university, by his prowess in an academic prize contest and thereafter Kinnoull became a powerful patron for George for the rest of Kinnoull's life. During university holidays he visited Uncle Joseph McCormick, then minister of Temple in Midlothian and the home parish of the Dundases, lairds of Arniston.³

Uncle Joseph also introduced him to Principal Robertson, who was, like Kinnoull, apparently impressed with George's abilities, and it was Robertson who recommended George as a tutor to the son of an M.P. who was a Scottish landowner. In 1767 George took up his tutorial role in London with the expressed wish to help his mother financially. His period as a tutor appeared to have been a formative one as it gave him access to an understanding of state affairs through an experienced and senior politician. He joined London debating societies and benefited from contact with the wider circle of his employer's family and friends.

By 1770 he was in Edinburgh, accompanying his pupil studying at Edinburgh University and continuing his own Divinity studies. As in London, his time in Edinburgh gave him 'access to the best and most desirable society', and he lodged with the sister of Principal Robertson. Cook stated that it was during this period that Uncle Joseph

¹ This appendix has used Cook's *Life* as the primary source.

² See chapter 5, p.86 for a further reference to Jean's father, Rev. John McCormick.

³ Joseph was minister at Temple 1760-71, followed by Prestonpans, before becoming Principal of United College, St Andrews 1781 until his death in 1799 (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 1, 349). In this latter capacity, he continued to provide patronage 'assistance' to George (Brown, *Thomas Chalmers*, 5).

'introduced him to the family of Arniston', thus laying the basis for Hill's greatest source of power: Henry Dundas.⁴ When Hill returned to St Andrews in 1772 he was a well-educated young man, both academically and in terms of his exposure to public life. He had acquired an enviable set of connections through a mixture of his own ability and opportunist family contacts.

⁴ Cook, *Life*, 39 and 42.

Appendix 10 Cook-Shank patronage connections

In February 1801 George Cook married Diana Shank, a niece of David Scott, Henry Dundas's confidante and adviser on India. Scott, as one of the many younger sons of the Forfarshire laird of Dunninald, had set off as a teenager to make his fortune in India as a free merchant. Scott returned to Britain a rich man in 1786, to run the London branch of his trading agency. Scott and Dundas became close friends and through Dundas's influence, Scott held a succession of Board appointments in the East India Company, including the chairmanship.¹

Scott was the overt sponsor of his nephews Alexander and Henry Shank. He helped Alexander set up trading in Canton and arranged for an appointment in the civil service in Bombay for Henry.² Bulley commented that Scott ensured that 'his protégés held key positions ... answerable to him in London' - Scott was certainly in close contact with his Shank nephews - thus consolidating the power network.³ As well as the link to Dundas at the centre of the power web, the Hill-Dundas and Scott-Dundas strands interconnected at another level. Sir David Carnegie, an Angus aristocrat, was David Scott's agent for his Forfarshire parliamentary constituency whilst George Hill was connected through his marriage to Carnegie.⁴

Alexander Shank had a colourful career as an opium trader and made a lot of money. His trading partnership evolved into Jardine Matheson but he did not live to

¹ Fry, *Dundas Despotism*, 195 and C. H. Philips (ed.), *The Correspondence of David Scott, Director and Chairman of the East India Company, relating to Indian affairs, 1787-1805* (London, 1951).

² Philips, *Correspondence*, Letter no. 118, 14th July 1797.

³ Anne Bulley, *The Bombay country ships: 1790-1833* (Richmond, 2000), 108 and Philips, *Correspondence*, Letter no. 328, 28th April 1801.

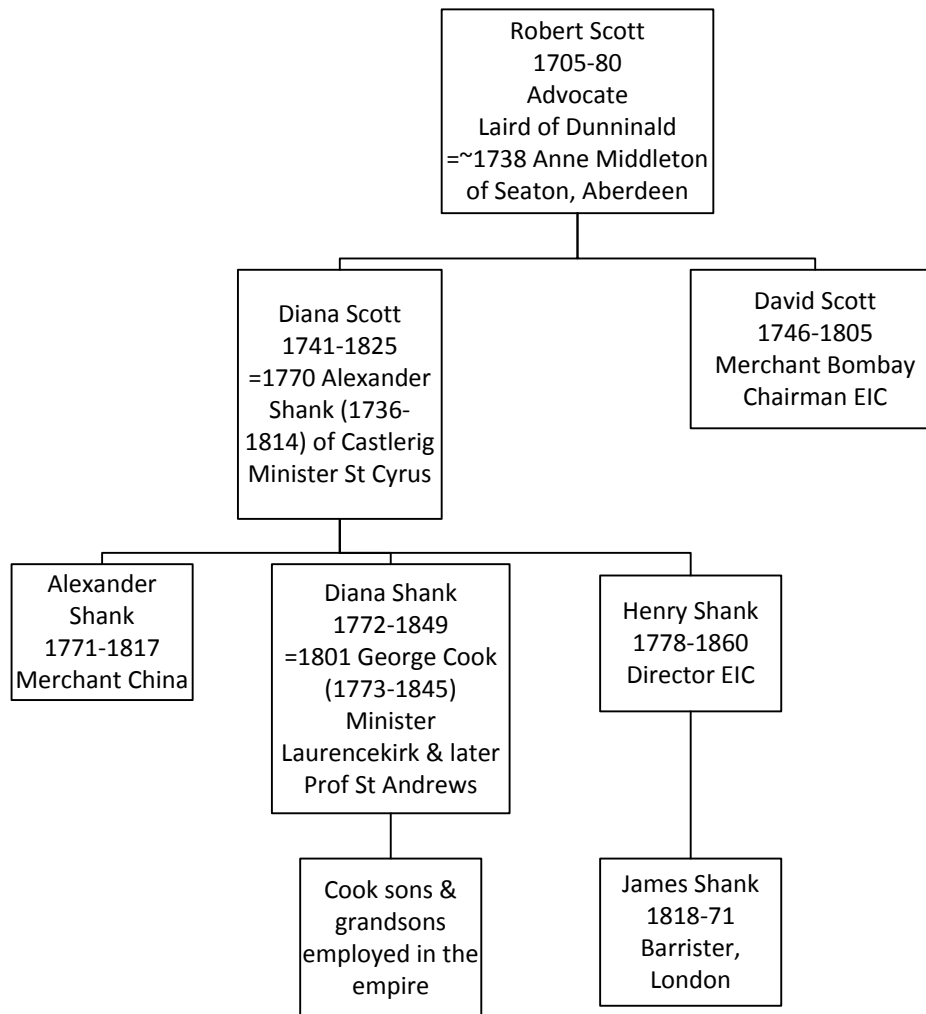
⁴ Fry, *Dundas Despotism*, 203, Cook, *Life*, 242 and Smart, *Biographical Register*, 154. The precise connection between Carnegie and Harriet Scott, Hill's wife, is not known or whether Harriet was related to David Scott.

enjoy his wealth, being lost at sea along with the ship.⁵ Henry Shank inherited much of the Shank family wealth and Scottish property and was also a director of the East India Company for several periods between 1831 and 1853.⁶ It was Henry Shank who proved to be the most significant family link to several generations of the Cook family.

⁵ W. E. Cheong, *Mandarins and Merchants: Jardine, Matheson & Co., a China Agency of the early 19th century* (London, 1979) and Michael Greenberg, *British Trade and the opening of China 1800-1842* (London, 1979).

⁶ Prinsep, *Records of Services*, xvii and NAS, SC5/41/1, testament, Diana Shank or Scott, 12th May 1825. See also NA, PROB 11/1664/122, will Alexander Shank, 13th November 1822; the original will is in the Jardine Matheson archive, University of Cambridge MS.JM/F22/1 (not consulted).

Cook, Shank and Scott family connections



Sources: Weaving, *Shank of Castlerig*, Scott, *Fasti* and OPR. Pertinent family members only shown.

Appendix 11 Differences between survival of boys and girls to adulthood in seven Fife families, late seventeenth to mid-eighteenth centuries

These seven families were chosen because of the strong degree of certainty concerning the total numbers and survival of the children. The fact that there were more boys than girls born, even with such a small sample, reflects the biological fact that there are more live male than female births. Typically 103 to 107 boys are born for every 100 girls.¹

Family (period of births)	Total children born		Survived to adulthood	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Alexander Gillespie/Christian Small (1665-80)	4	5	2	4
'Cousin James' Cook/Christian Mitchell (1679-94)	4	3	1	3
James Cook/Anna Aitchison (1686-95)	4	3	0	2
Robert Cook/Christian Dewar (1688-1709)	7	2	2	1
Dr Hugh Arnot/Christian Cook (1705-10)	3	2	1	1
James Melvill/Anna Cook (1714-33)	1	9	0	3
Rev John Cook/Ann Wilson (1739-50)	7	1	2	1
Totals (survival rate)	30	25	8 (27%)	15 (60%)

¹ Ingrid Waldron, 'Factors determining the sex ratio at birth' in *Too Young to Die*, 56.

Appendix 12 Cook family migration within Scotland, pre-1800

The table lists adult family members known to have migrated permanently at least 15km from their birthplace.

Family	Males		Females	
	Moved	Stayed	Moved	Stayed
James, Robert, Tho., John, Helen, Mary and Susanna Cook	0	4	2	1
John, Jean, Christian and Helen Allan	0	1	3	0
Christian and Anna Cook			0	2
Mary and William Cook	0	1	0	1
John, Ann, Christian, Mary and Janet Cook	0	1	2	2
Mary Lindsay (4 others unknown/died young)			1	
John & Ann Cook (1 unknown)	0	1	0	1
Patrick and Thomas Meek (4 others unknown/died young)	1	1		
Nellie Bell (4 others unknown/died young)			1	0
Totals	1	9	9	7

Appendix 13 Summary methodology of career choice analysis by boys at Edinburgh Academy, mid-nineteenth century

Boys could start at Edinburgh Academy at the age of nine or ten and could stay until they were fifteen or sixteen. Additionally, boys of a similar age could join or leave a class at any point.¹ Thus the career choice recorded in this study might be made at any point throughout this time span. The boys' first career choices were grouped:

- i. Military: army and navy
- ii. Law: Writer to the Signet, solicitor, advocate
- iii. Church: all denominations
- iv. Finance: banking, stockbroking, accountancy, insurance
- v. Land: landed gentry, farming, estate management, colonial planter etc.
- vi. Commerce/manufacturing: any form of business, commercial or manufacturing activity in Britain or abroad
- vii. Medicine
- viii. Civil service: Britain and colonial, M.P.
- ix. Engineering
- x. Other: teaching, the Arts
- xi. Died young: typically before about aged twenty and/or before a career choice was clear
- xii. Unknown: including insufficient information

The tables below show the raw data for the twenty year period. 'Geo, J, Alex, Harry, and Walt' are the 'military boys' and indicate the class to which they belonged. Percentage figures have only been quoted where they constitute a notable proportion of that class.

¹ *Edinburgh Academy Register*, xiv and Magnusson, *Clacken and Slate*, 63. With thanks to Edinburgh Academy for the long term loan of both these volumes.

First career followed after leaving school - 1848-58

Class/ C'eer	1848- 55	1849- 56	1850- 57	1851- 58	1852- 59 Geo/J	1853- 60	1854- 61	1855- 62	1856- 63	1857- 64	1858- 65 Alex
Milit.	13 17%	31 34%	40 32%	22 19%	24 28%	18 20%	20 15%	13 12%	12 9%	11 9%	7 5%
Law	9 12%	4 4%	13 10%	10 9%	4 5%	8 9%	8 6%	10 9%	24 18%	13 11%	10 7%
Chch	2	5	2	7	5	3	7	3	5	4	4
Med.	5	2	3	6	6	7	6	3	9	5	4
Fin- ance	3 4%	2 2%	6 5%	6 5%	3 3%	6 7%	11 9%	4 4%	8 6%	7 6%	18 13%
Com/ Manf.	7 9%	8 9%	17 14%	10 9%	8 9%	9 10%	15 12%	8 7%	13 10%	15 13%	23 17%
Land	0 0%	6 7%	14 11%	13 11%	4 5%	3 3%	11 9%	13 12%	7 5%	9 8%	10 7%
Civil Serv.	5	2	3	2	2	2	9	5	4	7	4
Eng.	2	0	5	1	5	1	4	1	4	1	4
Other	3	4	2	2	2	3	9	3	4	6	10
died <20	2	5	3	4	1	6	2	2	4	6	4
Un know	24 32%	21 23%	17 14%	32 28%	23 26%	24 27%	28 22%	46 41%	39 29%	36 30%	39 28%
Total in Class	75	90	125	115	87	90	130	111	133	120	137

1859-68

Class/ Career	1859- 66	1860-67 Harry	1861- 68	1862- 69	1863- 70	1864- 71	1865- 72	1866- 73	1867- 74 Walt	1868- 75
Milit.	7 5%	9 6%	6 6%	11 10%	10 8%	7 5%	5 4%	4 5%	7 7%	5 5%
Law	15 10%	15 10%	10 10%	18 17%	9 7%	11 8%	13 10%	8 11%	6 6%	7 7%
Church	4	3	4	0	2	2	1	4	2	5
Med.	4	9	5	10	8	15 12%	11 9%	4	3	11 11%
Finance	9 6%	14 9%	12 11%	6 6%	8 6%	18 14%	10 8%	7 9%	17 17%	9 9%
Com/Manf.	17 12%	19 13%	14 13%	10 10%	21 17%	10 8%	19 15%	5 7%	10 10%	7 7%
Land	11 8%	21 14%	13 12%	12 11%	11 9%	18 14%	10 8%	1 1%	15 15%	7 7%
Civil Service	9	5	3	3	1	1	1	1	6	3
Eng.	2	2	2	1	3	1	3	5	1	5
Other	11	5	4	8	10	7	6	13	1	10
Died <20	2	7	5	4	5	0	7	2	4	1
Unknown	52 36%	41 27%	27 26%	22 21%	38 30%	41 31%	40 32%	22 29%	31 30%	29 29%
Total in Class	143	150	105	105	126	131	126	76	103	99

Appendix 14 Professional connections between the Miller and Cook families, nineteenth century

The Miller family belonged to the Ayrshire baronetcy; some held very senior legal positions whilst others were senior officers in the Crown Army and Navy. George Cumming Miller had, along with three of his brothers, attended Edinburgh Academy in the 1820s. He subsequently joined the 54th Regiment in 1839, moving up its ranks before moving onto its 'half pay' list in 1857.¹ In 1859 Major George C. Miller both transferred into the 77th Regiment from 'half pay unattached' and retired from it.² Although Major George Miller's father died in 1827, his widowed mother lived in Edinburgh New Town until her death in 1857.³ Similarly John Kay records that William Miller senior continued to frequent Edinburgh into his eighties (around 1835 to 1840).⁴ Edinburgh and the legal profession were thus two potential points of contact.

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was another avenue of contact for the Cook family, their Hill cousins, and George Miller's father. Members of the General Assembly in 1817 included Rev. Dr [John] Cook and Henry David Hill, Edinburgh (elder) for St Andrews Presbytery, Rev. Dr [George] Cook, Laurencekirk, Walter Cook W.S. (elder) for Fordoun Presbytery and for Ayr Presbytery, Rev. [Alexander] Hill minister of Dailly and Thomas Miller, advocate (elder).⁵ A similar mix of Cooks, Hills, and Thomas Miller occurred in 1821.⁶

¹ *London Gazette*, 19th July 1839 and 4th November 1859, *Edinburgh Academy Register*, 33.

² NA, WO 65/134, 1859-60, 427.

³ Will, Edwina Miller alias Cumming NAS, SC70/1/94, 1st July 1857 and 1841, 1851 census at 3, Shandwick Place, Edinburgh.

⁴ John Kay, *Original Portraits*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1877), 346-48.

⁵ *The Scotsman*, April 12th 1817, 96. Alexander Hill was a son of George Hill and minister of Dailly 1816-41 (Scott, *Fasti*, vol. 3, 30). He was thus a first cousin once removed to Alexander Shank Cook. Henry David Hill is either George Hill's brother, a St Andrews University professor or, more likely, another of George Hill's sons (an Edinburgh W.S.) The Miller property, Barskimming, was in the parish of Stair, not Dailly.

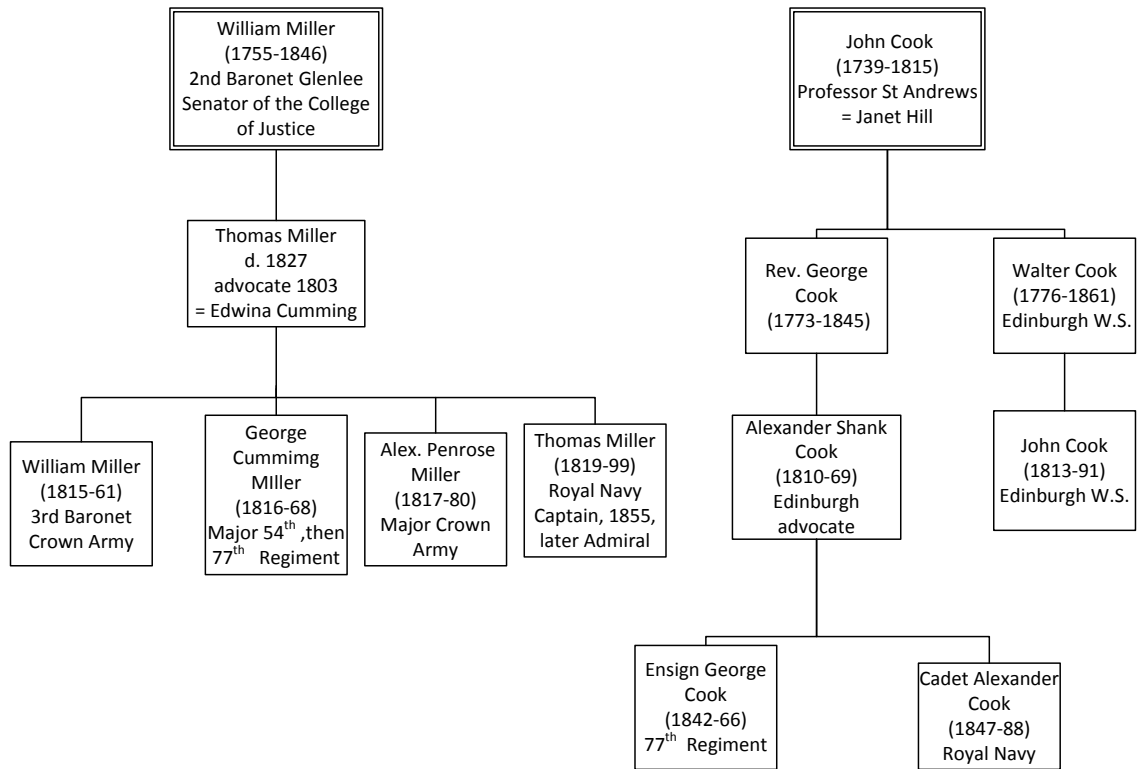
⁶ *The Scotsman*, April 7th 1821, 111.

For the Cook family, Walter Cook appeared as the key to the professional circle of contacts. Walter was in a position of authority in an Edinburgh New Town Church associated with professionals for nearly fifty years.⁷ He was a director of Edinburgh Academy between 1832 and 1842 and 1851 and 1857 (amongst numerous other legal professionals) and sufficiently well known in Edinburgh to warrant his inclusion in Benjamin Crombie's *'Modern Athenians'*.⁸ There were thus plenty of opportunities where contact might be made over a considerable period of time.

⁷ NAS, CH2/648/2, St Andrews, Edinburgh Kirk Session minutes, 7th September 1860. Walter was session clerk from 1812 until his death in 1861. He was joined by his son John (1845) and nephew Alexander Shank Cook (1849) as elders.

⁸ *Edinburgh Academy Register*, xxxviii and Benjamin W. Crombie, *Modern Athenians: a series of portraits of memorable citizens of Edinburgh (1837-1847)*, reprinted with biographical sketches by William Scott Douglas (Edinburgh, 1882), 77. There are around 100 sketches in Crombie's work, including individuals such as Rev. Thomas Chalmers and Henry, Lord Cockburn.

Miller and Cook family connections



Sources: *Edinburgh Academy Register* and Kay, *Original Portraits*.

Appendix 15 Photographs relating to Major John Cook V.C.

Memorial tablet to Major John Cook V.C., College Church, St Andrews, Fife.



Photograph taken 18th June 2006

Major John Cook V.C. 1879. Framed, colour tinted photograph.

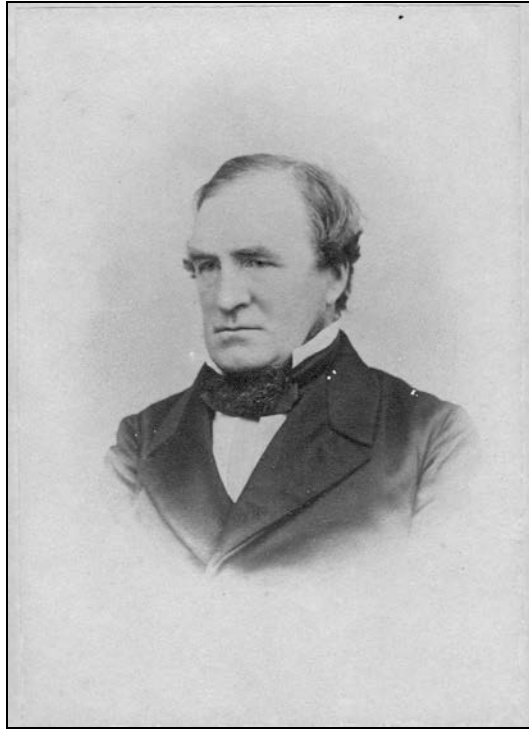


Source: All photographs, author's collection

Appendix 16 Nineteenth century Cook family photographs

All images author's collection unless otherwise stated.

Alexander Shank Cook, advocate in Edinburgh. London, mid 1850s.

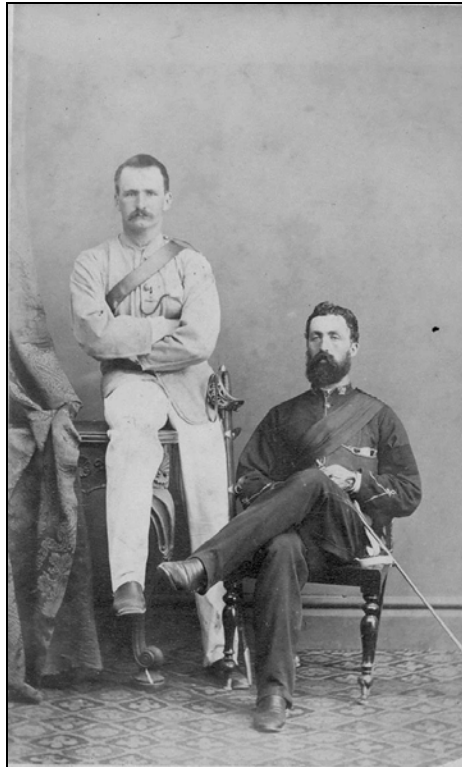


Alexander Shank Cook with three of his military sons (from left to right) John, Alexander and George. Probably Edinburgh, early 1850s.



'The Military Boys'

Lieutenant John, 3rd Sikh Infantry, and (seated) Lieutenant George Cook, 77th Regiment of Foot. North West Frontier, India, about 1866.



Commander Alexander Cook RN. Southsea, about 1887.



Harry Cook, Lieutenant in the South African Mounted Police. Kirkcaldy, Fife, late 1870s.



Lieutenant Walter Cook, 3rd Sikh Infantry. Kabul, Afghanistan, July 1880.



The Military Boys' sisters

Elizabeth Cook or Houston. Kirkcaldy, Fife, early 1870s.



Diana Cook. Edinburgh, about 1870.



Wives and families

Fanny George, wife of Alexander Cook RN. Southsea, about 1887.



Mary Simson, wife of Walter Cook, Military Police, Burma. Rangoon, early 1896.



Cousins

The Girton Pioneers: Rachel Cook seated on the ground and Louisa Lumsden, a life-long friend of Rachel's family, wearing striped skirt. Cambridge 1869.



Photograph reproduced with kind permission of the Mistress and Fellows, Girton College, Cambridge.

'Cousin Muff': Mary Cook, eldest daughter of Rev. Dr John Cook of Haddington. Edinburgh, about 1870.



Charles Cook W. S., author of Cook family genealogy. Edinburgh 1879.



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Papers of the Grant-Suttie family of Balgone, East Lothian, GD357/43/19 copy letters from John Cook senior and Principal McCormick probably to Lady Hyndford, 5th August 1789

High court minute books (JC)

High Court Minute Books – series D (1701-99), JC7/10/55-57 and 321-323, 30th March - 2nd September 1720

Parliament (PA)

Acts of the Parliaments (1466-1706), PA7/25/88/6, 16th February 1685

Privy Council (PC)

Privy Council papers, PC12/1705 and 1706

Register of Deeds (RD)

These are indexed by name and designation (for instance: 'John Cook bailie of Pittenweem') in the yearly '*Index to Register of Deeds preserved in H. M. General Register House*'. Some are published volumes, some internally printed, whilst others are the original handwritten indices. The year quoted in this study is the year the deed was registered. Deeds were generally registered within a year of their being drawn up but this was not always the case. Where there is a pertinent difference between the two dates, this has been made clear.

RD2/2/290, Thomas Cook, 1661

RD2/57/524, James and John Cook, 1682

RD2/67/184, Robert Cook, 1686

RD2/82/802, Robert Cook, 1699

RD2/82/991, Thomas Cook, 1699

RD2/83/283, Thomas Cook, 1699

RD2/85/77, John Gillespie, 1701

RD2/93/693, Christian and Anna Cook, 1707

RD2/103/2/605, James Cook, 1714

RD3/43/295, Robert Cook, 1677

RD3/86/590, John Aitchison, 1697

RD3/143/443-460, William Bell, 1714

RD4/57/826, John Anderson, 1686

RD4/61/599, Thomas Cook, 1687

RD4/74/574, James Cook, 1694

RD4/82/1874, John Cook, 1698

RD4/98/58, John and Jean Allan, 1706 (incorrectly indexed as RD4/98/70)

RD4/116/1331, Hugh Arnot, 1715

RD5/1816/85/496-504, John Cook, drawn up 1803, registered 1816 after his death

RD5/1869/1338/679, Alexander Shank Cook, drawn up 1853, registered 1869 after his death

Miscellaneous (RH)

Miscellaneous accounts and discharges, RH9/1/176, Accounts of Captain Robert Colinson, 1684-89

Marriage contracts, RH9/7/152, William Bell, skipper in Pittenweem and Jean Allan, daughter of deceased James Allan, skipper in Queensferry, 10th July 1707

Genealogies, family of Cook (Fife), RH16/190, c. 1842

Register of sasines (RS)

Particular register of sasines etc. for Fife and Kinross (1st series), RS31/17, 9th January 1649 – 15th February 1651 and RS31/20, 8th June 1655- 31st March 1657

Minute books of the particular register of sasines etc. for Fife, RS73/2, ~1657 -1690

Signatures of Confirmation (SIG)

SIG1/26/45, Signature of the lands of Balcormo granted to John Cook, 4th April 1683

SIG1/3/22, Signature of the lands of Balcormo granted to James Allan and his wife Helen Cook, 4th April 1683

SIG1/27/4, Signature of the lands of Rires granted to James Cook and Anna Aitchison his wife, 25th November 1692

SIG1/27/20, Signature of the lands of Newburn etc. granted to Thomas Cook, 28th December 1694

SIG1/64/72, Signature of the lands of Newtown of Rires granted to Alexander Gillespie 23rd February 1677

SIG1/65/3, Signature of the lands of Wester Newtown of Rires granted to Alexander Gillespie and Christian Small his wife, 25th February 1687

SIG1/4/24, Signature of the lands of Balcormo etc. granted to Hugh Arnot and John Arnot, 12th February 1713

SIG1/67/63, Signature of the lands of Kirkcounie etc. granted to John Gillespie, 22nd June 1720

SIG1/74/28, Signature of the lands of Mountquhanie granted to John Gillespie, 6th August 1776

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1-6 Perth and Kinross Council Archive (PKCA)

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1-7 University of St Andrews Special Collection (USASC)

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MS 4477, letter Professor John Cook to Henry Dundas, 21st June 1800

MS 4782, letter George Hill to Henry Dundas, 1st March 1799

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MS 4516, letter from the Chief Baron to second Viscount Melville, 27th November 1811

MS 4892, 21st November 1811

MS 4634, letter from the Lord Advocate to the 2nd Viscount Melville, 20th October 1820

MS 4661, letter Principal Haldane to second Viscount Melville, 14th May 1825

MS 4663, letter from Principal Haldane, St Mary's College to second Viscount Melville, 19th August 1825

UY 305/3, Acta Rectorum, 1578-1738

UY 412, Faculty of Arts Bursars Book, 1456-1853

UYUC 400/2, 3 and 8, Minutes of United College, 16th May 1765-30th June 1773, 14th August 1773-12th April 1780 and 9th October 1822- October 1834

1-7 Girton College Library, Cambridge

GCPH10/1/3, image of the 'Girton Pioneers', 1869 reproduced by kind permission of the Mistress and Fellows, Girton College, Cambridge

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Letter John Cook to his sister Liz Houston, Kabul, 27th November 1879 reproduced by kind permission of the Ashcroft Trust VC Collection

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