

**A History
of the
Stevenson and Reynolds Families**

Gleaned from various sources

By Burnett Pender

Chapter One

Thomas Stevenson, a handloom Weaver, was born in Kilbarchan, Renfrewshire in 1803. In or about 1832 he met and married Ellen Martin who had been born in 1805, in Ireland, the daughter of Edward Martin, a House Proprietor and Helen McCartney. Thomas and Ellen brought up their family in Love St Paisley, from where most of their children were married. Their fourth son, Daniel who had been born in 1838 met and married, in 1859, Ann Smith whose father, Robert was a mill tender in Paisley, and whose mother was Mary Carmichael. Robert had been born in 1801 to John Smith, a Shawl Weaver and Janet Hodgart. Mary's parents were Archibald Carmichael, a Cow Feeder of Paisley and Catherine Taylor

Daniel and Ann were married in 13 Thread St (Ann's parents' house), and set up home in 6 Glen Street, Paisley according to the 1861 census. They moved to the Milngavie area in late 1870. Actually the 1871 census has them living in Old Town, New Kilpatrick with six children; a further child Ann was born in Milngavie. 1893 saw a family tragedy. On the 9th of September Daniel didn't arrive home from work to 10 Main Street Milngavie. One can only imagine the panic that went through the whole family. Were they all out hunting for Father that evening? Anyway a fatal accident inquiry is quoted later as saying that the next morning he was "found drowned in a pond situated 80 yards or thereby in a westerly direction from Burnbank dyeworks in East Kilpatrick" The Sheriff's verdict was that the cause of death was "Drowning -accidental or suicide". His wife survived him by only two months. She died on the 27th of November; the cause of her death was given as "Bronchitis of 21 days duration". A more romantic explanation might be that she died of a broken heart!

Their third child Daniel met Janet Robertson, a threadmill worker, of Paisley, (at the time living at Stewart's Land, Elderslie) and they were married in the Good Templars Halls in Paisley, on January 2nd 1888. How they met remains a mystery because though Daniel was born in Paisley he would have been living over in Milngavie with his parents since about 1871 when he was nine years old, though having said that, he was not in fact registered as living with his parents in the census of 1881 so he may have been living and working as a dyer at this time in Paisley. (All pure conjecture of course!) However they seem to have almost immediately gone to live in Kilpatrick or Milngavie where presumably young Daniel worked alongside his father as a dyer. Janet though, seems to have come back to be with her mother in Elderslie for the birth of her first-born, Daniel (the third). The 1891 census has them living in 42 Main Street Milngavie with two children Daniel and Rachel and Janet's mother Mary Muir nee Reynolds. The family stayed in Milngavie until sometime after 1900 when they moved to Rutherglen. A better job? or just another job, we'll never know now! They had two more children in Rutherglen, Robert and Josephina. Sometime between 1905 and 1912 the family moved again, this time to The Concrete Buildings in Penicuik, where the family finally put down roots.

Mary Reynolds had a very adventurous life. She was brought over, by her parents Hugh Reynolds and Rachel (nee White) at the age of nine from Limavady in Ireland to Dalry in Ayrshire, presumably to escape from the potato famine, in 1848. Hugh brought over with him four sons by his first wife, Janet White (possibly Rachel's sister?) and five children by Rachel. A further son Samuel was born in Dalry in 1849. When she was about 23 Mary had a liaison with a young Irish mining labourer called Hugh Robertson and fell pregnant. To give the child a name and to get Hugh to finance the child's upbringing she took him to the Sheriff Court in Kilmarnock. The Sheriff accepted proof that Hugh was the father and ruled that Hugh would pay "one pound ten shillings sterling (£1.50) of lying-in expenses attending the birth of said child. Interest thereof at the rate of 5% per annum from the birth of the said child till payment. The sum of £5 yearly for nursing, clothing and alimending said child payable quarterly and in advance beginning the first quarter's

payment of said aliment as on the birth date of the child thereafter and so forth quarterly and in advance until said child shall attain the age of 10 years complete". (Presumably from the age of 10 years the child was expected to be able to go out to work and earn sufficient to keep herself!).

How much of his debts Hugh paid we don't know, but certainly Mary managed to bring up her wean successfully, so all was well that ended well! In 1880 Mary was in Paisley working in one of the threadmills. On the 16th of July that year she got married to William Muir a coal merchant of Paterson Street, Motherwell. Mary's address was given as 16 Ferguslie and her daughter (aged 17) acted as her best maid. We don't know how long the marriage lasted but certainly William appears to have died sometime before the fifth of April 1891 when she turns up living with her daughter and son-in-law in Milngavie. However she may only have been visiting, because next we find her in 1892 back in Elderslie getting married at Burnside, Elderslie to one Love Irvine a bargeman on the Glasgow Paisley and Ardrossan Canal, (Love was 44 at the time and though Mary was born in 1839 she gave her age as 49, A lady's privilege! The witnesses this time were her brother and sister-in-law, Frederick and Jeanie Reynolds (nee Smith) who were away from Dalry by this time and were running a wee sweetie shop on the Main Street, Elderslie. They eventually expanded the shop into a small grocery store and seemed to make a reasonable living until 1907 when Frederick died aged 70, in Keith's Land Elderslie. Jeannie lived on to 78 when she died in November 1916 at 15 West Campbell Street, Paisley, where she appeared to have been living with her niece Martha Taylor.

Meanwhile Mary's mother, Rachel had also moved away from Dalry after the death of her husband Hugh who died of bronchitis in Burn Row, Dalry, where he appeared to have lived since he brought his family over from Ireland some 20 years before. Hugh was 71 years old. A few years ago Joyce and I found the grave where Hugh and Rachel were buried in Dalry cemetery. Two lairs had been bought by Mrs F.Reynolds of Eastland by Elderslie (obviously Jeanie). Others of the family buried there were Samuel Reynolds aged 24 died 7th May 1873, John L Reynolds aged 3 months died 7th August 1891, and Frederick Reynolds aged 73 died 23rd October 1907. There was however no headstone).

Rachel was, I think, living with Joseph, her son, and his unmarried sister Margaret in West Candren (a farm at that time) or perhaps Inkerman just to the north of Paisley. Rachel outlived her husband by 29 years eventually dying in West Candren of "senile debility" in 1896 at the age of 93! Maggie worked on at West Candren till December 1912 when she died of erysipelas at the age of 68, at 109 Inkerman. (I assume she was still working as her occupation on her death certificate was given as farm worker). Joseph outlived his sister by only five months when he died of "Senility" at the age of 79. His address at death was given as 186 Main Street, Elderslie. (When Joyce's sister Jean and her husband Peter Sharpe were over from New Zealand in 1991, we went over to Paisley and found Maggie and Joseph's grave and headstone in Hawkhead cemetery).

Mary Reynolds stayed in Elderslie until Love Irvine died in 1910 of kidney trouble at which time it appears she came through to 44 Bridge Street, Penicuik (the Concrete Buildings), where she lived till 1917 with her daughter and son-in-law and her eight grand weans. It would appear she saw two of her great grand weans Daniel the fourth, (who still lives in Penicuik) and Janet (Jenny Thomson/Rodgers of Corstorphine) who died in September 1997.

Mary died of bowel cancer at the age of 78. A real link with the historical past!

(Joyce suggested I add a little more. - When my mother was a wee girl in Elderslie, where she was born and brought up, she was given to running messages for the neighbours, for which she might be given a penny or still better a farthing (a penny she was made to put in her piggy bank but a farthing she was allowed to spend on herself! A farthing was 1/960th part of a pound sterling) She used to tell me how she would go down to the wee sweetie shop and spend her farthing on broken candy. Now in Edwardian times Elderslie was not much more than a few houses bordering the

Paisley-Johnstone Turnpike so there couldn't have been many shops far less many sweetie shops. I, therefore, have this mental picture of my mother buying sweets from my wife's great-great uncle. And when you consider that I was born and brought up in Elderslie while Joyce was born and brought in the south of England, and we actually met in Aden; I reckon if you had read that in a Catherine Cookson story you might have suggested that she was stretching coincidence just a bit too far.)

Frederick Smith Reynolds Stevenson, Daniel and Janet's second son, was born on the 16th of July 1895 in 10 Main Street, Milngavie. Somewhen between 1905 and 1912 the family moved to Penicuik to 44 Bridge Street, The Concrete Buildings. On leaving school he took up work in a grocer's shop. However within a week of the outbreak of the First War Freddie, all five foot one and three-quarters of him enlisted in the Royal Highlanders Army Reserve for six years service (this is information from the Ministry of Defence Records). It is more likely that he enlisted at Glencorse Barracks in Penicuik in the Royal Scots and was posted to the 3rd Battalion. On the 31st of October he was posted to the 11th Battalion, which would appear to have been held in reserve. On the 1st of January 1916 Freddie was transferred to the Machine Gun Corps, (was he hoping for some action?) The following month (24th) he was posted to 62 Company and the same day sailed for Le Havre. If he thought he was going to see some action then it appears he was disappointed because it was not until 26th February 1917 that he attended a course at the Machine Gun School. The trouble is that the MOD records give very little detail so we just don't know what his war adventures were. After the Armistice he was demobilised on 19th January 1919 and went home to Penicuik.

Either he couldn't get himself a decent job or he still had itchy marching feet, anyway the MOD records tell us that on the 3rd of November 1919 he had re-enlisted at Edinburgh in the Machine Gun Corps Infantry, and come the 27th April 1920 he embarked at Devonport en route for Bombay where he landed on the 24th March. Five months later he sailed for Iraq where he served with the Armoured Car Company, with which he was appointed to the rank of Lance Corporal, until embarking for UK on the 4th of November 1924. He was discharged on the 28th of the same month. Family stories tell us that he was wounded during his time in the East with a bullet in his back and it was this, which eventually led to his being semi-paralysed and bed-ridden. MOD records however give no indication of any wound to his back or elsewhere. So, is it the Family or the MOD who have got it wrong? One thing I do know is that my father Corporal John Pender was wounded twice in the war and there is no mention of these in the MOD records. (Having said that, the majority of the records for soldiers who served 1914-20 were destroyed by enemy air action in 1940. It is estimated that less than 40% now survive but of those many are in a very poor condition having been damaged by fire and water. Cpl Pender's MOD records amount to just half a page; Freddie's MOD information stretches to two A4 sheets.) Freddie was awarded the Indian General Service Medal with the Waziristan 1921-24 clasp. This would suggest that he served on the North-west Frontier as well as Iraq during his time out East, but again the MOD records do not mention any NW Frontier service.

Chapter Two

Freddie couldn't get himself a permanent job in the Penicuik area so he packed his bags and made for London hoping for better things. Within a year he met and married Ellen Payne, daughter of a brewer's drayman, Erasmus Eli Payne and Elizabeth Clarke. Freddie's jobs in London included hotel porter, garage attendant and London Transport porter; jobs which would not have done his back much good.

His Sundays were taken up with lay preaching at one of the Baptist chapels in the city. Joyce has a memory of coming home after church one Sunday with her father and her sister Jean across Lambeth Bridge. Freddie picked Joyce up and pretended to throw her over the parapet of the bridge. Joyce's memory of this was that it was all one big joke, and she still remembers laughing and giggling as father made to chuck her over. Some fifty-odd years later Joyce was telling her big sister Jean that this was one of her earliest memories. Jean, some two years older and with a better memory of this episode told Joyce that Father was not in a joking mood and was in fact very angry with the pair of them, that Jean had taken Joyce out to the toilet at the back of the church and that in washing their hands they had turned on the water tap too full and had been unable to turn it off again, causing much hilarity between the two of them, which hilarity had been heard throughout the church, thoroughly embarrassing their father, and leaving him in no mood for play. Oh dear, how childhood memories can play tricks!

In the winter of 1935/36 Jean tells us that she was out walking with her father when he slipped on the icy pavement and landed on his back. Freddie found that he couldn't get up and Jean had to run for help. That was the start of Freddie's paralysis because from then on he was bedridden either at home or in hospital.

That was the real start of the family's troubles. There was never much spare cash in the house and "Uncle"(the pawn shop) was always a friend in (dire) need. There was Ellen with a bed-ridden husband and a family of four girls and a boy, the eldest, Janet being just ten years old. Social Security benefits for families such as this were still some time in the future. Ellen tried to keep the family together by doing odd jobs and on at least one occasion managing to buy some sugar and apples and making and selling toffee apples. Things became so tough for Ellen in trying to keep her family together that she even had to pawn her wedding ring.

Eventually it all became too much for her, she was at her wit's end trying to feed and keep her family together and on an occasion when her husband was in St Olave's hospital, Rotherhithe, she gathered up the four girls (little Freddie was at that point also in hospital) and swearing them to secrecy took them to the nearest police station. She told the desk sergeant that she had found the children wandering in Brixton Road and she left them to the tender mercies of the local constabulary. The children were taken into care and were kept warm and fed in Earlsfield House, Wandsworth.

Ellen presumably felt she had done all she could for her little family, she could not obtain the wherewithal herself to keep them in food and clothes and she presumably realised that the parish was duty bound to look after the children if not the mother. But the authorities were very much harsher in those days and felt that she should have done more (What?) to keep her small family together. She was found, by the police, living within half-a-mile of West Square at 15 Merrow Street, Walworth. She was arrested and charged with "neglecting and abandoning her children". (It would appear that the authorities had accepted her story to the desk sergeant that she was a stranger who had found the children crying and abandoned in the street but the name and address of this "stranger had not been recorded." Possibly she had managed to slip away quietly whilst the police were busy seeing to the children.

The day after her arrest she was brought before the magistrate at Lambeth Police Court. Joyce says she remembers the four girls being brought into the court room, Jean says that on seeing her mother in the dock she screamed for her Mum at which the girls were ushered out of court never to see their Mother again. Ellen was found guilty as charged, not having had the benefit of a defending counsel, and sentenced to four months hard labour. 'O Tempora, O Mores!'

It was obviously a very summary trial. The Judge either was not informed or chose to ignore that, far from abandoning her children, she had taken them to the police station herself. The police had not realised that the woman who had "found the children wandering in the street" and had taken them to the police was in fact the same woman whom they had in the dock. Surely if the desk sergeant had been sub-poenaed to give evidence he would have been able to say "'Ere, that woman in the dock is the same woman what handed in the children to the station".

Or would it in fact have made any difference? Was she expected to look after her children herself regardless and was handing them over to the parish almost as much a crime, in the eyes of the law and the moneyed establishment, as abandoning them in the street. One can't but think how differently single mothers are treated in the present day? Rent-free council accommodation, unemployment benefit, family income supplement, child benefit and so on were all many years in the future. Ellen Stevenson felt she couldn't cope and did the only thing she could think of to keep her little family alive, and for that she was put in prison. She never got even the chance to try to look after her children again, and possibly never saw her whole family together again in her lifetime.

From then on the children became the responsibility of the London County Council who it would appear insisted on keeping them within its Jurisdiction and within its geographical responsibility.

The eldest girl, Janet, was taken in by their mother's sister Ethel and her husband William Bullock. Little Freddie spent the whole of the rest of his childhood in an orphanage (Earlsfield House?) where it appears he was reasonably happy, he was only about three years old at the time he was taken in to care so probably soon forgot his own family in the large pseudo-family of the orphanage.

Jean, Joyce and the baby June were fostered out in various homes, initially as a group. Throughout the War the three girls stayed with Mrs Gumm and her family in the village of Scaynes Hill in Sussex, not far from Haywards Heath. Mrs Gumm's reason for fostering was the money she was paid, and probably the children's ration books. She didn't appear to enjoy having the foster children and in fact treated them as servants in the house rather than as daughters to be cherished. Her own daughters came first and last. The LCC lady came round every now and again but she either shut her eyes to what was going on or had the wool successfully pulled over her eyes by Mrs Gumm.

At one point Jean was taken off by the council lady. Joyce and June thought she had been taken in by their auntie and probably wondered why they hadn't been so lucky. In fact it seemed that Jean had been complaining of the abusive treatment of Mrs Gumm. Far from being taken to her Auntie, she was fostered out with another family. In fact that was the start of a series of foster homes which Jean saw between then and her seventeenth birthday when she was reckoned to be able to earn her own living and went to live with her Auntie and Uncle Bullock.

Joyce and June stayed in Scaynes Hill for a few years more with Joyce travelling daily to Lewes to the Grammar School there.

In May 1943 Mr and Mrs Gilbert Rodgers of Malmains Way, Beckenham, Kent suffered a severe blow. They learnt that their only son Richard, who was fighting in the Western Desert as a corporal in the Cameron Highlanders preparatory to being commissioned in the infantry, had been killed in action. To alleviate their grief and to make some attempt to fill the great void left in their life they decided to take in a foster child. By this time the authorities were aware that the girls were being physically abused by the Gumms and Joyce and June were introduced to the Rodgers'. We

don't know if the Rodgers' knew how the girls were being treated in Scaynes Hill but they immediately accepted the pair of them as their new family into Malmaims Way and Joyce was enrolled into Beckenham Grammar School. It would appear that Joyce and June at least of the little Stevenson family were at last being treated as all children have the right to be treated, brought up by loving parents in a loving environment.
