

A JOURNEY OF VOICES
The Builders

Diane McAdams Gladow

*Front cover image: Craigengillan, a former McAdams estate in Scotland. Photo by Dean Gladow.
Back cover image: Craigengillan's Doors.*

“A Journey of Voices: The Builders” by Diane McAdams Gladow.
ISBN 978-1-62137-956-0 (softcover).

Published 2017 by Virtualbookworm.com Publishing Inc., P.O.Box 9949,
College Station, TX, 77842, US.

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Dedication

To Dad in gratitude for all the stories over all the years, for your love and care, and for the example that you set. You have been my inspiration for this book. This one is for you.

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Note: Please use the generation charts at the back of the book to clarify the names of individuals and their families as you are reading.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

“Dad, what can you tell me about how your family became town dwellers?” I was no longer a child and had developed an interest in my family’s history, both recent and far removed. Whenever possible I would prod my father to tell me about the past that he knew, and I would record his comments on audiotape and later on a MP3 player.

“Well, my dad decided fairly early in his adult life that he couldn’t continue sharecropping pieces of land owned by others. He had a large family to feed and clothe. With only two or three years of formal education and most of his training in reading and writing being self-taught, he did not have many options other than farming or hard labor, and he sure couldn’t afford to buy his own land. After considering various occupations in the local small town and after working on the railroad loading docks part-time, he decided to become a mail carrier which was a federal government job and paid better than he could make sharecropping. So our family moved from the small three-room cabin on the bayou near Lorena, Texas, into town. My dad did become a mail carrier and eventually the postmaster, and our lives changed for the better.”

“What kind of changes?” I asked.

“Well, the family now lived in a town instead of on a farm, and the children would have opportunities that they would not have had with everyone working the land - in one word, this meant education. My dad saw clearly that the only hope for his children to have better lives than he had managed to provide for himself was to see that they all received a good education. He

was determined that this would happen. Furthermore, living in town provided more opportunities for the family to have a social life, to attend church regularly, and to be more aware of what was happening in the world outside of the Lorena area. It did not particularly mean prosperity however, but the family fit fairly well economically into the community of other families living in town.”

“I guess when looking at the McAdams family as a whole, it was a turning point. The family never went back to full-time farming,” I commented.

“That is correct, and no one regretted it either,” Dad chuckled. “They did, however, work in the area cotton fields part-time to earn extra money.”

“I know that the McAdams men were interested in carpentry work. How did that play out during this period?”

“Both my father and my grandfather were part-time carpenters, and my brothers and I have done our share of that kind of work as well. Beyond my grandfather, I don’t know for sure, but I have heard it said that carpentry work as a profession was always at least a part-time vocation for the McAdams line of men. It probably spurred their interest in becoming Masons because the Masons had carpentry as a part of their traditions and rituals. This was a direct and deliberate connection to Jesus Christ of Nazareth who was a carpenter.”

“I believe that building was one of the great character traits of the McAdams family. The desire to build something, sometimes from nothing, was a big driver or motivator in what they were able to accomplish.” I was thinking about the entire ancestral line.

“In that you could be very right,” my Dad smiled as he drifted off in thought.

Thus began my many conversations with Dad over the years. He told the same stories many times in our talks, and sometimes they got bigger as he told them. Like the other men in the McAdams line and in true Scottish fashion, my dad loved to tell stories and laugh as he told them. But he could be serious too.

“I’m talking along here and I can’t begin to tell you the life we led. There is no way. I can come back another time, and I can

tell you a bunch of other wild stories. They are not just stories. These things actually happened. We didn't think much about it at the time. I look back at it now, and it's hard to believe. We had a lot of fun there, living in that old house in Lorena."¹

My mother was the dedicated family researcher and keeper of the family "treasures," but at some point, my dad's interest was engaged, and he also started to look for his family through the many generations since the American Revolution and to preserve what few things the family had managed to save and pass down. He had an old trunk full of even older things which he had gotten from his dad and in which he had stored some of his own keepsakes. In his later years he sorted through these items, organized some of the papers and photos into scrapbooks and put some things into my mother's old hump-backed trunk for safe keeping. He then gave away the empty old McAdams trunk. His intent was to consolidate the family keepsakes in order to pass them down to his children. Many times he would talk to me about what he was doing.

"This is all there is left of our family. We have some records, some pretty good photographs, and a few old junky items. But I want you to keep it - someone has to keep it. I know you're going to have a good life where you don't have to be so negative with everything you do, where you have a place to keep some of these things. You can pass them down when it comes your turn."²

After my mother died, my father brought me the old trunk full of treasures from both sides of the family, and although it was several years before I began to really look at what the trunk contained, I understood that I was the next "keeper" of my family's history. My brother was involved by this time as well. He helped to keep some of the McAdams' family possessions, and he traveled to the British Isles looking for clues to the ancient history of the family. After I opened the trunk and examined its contents, my interest grew. Such things as an old shoe last for repairing and constructing shoes (which my family used for a doorstep when I was growing up), some tooth pliers for pulling teeth, antiquated eyeglasses and pipes, straight razors, shaving mugs, watch chains, Bibles, school books and slates, and even a paint set made me almost contemplate opening a museum.

Behind each item there was a story - a small piece of my family's daily life in a long ago time.



However, the most interesting things in the trunk to me were not objects but letters, still in their envelopes and carefully preserved as though they had just arrived the day before. Unfortunately, the letters were not in great condition - mouse-chewed, yellowed with age, the handwriting barely legible and



faded, not to mention the spelling and sentence structure belonged to an earlier time period. But the voices in the letters captured me. It was as though they were speaking to me from a time long ago before I was born. The McAdams story, as well as the story of my mother's family was there for me to experience, and with my interest in history in general, I began to connect that history to my family's every-day life. It was the beginning of a long journey for me into the past to see just how much I could recover and pass on to future generations.

The known McAdams family history goes back beyond their American experience to Scotland with its rich heritage of fierce, contentious people who would never give up or give in. Their determination is legend in the annals of world history, and it had always been my experience with McAdams that they fit this mold perfectly. Even in my father's time, this character trait of determination - some might call it stubbornness - ran through the family. However, whether it was stubbornness or determination, it allowed the McAdams family to survive some very tough times and become the builders of a new life, a new town, a new state, a new nation - whatever caught their imagination. And to hear their version of their own story - well, that was a treat in itself. I was eager to begin the journey.

CHAPTER 2

The Legend

Late Decades of 1400, Scotland

Adam MacGregor and his cousin, a Grierson (sept¹ of the MacGregor clan), were camped in a forest in the central part of Scotland midway between the Highlands and the Lowlands. They were tired, dirty, and discouraged, separated from the MacGregor clan members whom they usually claimed as kin because of the times, and more importantly, the government of Scotland in the person of the King, had turned against them. In spite of the McGregors having an ancient history which originated with them as titled and landed stockmen, over the centuries the MacGregor's inability to get along with the neighboring clans and the kings of Scotland had cost them their titles and lands. Many had become cattle thieves and raiders in order to survive, nomads with no land to call their home. Most recently and in a total disregard for their own best interests, they had gone too far, almost destroying the entire Clan Colquhoun in a fierce fight at Glen Fruin near the west side of Loch Lomand, and the enraged King of Scotland had acted. He had disbanded the clan, declaring the MacGregors outlaws; and because of this, they could not assemble, wear the colors of the clan, display the coat of arms, or bear the name. If captured (men, women, or children), they would be subject to branding, banishment, or execution. The King was proving to be as ruthless as the MacGregors themselves. Adam MacGregor and his cousin were on the run and discouraged indeed.

“There is a way out o’ this mess ifen ye’ve a mind ta take it,” offered the Grierson.

“And what would tha’ be?” groaned Adam as he morosely contemplated his worn-out shoes and dirty clothes. “I’m tired ‘o runnin and fightin’ with ne’er a hope of enythin’ difrent.”

“Listen ta me,” the Grierson cajoled. “I’ve kin in tha Galloway region ta tha south o’ here. They’ll take us in and provide us with a start o’ land ta work. We can change our names and begin a new life with some hope o’ makin’ it a good one.”

“But wha’ aboot me da²?” Adam argued. “He’s all I ha’ left o’ family. I canna desert him.”

“Ye canna help him, Adam. He’s done for, due ta be executed in Edinburgh. Yer only hope is to see to yerself and try to make a difrent life fer yerself. He could ne’er provide any kind o’ life fer ye ‘cept runnin’ and thievin’. Tha’ won’t work anymore, now tha’ the King has turned agin us. We have ta see after ourselves. Now, make up yer mind. Are ye comin’ with me or no? We donna have much time.”

Adam thought for a bit, and although it felt like he was being torn apart, he finally slowly nodded his head, and said, “Aye, I’ll join ye.”

Without any more delay or discussion, the two carefully started on their journey, making their way through the forests to the south, keeping hidden as much as possible, until they finally reached the Galloway (Wigtownshire and Kirkcudbrightshire) region where the Grierson clan had land. Upon arrival, events happened as the Grierson had said they would. With new names and land to work, the young lads became new men with a chance for survival, perhaps even a chance for a little success, because the Griersons were in the favor of the King of Scotland.

Adam McGregor became Adam MacAdam, and a new family line was born. The name MacAdam means son of Adam. With the connotations from the Bible of Adam being the first man and Adam MacAdam being the first of his line, he may have liked the idea of the name. The men who came after him would truly be his sons - the Sons of Adam. However, he may simply have taken the name from another who carried it, because the earliest known

*recording of a form of the MacAdam name was Dolphinus Mackadam who witnessed a charter by Emaldus, Bishop of St. Andrew, dated about 1162. This occurrence was followed by other people, places and events of record over the centuries until the MacAdam family of Andrew was documented around 1450.*³

Was this legend true? It was handed down in the family for centuries as the origin of the MacAdam family, but was it just a legend? The story of the doomed MacGregors was certainly true, but did Adam and his cousin exist? With few written records of the period, perhaps the best piece of evidence to lend the legend credence lies in the twenty-first century with the advances made by DNA studies. It has been proven through YDNA testing that the McAdam family and the MacGregor family are connected at some point because they have closely matching DNA.⁴ However, DNA studies are not yet able to make specific connections of individuals in family lines. They provide evidence, but they must be supported with documentary research. Another factor to support the legend is there are other men named Adam in the early MacAdam line, perhaps indicating that the first member of the line was indeed named Adam. However as of this date, there is not enough solid evidence to prove the family began with this legend or did not, but the legend is timeless and pervasive in McAdam lore.

CHAPTER 3

The McAdam Scots

Note: A family chart is provided between Chapters 3 and 4 for the reader's use in understanding the McAdam family lines.

Beyond the family legend, the first MacAdam of public record in the line was Andrew MacAdam, born around 1445 in the Ayrshire region of Scotland. He could have been a son or grandson of Adam MacGregor MacAdam, or neither if the legend is just a legend, but from him began a long MacAdam family line of people who lived off of the land in Ayrshire and Galloway. Although he may not have been a landowner himself, he did make a living renting or tenanting land from others. He had several parcels and did well for himself. The MacAdam, from the beginning, showed himself to be industrious, ambitious, and determined to improve his situation. He apparently was also a calm sort, not given to fighting with his neighbors or the government currently in power, because he knew, in order to be successful, he would need help from others. Andrew married Janet Campbell, and among his sons were Donald, John, Gilbert, and David. He also had a daughter Janet and quite probably more children that did not get mentioned in the existing public records but who helped to grow the family.¹

The land that the MacAdam family settled in southwestern Scotland was composed of high and low grass-covered rolling hills with forested areas (during some time periods) and several rivers. The River Deugh met the River Ken at the eastern end of Carsphairn parish. The River Doon was also in Ayrshire, and

later in the 1930's, it was dammed to provide better water management, enlarging a beautiful lake formed by the river and having the same name. The bridge over this river, built by James Kennedy during the early 1400s according to John R. Hume, was immortalized in literature by Robert Burns and later in a Broadway musical, *Brigadoon*, in the United States. Brigadoon, loosely translated, means bridge over the Doon. Burns, poet laureate of Scotland, was born and lived part of his life in the Ayrshire area.²



1. Bridge over the Doon River/Ayrshire, Scotland

This land was suited to herds of cattle and sheep and could provide a good living. Some farming was utilized to grow feed for the livestock and food for the families who tenanted or owned the land, and at various times, the forested land was harvested for fuel and as lumber for extra income. Peat was also used for fuel before coal mining began. Fishing and hunting were a part of daily life. The hills were low in comparison to the mountains in the north of Scotland, but the highest hills were significant. For as far as the eye could see, the land was open and unspoiled, green with thick grass on the high hills, the lower areas covered in moss and heath, and all of it dotted with wildflowers and rock outcroppings. The climate was wet and humid, creating bogs in the low areas, and it was prone to fog and mist at certain times of the day and evening. The wispy fog tended to add to the old legends that the inhabitants of the land loved to recount on cold,

dreary nights. It was a pastoral land and somewhat of a peaceful retreat from the cities where turmoil, poverty, and political intrigue were prevalent.³

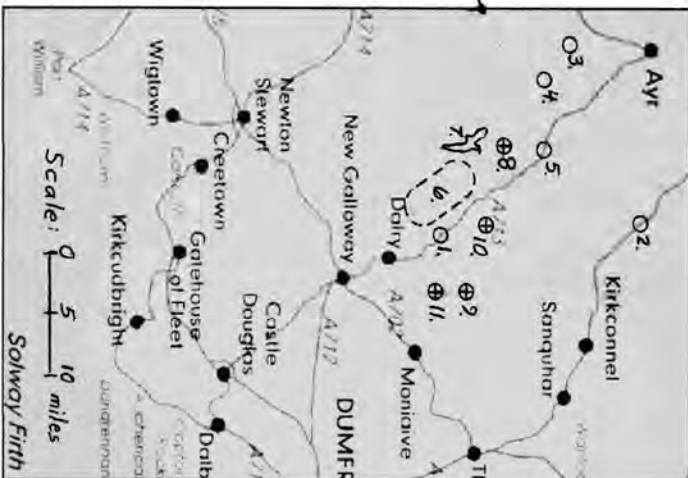


2. Carsphairn Area, Scotland

The families who owned the land controlled the use of any rivers on it and also any towns that were built. As well, the hills of The Glenkens, covering the four northern parishes of Kirkcudbrightshire, held the crossings of the two principal trade routes in Scotland which led south to the Solway Firth and to the Irish Sea ports. These trade routes, known as the Edinburgh and the Ayr/Glasgow, both passed through St. John's Town of Dalry, and they handled much of southern Scotland's trade with England, France, Ireland, and eventually the new world of the American colonies. It was another way to make money, charging tolls for the use of the rivers and the trade routes. The MacAdam family eventually occupied much of the land, as tenants and as owners, which lay between eastern Ayrshire and northern Kirkcudbrightshire, a strategic location for dealings with the Gordons, the Kennedys, and the Cunninghams, for controlling the rivers and the trade routes, and for keeping the peace, at least most of the time. For centuries, the families that thrived on the land continued to grow larger, during the clan period and after it. The MacAdam family, although never a clan in its own right, was destined to be a part of this growth.⁴

Scotland McAdams Locations

1. Carsphairn (town)
2. Cumnock (town)
3. Kirkmichael (town)
4. Straiton (town)
5. Dalmellington (town)
6. The Glenkens (area of large hills)
7. Loch Doon (lake)
8. [New] Craigenjiljan (Family Estate)
9. [Early] Craigenjiljan (Family Estate)
10. Waterhead (Family Estate)
11. Smeaton (or Smitons, Family Estate)



Andrew's son, John MacAdam⁵, married Janet Hamilton and continued accumulating land, both tenant properties and small purchased land plots. John's children numbered at least eleven. The laws of Scotland which dealt with inheritance were bound by the system of primogeniture and had been for centuries. This meant the first born son inherited his father's property, and the second born son inherited his mother's property. A woman often brought land with her into her marriage as her dowry if her family was wealthy enough to own several properties. Tenancies could be inherited as well as owned properties. The rest of the children were on their own or at the mercy of the first and second born sons. However, there must have been some leeway in this system because the MacAdam family did not always follow the tradition. Looking at the birth dates that are currently known, Donald was born first to Andrew and John was born later, perhaps second. When Andrew died, at least two branches of the family emerged with these two sons as the heads. It appears Andrew split his tenant holdings between the two sons but may have designated John, the younger of the two sons, as his heir to carry on the line.⁵

Donald lived at Dalmellington, was a tenant at Over Longford, and owned Arrow, next to Erwy. He became known as Donald of Erwy, and had sons Andrew, Donald, and Alexander. John MacAdam, the younger son, inherited some of his father's small titled lands and a chance to rent his father's tenant properties. The other sons of Andrew set about collecting their own tenant properties or went into other fields of endeavor. John was also said to be, in some accounts, a friend and servitor or writer for King James V, and may also have been, according to other accounts, a tenant farmer at Waterhead, a large titled estate owned by Michael Gilbert. The opinions vary concerning John's activities and are seldom supported by public documents. If this last opinion were true, John's son Andrew, his first born, may have taken over his father's tenant property at Waterhead, along with John's other properties, some perhaps in the Dalmellington area. However, this second Andrew- more importantly- was destined to change the family's fortunes forever.⁶



3. *College Glen and Loch Kendoon Carsphairn area*

Around 1568, this Andrew McAdam was following in his father John's footsteps as a stockman, with both tenancies and small titled land parcels, and was having some success at maintaining the family's solid livelihood. It can also be noted that it was in this generation that the MacAdam name came to be spelled without the "a" in "Mc." No reason is known for this, and it was probably not universally true. The name would continue to be spelled several different ways depending upon the person who owned it. The McAdam tenant properties were partially bordered by the Gordons on the eastern side and the Kennedys (the family of Andrew's wife, Christine) on the west. These families enjoyed the favor of the King through his regent, the Earl of Moray. Sometime in 1568, Andrew did something, perhaps different for him, but which turned out to be pivotal for the entire family. As the family story goes, when James Stewart, the Earl of Moray, made a visit to the neighborhood collecting support from the Scottish nobles for the king, Andrew seized on the opportunity to play host for an evening. The McAdam family had a policy of trying to get along with their neighbors, who sometimes could not tolerate each other, which was typically the case with the Gordons and the Kennedys, and so, in that one evening, Andrew had an opportunity to impress the King's Regent with his loyalty to the crown and his ability to keep the peace among his fractious neighbors.⁷

This family story may have some validity because the next year in 1569, a crown charter to four and one half merks of Waterhead became available through Michael Gilbert's resignation of the charter (perhaps unwilling), and the King's Regent granted the Waterhead charter to Andrew and the McAdam family. It is also possible an amount of money may have changed hands on this occasion, provided by the Kennedys. It was in their best interest to have Andrew, elevated in this fashion. The Cunningham family also had an interest in Andrew's status being raised and may have contributed some funds because they desired a marriage between Andrew's sister and one of their sons. In any case, having title to a large piece of land made a huge difference in how the McAdam family operated and lived. They were now in charge of tenants rather than being tenants. This increased their income and their opportunity to make advantageous marriages in the neighborhood which brought in more titled land. It was a whole new world.⁸

Donald MacAdam of Erwy (the original Andrew's eldest son and John's brother) had a son named Andrew as well. This Andrew married Marion Grierson (or Grier), and because she had the rights to her mother's land, Craigengillan, that property came into Donald's family, beginning the McAdam Craigengillan line. At this point two McAdam lines, the Waterhead and the Craigengillan, had been formed from the original line of the first Andrew. Donald's heir and executor was his son Alexander who received his father's properties, both owned and tenanted, but he did not receive the Craigengillan lands. Those were the lands brought into the family by his mother, and they went to the second son of Donald, Andrew, as provided for by primogeniture. The lands of the two new lines, Waterhead and Craigengillan, as well as the lands of other lines that the children and grandchildren of the original Andrew formed, such as the one from Alexander, were all located in close proximity, and thus the McAdam family as a whole controlled a vast tract of land on the Ayrshire/Kirkcudbrightshire border. Over the later years of the 16th century (the 1500s), the families grew, and through advantageous marriages with other families in the area, the McAdam land holdings continued to increase as well.⁹

One of the original John's eleven children and brother of Andrew (who started the Waterhead line), Duncan, became the Burgess of Ayr, which was a very important position for the family as a whole. A burgess was an agent in charge of buying and selling various goods produced by the farmers, herdsmen, and merchants. Ayr was a thriving town in Ayrshire, and thus the McAdam family had their own agent in a position of great responsibility, a very large advantage in obtaining the best prices for their goods. Duncan's sons also became burgesses, continuing the tradition.¹⁰ Another of the original John's children, Quintin, through his acquisitions and marriage to Janet Grier of Knockengarroch and Smeaton, brought these lands into the family. When Quintin died, he divided his land among his sons, Quintin, John, William, and Gilbert. The Smeaton (Smitton, Smeithoun, Smeation) line was begun with Quintin and existed in the same time period as the lines of Waterhead and Craigenkillan.¹⁰



4. Waterhead, Scotland

In Scotland, the land was so connected to the people who owned it that the two were inseparable. The people's names bear this out; part of their name was the name of the land that they owned (for example, Andrew McAdam of Craigenkillan). Acquiring the title to land was the ultimate goal of almost every

Scot. It gave them not only an income or a way to accumulate riches but an identity, a reason to exist. For centuries, before the growth of towns and cities and with them a middle class, all power and might centered in the landholders of Scotland. Those who could not own land had to content themselves with working for, and often fighting for, the man who did own it. This often provided occupations for the third, fourth, and later sons in Scottish families. These later sons otherwise had to find land to tenant, a trade to pursue, or a place within the church or the military. In the early centuries, the sons of gentry or land owners would rarely pursue a trade in a town or city. This was not considered suitable for a nobleman.¹¹

Although the McAdam families had seemed to be splitting apart into separate family lines connected to separate pieces of land, by the end of the 16th century, the lines had essentially come back together again into one. Margaret, the daughter of Andrew of Waterhead married her first cousin, Gilbert of Smeaton and Knockingarroch (and son of Quintin) with the stipulation that Gilbert would become Andrew's heir (the heir to Waterhead). This was somewhat of a departure from the primogeniture system and probably required a sum of money to cross hands. Thus the Waterhead and Smeaton/Knockingarroch lines were united with the birth of Margaret and Gilbert's children. By one theory, one of their children, Quintin, then married a daughter of Andrew of Craigengillan, and this brought the Craigengillan line into the Waterhead line. Another theory has Andrew of Craigengillan's son William begetting the line which eventually merged with the Waterhead line in order to have an heir for Craigengillan. William was head of the family when the Craigengillan lands were officially granted to the family by License and Crown Charter in 1611. This united several properties owned by William and his brother John under the name Craigengillan although the original names of the family groups and their farms such as Berbeth and Grimmet lingered on for many years. However, there was no heir from William's son to carry on the Craigengillan line, thus necessitating appointing or obtaining an heir from the Waterhead line. This resulted in James, the son of John, the son of Gilbert of Waterhead becoming the head of the

Craigengillan line. James was also a descendant of the Smeaton line with Quinton (son of the original John) at its head.

The final result was by the early 1600s, the McAdam line was essentially reunited under the name Waterhead. There were many McAdam family members who had married into other families or who were living independently, but almost all of the power and wealth that the family could claim came from the Waterhead line. However, in typical McAdam tradition, this consolidation of the Waterhead line would not last for more than a generation. Once again, the lines split into two parts, the Waterhead and the Craigengillan, and this division would remain for many generations.¹²