

Alexander snr GORDON & Jessie, nee MATHESON

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www.alexanderandjessiegordon.net

How to use these notes

- Too much detail?: Read the summary first, to get the essence of what this is all about - rather than getting lost in the details in the body of these notes.
- Research: These notes are not in a narrative style because it is not intended for the general public. This is for serious researchers. There are standardized headings and dot-points which are a framework into which extra discoveries can be placed.
- Sources: The details are from the profiles on the website, also OPRs & censuses (appendix A), as well as from other references quoted throughout these notes. This is mainly from what is available on the internet - we have not yet directly researched original physical records. We are drawing heavily from 'The Gordons' by Nathalie & Colin Semmler which can be seen in the STORIES directory on the left of the home page. .
- Searching: You can search this PDF document by using Control/F, and then a relevant key word.
- Our other docs: This is one of a series of research notes which are interconnected. These can be found in the STORIES directory on the left of the homepage. The notes that are most relevant to Alexander and Jessie.
 - ☐ **0.02 – 'Inverness tour'** (many family connections)
 - ☐ **1.10 – 'John Gordon & Elizabeth, nee Gordon'** (parents of Alexander snr)
 - ☐ **1.20 – 'Alexander snr Matheson an& Margaret, nee Fraser'** (parents of Jessie)
 - ☐ **2.10 – 'Alexander (jnr) Gordon & Annie Saltmarsh'** (son)
 - ☐ **2.20 – 'Tale of Two Women - Catherine 'Kitty' Gordon, Susannah Gooding & Samuel Way'** (daughter)
 - ☐ **2.30 – 'Donald Matheson Gordon & Annie McLachlan'** (son)
- Author: These notes were compiled by Don Gordon who is a GG-grandson.
- Feedback: This is a draft. Your corrections and suggestions will be welcomed - via 'Contact us' on the homepage.

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Summary

Alexander was born in Kiltarn in 1822. His parents were John and Lizy. He was brought up in Kiltarn and later worked in Urray.

Jessie was born in 1823. Her parents were Alexander Matheson and Margaret, nee Fraser. She was living at Inchberry at the time she married Alexander in 1850.

They were in Stonehaven for a short time where Alexander was a platelayer for the railway. Then they were at Larbert near Stirling for a few years. During their first four years of marriage, they had three children – John, Alexander and Kitty. Then in 1854, the family migrated to South Australia on the Eldorado.

The Gordons were pioneers in Belvidere near Strathalbyn. The first farms in the district were started 14 years before the Gordon's established their farm, Beaufort.

Three more children were born – Donald, Hugh and Maggie. Jessie died in 1866 at the age of 42 years. Alexander married Ann Campbell who had been his housekeeper and they had sons, James and David.

For a decade from the late 1870s, Alexander attempted to get established in Alma and Bordertown but finally settled back at Beaufort.

Over the years he purchased several other properties and, although he was probably quite well off, he was not amongst the most prosperous farmers in the district.

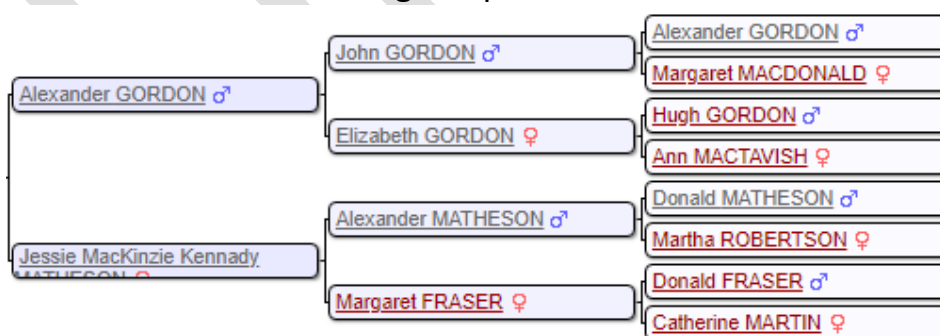
Alexander was a key figure in the establishment of the Church of Christ in Strathalbyn.

He died in 1895 at the age of 73 years, after four decades in the colony.

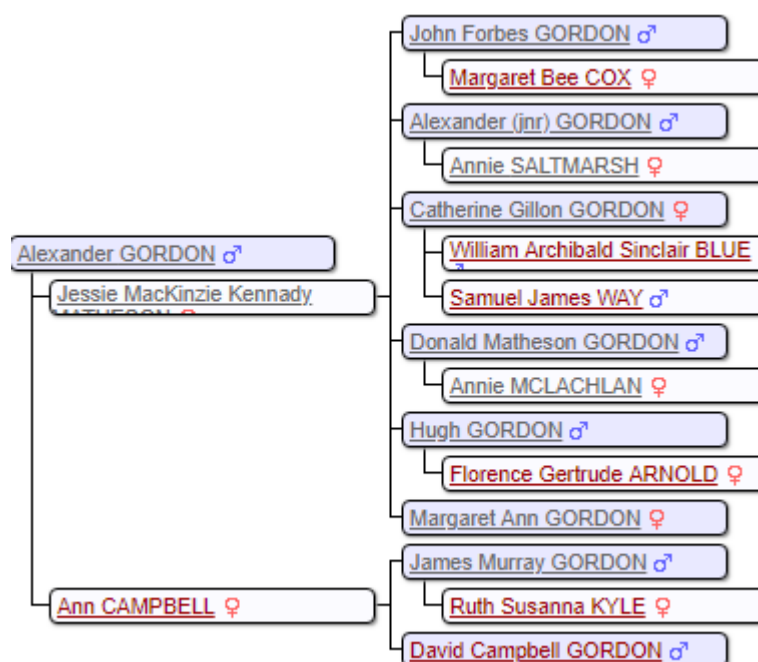
Of the eight children, one died as an infant, one daughter was unmarried and three sons married in their late 30s and had no children. Only three of the children produced grandchildren – 19 altogether – all in Alexander's lifetime.

- John Forbes: He was three years old when the family migrated. Little is known about his schooling and early working years. At the age of 37 years he married Margaret Bee Cox – they had no children. He was a farmer in Penola, Naracoorte (Hynam), 'Glenroy' & Coonawarra.
- Alexander jnr: He was two years old when he migrated. He married Annie Saltmarsh and they had 11 children. They were on several farms in the south east in South Australia – notably, Point Sturt Station, Watulunga and Glenngarie. Their children had contrasting fates – some were struggling farmers in South Australia and others were prominent temperance preachers in America.
- Catherine 'Kitty': She was an infant when she migrated. For some years she was in the care of Jessie's sister, Catherine and Donald Gollan. At 18 years old, she married Dr Billy Blue (Mayor of Strathalbyn) and they had four children. All the children were born in Strathalbyn. She later married Sir Samuel Way and was prominent in Adelaide society.
- Donald: He was born in Strathalbyn. He married Annie McLachlan and they had four children. He worked on a farm at Owen and was active in church work. In later years they lived in Georgetown and Jamestown.
- Hugh: He was born in Strathalbyn. He married Florence Gertrude Arnold when he was 36 years old. They did not have any surviving children. He managed Avadale and Wolgan stations in NSW, and Seaview in SA.
- Maggie: She was born in Strathalbyn. She was not married. She lived at various locations, including Penola.
- James: He was a child of Alexander's second marriage. He married Ruth Susanna Kyle when he was 39 years old. They did not have any children. He lived in Goolwa where he was active in the town council and Church of Christ.
- David: Died as an infant.

Parents & grandparents of Alexander and Jessie



Children of Alexander, Jessie and Ann



Alexander's childhood

Alexander was born in 1822 in the parish of Kiltarn, Ross Shire, Scotland. He was the third of eight children of John Gordon and Lizy Gordon.

Kiltarn is a parish – not a specific location. The family must have been living somewhere in that parish, which is where the births of Alexander's siblings are recorded.

See John and Elizabeth's biography for some details about the life of the family in Kiltarn, Contin and Brahan.

At the time of his wedding, Alexander was living in Urray on a large estate called Brahan, which about three kms from Contin. Alexander might have had a brief connection with the estate, or on the other hand, his family might have had a strong association over many years. We don't know what sort of work Alexander was doing at Brahan, maybe gardening because his father was a gardener.

Jessie's childhood

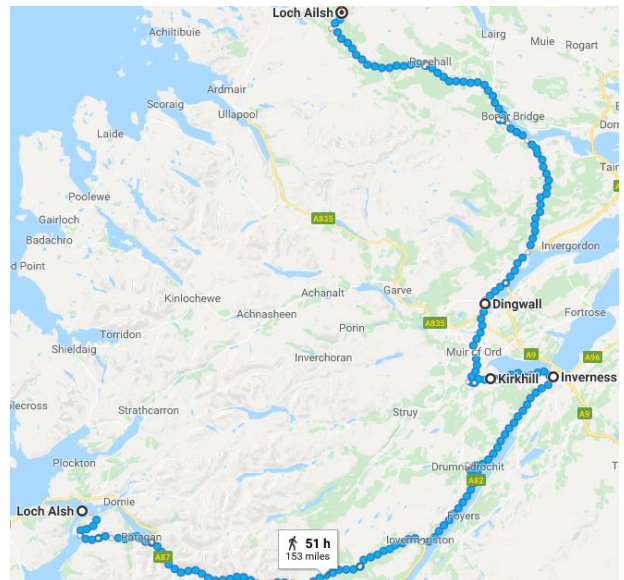
Jessie was born in 1823 the parish of Inverness. The reverend who officiated at her baptism was of Red Castle which is near the Killearnan Church (across the Firth from Kirkhill) but, the birth was registered in the parish of Inverness rather than the parish of Killearnan – so maybe the reverend was visiting Inverness rather than the family being in Killearnan at the time of the baptism.

Birth place:

- Records:-
 - ☐ Her parents were married in Inverness.
 - ☐ Jessie's OPR record has Jessie's birth place as Inverness - like her siblings.
 - ☐ The 1841 census records her birth place as Loch Alsh [research: Check this].
 - ☐ The 1851 census has her born in Kirkhill in Inverness.
 - ☐ Jessie's father's army discharge papers have him as born near the town of Dingwall in the Parish of Lochailsh.
 - ☐ Her half-brother Hugh was born in Loch Alsh.

- Geography:-

- Inverness Vs Inverness-shire: The shire is one of the largest areas within Scotland. Normally Inverness is considered as around the township itself, whereas outer locations are identified as a specific location somewhere within Inverness-shire.
- There is a Loch Alsh about 100 km south-west of the town of Inverness. It is on the north-west fringes of the County of Ross and Comarty.
- There is another place called Loch Ailsh the same distance, 100 kms but north, of the town of Inverness. This is in the County of Sutherland, just across the border of Ross and Comarty.
- There are no indications that Jessie's parents were near Loch Alsh or Loch Ailsh at the time of her birth.



- Conclusion: More research is required to resolve these apparently incompatible pieces of information.

Jessie's parents were Alexander Matheson and Margaret, nee Fraser. She had been surrounded by children's activities as she was growing up. She was the sixth of eight siblings and she also had another seven younger half-siblings. See the biography of Alexander & Margaret - 1.20 in STORIES on the home page.

In 1839 her sister, Catherine, migrated to the new colony of South Australia. Catherine was 27 years old and was married to Donald Gollan. It must have been a major family event for 16 year old Jessie and the rest of the family. It would eventually lead to Jessie's own migration 15 years later. Indeed, eight of her 14 siblings and half-siblings migrated to Australia.

At the time of her marriage, Jessie was living on Inchberry. She might have been living there for a considerable time and might have worked there. Significantly, her older sister, Catherine, was also living in Inchberry the time of her wedding 11 years before. Jessie eventually joined Catherine in Strathalbyn.



There are two places called Inchberry. The relevant one is an estate on the south western shores of Beaulieu Firth, about 5 kms east of Kirkhill and about 10 kms west of Inverness. (However, there is another Inchberry which is in Moray, about 70 kilometres east of Inverness.)

The photo on the left was taken by John Gordon (of Mundaring in Western Australia in 19xx)

First years of marriage and migration

It is not known how Alexander and Jessie met. Brahan and is about 20 kms from Inchberry.

They were married at parish of Kirkhill in 1850 when Jessie was 27 years old and Alexander was 28 years. The wedding was probably attended by many of their siblings. Alexander had 7 siblings and Jessie had 14. We do not know where the siblings were all living at the time, but distances were not great, even by walking or by horse and cart, if many of his siblings were around Brahan which was about 16 kms from Kirkhill, and if hers were around Inchberry which is about 4 kms from Kirkhill.



Kirkhill church – source <http://canmore.org.uk/collection/1272834>



We do not know where they lived straight after the wedding – maybe Kirkhill, Brahan, Inchberry or somewhere else. Or they might have soon gone to Stonehaven which is 20 kms south of Aberdeen because, eleven months after the wedding, their first child, John was born early in 1851. And this was confirmed in a census a few months later.

There could some confusion about the John's birth place because (a) Colin Semmler p5 has the birth at Dunmotar, Aberdeenshire, and (b) The 1851 census has his birth place as the town of Stonehaven in Kincardine. There is no such place a Dunmotar and there is a Kincardine in Stirling (near where the next two siblings were to be born) – but this is not the one. However, it all matches up OK because there is a Dunnottar castle near Stonehaven, and Kincardine is the old name for that area.

The 1851 census has Alexander as a plate layer (railway worker) living in Barclay Street in Stonehaven.

Soon, they moved another 120 kilometres south-west to Larbert where Alex was born about a year

after the census. It is not known why they were there, nor what were their accommodation arrangements. Nor do we know what sort of work he was doing. Maybe he found another plate laying job with the railway.

Around the time of Alex's birth in 1852, there must have been great excitement with the visit of Jessie's sister, Catherine, and her husband, Donald Gollan. This visit is mentioned in Donald's obituary (The Southern Argus, 1st March 1888, p3):-

- They had been in South Australia for thirteen years and Donald had become a prominent citizen in Strathalbyn with several business interests - including a local hotel, farm land and a transport service to Adelaide.
- During this time, maybe there had been exchanges of letters between Catherine and Jessie (or other family members). Communication between the mother-land and colony could only have been by letters which took at least three months across the sea – a turn around time of about seven months.
- We can only guess at what places in Scotland Catherine and Donald visited - and how long they stayed, and who they met.
- Maybe the Gollans came to Larbert, or maybe there was a family gathering nearer Inverness - where Donald had come from and where Alexander and Jessie's many siblings were possibly living. But this would have been a major journey for Alexander and Jessie and their little family.
- There are some indirect indications that Catherine and Donald met up with Jessie and Alexander.
 - Bond: It is not known how close Jessie and Catherine were. Jessie was 11 years younger than Catherine.
 - Naming: The visit must have struck a chord because Alexander and Jessie gave their next child a middle name of Gillon (spelled that way). Catherine Gillon Gordon was born more than a year after Catherine's visit but perhaps the idea of Catherine, 'adopting' a child was discussed at this time. It was clear that Catherine was not going to have children of her own – she was childless after more than a decade of marriage.
 - Inspiration: The visit by the Gollans would have brought migration into sharp focus. There would have been a lot of discussion about the possibility of Jessie and Alexander migrating. The Gordons were on their way within two years of the visit.
 - Sponsorship: Maybe Donald sponsored Jessie's siblings. He might have assisted with the costs of their voyage, and maybe he helped them settle into Belvidere. [research: In what ways might he have sponsored them?] Donald may have already arranged for three of Jessie's siblings to migrate - brother Alexander and half-brothers Hugh and George. We know that Hugh married Donald's niece, Margaret. [research: We have no details about the other brothers, Alexander and George.]

- After Alexander had been in the colony for almost two decades, Alexander and Donald were co-purchasers of some farm land and might have lived together for a short time at Tatiara, near Bordertown.

They remained in Larbert for two or three years. The family continued to grow with their third child, Kitty, born to make three children in four years.

Their journey started with embarking in Glasgow. The family might have gone directly from Larbert to Glasgow (35 kms to the south-west) without returning to see their families around Inverness which is the opposite direction (250 kms to the north). It is possible that the last time they saw their parents and siblings was at their wedding.

So, the family of five boarded the ship for their long sea voyage. This was four years after their wedding with John 3 years, Alexander 2 years and Kitty a babe in arms at ten weeks.

The Eldorado left Glasgow on 18th June 1854 under Capt J MacKay and, after a 16 week voyage, arrived in Port Adelaide on 5th October.

Life at Belvidere

Alexander, Jessie and the three children settled in Beaufort at Belvidere, on the banks of the Angas River, 6 kms south-east of Strathalbyn. Was this lot 2772 and/or 2774? [research]: Check this. When did he purchase it? It is surprising if it was as late as 1878. Maybe he leased it or just lived there for his first 24 years in the colony.]

A portion of the original farm house is still standing. It has thick limestone walls and a fireplace still intact. In 1986 it was owned by Sidney Wakefield. It was being used as a two-car garage. (Colin Semmler, p2). There is a photo showing it in a poor state but still a somewhat impressive structure which the owner intends to restore to its authentic condition. [research]: Get a photo of this building as it is now.]

In the 1850's settlement around Belvidere was in its earliest days but it was in the process of becoming a busy rural village. It was at the intersection of the Strathalbyn and Lake Roads. There was a weatherboard school and a church (BRB p484). Jeff Jefferies had a blacksmith workshop and then in 1856 he built a hotel across the road. (BRB p484). This was near the River Angas. Brickworks were nearby (BRB p482). There was a post office from 1860. (BRB p 484). Although the farm is close to Belvidere, on some documents the postal address is Angas Plains.

Matthew Rankine (of Belvidere), in his diaries, several times mentions his neighbour Mr Gordon - but it seems that he is not referring to Alexander, but to John Hannah Gordon. John was a local lawyer who served as mayor of Strathalbyn and later became a judge and politician. He took a minor part in the process of federation and is thus one of our nation's founding fathers. He was knighted. This is all detailed in the ANU's Australian Dictionary of Biography. He was not a relative even though he lived in the same small community and at the same time as 'our' Gordons and there would have been some contacts between the families. [research]: What were the relative locations of the farms of Matthew, Alexander and JH Gordon?]

Three more children were born – Donald, in 1856 - a year and half after migrating, then Hugh, after another year and a half, then Maggie after two and a half more years, in 1860.

We notice a few events in newspapers around 1860 which are reported as Mr Gordon or Alexander Gordon. We have some confidence that they are referring to 'our' Alexander Gordon, but a little caution is needed to avoid confusion with John Hannah Gordon. There would be no confusion with his son by the same name who was only 8 years old at that time, but there was another Alexander Gordon who was the principal of the Baptist College - born 1831 and died in Strathalbyn in 1919. (The Advertiser, 4th Jan 1919).

- 1859 – Alexander was fined 5 shillings for neglecting precautions before burning stubble – (The South Australian Advertiser – 7th April 1859).
- 1859 – He addressed a Temperance meeting: On 10th Nov 1859, a Temperance meeting was held in the schoolroom at Langhorne's Creek. (South Australian Weekly Chronicle, 19th Nov 1859, p4 & The South Australian Advertiser – 14th Nov 1859)
- 1860 – He was President of the Total Abstinence Society (South Australian Advertiser – 5th July 1860 & South Australian Weekly Chronicle, 7th July 1860, p1)

- 1861 - He was ordained as an Elder in the Free Presbyterian Church in Strathalbyn – *“On Sunday last Mr. Alexander Gordon was ordained to the office of Elder, in the Free Presbyterian-Church, Strathalbyn, to which office he had been chosen by the members in connection with that place of worship. The service was conducted by the Rev. J. Anderson, in the presence of a large congregation”.* (South Australian Register – 9th February 1861, p3
- 1861 – The Presbyterian Sabbath School at was held at ‘Beaufort’. A gathering *“took place on the Angas Plains, the anniversary of the Presbyterian Sabbath School being held at the residence of Mr. Alexander Gordon. The children looked remarkably happy, and were examined by their estimable pastor, the Rev. John Anderson They then took tea, and dispersed to play whilst the public tea meeting took place. Taking this place as a specimen, the country beats the town for a good ‘tea fuddle’. About 70 persons were present; and being in the bush, as soon as tea was over they departed for their distant homes.”*

Schooling: *“It appears from records that the children attended both Belvidere and Angus Plains schools. An examination register (SA state archives) and newspaper article dated 23 Nov.1867 lists John and Alexander Gordon as receiving prizes for excellence in 1st class, and Hugh Gordon for excellence in 3rd class. These class names are not as we would understand them now, as John would have been 16 years old, Alexander 15 and Hugh 10. A newspaper article from 28 Oct. 1871 states that Donald Gordon of Mr BW Webb’s school at Belvidere was awarded two prizes.”* (Colin Semmler’s notes p2)

Jessie died in 1866 at the age of 42 years. The cause of death was cancer (Semmler, Brief). She was buried at the Strathalbyn cemetery *“The funeral of Mrs. Alexander Gordon, of Beaufort Estate, Angas Plains, took place at the Strathalbyn Cemetery on Thursday last, when a large number of relatives and friends of the deceased lady (who was highly esteemed by all who knew her) were in attendance. The service was conducted by the Kev. James Anderson, Presbyterian.”* (Adelaide Observer, 23rd June 1866, p4)

In 1867, Donald Gollan’s hotel was burnt down.

In 1868, Alexander changed from Presbyterian to Church of Christ (see below).

Two years after Jessie’s death, Alexander married Ann Campbell who was his housekeeper. The wedding was at Beaufort (Semmler, Brief). After four years of their marriage, Alexander and Ann had a son, James Munro Gordon. At that time, in 1872, there were six children – John was 21 years old, Alexander jnr was 20 years, Donald was 16, Hugh was 15, Maggie was 12 years old, and baby James. Kitty would have been 18 years old and had left the household many years previously – she went to live with Jessie’s sister Catherine and Donald Gollan in Strathalbyn. Kitty was married to Billy Blue a few months after James was born – see her own biography.

In xxxyearxxxx the family moved from Beaufort in Belvidere to Strathalbyn on the northern end of High Street. The house was still standing in 1997. (Semmler p 3) [research: Get a photo, if it still standing.] But after a short time, they returned to Beaufort.

Beginnings of the Church of Christ

Alexander’s father, John, was an elder in the Presbyterian Church in Scotland and in the early years in Belvidere Alexander attended the Presbyterian Church and was ordained as an elder in 1861.

Around the time he married Ann, he joined a new Christian movement. *“About the year 1868 his mind became troubled about the design of baptism. While in this state of mind the late A Kemp loaned him A Campbell’s book ‘Christian Baptism’. When he read this book, he saw at once where he stood. He lost no time in complying with the requirements of his Lord, and was immersed by Wm Judd. His wife [this would have been Ann] was immersed at the same time”* (Jubilee p58 & 59 and/or 38 & 39).

In 1869 an evangelist and gifted preacher, Henry S Earl visited Strathalbyn. The church’s centenary history describes the remarkable events over a few action packed weeks with, no doubt, Alexander and his family taking an important part. *“Earl preached his first sermon in Strathalbyn on 3rd October 1869, in Colman’s grain store on Commercial Road. This led to an open-air service on the banks of the River Angas, during which four persons were immersed in the presence of 600 people, about half the residents of the town and nearby country. On Monday 1st November, he constituted a church with 23 members, several of whom were the result of the labours of George Goudie and Samuel Judd at Milang and Belvidere. Increased interest of the local people was evident at another baptismal service, as Earl reported: In the afternoon of 5th December, Earl baptised in the river in the presence of upwards 700 witnesses. The most profound attention was given to the address at the waterside, and the most solemn order prevailed during the*

whole service. In the evening our large place of meeting was crowded and some decided for Christ. On Tuesday night I preached my farewell discourse to a large attentive audience and the following day 'buried in Christ in baptism' five persons." (D, 2 4-17)

After the initial excitement following Earl's meetings, and the founding of the church, and so many new members, a minister was engaged.

Alexander was one of the founding members of this church and he soon became an elder. *"He laboured for the church which he much loved."*

"At first the Church of Christ, known in 1869 as the Christian Chapel, held services in secular buildings or in the open air. An evangelist baptised some candidates in the River Angas. Some early services were held in Colman's store" (McDougall & Vine p13, referencing Gemmell p61 & Stowe p93). At that stage, they did not have their own church building but "as there were good prospects that a prosperous time was in store, the little band decided to build a chapel for their meetings". In 1872 the congregation bought land in Dawson Street for 20 pounds and the church was erected in 1873. "All the brethren - and some friends - gave their time and money for this object. Some carted stone, some worked at the building, others not able to give their time during the day, assisted in the moonlight, and at last, thanks to the great self-denial of these noble men, the building was erected. We had now a place of our own" (Jubilee p xxx). It opened without a floor or internal plastering. Certainly, Alexander and his sons would have been central to this project.

5 Dawson St, Strathalbyn SA 5255.



However, this momentum lasted only about a decade before the church began to face difficult times. Church historians describe how the Strathalbyn church was greatly affected when *".... several prominent [church] workers sold their properties and went north to secure land which was being sold. Others soon followed. People were bent on trying their fortune in these new fields and so the numbers [of the church members] dwindled away, until at last, no one being able to carry on the work, this fine chapel was closed. It seemed such a pity, after the hardest difficulties had been surmounted, that this building, capable of seating 250 people, should remain for a considerable period with closed doors"* (C59, 8-21).

Over this time, the church had virtually no members and the state Evangelist Committee (later called Home Missions) could no longer provide funds for a minister (D3, 1).

Trying out the north and south

Farmland around Strathalbyn was becoming less productive and there were stories about new land being opened up. In the mid 1870's, Alexander, along with quite a number of district pioneers, went to look at new land in the north. This was the same time that Allan McLean was moving north to Collinsfield. Alexander was probably hoping that his sons would be able to obtain some good farming land.

Alexander snr & Alexander jnr and Donald (we don't know about John Forbes) looked around Alma which is about 130 kms north of Strathalbyn. At that time, about 1873, Alexander snr was 51 years old, John Forbes was 22 yrs, Alex jnr was 21 yrs and Donald was 17 years old. In that year, there was heart ache when, David, who was Alexander's and Ann's last child, died soon after birth. And then joy with their first grandchild, Sinclair, to Kitty and Billy Blue.

After having a look at farming prospects around Alma, Alexander snr, might have returned to Strathalbyn quite soon. But Alex jnr had met Annie Saltmarsh, whose sister was at Alma, and Alex jnr and Annie married in



Adelaide in 1875 and had their first child, Coningsby, in 1876 in Alma before they went back in Strathalbyn. Donald remained in the Alma/Owen area for the rest of his life but never purchased any farm land (just a residence in Jameson late in life).

In 1876, Alexander was one of the executors of the estate of Donald McBain who was a Bremer farmer (Southern Argus, 6th July 1876, p2) .

Kitty had had two more children in Strathalbyn – in 1877 and 1879.

In 1878, Alexander is listed in the South Australian Directory as being in Burnt Gully.

Alexander snr soon turned his interest to the south. In the early 1880's, he went with his brother-in-law, Donald Gollan, to join a general exodus to the Bordertown area. Alexander leased out Beaufort to Mathew Rankine [research: Check if this part of the lease included the farm-house.] Land conveyancing documents note his address as Tatiara near Bordertown in 1880 and 1881 and Huntley Park [research: Is this the same as Athol's Huntley Brae?] near Bordertown in 1884. [research: How long was he on these properties? Did he own them. Did he work them?] At least part of Beaufort (section 2774) was sold in this time, but Alexander retained a connection with this property. Alexander later returned to live in Strathalbyn and then Beaufort after an absence of a few years.

In 1882, Kitty had her fourth child, Shylie.

Over the years, Alexander owned various properties, some of which were in conjunction with Donald Gollan. We have no details of his land dealings for his first 18 years in the colony - between 1854 to 1872. The following details are mostly from Nancy Semmler (Brief) [research: Copies of the title deeds are needed]

- Lot 2800:
 - ☐ Where was this?
 - ☐ How many acres, what sort of land quality
 - ☐ 19th Nov 1873 - purchased from E Hector
 - ☐ Alexander co-purchased this with Donald Gollan
 - ☐ On 16th May 1881 – leased to William Charles Bonney for 5 years - at the time Alexander and Donald gave their address as Tatiara.
- Lot 2772
 - ☐ Was this Beaufort or part of it (what about lot 2774?)
 - ☐ An area of 228 acres
 - ☐ 18th June 1878 - purchased from South Australian Co on for 678 pounds.
 - ☐ 13th Dec 1880 - Alexander leased it out to Mathew Rankine for 5 years – at the time he gave his address as Tatiara in Bordertown.
 - ☐ 2nd March 1884 – Mortgaged for Alexander jnr – at the time Alexander snr gave his address as Huntley Park Bordertown
- Lot 2774
 - ☐ Section of Bremer – was this part of Beaufort?
 - ☐ Sold in 1880 but Alexander must have had continuing connections with 'Beaufort' because he died there 15 years later.
- Lot 2819
 - ☐ Where was this?
 - ☐ Re-conveyed to 1884 Arthur Tucker, Hemp, McBain, Perry & St Clair

Alexander was away from Strathalbyn and Belvidere, on and off, for about a decade from the late 1870s to late 1880s. But he seemed to have settled back there from the early 1890s until his death in 1895.

In 1886, Robert Gordon and Nathalie Semmler visited the ruins of an old home near Alma which is possibly that of the Gordons, on the property Glen Roy (Semmler, Brief). [research: Did Robert & Nathalie take a photo of Glen Roy?] Maybe there is confusion in this. There is a Glen Roy Station near Naracoorte rather than Alma – and maybe it was not Alexander who was there, but rather it might have been his brother, John Forbes Gordon, who was the manager of Glen Roy in the late 1880s to early 1900s. [research: Check in the Lands Titles Office.]

Valiant church work

Even though Alexander was coming and going as he tried out farming possibilities in other areas, he single-handedly carried on with the church work at Strathalbyn. He re-opened the chapel, and for a long time his family assembled by themselves. He kept things going by conducting the services himself for many years. *"During very difficult times in the [late] 1870s when finances could not support a resident preacher, Alexander conducted the services.* (Belvidere p104).



"Gradually others came along and joined the church. Sometimes we gained strength and soon again became weak. A Gordon, senr, to his credit, stuck to the place through it all, and though surrounded with difficulties which many would never have faced, never yielded an inch, and so remained faithful till God called him to his reward. Too much praise cannot be bestowed on our departed brother and his family for their herculean efforts for primitive Christianity. Had they not remained true to their post, it is quite probable we should not have a Church of Christ here today" (C59, 28-45).

Members of his family still living at home would have been his wife, Ann, and children, Hugh, Margaret & James. The four eldest had left home. [research: Where were the family living at this time? At Beaufort, Burnt Gully or High Street? – or Tatiara or Huntley Park?].

"He [Alexander snr] and his sons were great workers for the Church of Christ with three sons training for the ministry" (Belvidere p104) Who were these three? Maybe his sons Donald, Alexander, Hugh and James – or more likely his grandsons who became noted preachers Coningsby, Gifford and Linley (sons of Alexander jnr) or James (son of Donald).

It is difficult to reconcile his extensive involvement with the Strathalbyn church around the same time as his ventures into Alma-Owen and Bordertown. Alma-Owen was a 130 kms (a few days ride) to the north and Bordertown was 240 (maybe 4 days ride) to the south. But there is considerable evidence of his time in Bordertown (conveyancing records) as well as evidence of his activity in the church at home (CofC records). Maybe he travelled between the areas in order to maintain his farming interests as well as his church activities. Maybe his time away was not as extensive as it appears, or maybe his church activity was overstated. Or maybe it was referring to the late 1880s.

Death of Alexander

In 1895, Alexander died at Beaufort at the age of 73 years. The cause of death was renal disease and pleurisy. He was buried in lot 222, division 1 of the Strathalbyn cemetery, along with Jessie. This grave was unmarked for many years until 1986 when a few descendants laid a simple stone and plaque to their memory.

Although Alexander had various farming interests over the years, he was not a rich man when he died as his estate did not exceed 300 pounds. His Will directed everything to Ann and James (who was 23 years old).

We are left wondering why he didn't leave anything to the children of his first wife? They were living independently of course. Was there a breakdown in the family? Why did he sell Beaufort when he was 66 instead of passing it on to one of his eldest sons? Or did he sell only part of the property which did not have the farm-house? We need to check this as Natalie Semmler indicated that Alexander had not sold Beaufort - but James had inherited it and James then sold it. If Alexander had sold it, was this decision prompted by finances, or by the family drifting apart? There are no records of contact with Donald after Alexander helped him settle in Alma-Owen when Donald was in his 20s and Alexander was in his 60s. But this silence may not indicate anything either way, other than the difficulty of finding old records. There are signs that there was a continuing relationship with Alexander jnr as he remained in the Strathalbyn area and apparently the father helped this son with a loan by mortgaging Beaufort in 1884. And what about contacts with John Forbes, Margaret and with Kitty?

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References

- 'Belvidere' by Lance C Wakefield, 1992, ISBN 0 064 122 01 0
- 'Old Strathalbyn & Its People, 1839 to 1939' by Nancy Gemmell, ISBN 0 090378 35 5
- 'The Gordons – a book of the descendants of Alexander (jnr) & Anne Saltmarsh' by Nathalie & Colin Semmler, 1997 (See 'Stories' directory on the home page of www.alexanderandjessiegordon.net).
- 'Brief History of the Gordons', notes by Nathalie Semmler (see 'Documents' directory in home page of www.alexanderandjessiegordon.net).

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DRAFT

Official records

Birth: Alexander Gordon - baptism 19th Feb 1822 in Kiltearn, Ross

- Birth extract registration 003149, County of Ross Father - John Gordon, gardener at Kiltearn Mother - Lizy Gordon

Birth: Jess Matheson - birth 17th April 1823 in Inverness

- OPR births 098/0110 0096
- Father - Alex Matheson, Sergt 78 Regt Foot
- Mother - Margaret Fraser
- Officiator - Rev W Kennady of Red Castle (this is on the north shores of Loch Beaully - half km east of Killearnan Church)
- Witness - William & Don Monro

Marriage: Alexander Gordon & Jessie Matheson - marriage on 18th Feb 1850 in Kirkhill

- OPR marriages 103/0020 0133 - Kirkhill on 18th February 1850
- "Married of this date Alexander Gordon Brahan Parish of Urray to Jessie Matheson Inchberry Parish of Kirkhill witness Alex Fraser esq and Alex Douglas schoolmaster Taewilt??"

Census 1851 - Gordon household in Stonehaven - Alexander, Jessie & John

- Parish of Fetterston, town of Stonehaven - reference 258/1/53, page 53 number 287.
- Barclay Street
- Alexander Gordon, head, married, male, 29 years old [c1822], platelayer, born in Rosshire Kiltearn
- Jessie Gordon, wife, married, female, 25 years old [c1826], born in Inverness Kirkhill
- John Gordon, son, unmarried, male, 3 months old [c1851], born in Kincardine Stonehaven

Further research

- Marriage: Alexander Gordon & Ann Campbell at 'Beaufort' in 1868
- Death: Alexander Gordon on 5th Sept 1895 at 'Beaufort'
- Death: Jessie Gordon, nee Matheson on 12th June 1866 in Lake Plains
- Birth: John Forbes Gordon on 5th Jan 1851 in Stonehaven – parents Alexander Gordon & Jessie, nee Matheson
- Birth: Catherine Gillon Gordon on 8th April 1854 in Larbert - parents Alexander Gordon & Jessie, nee Matheson
- Birth: Donald Matheson Gordon on 4th May 1856 in Strathalbyn - parents Alexander Gordon & Jessie, nee Matheson
- Birth: Hugh Gordon on 27th Nov 1857 in Angus Plains - parents Alexander Gordon & Jessie, nee Matheson
- Margaret Ann Gordon on 27th April 1860 in Angus Plains - parents Alexander Gordon & Jessie, nee Matheson
- James Murray Gordon on 18th July 1872 in Angus Plains - parents Alexander Gordon & Ann, nee Campbell
- David Campbell Gordon on 4th Jan 1875 in Angus Plains - parents Alexander Gordon & Ann, nee Campbell
- Land titles: 'Beaufort' – maybe Bremer section 2770 and/or section 2774
- Passenger list: On the 'Eldorado' in 1855.

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Places

General: Use Google Maps and Google for general information about locations.

Specific: Information explicitly relevant to our family history can be accessed through the search boxes for names on the top left of the home page of www.alexanderandjessiegordon.net.

- ☐ Type the word 'Places' in the box for first names, to see all the places we have described.
- ☐ Or, for a particular place, type that place in the box for surnames. This includes the following:-

Scotland

- Contin: Not yet completed
- Inchberry: Not yet completed
- Inverness in Inverness Shire: Not yet completed
- Kiltarn parish: Not yet completed
- Kirkhill: Not yet completed
- Larbert in Stirling: Not yet completed
- Loch Alsh or Lochaelsh & Loch Ailsh: Not yet completed
- Moray: Not yet completed
- Ross & Comarty: Not yet completed
- Stonehaven: Not yet completed
- Sutherland: Not yet completed
- Urray: Not yet completed

Australia

- Alma: Not yet completed
- 'Avadale' station: Not yet completed
- 'Beaufort' in Belvidere: Not yet completed
- Bordertown: Not yet completed
- Dunnottar Castle: Not yet completed
- 'Glenngarie': Not yet completed
- 'Huntley Park' near Bordertown
- Kincardine: Not yet completed
- Owen: Not yet completed
- Penola: Not yet completed
- 'Point Sturt' Station: Not yet completed
- 'Tatiara'
- Strathalbyn: Not yet completed
- 'Watulunga': Not yet completed
- 'Wolgan' station: Not yet completed

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