

Rootsweb Message Board -- Marsha Caldwell wrote:

Hello,

I am looking for any information on Margaret Blackwood who was born approx. 1765 in Ireland and died approx. 1842 in Mercer Co., PA. I've read that her relatives might have been "titled" persons in Ireland, but I'm not at all sure about that. Maybe someone could direct me to where I might find birth information or christening information for her.

Thank you very much!!!!  
Marsha Caldwell  
[mcaldwell@oeapbt.com](mailto:mcaldwell@oeapbt.com)

Answer from Dennis Bell:

This Blackwood is a bit of a mystery, but I think I've worked it out:

Thomas Blackwood (born ca. 1727 died February, 1793)

His Wife: Sarah Shaw (born ? Drumaroad, County Down, Ireland died ?).

Their Five Children:

1. Son - John Blackwood (born ca. 1761 died March 17, 1855 Castlenavin) at age 94. He was High Constable of Kinclay in 1798 and a lieutenant in the Seaford Infantry. He was also probably an ordained minister, described as Rev. John Blackwood of the Rocky Quarter, Seaforde, County Down. Buried at Seaforde. Married Mary McCoubrey or Mary Macoubrey in 1793, children unknown. Mary died in 1833.

2. Daughter- Mary Blackwood (born ca. 1763 died 1820).

3. <sup>1774</sup> Daughter - Margaret Blackwood (born ca. 1764 died July 3, 1842 Mercer County, Pennsylvania). Buried with her husband in Rocky Springs Cemetery, Sandy Lake, Mercer County, Pennsylvania. Known as Lady Margaret, she married that wild red-headed Scotsman named John McClelland, and nicknamed Woodpecker, in 1792 against the family's wishes. When she defied the family and they were wed, her portrait is said to have been turned to the wall at the family home, presumably Ballyleidy in County Down, and she was disowned. McClelland (born ca. 1760 or 1761 in Scotland or Colrairie, Ireland, died Dec. 31, 1839 Mercer County, Pennsylvania) was the son of John McClelland. John the younger decided to take Lady Margaret to the New World. They emigrated first to Maryland in 1795, and then to western Pennsylvania, settling in Mercer County. Several other McClelland brothers accompanied them to the United States, including George McClelland, who ended up in Venango County, Pennsylvania. John and Margaret raised 10 children, some of them born in Ireland. The children included Sarah Jane McClelland (born April 23, 1793 in Corrmagh, Ireland died Aug. 13, 1845 Mercer County, Pennsylvania) and another daughter named Dorcas Tabitha McClelland (born Dec. 5, 1795 Cecil County, Maryland died between 1871 and 1878 in Irwin Township, Venango County, Pennsylvania). Both sisters married brothers named Killgore, William and John J. respectively. There is possibly an earlier marriage to a man named David Boyd for Margaret Blackwood.

4. Daughter - Nancy Blackwood (born ca. 1765 died ?). Married John Walmsley.

5. Daughter - Sarah Blackwood or Eliza Sarah Blackwood (born 1766 died ?). Married Joseph Nicholson, of Derryogue, County Down, the grandson of Donald McNicol, chief of the clan in Skye, through Rev. Alexander Nicholson, according to Irish Pedigrees Vol. 1, published in 1892, and written by O'Hart. They had children and a grandson named Joseph Nicholson, born in County Down Sept. 25, 1826, became superintendent of the House of Correction in Detroit, Michigan. Family historian Reginald Blackwood describes her as the eldest daughter of Thomas Blackwood (the Younger) of Castlenavin, near Seaforde. Castlenavin is probably the name of a family estate, as it is not in the Townland index. She is described in another contemporary account as sister of the Rev. Joseph Blackwood of the Rocky Quarter, Seaforde, County Down and cousin to Sir John Blackwood, whose widow became Lady Dufferin.

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That's her immediate family -- I think. There was a great thundering herd of Margaret Blackwoods around that time in Ireland, and I haven't yet proved her out completely as the one who went to Pennsylvania. I'd be interested in hearing from you and others on the topic.

This one was distantly connected with the blueblood Blackwoods and traces directly back to the founder of the Irish Blackwoods, who went over to County Down from Dunfermline, Scotland in the early 1600 for the Ulster Plantation:

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John Blackwood - (born 1591 Dunfermline, Fife, Scotland or Pitcruvie, Largo parish. John died May 22, 1633 Bangor, County Down, Ireland?) Buried in Bangor, he was the first Blackwood in Ireland, described as John Blackwood of Bangor, County Down. Records of him are on file at the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) in Belfast, contents unknown. However, it is known that he took possession of substantial lands in County Down, which he passed down to his eldest son. No titles are attributed to him, and his son and grandson were both attainted by James II, apparently for their adherence to the Protestant rather than the Catholic faith. Nothing came of it. There are indications in Burke's Peerage and Baronetage that John originated with a younger branch of this family, as opposed to the Blackwoods in Ayr and Lanark. John was possibly the son of John Blackwood, born Oct. 31, 1574 (LDS Film #178022), who in turn was the son of Archibald Blackwood and Besse Stalker. There are also unconfirmed reports that the first Irish Blackwood was in fact born in Pitcruvie Castle, Largo parish, Fife rather than in Dunfermline, where the Blackwoods first came to prominence. Pitcruvie, which derives from the Celtic baile-craobh, or town of the trees, is a fortified tower house, the ruins of which still stand above Keils Den in Lower Largo, near the Lundin Links golf course.

Pitcruvie Castle was built by the Lindsays around 1500, but the family eventually sold it to James Watson, Provost of St. Andrews, around 1664. There are no known records of Blackwoods inhabiting the castle, but they may have been guests. Wherever he was born, John Blackwood is known to have married Janet Clerke. The most reliable information on the Blackwoods in Ireland comes from Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry of Ireland, by

Sir Bernard Burke, Burke's Peerage Ltd., 4th edition, 1958.  
His Wife: Janet Clerke or Janet Clarke (born 1603 Dunfermline parish,  
Fife, died ?)

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John is also related to all the other famous Blackwoods: Adam Blackwood, privy counsellor to Mary Queen of Scots; the Marquis of Dufferin, British diplomat during the Victorian era; Sir Henry Blackwood, Lord Nelson's frigate squadron commander at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805; Algernon Blackwood, classic horror story writer and early British TV star; Caroline Blackwood, contemporary fiction writer; William Blackwood, founder of Blackwood's Magazine -- the British Time -- and the book-publishing House of Blackwood; Sir Robert Blackwood, an Edinburgh silk merchant who became one of the main promoters of the ill-fated Darien scheme to settle Panama with Scots. (Sir Robert was also Lord Provost, or mayor, of Edinburgh in the early 1700s).

Hope this helps,

Dennis Bell in British Columbia