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The Annals of Lesmahagow (written prior to 1864)

Chapter 5 - LANDED ESTATES, FAMILIES, AND HISTORY CONNECTED WITH THEM

GLENANE, NOW KERSE



KERSE - The residence of John Greenshields Esq

Kerse is the same word as Carse, and signifies rich haugh land. The original name, however, was Glenane

Osbert, who was Abbot of Kelso from 1180 until 1203, granted, in common council, and with consent of the chapter, to Radulphus, a servant of the Abbey of Lesmahagow, and his heirs, a certain part of land in Glenan, infeud and heritage, bounded as follows, viz.; - As a burn runs between the croft of Frethetan and the croft of Gilmagu Macaldic, and falls into Halliwell burn; and as a certain other burn runs between the said Radulphus and the land which belonged to Gilchrist Kidd, as far as Naythan; also, the two holms upon Naithan, viz, Daldroc and Dalsagad, with all the easements of the said town of Glenane; to be held by him and his heirs from Kelso, in fue and heritage, paying annually to the

Priory of Lesmahagu half a merk of silver, one half at the feast of St. Martin, the other at Midsummer. And the said Radulph and his heirs might use the land within these bounds everywhere, for ploughing and cultivation, without being disturbed; being thirled to the mill at Lesmahagu, paying multures, and performing all the work of the mill, like other abbey men, and performing other services used and wont, both in ploughing and other works, as their neighbours of Glenan did. (L. de Cal., 81, 110.) These boundaries can easily be distinguished. The burn falling into Wellburn or Halliwell burn still forms, with that rivulet, the western boundary of Kerse. The other rises near Clandyke, and discharges itself into Nethan at the Auchtyfardle garden. It is sometimes called the Clannoch burn. The Daldroc holm carries us river's side, rendered also, dale of the small stream; and Dalsagad, dale of the mountain vale. The grantee, Radulph or Rodolph, is old German for Rolf or Ralph, and his neighbour, Frethetan or Fridestan's name, is compounded of Anglo-Saxon frid, signifying peace.

Nothing further is known regarding Kerse until the beginning of the seventeenth century, when we find Weirs of Stonebyres in possession of the property. George Weir of Stonebyres was, in 1607, served heir to his father, William, in the lands of Kerse. (Inquis. Spec., 75.) In 1612, there is a disposition by Thomas Thompson, indweller in Lanark, in favour of James Weir, son of Ralph Weir, designed "portioner of Auchtygemmell," of a merk land in them ains of Lesmahagow, called the Letham, and charter in favour of James Weir, by Robert, Earl of Roxburgh. ("Auchlochan Charter Chest.") About this period the Weirs of Kerse and Auchtygemmell became cadets of Stonebyres. Before 1668 John Weir of Kerse was proprietor of the five-merk land of Nether Poneill, called Saddlerhead. He married the sister of Gawin Hamilton of Rahlocl. ("Auchlochan Charter Chest.") In 1652, James Weir, senior, was laird of Kerse; and in 1691 John Weir possessed these lands. (Par. Sess. Records.) In 1695, John Weir is styled "elder" of Kerss, and John Weir "of Kersse." (Lesmahagow Poll Tax Record) James Weir was Baron Bailie of Lesmahagow for Anne, Duchess of Hamilton; but on the 18th December 1700, at a meeting of heritors and kirk-session, which was numerously attended, the said James Weir being present, the meeting "did chuse and elect the Laird of Craignethan to be Magistrate in the paroch, for putting the laws into execution against profanity, and ordained application to be made to her Grace, the Duchess of Hamilton, for obtaining a commission to the Laird of Craignethan, for the effect foresaid. (Sess. Records.) It is probable that this was a special office, which did not conflict with the jurisdiction of the baron bailie.

James Weir appears to have been actively associated with the heritors and kirk-session in the management of the poor. (Ibid.) In 1709 he sold Kerse to John Weir, a burghess of Edinburgh, who was probably a relative to his own. A portion of Auchtygemmell, which appears from the Poll Tax Records to have formed part of Kerse in 1695, was about that period conveyed to Anne Duchess of Hamilton. The disposition to John Weir comprehended the twenty shilling land of Daldaholm, ten shilling land of Clannochyett, and the one merk land of Priestholm, ("Kerse Progress of Writs.") In 1764, Thomas Weir of Kerse as superior, granted a precept of Clare Constat, in favour of James Weir of Hawksland, of all and hail the two pleughs of the five merk land of Nether Poneill, called Saddlerhead. Daldaholm, Clannochyett, and Priestholm, were sold about the year

1780. The author has been informed that the first private carriage in the parish of Lesmahagow was kept by Weir of Kerse. The last of the family was Miss Weir, married to Charles Cunningham, Esq. of Newholm, Town Clerk of Edinburgh. How rare is it to behold an ancient family which, to use the language of Lord Becon, "hath stood against the waves and the weather of time."

In 1793, the remainder of the property was brought to sale by Messrs. Edie and Laird, merchants in London, and purchased by James Ferrier, Esq., designed "late of Jamaica." He resold it in 1797 to John Jamieson, Esq., of Leith, wine merchant, who sold it in 1801 to William Clerk, Esq., of the Custom House, Glasgow. In 1821, Kerse again changed hands, having been purchased by the present proprietor, J Greenshields, Esq. It then included a portion of the common muir, called Dunside. This latter portion was subsequently acquired by J. G. McKirdy, Esq. of Birkwood, and consolidated with other portions of the same common.

Kerse is noticed by Hamilton of Wishaw, in this description of the Sheriffdom of Lanark, as "a convenient dwelling." The house to which he alludes, and which had stood for about two centuries, was taken down in 1857, and a new one erected in the modern Elizabethan style, from designs by William Spence, architect, Glasgow.