

‘Lesmahagow Inhabitants of Fifty Years Ago’ (ie.1864)

Including all the worthies and many of the Place Names of the Parish.

Put into Rhyme by Mr Thomas Thomson, of Ohio, USA (late of Craighead Mill, Lesmahagow) and published in 1914 by James Young, Lesmahagow.

Thomas Thomson was born in Craighead, Lesmahagow on 26th January 1842 and emigrated to the USA in 1864. At the time of the 1910 US Census, he was a widower and was living in Cleveland, Ohio with three brothers and a niece.

Thomas’s poem is important to this gazetteer as it epitomises the concepts of a close-knit community and the ‘living history’ of the old parish of Lesmahagow. He takes us on a tour of the parish, using expressive and descriptive Old Lowland Scots together with an interwoven (sometimes irreverent!) tale of people, occupations and place names. All of the many place names mentioned are contained in the database and ancestors of some families living in the area today (2016) are mentioned in the poem.

It is a collection of Thomas’s memories of Old Lesmahagow as it was in 1864, when he left his homeland to make a new life in America. Apparently written later in life, it’s as if the distance of space and time has magnified his need to paint a picture in words of the world and people he left behind a life-time earlier. When the poem was published in 1914, the whole world was about to change.

Or was it? One hundred years after publication, the layout of the Lesmahagow landscape has changed little. Almost all of the farms still exist and most of the old roads are still here, albeit under tarmac. The layout of the main streets of the villages would still be recognisable to Thomas if he were to return today.

If he were to walk south from the Lairs, via Kirkmuirhill Cross, to Muirsland (on the Kerss Muir) he certainly would remember the horse-drawn coaches labouring up that two mile climb before continuing to Lesmahagow, Carlisle and London. This is why he may have known that the name Kirkmuirhill probably derived from the coachmen driving up the ‘Kerss Moor hill’.

He would also have known the 5th or 6th great grand-parents of many of today’s residents. If he were to walk over the landscape today he would still be able to name the farms, as well as the people who lived there in his day. Most of all, he would enjoy hearing much of the same rich dialect that he was born into.

So, you are invited to enter the world of the parish of Lesmahagow as Thomas knew it in the middle of the 19th century, starting at Lesmahagow village then branching out to the outlying farms.

(The place names are underscored and the Nos. in brackets refer to notes at the end of the poem)

1. There leaved langsyne, in <u>Lesmahagow</u> toon, Some gie droll worthies, an’ the country roon; In hamely verse, their names I’ll try to tell, So I’ll begin at the fit wi’ Guy Dalzell.	2. He was the inventor o’ the Wooden Horse, (1) An’ on its back he carried claith and tea; While o’er the road leaved Andrew Wilson, If onybody owed him, he cried pay, pay.
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3. But I manna forget the Weavers' hooses, Where the Auld Baillie wove the waft to tartan; Dan Haddow, his twa dochters, an Guy Cooper, Auld King Carwell an' Bauldy Martin.	4. There was Tam McCartney an' Leezie Steele, Tailor Brown an' Sanny McKie; Morris Harrison an' Geordie Scott, Doctor Slimon an' Jock o' the eye.
5. Dougall, Keugh, an' Willie Weir, Auld Chalmers that kept the beggarie; Geordie Tudhop an' Cobbler Muir, An' Clerk Brown's wife, Jean Brownlie.	6. Wee Beagle Miller an' Beagle Steele, Auld Thooms I mind as weel's yestreen; Dean Allan an' Auld Will Watson, John Bertram an' Peter McQueen.
7. Ratson Joseph an' Guy Barr, Jimmie Hendry an' his Brother Harry; Ben Redfern an' Tam Limerick, Sally Kane an' Brush Mary.	8. John Donaldson an' Baker Kean, Robbie Carmichael an' Dannie Keever; Jennie Meikle an' Jennie Weir, Mary Scott an' the auld Scriever.
9. Paterson that kept the Mason's Lodge, Saddler Brown an' Tory Pelling; Samual Forrest an' Sandy Scott, John Walkinshaw an' Peter Allan.	10. Sandy Walker, Wee Smith Dodds, Andrew Reid an' Auld James Cowie; Alex. Brown an' Deacon Young, Highland Sandy an' Jimmie Powie.
11. Doctor Lindsay an' Doctor Frame, Allie Simpson an' Auld Jean Bow; Willie Burley an' Tailor Gibb, Killie Shorely an' John Rowe.	12. Flesher Capie an' Carrier Tamson, Daft Andrew Meikle an' Ross Lamb; Bryson the Cracksman an' Auld Feeley, John Barr the grocer an' Tartan Tam.
13. Patie Brown an' his wife, As queer a couple as e'er was yoket; Laird Muir an' Tim Burnside, Boss Jock, an' Rob, an' Auld man Brocket.	14. Buggif o' hen an' Navvy Nannie, Sandy Wyper's wife, Leezie Findlay; Geordie Carruthers an' Charlie Miller, Jimmie Hamilton an' John McKinlay.
15. Jimmie Mayes an' Tammy Curr, That went on mony a drucken Tare; Robison Darling an' McLatchie, That girmed mony a guid fat hare.	16. Jamie Miller an' Stewarty Millar, An' wee, wee Miller the Nailer; Baker Gibb an' Banker Gibb, Auld Gravy an' Lewis the Tailor.
17. Auld Deacon Brown an' Yamie Brown, An' Alexander Brown the Preacher; Gavin Brown an' Francie Brown, An' John Brown the Pupil teacher.	18. <u>Auchrobert</u> Browns an' <u>Kilnhill</u> Browns, Deaf Willie Brown an' Girsy Brown; An' Tam Brown that ran the post an' kept A shop next Scott, up the Newtown.
19. Auld Jamie Clelland an' wee Cripple Colthart, Heilan Duncan Campbell that kept the parish schule; Auld Mr Duncan that lived wi' McCartney, Rob Duncan the Weaver an' Duncan o' <u>Auchtool</u> .	20. When in the Kirk we got on Sundays, If 'twas oor ain preachers that were speaking; Cordiner, Laing, or Tammy Burns, Doctor McNaughton, or McMeekin.
21. Tattie Donald an' Jean McDonald, An' the Donalds o' <u>Waterside</u> ; <u>Blackwoodyett</u> Donalds an' Geordie Donald, An' Robbie Waddle that lived at <u>Gateside</u> .	22. Tam McGhie an' David McGhie, Will McGhie that was keen o' a drappie; McGhie o' <u>Moatyett</u> an' McGhie o' the <u>Trows</u> , An' Kate McGhie that married John Capie.
23. There was Shoemaker Scotts an' Killie Scott, That sawed big trees into lang brods;	24. Danny Meikle an' Jamie Meikle, An' Jock Meikle's dochter Kate;

Johnnie Young an' Geordie Young, An Auld Youngie that worked on the roads.	Jamie Tudhope an' Andrew Tudhope, An' Tudhope that married May Pate.
25. Tamson in <u>Craighead</u> , Tamson in <u>Folkerton</u> , (2) An' wee Willie Tamson the flesher; Daniel Tamson an' <u>Birkenhead</u> Tamson, An' James Long that was a good thresher.	26. Andrew Frater was smith at the <u>Hawksland</u> , (3) An' at <u>Kirkmuirhill</u> Johnnie McCrow; William Muir was smith at the <u>Beatons</u> , An' Dan Tudhope at Auld <u>Rottenrrow</u> .
27. Brown in <u>Flochan</u> an' Porteous in <u>Milton</u> , An' Johnstone in <u>Milton Mill</u> ; Carrier Ray an' auld Andrew Rae, An' the Harrisons o' the <u>Hill</u> .	<u>28.</u> <u>Middleholm</u> Hamiltons an' <u>Aulton</u> Hamiltons, An' Auld <u>Knocken</u> was a Hamilton tae; In <u>Deadwater</u> Torrance an' <u>Burnbrae</u> Torrance, An' Mrs Mitchell o' <u>Brocketsbrae</u> .
29. Tam Steenson the wright an' Willie Shand, John Symington an' Ritchie Pelling; Clarkson the mason an' John Liddle, Roaring vesty an' Carrier Allan.	30. Stewarts in <u>Southfield</u> an' Browns o' <u>Bogside</u> , Mungo Sinclair an' Auld Johnnie Polk; Tods o' <u>Birkwood</u> , Houston an' Howie, Captain Mosman an' Auld Coffee Jock.
31. The Brothers McGowan in <u>Blackwoodyards</u> Farm, An' Brownie in <u>Lochanbank</u> Mill; At <u>Monkstable</u> for years lived Auld Rob Brownlie, Jimmie an' Alex Brownlie at <u>Hoodshill</u> .	<u>32.</u> <u>Waterhead</u> Steeles an' <u>Bankend</u> Steeles, An' the Steeles o' <u>Reddochbraes</u> ; <u>Sighthill</u> Steeles an' <u>Boreland</u> Steeles, An' John Steele o' the <u>Teaths</u> .
33. <u>Muirland</u> Weirs an' Auld Tam Muir, Will Porteous as blin' as a bat; <u>Clandyke</u> Lochart an' Samuel Lockhart, James Fairservice an' Auld Will Watt.	34. Nathan Dickson in <u>Teaths</u> , Johnnie Shaw o' <u>Woodyett</u> , (4) An' Greenshields in <u>Kerse</u> an' <u>Westown</u> ; <u>Kypeswaterhead</u> Meikle, Samuel Barr in the <u>Burn</u> , In <u>Birkwoodbrigg</u> Farm was a Brown.
35. Tam Stodart an' <u>Garlwood</u> Stodarts, An' the Stodarts o' <u>Kirkmuirhill</u> ; <u>Bellscraft</u> Semples an' <u>Greenrig</u> Semples, An' John Watson o' <u>Gill Mill</u> .	36. <u>Auchtygemel</u> Caruthers an' <u>Lesserlinn</u> Carruthers, Daft Jock McCartney that jumped like a cuddy; Archie Cunningham that drove the big bus, An' Miss Mary Fleck that dish oot the toddy.
37. In <u>Blackwood</u> Hope Vere, Monteith in <u>Stonebyres</u> , (5) An' in <u>Dillarburn</u> lived Auld James Barrie; In <u>Stockbriggs</u> was Alston, Jacob Frame in the <u>Holm</u> , And aboon <u>Muttonhole</u> lived James Wharrie.	38. Stoddart in <u>Blackhill</u> an' Miller in <u>Muirhouse</u> , Tennants in <u>Hillend</u> an' <u>Notroch</u> were the Scotts; Stein in the <u>Kirkfield</u> an' Neilson in the <u>Dillars</u> , Kirkland the butcher bocht a' Mr John's stots.
39. <u>Kerse</u> Sanny Taylor an' Auld Will Taylor, An' Irish Jamie the Nailer; Ault John Lowrie an' Bobby Robbs. An' Sandy McIntosh the tailor.	40. Blackwood in <u>Leelaw</u> , Blackwood in <u>Dinseed</u> , In <u>Ardoch</u> lived Auld Bauldy Weir; Burtons in <u>Hawksland</u> , Marchbank in <u>Devonburn</u> , An' Stewarts in the <u>Brokencrossmuir</u> .
41. Leans in the <u>Greystone</u> , Harvies in <u>Star Inn</u> , Dykes in the <u>Byretown</u> an' <u>Bent</u> ; Curley Wilson in <u>Woodhead</u> , Mackay in <u>Whiteside</u> , An' in <u>Brackenridge</u> Auld Irvin Dent.	42. In <u>Darnfillan</u> was Semple, John Barr in the <u>Moat</u> , An' Dan Finlay was in the <u>Hillend</u> ; Cook in <u>Blackreckning</u> , Prentice in <u>Clarkston</u> , An' Ritchie Meikle was Laird o' <u>Auchren</u> .
43. Young in <u>Cleughhead</u> , Hugh Gall in <u>Midtown</u> , An' John Murdoch o' <u>Whitesidehill</u> ; In <u>Brockley</u> was Forrest, Jamie Reid in <u>Coalburn</u> , An' Auld Pullam he had a Saw Mill.	44. Pettigrew at <u>Draffan</u> , Tudhope in <u>Lairs</u> , The Duke's gamekeeper's names was John Tait; McKirdy in <u>Birkwood</u> , Cooper in <u>Holmhead</u> , An' in <u>Dumbraxhill</u> Farm Andrew Pate.
45.	46.

Sandilands in Syde an' baith Cumberheads,
An' Mrs. Minto she lifted the toll;
In Eastwood was Allan, Michael Wilson in Bush,
An' Will Barr frae the Station drove coal.

Johnnie Frame was in the yae Hawhill,
An' in the ither Laird Cadzow;
An that's everybody I mind the noo,
About Auld Lesmahagow.

Note 1

Gavin (Guy) Dalzell, from Lesmahagow, is said to have copied Kirkpatrick McMillan's machine in 1846 and passed on the details to so many people that for more than 50 years he was generally regarded as the inventor of the rear-driven bicycle, or 'wooden horse', as shown below.



Note 2

Tamsons of Craighead referred to Thomas's own family. His father, Hugh, was a miller there.

Note 3

One of Johnnie McCraw's descendants was the late Colin McRae MBE, who once held the World Rally Championship title.

Note 4

John Blackwood Greenshields, author of the 'Annals of the Parish of Lesmahagow' (1864, the same year in which Thomas emigrated to the US) and listed as another 'Source' in the database.

Note 5

Richardus de Vere (also recorded as Richard WERE) was proprietor of the lands and the barony of Blackwood, circa 1296. Through marriage to the Hopes of Hopetoun, the Weirs also came into possession of Craigiehall. At the time of Thomas's poem, the estate of Blackwood was in the possession of the Hope Vere's of Blackwood and Craigiehall.