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RECENT LITERATURE ON THE DUNCANSON SISTERS OF NEW NETHERLAND

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In an article published sixteen years ago in this journal, Gordon L. Remington confirmed the longstanding hypothesis that the wives of the New Netherland settlers Pieter Loockermans, Thomas Powell, Willem Teller, and Sander Leendertsz. Glen were sisters. He identified the women respectively as Mary, Anne, Margaret, and Katherine Duncanson, daughters of the Reverend James Duncanson, minister of Alloa and Tullibody, Clackmannanshire, Scotland, by his wife Helen Livingston, and granddaughters of the Reverend John Duncanson, minister of Stirling and to the household of King James VI, probably (now known to be certainly) by John's first wife, Janet Watson. Further, Remington noted that Katherine Duncanson's baptismal sponsor was a "Mr. Hendrie Livingston," whom he identified as Henry Livingston, minister of St. Ninian's, Stirlingshire, a son of Henry Livingston of Falkirk and Margaret Forrester, the earliest proven ancestors of the Livingston Earls of Newburgh.¹

The first of the four sisters to arrive in the New World, in 1639, was Katherine, who would become a successful trader after the death of her husband. Dutch records refer to him as "Sander Leendertsz. Glen" and similar forms, and give his place of origin as "Duysert in Scotland," suggesting—as Remington noted—that his original name was Alexander Glen, his father's name Leonard, and his place of origin Dysart in Fifeshire. Unfortunately the prospect of identifying him further is frustrated by gaps in the Dysart Presbyterian church registers. Despite the rarity of the name Leonard in Scotland during this period, Remington was correct in his unwillingness to accept the capricious reading Lindsay for the middle component of the name of Alexander Glen,² a notion which had arisen by the 1890s and which was later to be embellished by the prolific but unreliable

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¹ Gordon L. Remington, "The Duncanson Wives of Four New Netherland Settlers: Glen, Teller, Powell, and Loockermans," RECORD 128 (1997): 1–10, 228. Thomas Powell was also married afterwards to a fifth sister, Janet Duncanson. Although Remington cautiously qualified Mary as a "possible" and Anne as a "probable" member of this family, the indirect evidence he presented that they were sisters of the others is compelling, particularly the fact that Anne's marriage intention describes her as from "Sterling," accompanied by a sister "Jannetic." Furthermore, Burke (note 8 below) shows that the Rev. James Duncanson and Helen Livingston were married many years earlier than the extant baptismal records at Alloa suggest, and that Helen had ten children alive in 1633.

² Remington, "Duncanson Wives of Four New Netherland Settlers" (note 1), 3n8.

Thomas Allen Glenn.³ Apart from the inherent implausibility of such a name as Alexander Lindsay Glen for a man born in the seventeenth century (when middle names were still extremely rare), the assumption that the name Lindsay would be so seriously mangled by Dutch clerks as to be represented as “Leendertsz.” does not accord with the fact that the spelling Lindsay is well attested in Dutch records of this period. Disregarding records obviously made by English-speaking writers, such as the registers of English and Scottish churches, examples include Jeems [James] Lindsay, who married in Delft in 1607,⁴ Bernardt Lindsay, who served as a baptismal sponsor in Bergen-op-Zoom in 1655,⁵ and Georgius Lindsay, who was matriculated at the University of Leiden in 1688.⁶

The vast progeny of Katherine and her sisters has made the elucidation of their ancestry a question of interest to many, and several years ago, the Duncanson/Livingston Project was founded by Adrian Benjamin Burke, John Howard Camp, Anthony Glenn Hoskins, and Joseph V. R. V. E. Laux, with the eminent genealogist Andrew B. W. MacEwen acting as consultant on the medieval portions of the research.⁷ The members of the project commissioned extensive research conducted by Diane Baptie in the National Archives of Scotland in Edinburgh. In Spring 2013 the project bore fruit in the form of the first installment of a three-part article by Burke, which spectacularly confirms and extends Remington’s work.⁸ In part one, Burke shows that Helen Livingston, born say 1585, was a daughter of the Reverend Henry Livingston, minister of St. Ninian’s, Stirlingshire, by his wife Agnes Gray, and a granddaughter of Henry Livingston of Falkirk and Margaret Forrester; and thoroughly documents the immediate descendants of this last couple. Part two rehabilitates an early-eighteenth-century identification of Margaret Forrester as the widow of Sir James Colville of East Wemyss,⁹ and as such the daughter of Sir James Forrester of Torwood and Garden by the latter’s first wife, Elizabeth Erskine, opening the door to a legitimate descent from Robert III, King of Scots, who died in 1406. The Duncanson sisters of New Netherland are in the ninth generation of descent from this king. The 1673 arrival of Robert Livingston the elder, first lord of Livingston Manor in New York, who was presumably related somehow to Helen Livingston in the

³ “J. S. Glen Edwards,” in Washington Frothingham, *History of Montgomery County* [New York] (Syracuse, N.Y.: D. Mason and Co., 1892), Part 2, p. 49. Thomas Allen Glenn, “Genealogical Notes Regarding the Family of Glen, or Glenn,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 36 (1912): 494.

⁴ Jeems Lindsay betrothal, 9 Dec. 1607, Delft, Doop-, trouw-, en begraafboeken [DTB] 4:72, “Zuid-Holland Province Church Records, 1367–1911,” digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2037907>), citing Family History Library microfilm 117,497.

⁵ Andries Swold baptism, 27 July 1655, Historisch Centrum Het Markiezenhof, Archiefnummer 31, DTB, Bergen-op-Zoom, 18:165, digital image, *Historisch Centrum Het Markiezenhof* (<http://www.markiezenhof.nl>).

⁶ *Album Studiosorum Academiae Lugduno Batavae 1575–1875* (s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), col. 699. The name is there printed Lindsaij, but in Dutch orthography this is equivalent to Lindsay.

⁷ Adrian Benjamin Burke, “The Duncanson/Livingston Project . . .,” *Foundations* 4 (2012): 44. For further details of the project see “The Duncanson Sisters of New Netherland,” *Facebook* (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Duncanson-Sisters-of-New-Netherland/160054204051567>).

⁸ Adrian Benjamin Burke, “The Livingston Ancestry of the Duncanson Sisters of New Netherland,” *The Genealogist* 27 (2013): 28–50, 163–81, 189 (correction), with part three scheduled to appear in Spring 2014.

⁹ Correcting “Lord Colville of Culross” in *The Scots Peerage*, ed. Sir James Balfour Paul, 9 vols. (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1904–1914), 2:547, where it is erroneously concluded that Margaret died before 16 May 1562.

paternal line,¹⁰ may have been tenth in descent from the same king, but in a completely different way.¹¹ While the descent from Robert III is shared by several other American immigrants of the colonial period,¹² these either arrived considerably later or had no apparent connection with the New Netherland region. And the only New York colonist with a known descent from a more recently deceased monarch is the 1679-arrival Robert Sinclair, descended (illegitimately) from James V, King of Scots.¹³

Beyond the royal descent, Burke's article reveals in the ancestry of the Duncansons a wide swath of medieval Scottish nobility.¹⁴ The sisters were sixth cousins of their contemporary, James VI, King of Scots (James I, King of England), through their shared descent from their early-fifteenth-century ancestors Sir William Douglas, 2nd Earl of Angus, and Margaret Hay,¹⁵ and they share with the present royal family of the United Kingdom the mid-fifteenth-century ancestors William 2nd Lord Graham and Helen Douglas.¹⁶

Burke has already announced that the as-yet unpublished part three of his article will focus on the evidence for the identification of Helen Livingston's mother, Agnes Gray, and maternal grandmother, Helen Little, identified in part one as the wet-nurse to King James VI.¹⁷ Burke writes: "I . . . uncovered an unusually close network of servants to Mary, Queen of Scots, and her son James VI (later King of England) which included Helen's mother, maternal grandmother, and several other Roberts close relatives. The unique relationship between Helen's mother and King James I of England is the likely reason why

¹⁰ Burke identifies Helen Livingston's paternal grandfather, Henry Livingston of Falkirk, as the probable eldest son of William Livingston, parish clerk of Falkirk, and notes that this line probably descended from an early cadet branch of the medieval Livingstons of that ilk—making them distant but unproven cousins of the Lords Livingston of Callendar, their feudal overlords in Stirlingshire.

¹¹ This line is shown in its entirety in John P. Ravilious, "Ancestry of Alexander Hamilton," *Gene-Medieval*, discussion list, Jan. 2004 (<http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/GEN-MEDIEVAL/2004-01/1073937974>), but Gary Boyd Roberts, *The Royal Descents of 600 Immigrants to the American Colonies or the United States . . .* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2008), 129, may have found it unsatisfactory as he bypasses part of this line and instead gives a descent from Robert II. Moreover, even in the portion given by Roberts, corresponding to generations six through eleven of the line shown by Ravilious, the connection between generations seven and eight—the parentage of Barbara Livingston, wife of the Rev. Alexander Livingston, rector of Moneybroch—is not really proven by the cited sources. Edwin Brockholst Livingston, *The Livingstons of Callendar, and their Principle Cadets: The History of an Old Stirlingshire Family*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: the author, 1920), 446–47, characterizes the identification only as "most probable," and Florence Van Rensselaer, *The Livingston Family in America and its Scottish Origins* (New York: n. pub., 1949), 45–46, does not address this point of doubt.

¹² See Roberts, *Royal Descents of 600 Immigrants* (note 11), 112–28, and, for another colonist with relatively recent shared ancestry with the Duncanson sisters, John L. Scherer, "Archibald Dunlop (1672–1713) of Stratford, Connecticut: His Descent from King Edward III of England and from King James II of Scotland," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 152 (1998): 191–92.

¹³ Roberts, *Royal Descents of 600 Immigrants* (note 11), 37–39.

¹⁴ The connection is through their great-grandmother Margaret Forrester. For a convenient summary of her ancestry see her entry in the *Genealogics* database compiled by Leo van de Pas (<http://genealogics.org/pedigree.php?personID=I00269386&tree=LEO>).

¹⁵ Nos. 544 and 545 in Neil D. Thompson and Charles M. Hansen, *The Ancestry of Charles II King of England: A Medieval Heritage* (Saline, Mich.: The American Society of Genealogists, 2012), 114.

¹⁶ Nos. P49745 and P49746, repeated as nos. Q98345 and Q98346, in Gerald Paget, *The Lineage and Ancestry of H.R.H. Prince Charles, Prince of Wales*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh and London: Charles Skilton, 1977), 2:249, 396–97.

¹⁷ For the identification of Helen Little as the wife successively of Alexander Gray and Thomas Livingston, and mother of Agnes Gray, see Burke, "Livingston Ancestry of the Duncanson Sisters of New Netherland" (note 8), 40n79, 44n111.

Helen twice received royal favor from King James and his son Charles I.”¹⁸
The final installment of this monumental article promises to be of interest as much for social history as for genealogy.

¹⁸ Adrian Benjamin Burke, “Four New Colonial Gateway Immigrants with Medieval Ancestry,” *Gen-Medieval*, discussion list, 12 Jan. 2013 (<http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/GEN-MEDIEVAL/2013-01/1358026252>).