

The Murdoch Messenger



“Tell my son John I died with my face towards Zion”

Greetings To Members of the James and Mary Murray (Wee Granny) Murdoch Family

It is with great pleasure that we as officers of this great family organization present you with the first of what we hope will be many newsletters. These letters are intended to keep family members informed about upcoming events that are important to each of us who are descended from James and Mary Murray (Wee Granny) Murdoch. In addition, we hope through this newsletter we can do a better job in correlating family history, genealogical research, dates of family reunions, and news items of interest of family members.

We hope to create a greater bond between our ancestors, ourselves, and our children as we become better acquainted with each other. We need to do all we can to strengthen the bonds of our children to our ancestors as we approach a future filled with the ominous storm

clouds of approaching darkness.

On Nov. 11, 2003, a business meeting of family members was held at the home of William Murdoch in Holiday, Utah. The purpose of the meeting was to re-organize the family with a complete slate of officers who could carry on the business of the family. The meeting was presided over by Dallas E. Murdoch, a former president of the James and Mary Murdoch Family. During this meeting, new family officers were sustained (contact information is listed at the end of the newsletter).

In addition to the sustained officers, individuals representing each of the 3rd generation branches of the family have been asked to gather names and addresses of their respective family members and submit them to David Graehl who will enter them into a data base so that mailing labels can be printed out for each newsletter.

The recent organization of the Murdoch family represents the first time since the early 1980's that an

official organization of family members has been in place. It is anticipated this organization will function on a limited scale and will not interfere with, but provide support for branches of the family who have their own officers and who are actively planning family reunions and other family oriented activities.

In addition, there are important events happening and will continue to happen that will affect all members of this great family. This is one of the main reasons for these newsletters, to keep all members of this great family informed about these events so if possible, they can participate also.

Did You Know?

At 97 years old, Brigham Dallas Murdoch is the oldest living great-grandchild of Wee Granny.

Family Dues

It was the decision of family officers to ask each family to send in \$10.00 per year for family dues. This will help us cover the cost of newsletters along with other expenses of the family.

Your payment of these dues will be greatly appreciated. They can be sent to:

James and Mary Murray Murdoch
Family

% Helen Hall, Family Secretary
1853 Parklane Dr. E
Orem UT, 84058

Dedication of Highway Information Site Featuring Wee Granny

Jan Stock, an officer of the Mormon Pioneer Heritage Trails Association, was in attendance at the Wee Granny Memorial Service that was held at Scottsbluff Nebraska, in June of 2001.

She gave a talk as part of our program and informed those in attendance about some of the plans of the Association. These plans included identifying important pioneer sites in their area of eastern Wyoming and western Nebraska and installing pullouts and highway signs with information about pioneer history that occurred at each site. About 24 sites had been selected.

Last fall she informed us that they were planning to install these highway markers at three of the sites. One of these locations was a site on State Highway 26, about 7 miles east of the cemetery where the Murdoch family had placed a memorial for Wee Granny and

about three miles from where Wee Granny actually died. She also informed us that the Chimney Rock State Park Visitors Center that is close to the cemetery where her memorial stone is located has more inquiries about Wee Granny than any other pioneer.

At the family meeting held on Nov. 11, 2003, it was agreed by those present to donate \$2000.00 to the Mormon Pioneer Heritage Trails Association for this sign. This was in addition to \$1000.00 that had been donated to this group shortly after the Wee Granny Memorial Service. This money came from surplus funds that had originally been donated to the family for the Memorial stone that was placed in the cemetery near Chimney Rock at the time of the Wee Granny Memorial Service. These funds were not needed for the memorial stone but it was the feeling of family officers that they had been given to the family for the purpose of honoring Wee Granny and this highway sign was an appropriate way of doing that.

In a recent e-mail, Sister Stock gave us the following information. "The foundry will not have our markers done ... but we will have a ground breaking ceremony to prepare the sites at 1:00 PM on the 24th of July, 2004. The completed dedication will probably be in late September. The bronze plaque on the memorial marker will be worded as follows: Not only was Chimney Rock a much sought after sight for the Mormon Pioneers, it was also a burial site for many.

Diarists of the Mormon Trail tell of many gravesites near Chimney Rock. One such burial site is of Mary Murray Murdoch, also known as "Wee Granny", a 73 year old widow from Scotland who

was buried 3 miles east of this spot. She was going to Utah to join her son John and his family. Exhaustion and fatigue contributed to her death. Her last words were, "Tell John I died with my face toward Zion."

We wish to invite all family members to attend either the ground breaking ceremony on July 24th or the completed site dedication in late September. If you wish more information, call any of the following family officers:

Dallas Murdoch	208-425-3410
Gary Lloyd	435-657-1146
Helen Hall	801-762-0364

Upcoming Wee Granny Memorial Service

Your family officers, recognizing that many of the family were unable to attend the Wee Granny Memorial Service that was held at Chimney Rock in June of 2001, are planning a second memorial service for this noble ancestor. This will be held in the fall of 2006, 150 years since she died near Chimney Rock on Oct. 2nd, 1856.

The actual date and location is yet to be announced but keep this important event in mind as it will be yet another opportunity for the family to gather together to renew acquaintances and honor this noble woman.

Book on John Murray Murdoch in Progress

A book length manuscript on the life and times of John Murray Murdoch is currently under development, and it is anticipated that it will be completed and printed in time for distribution at the planned 2006 Wee Granny celebration.

Although John Murray Murdoch's life has been previously detailed in family histories, no one has yet written a comprehensive history of his life and times that goes significantly beyond his own brief autobiography and family remembrances. This project will focus not only on the major life events of John Murray Murdoch and his immediate family, but will also include a social history of Scotland and the 19th century emigrations, the early decades of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and the Wasatch County region of Utah.

Some of the significant aspects of John Murray Murdoch's life that are slated to be covered in this book include his conversion to the Church, his voyage to America and the trek west (including the circumstances of the death of his two children), his early settlement in Utah and founding role in the Heber Valley settlement; family, civic, business, and church interests, and his family life, including information on his two wives, Ann Steele and Isabella Crawford.

This book should be of interest not only to members of the Murdoch Family, but to other individuals interested in Mormon history and immigration patterns within U.S. History.

This project is being researched and authored by Kenneth Merrell, a

great-great grandson of John Murray Murdoch and Ann Steele through Janet Osborne Murdoch and Henry Lufkin McMullin.

Ken is the author of the 16-page booklet on Wee Granny, "The Long Road to Zion," which was written for the 2001 memorial service in Nebraska (and is still available for free download on the Murdoch Family website), and is an avid reader of L.D.S. and American history.

Ken is currently attempting to gather as much original source material as possible on the life of John Murray Murdoch, including information on his wives and their children. Family members and others who have access to any potentially appropriate material are invited to send copies to Ken Merrell at:

2285 Elysium Avenue
Eugene Oregon, 97401
e-mail: kmerrell@uoregon.edu
fax: 541-338-8736

Some of the materials that would be particularly useful in developing the book include photographs, letters, legal and business records (including property titles, tax records, wills, etc.), patriarchal blessings, maps, and any other relevant materials. In addition, anyone who has information on the specific location of the mine in Scotland in which James Murdoch, John's Father, met his untimely death, or the location of Wee Granny's cottage in her later years in Scotland are urged to send this information to Ken.

Our Great Scotland Heritage

Gary M. Lloyd

Many of you who read this article are familiar with some of the facts cited here. However, a few of the specific sites mentioned may be new to you. In the summer of 1990, my wife Donna and I set out to not only go to the country of my ancestors, but to use specific maps to identify the general locations where much of the Murdoch early history took place. We also wished to, where possible, research some of the sites and speak with some of the people who lived there, hoping for added information about home sites of our Murdoch ancestors.

While in what used to be Gaswater, the Lime Works mine where James Murdoch worked, we were informed by some of the older generation that the mine had been closed since the middle 1850's. That time agrees with the experience that James had while trying to save the life of a fellow miner who "had fallen a victim of foul air in the bottom of a new mine shaft they were sinking". Both were overcome by gas and died on October 20, 1831.

Even though the map in the Red Murdoch book shows where the community of Gaswater, Ayrshire, Scotland, was located, it took us three hours of asking local residents to find the former location. Current maps do not have most of the check points as shown on the Murdoch book map.

We also knew that the James and Mary Murray Murdoch family lived within a short distance of the mine. After another three hours of going door to door, asking local

residents if they might know the location of the Murdoch home, I happened onto a very old farmer (perhaps 93 years of age) about eight blocks away from the mine. At first he did not want to even say hello and after telling him of our purpose, he said he knew where the Murdoch's and two or three other families lived. His directions were as follows: "Go back out to the main road, turn left, go about four blocks, just before coming to the old road on the right that leads to the mine, you will find that the land is level with the road back about 100 feet and then the land jets up about three feet where there is a lot of grass. Below that grassy area you will find the foundations of three homes. As far as I know the Murdoch home was in the middle. There is also some loose red brick that formed the home laying around."

Coming south from Glasgow on highway M77, travel about 23 miles until you reach highway A77 and pass the city of Kilmarnock. Proceed another 6 miles until you see highway A76. Proceed 15 miles until you pass Auchinleck, where James and Mary were married at the old Auchinleck parish church. This church, found in the Red Book, was a great experience to see, along with the many headstones around, many of them with the Murdoch name. Turn on highway A70 to the left and before reaching Cumnock, travel about four miles on a two lane road. At this point I believe it would be good to stop and ask around to see if someone could direct you to what used to be the Lime Works in Gaswater. Again the farmers direction on getting to the Murdoch home foundation is about as good as I can offer. Six of the children of

James and Mary were born in Gaswater.

Another site worth locating is on highway A76, continuing on past Cumnock to the township of Kirkconnel

We are very happy to have found the foundation area and brought back some of the soft red brick that we have since placed in a block of cement and placed near the front door of our home in Midway, Utah.

Donna and I both commented as we drove in this choice area of Scotland, how much we felt the spirit of the area. We greatly enjoyed traveling in the specific areas where our ancestors spent many difficult years trying to raise families and eventually, after joining the Church, heading West to the United States to find the seat of the Gospel.

Well, there you have it. At best it will be difficult to find the place. When we return one day, I believe we will have some difficulty reaching that special Murdoch foundation, not far from where the Lime Works mine once offered work for hungry Scotsmen.

Donna and I felt a clear spirit of the great country of Scotland, as we walked on some of the same paths taken by our great Murdoch relatives.

Family History Is For All Ages

Don L. Blanchard

Mention family history or genealogy to most young people and they quickly find somewhere else to be, but family history is truly for all ages and there is such a wide

variety of activities, that nearly everyone can find something to interest them. If you are keeping a baby book, writing a journal, making a scrapbook, saving letters, or simply taking pictures of family members, you are doing family history. It's not just about finding and recording a bunch of names.

I have taught family history courses off and on for many years and have found the computer to be the single most effective tool that has ever been developed for creating interest in and doing family history. As my brother once mentioned, "Maybe I can get interested in this family history stuff now that we can do it on the computer."

Some of the more recent versions of computer software available have allowed for the incorporation of multimedia into the data, making it much more interesting and personable. Even some young people, who would normally shy away from anything associated with family history, are at least starting files of their immediate families and the multimedia is what is driving that interest.

There are many different programs out there, but you can download a great computer program to keep track of your family history from www.familysearch.org and the best part, is that it's FREE.

The program is called Personal Ancestral File (PAF). The current version is version 5.2.18. In addition to providing you with a place to keep your ancestral information, it also allows you to import pictures, sound clips and video clips, and attach them to a particular individual.

These can then be used to provide a computerized slide show for an individual, print color picture

pedigrees, as well as color picture family group sheets. Another feature is the ability to view or print scrapbook pages for an individual. As might be expected, my most complete scrapbook pages are of my grandchildren.

It doesn't take too many generations to get back far enough that the camera hadn't been invented yet and the pictures are not available. In some cases we can find a painting or two, but an alternative that I use whenever possible, is to insert a photograph of the person's grave marker. Recently, my family has also been recording the geographical coordinates of grave sites that they visit. By using a GPS receiver to get the coordinates, it allows us to put the information with the pictures. Some obscure cemeteries are difficult to locate and even the large, well-known ones can be a challenge when you are looking for a particular grave.

So, once you get all of this information, where do you put it? Personal Ancestral File (PAF) is a good place to start. If you need additional help, try contacting your local family history representative, Family History Center, or feel free to contact me personally (the Murdoch Family web site also has a link to more PAF information).

Every day of our lives, doors are closing that will prevent us from obtaining some vital piece of information that we will sooner or later need. A parent might develop Alzheimer's or a distant relative will pass on and some information might be lost forever.

One of the goals of this organization is to continue to compile an accurate and documented history of the James and Mary Murray Murdoch Family

and their descendants. It has been estimated that Mary Murray (Wee Granny) has over 10,000 descendants. I'm sure that we don't have information on all of them.

A great deal of work has already been done and has been disseminated in two different books. One is *The James and Mary Murray Murdoch Family History* and is red in color. The other is *The Brigham and Thomas Todd Murdoch Family Histories* and is blue in color. Recently, several copies of these two books have surfaced and are again available from the Murdoch Country Store. The "Red" book has also been scanned and placed on a CD in Adobe Acrobat format through the efforts of Jack Lyon. It is also available through the Wee Granny Store on the Murdoch Family web site, and is listed below in the Wee Granny Store section of the newsletter.

Since these books went to press, there have been a lot of changes and additions to the family organization and some of the information we have is undocumented. We would like to continue to document what we can, particularly in the descendent areas where the information should be readily available. As far as I know there has not been an effort to combine all of the descendant information into a single large database in PAF format, but it can be done.

If you have information that you wish to contribute or would like to assist in this effort, please let us know. I would appreciate it very much if family members who are working on particular lines of Murdoch genealogy would register with me so we can correlate with other family members who may have an interest in that same line.

Chronology of Wee Granny

Below is a chronology of the events that brought Mary Murray Murdoch, our Wee Granny, to America, and to join the Martin Handcart Company.

- Born: October 13, 1782.
- Married: January 10, 1811 to James Murdoch.
- Children: Eight - 5 girls, 3 boys.
- Widowed: October 20, 1831.
- Baptized: December 22, 1851 into the LDS Church.
- 1852: Son John immigrates to America, then to Utah.
- 1856: On May 25, Wee Granny, at age 73, begins her journey to America, traveling with James Steele, his wife Elizabeth, their two sons, and Elizabeth's mother.
- Handcarts: Left Iowa City on July 28 with the Martin Handcart Company, enroute to Florence NB.
- On to Zion: On August 27th, after making repairs to many handcarts, the company begins the long journey to Utah (Zion). Wee Granny walks most of the way.
- Chimney Rock: On October 2nd, Wee Granny passes away along the trail near Chimney Rock.

www.murdochfamily.net

We are blessed as a family to have our own website. This site is maintained by Jim Murdoch. The site is a wonderful place to share information that is important to all of the Murdoch family. We encourage you to scan through the various options that are available.

The following information is available on the site:

1. Upcoming Murdoch Family Events
2. Information on the past memorial services for Wee Granny and John Murray Murdoch
3. Items for sale at the Wee Granny Store
4. Murdoch Family Genealogy
5. Past Murdoch family Newsletters
6. The Murdoch Family Message Forum

To access the site, enter the following in the address window of your browser:

<http://www.murdochfamily.net>.

Sometimes the site is difficult to access from some search engines. With the browser open, you can also find the web site by selecting CTRL – O (the Control key, plus the letter O on the keyboard), and then entering the name of the site (murdochfamily.net).

If any of you have suggestions for improvements, please let Jim know - his email is jim@murdochfamily.net.

James and Mary Murray Murdoch Executive Committee

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