

Our Cook Ancestors

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Cook Context

Along with her husband Margaret the first and only Cook ancestor be identified, she was born and died in Scotland. Margaret Cook was the spouse of Alexander Armour. Her daughter Margaret married into the McManus and the descendants into the Retson line.

Stair, East Ayrshire, Scotland ¹

Stair is a village in Ayrshire, Scotland. It lies at the bottom of a glen beside the River Ayr at the north-west border of the 5,376 acre (22 km²) Parish of Stair where the River Ayr is joined by the Glenstang Burn. The village is known for its connection with the Dalrymples, Earls of Stair. The family first became associated with the village in 1450, when William de Dalrymple acquired the lands of Stair-Montgomery and built Stair House. Places of interest in the parish include Stair Brig built in 1745 and Stair House. The "Stair Fair" at the churchyard was the equivalent of the Mauchline Holy Fair and was equally wild with people travelling from miles around and staying several days until every last item of food and drink had been consumed. A "Fair Stair Sacrament" was an expression used to describe a good hearty meal at which everything was eaten for many years after the fair ceased to be held. At the old Clachan of Milton on the other side of the bridge from Stair lies in South Ayrshire. There used to be an inn here at which Robert Burns would stop on occasions and here also was the end of the old pack horse road to Annbank that once followed the course of the river. Opposite the inn was once an old toll house and nearby was the thatched cottage in which Maily Crosbie lived, onetime housekeeper at Stair House. The miller here was one of the Covenanter martyrs who gave his life by refusing to hand over his bible to the king's soldiers. Margaret or Peggy Orr was a nursery maid at Stair House and Robert Burns lent a hand as a 'blackfoot' with his friends courtship of this lady, however the engagement was brief and she later married John Paton, an Edinburgh shoemaker. In his first 'Epistle to Davie' entitled 'An Epistle to Davy, a Brother-Poet, Lover, Ploughman and Fiddler, Burns wrote:

There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
The lover an' the frien',
You hae your Meg,
your dearest part,

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stair,_East_Ayrshire, accessed September 1, 2018

And I my darling Jean.

Catherine Stewart of Stair and Afton Lodge, the wife of Major-General Alexander Stewart, became aware of 'Robert Burns the poet' through his visits with David and she was the first member of the upper classes to acknowledge his ability and befriend him. Burns sent her a number of his poems in a document known as the 'Stair Manuscripts'. Burns would visit the thatched cottage at the Clachan of Milton in which Maily Crosbie lived, onetime housekeeper at Stair House and a friend from the days of David Sillars attempts at courtship. The family kept the handle less cup from which Burns used to drink as a souvenir.

Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland²

Sorn (Scottish Gaelic: Sorn, meaning a kiln) is a small village in East Ayrshire, Scotland. It is situated on the River Ayr. It has a population of roughly 350. Local services include: a pub, a church, a general store, a motorbike shop and a television shop. There is also a village hall and a bowling green and primary school. Sorn is known for its success in the Britain in Bloom competition. In 2004 it won gold in the "Small Villages" category and has previously won, amongst other awards, the "Highly Commended Certificate" a number of times in the 1980s. Sorn is also the first village in Scotland where all parking is off road parking.

1. Margaret Cook 1791 - Alexander Armour 1792 – 1870

<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Cook-45180>

Margaret Cook was born in 1791 in Stair, Ayrshire, Scotland³. She married Alexander Armour on 07 Mar 1812 at Kilmaurs, Ayrshire, Scotland.

In 1841 census she was residing on St. Cuthberts Street, Catrine with husband Alexander, children David 20, John 15, Margaret 12, William 10

In 1851 census she was living at St. Cuthbert St. Catrine with children Margaret 22, William 19

She was no longer living in the home of Alexander in the 1961 census when Alexander was residing at 8 Cuthbert St Sorn with his 10 year old granddaughter Mary McManus. His son-in-law Francis McManus had died in 24 May 1856.

They had the following children:

- i. David Armour b. 31 Mar 1821 in Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland, d. 23 Jul 1886 in Catrine, Ayrshire, Scotland, m. (1) Elizabeth Buchanan 17 Mar 1843 at Sorn, Ayr, Scotland. They had eight children. She died Bet. 1864–1871, He then Married Mary Wilson 15 Dec 1871 in Sorn., They had no children.
- ii. John Armour
2. iii. Margaret Armour b. 29 Jul 1828 Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland, d. 20 Apr 1869 in Catrine, Ayrshire, Scotland, m. Francis McManus 15 Sep 1851 in Sorn.
- iv. William Armour b. 2 Apr 1831 Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland
- v. Mary Armour b. 28 Mar 1834 Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland
- vi. Elizabeth Armour b. 28 Mar 1834 Sorn, Ayrshire, Scotland

She died unknown date.

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sorn>

³ 1851 census

Appendices

Abbreviations

Abt. About aft. After b. born circa
m. married
d. died

Sources

Durie, Bruce, *Scottish Genealogy*, 3rd Ed Stroud, Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2009
Epperson, Amanda, *The Family Tree Scottish Genealogy Guide*: Cincinnati, Ohio, 2018