

**Imperial Women of Darien:**

**Scottish Migration and Gender in the Atlantic World, 1650-1740**

by

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In the last two years of the seventeenth century, approximately 3,000 people, mostly Scottish merchants, soldiers, sailors, and their families, migrated to a small coastal region in central America for the purpose of establishing a colony in Panama. These travelers personified the financial dreams of some elite Scottish merchants when they formed a joint stock company known as The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies in 1696. The colony of New Caledonia ultimately proved unsuccessful and ended in the first years of the eighteenth century. Because of the failure of the Darien Scheme and its close association with the union of Scotland and England in 1707, much of the history surrounding the creation of the colony centers on economics and state-formation, usually from an elite perspective. These views tend to shield any view of individuals who lived outside the privileged sphere of influence, leaving them understudied in their own history. Was the creation of the Company supported merely by men of influence? Can a more complex understanding of empire creation emerge when examined through the lens of a gendered analysis?

This dissertation returns to the familiar sources to answer these questions of the Company's creation to argue that women were active participants in all stages of empire associated with the short lifespan of The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies. Women in Scotland, and in some cases beyond, chose to associate themselves with the Company and acted as investors who supported the transatlantic venture.

Women contracted in their own names and provided material for trade and the comfort of travelers making the journey to Panama. Women's networks were instrumental when deciding to invest and sell their goods or labor to the Company directors. Women's kin networks were central to decisions made regarding migration with the Company. The numbers of women associated with the Company expanded even further with the Union between England and Scotland in 1707 and led women to seek compensation as investors or kin who lost loved ones associated with the colony. While the settlement failed, this dissertation explains the ways that women's support reinforced the economic and material goals of empire in the Scotland that can be traced throughout the first decades of the long eighteenth-century Atlantic world.

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## Introduction

### **Imperial Women of Darien: Scottish Migration and Gender in the Atlantic World, 1650-1740**

The primary topic that this dissertation investigates is women's involvement with the rise and fall of The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies and the degree to which some Scottish women facilitated the migration and colonization into the region of Panama that the Company, later named New Caledonia. This migration came to be known as the Darien Scheme. The Company documents found in archives across Scotland confirm that many women appeared on the official registry as people who subscribed to the venture beginning in 1696. Listed as daughters, spouses, widowers, or individuals appearing with no other identifiers, these women stand out in stark contrast to the men one expects to find when imagining participants in empire in the last years of the seventeenth century. Yet women are present on almost every page of the ledger books and loose documents used to preserve details of the investors and other with associations to the Company.

Directors of the Scottish Company lacked the ability to sustain the colony and this weakness is offered by many as a main reason for the subsequent union between Scotland and England in 1707. Historians addressing the major shifts in political, legal, and economic relationships between these two independent nations fill shelves of monographs on the matter, each considering England's upper hand or the vulnerability of Scotland. Some rightly argue that Scotland was far from unified behind this imperial

scheme.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of the range of support within the nation or the outcome of the venture in the West Indies, it is clear that merchants and elites living in Scotland were pulled into the deep and dangerous waters of empire.

The very first individuals to invest in Scotland's imperial plans were elite women from Edinburgh. Despite women being the first people to step forward and sign their names to the subscription lists in 1696, it is the histories of elite men, their honor, and their participation, or the lack thereof that dominates the chronicle of the Darien venture. Though first in line, these seventeenth-century women have not captured the full attention of those publishing works on the subject.

The most cursory glance at the published primary sources on the subject makes it abundantly clear that gender is a useful means of analysis for the Darien Scheme. Notions of the roles of Scottish men and women in seventeenth century society were shaped and reshaped during the decades surrounding the Darien venture. Katie Barclay proves that patriarchy influenced Scotland's culture and was influenced by "Enlightenment philosophy, the rise of commercial society and the expansion of the public sphere."<sup>2</sup> Family economies present in Scotland meant that women were part of the larger family network that was separated "along gendered lines, although there was often overlap between male and female spheres."<sup>3</sup> The surviving documents of the Company have much to say about the wider implications of gender in the transatlantic world when applying our understanding of public and private spheres formed along gendered lines.

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1 Steve Murdoch, *Network North: Scottish Kin, Commercial and Covert Associations in Northern Europe, 1603-1746* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 240-243; W. Douglas Jones, "The Bold Adventurers': A Quantitative Analysis of the Darien Subscription List (1696)," *Scottish Economic & Social History* 21 (2001): 25.

2 Katie Barclay, *Love, Intimacy, and Power: Marriage and Patriarch in Scotland, 1650-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 198.

3 Barclay, *Love, Intimacy, and Power*, 203.



This dissertation analyzes the degree to which women influenced and were engaged in the Company's transatlantic migration plans by examining the role that gender played on behalf of empire. The argument of this project is that women were central to any plan created by the Company directors and it proves these women's emotional, economic, and material support were necessary for the buildup of the Company agenda. Later, when the Company was forced to end all activities in Panama, women continued to advocate for compensations due to them. Whether in Scotland or abroad, Darien women made decisions about their lives and the lives of the people in their family networks. This dissertation is a "reinterpretation of the current narratives" of the Darien moment and positions these women alongside the Company directors, foot soldiers, and merchants to explain the complex nature of empire construction.<sup>4</sup> Men and women were both required to meet the logistical and economic demands of Scottish investors as the Company struggled to position itself in the transatlantic world markets in Central America.

Some background information is useful to explain the events surrounding the formation of the Darien venture. For years merchants in Edinburgh and Glasgow coaxed the monarchy for the right to engage in colonial enterprises in the transatlantic world. In June 1695, King William III granted Scotland "all Powers, rights and Priviledges, as to their Persons, Rules and Orders" to imagine and structure a colonial joint stock company. Prior to this pronouncement Scottish merchants surreptitiously maneuvered around provisions of The Navigation Acts that limited its trade, much like the British American colonies.<sup>5</sup> Much of the merchant's profits and engagement in the region, however, were

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4 Elizabeth Ewan, "A New Trumpet? The History of Women in Scotland 1300-1700," *History Compass* 7, no. 2 (2009): 431.

5 Eric J. Graham, "The Defence of The Scottish Maritime Interest, 1681-1713," *Scottish Historical Review* 71, no 191/192 (April-October, 1992): 90.

limited to clandestine activities. Understanding this limitation, Glasgow and Edinburgh traders desired to openly and equally participate in the Atlantic frenzy of mercantilism and empire. King William initially saw every reason to grant “all persons concerned, or to be concerned in this Company are hereby Declared to be free Denizens of this Kingdom, and that they, with all that shall settle to Inhabit, or be born in any of the foresaid Plantations, Collonies, Cities, Towns, Factories, and other places that shall be purchast and possessed by the said Company shall be repute as Natives of this Kingdom, and have the priviledges thereof.”<sup>6</sup> His mind was changed when a group of English merchants hinted at the possibility that Scottish thistles could hinder the growth of “orderly tulips” so carefully cultivated by East India Company of the Dutch and the English.<sup>7</sup> William’s 1695 declaration was soon revoked and complicating the relationship between Scotland and England and unsettling, for a time, all manner of trade in the Atlantic world.

Despite the retraction, Scottish merchants quickly went about the business of facilitating a colony somewhere in the Indies, holding close to their breast whether their final destination would be in the east or the west.<sup>8</sup> These Scots hoped to foster economic partnerships with investors from England, Hamburg, and Amsterdam to share the cost of creating these new trading opportunities. Complications emerging from the King’s negated approval and limited the participation to only Scottish investors. As wider support from non-Scottish investments disappeared, the Company’s directors worked to finance

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6 James Samuel Barbour, *A History of William Paterson and the Darien Company with Illustrations and Appendices, Appendix A “Act of Parliament Constituting The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies”* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1907), 201-210.

7 John Prebble, *The Darien Disaster: A Scots Colony in the New World, 1698-1700* (New York: Holt Reinhart and Winston, 1969), 83; Douglas Watt, *The Price of Scotland: Darien, Union and the Wealth of Nations* (Edinburgh: Luath, 2007), 36-37, Ned C. Landsman, *Scotland and Its First American Colony, 1683-1765* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), 73-76; Graham, “The Defence of Scottish Maritime Interest,” 101-102.

8 Watt, *The Price of Scotland*, 27-29.

the colony through their own public investments that included elite Scottish men and women as well as investors of limited means along with working women and men from throughout the country. The funds needed to accomplish the desires of the company was originally set at £300,00 was increased to £400,000. The Company clerks recorded all monies collected in “sterling rather than £ Scots.”<sup>9</sup> Scotland’s currency at the time of the Darien moment was measured pounds, shillings, and pence in Scots money. One pound sterling equaled £12 Scots prior to the union in 1707.<sup>10</sup> While ledgers associated with the venture were most often recorded in sterling, smaller receipts recorded on loose slips of paper signed by individual merchants prove that some transactions took the form of Scots money.<sup>11</sup>

Scottish people watch on when the approximately 2,000 Company investors saw their efforts rewarded after funds and materials were collected sufficient to mount two separate expeditions to Panama in 1698 and 1699.<sup>12</sup> The colonizing venture was short-lived due to bad weather, lack of provisions, and Spanish defense of the Panamanian coastline. This left the economically broken Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies with no other choice but to bear the shame and accept the failure of the Darien colony by 1701. For a time, directors attempted to establish stronger networks by trading in the East Indies. The Darien venture was an important fulcrum moment that drove

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9 Douglas Watt, “The Management of Capital by The Company of Scotland” *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 25, no. 2, (2005): 101.

10 A. J. S. Gibson and T. C. Smout, *Prices, Food, and Wages in Scotland, 1550-1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), xv.

11 Adv. Ms. 83.8.1. Monetary amounts appearing throughout this dissertation will adhere to the currency patterns described by Watt, unless the documents show alternate currency was indicated.

12 Graham, “In Defence of Scottish Maritime Interest,” 102. Examples of people begin paid in Scots appear regularly throughout the record of receipts. One example is seen Adv. Ms. 83.8.9, 116 when Widow Justice received payment for the ship’s canvas she provided. Payments in this example were made in Scots money.

England and Scotland towards a unified Great Britain in May 1, 1707 when the Company of Scotland was dissolved.<sup>13</sup>

Women were not substitutes added in place of foreign investors. Rather, this dissertation proves that women's work, their capital, and their support were essential; women were present in all aspects of the Company's undertakings from the time the venture began. Archival sources associated with the creation of the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies housed at the Royal Bank of Scotland, the Spencer Collection at the University of Glasgow, the National Library and National Archives of Scotland are used to structure this argument of women's contributions. By asking new questions from well-worn sources, this dissertation makes new inroads on the subject to show women actively shaping empire and transatlantic migration in the early modern era. The ledgers of the Darien documents offer some of the only surviving remnants of these women's lives. They provide historical insights into the multiple levels of economic and labor hierarchy for these Scottish women. The work of reconstructing their networks began with identifying these women and then reconstituting the social, familial, and economic webs of connectivity associated with them. Excavating these women from their long silence in the archives helps to complicate conventional understandings of the lives of men and women and the critical role that *each* played in the venture.

There is no question that the Darien venture failed. This collapse of the colony is fully explored in economic and political histories written concerning the event. However, what can be learned when examining this moment through a gendered lens? Was gender

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<sup>13</sup> Christopher Whatley and Derek J. Patrick, *The Scots and the Union* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 53; Watt, *The Price of Scotland*, 241; T.M. Devine, *Scotland's Empire: The Origins of The Global Diaspora* (London: Penguin, 2004), 44-48.

a tool used by the Company to garner enthusiasm for empire? On what terms were women encouraged or willing to participate?

The sources are clear on two things: first, women were needed in all aspects to support colonial migration. Secondly, even though some women lived so close to the bone that they may have lacked funds to invest in the venture, many still managed a profit by producing goods and providing services in preparation for the mass migration to Panama. The evidence of cooperative relationships between the men and women who chose to participate in the colonial enterprise are extensive and clarify that women were not excluded from any part of the venture, with the exception of serving as directors of the Company in Scotland or as governors in the colony. These two roles were specifically reserved for men.

1696 was an important year for the nation of Scotland. A handful of women and men were very active during the founding of the Bank of Scotland, and the Company Subscription Lists were opened to the public in Mrs. Purdie's coffeehouse on High Street in Edinburgh. Even more telling is that some women were so involved in economic endeavors of 1696 that they invested in both enterprises. Richard Saville notes that seven women were listed among the 172 investing "adventurers" of the bank.<sup>14</sup> A broadside printed in Edinburgh by Agnes Campbell, "Printer to His most Excellent Majesty," advertised the newly formed bank, and shows that the elite women like Duchess Anne of Hamilton were part of a contingent of people considered for election as "Governour, Deputy-Governours, or Directors," four other women could be elected as Directors to the bank. Isobel Winram was the lone woman who appeared on the list who was not

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<sup>14</sup> Richard Saville, *Bank of Scotland: A History, 1695-1995* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 3.

considered for any leadership position beyond adventurer in the bank.<sup>15</sup> Already a precedent was fomented that gave some women living within Scotland a degree of Scotland's economic future.

Women with particular skills were integral to the logistical success of filling the ships' cargo holds and the bellies of the sailors who manned them. Women earned wages by cooking and caring for ill patients attached to the venture. Others were paid for preparing bodies for burial. Taking these actions collectively, an understanding emerges of women's place within the Atlantic world through their participation in the Darien venture. Darien women of elite, middling, and laboring status were part of the larger history of transatlantic migration in the seventeenth century and were necessary components of an emerging transatlantic market economy as a result of the Scottish joint-stock company's colonizing plans. The Darien venture, despite its failure, is an event that proves that women from every stratum of society, along with the networks of men connected to them, publicly engaged in their communities as a response to the imperial and economic goals that some saw as of nation-building. Women were central to migration enterprises in the seventeenth century and imagined themselves as colony builders that would help position Scottish merchant communities as capable imperial power brokers as it entered into the long eighteenth century.

The analysis that follows deals first with Glasgow and Edinburgh beginning in the 1670s which led up to the first ships leaving Scotland and concludes in the second and third generations of families in the 1710s and 1720s that were formed after its failure. Not all women found in this analysis lived in either region. However, all of the women

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<sup>15</sup> "A list of the Names of the Adventurers in the Bank of Scotland, January 1. 1696." Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland from Early English Books Online.

associated with The Company shifted their focus, money, or labor to activities taking place in these urban centers. Additionally, the Darien venture expanded beyond the boundaries of Scotland's borders. The Central American isthmus was the destination of choice that was named by Balboa in 1510. Despite Spain's inability to maintain authority in the mountainous region they never gave up defend lands they viewed as under their control.<sup>16</sup> The Kuna people living in the coastal central American region were skillfully adept at complicating Spanish efforts to subdue their communities and culture; where possible, the women of this community are considered. The particularly transatlantic nature of the venture and its triangulation between Scotland, Central America, and colonial North America affords a space to assess women's roles as historic actors who influenced the goals of empire. Useful insights emerge that prove interesting for anyone examining women beyond a singular border of empire history. Likewise, historians testing questions about the degree of transatlantic influence of economy, labor, and migration with kin networks in European societies will benefit from a non-English perspective of women from the period.

These Scotswomen replicate many of the mobility patterns of "betterment migrants" and "subsistence migrants" described by Alison Games in *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World*.<sup>17</sup> Reasons for Scottish migration to the New Caledonia, surprisingly, had little to do with escaping hardships and more to do with building an imperial nation-state that was keen to modernize and compete in the early modern Atlantic. Consequently, my research complicates traditional push-pull

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<sup>16</sup> Watt, *The Price of Scotland*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Alison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 17.

explanations for migration and offers a more nuanced understanding of the long eighteenth century. It also proves that return migrations were not merely made by men who left to acquire wealth and returned back to their home, but included women, too.<sup>18</sup> Early modern migration histories and women's colonial American histories stand to benefit, as these women functioned as producers, investors, and migrators to Panama, complicating our understanding of women as passive latecomers to colonial regions in the West.

Unlike women in England, Scotswomen maintained their birth-right surname after marriage and these naming traditions appear in almost every case dealing with this study of Darien women. Peter Clark's work in the 1970s is one of the foundational pieces of work that Games utilizes in her monograph on migration of English societies. Clark categorized English women in Kent into a larger collective grouping of "problem people" who left little information for historians, likely associated with adopting spousal surnames.<sup>19</sup> These "married and widowed women who depended on the status of their husbands or late husbands" vexed Clark's study, leaving their actions largely untraceable.<sup>20</sup> While Clark's efforts to include Kent women are admirable when they could be found, he admitted that "strict comparisons of these figures with the analysis of the movement of male deponents is not possible, because in the case of married and widowed women their moments since birth have been excluded."<sup>21</sup> This naming confusion is not replicated in Scottish culture or Darien documents. Where the records survive,

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18 Alan L. Karras. *Sojourners in the Sun: Scottish Migrants in Jamaica and the Chesapeake, 1740-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

19 Peter Clark, "The Migrant in Kentish Towns 1580-1640," in *Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500-1800*, eds. P. Clark and P. Slack (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 120.

20 Clark, "The Migrant in Kentish Towns," 120.

21 Clark, "The Migrant in Kentish Towns," 123.



Darien women are traceable from their baptism, marriage, death, along with the lives of their mothers and children from each generation.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, the majority of bookkeeping transactions associate women who had dealings with the Company of Scotland reinforcing Scottish naming practices. Conflating Scottish women of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries into a more British or English perspective associated with the history of women overlook significant cultural differences between the two groups. Consequently, the very nature of “public sphere” and “private sphere” terminology and patriarchy lose a degree of traction when measured against the women in this study. A small number of women from Hamburg and Amsterdam also appear briefly in the colonial venture. These women operating outside of Scotland exemplify a willingness by some to profit outside their own national boundaries highlighting the agency of some women in the transatlantic world to profit from imperial ventures in the early modern era.<sup>23</sup>

This research leans heavily on three fields: Scottish history, women’s history, and histories focused on migration. National histories associated with Scotland leading up to the Union in 1707 are integral to this study. Foundational to all works of Scotland’s role in the establishment of the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies is the work of George Insh, published in the 1920s and 1930s. Douglas Watt argues that it was the inability of the Company directors to manage of funds resulting from the opening of subscriptions in 1696.<sup>24</sup> Tom Devine’s *Scotland’s Empire and the Shaping of the Americas, 1600-1815* and Christopher Whatley’s *The Scots and the Union* each explain

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22 Parents gifting first names to their children in memory of their ancestors continues to complicate absolute identification of some individuals, as is often the case many societies, leaving some individual’s lives untenable.

23 Kathrin Zickermann, “Across the German Sea: Scottish Commodity Exchange, Network Building and Communities in the Wider Elbe-Weser Region in the Early Modern Period,” (PhD Thesis, St. Andrews University, Scotland, 2009).

24 Watt, *The Price of Scotland*, 252-253.

the various ways that Scotland contributed to the larger British colonial empire. John Prebble's 1969 narrative, *The Darien Disaster*, is also cautiously applied to the research to show how the Darien history is understood by the general public. Prebble was a journalist who wrote with the purpose of selling books and newspapers, which meant that he was more interested, among other things, in retelling tales he learned from his extended travels in Scotland rather than arriving at a solid reason for the colony's failure.<sup>25</sup> His book shares part of the blame for freezing in time the context of the events associated with the venture, leaving the general readership with the impression that there is little else to uncover about the disaster. Julie Orr explains the Company's connections to wider Atlantic trading networks and leaderships in her 2018 monograph *Scotland, Darien and the Atlantic World: 1689-1700*. Insh, Watt, and other works are immensely valuable and form a scaffold for this dissertation that reveals women's histories alongside the Company directors, captains, ministers, merchant men, soldiers, and sailors. The Darien papers, when taken in hand of those using a gendered analysis brings to light a history that is more reflective of activities of all who participated with the venture.

The theoretical foundations for studying women within this project draw concepts in part from Anne McClintock's *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. McClintock proposes that scholars first evaluate "the gendered

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<sup>25</sup> A recently published work *Forty Two Years a Secret Mistress* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse UK, 2013) by Jan Prebble reveals that much of the reason for Prebble's interest in traveling and research associated with his work on *The Darien Disaster* was because it allowed him time to spend with Jan Prebble in her self-described role as "a married man's secret mistress for 42 years" (1). She wrote: "they drove round every part of Scotland, covering literally thousands and thousands of miles over the years. Doing research there provided John with the perfect excuse for being away" (8) and offered the necessary cover under the auspices of writing and publishing books on the places they traveled. Their secret relationship lasted until John divorced his wife, leaving the couple free to marry one another many years later. Six years after their marriage John Prebble passed away and Jan began her work on the memoir account of their relationship.

formation of sanctioned male theories,” and then look for women’s “cultural and political participation in national formations.”<sup>26</sup> She finds historical memories of the pre-modern era are prone to hyper feminizing ideas of women’s role in society. On the other hand, modernity and the Enlightenment are equated with masculine attributes.<sup>27</sup> Looking at the gendered Darien moment as a microcosm with a beginning, middle, and end allows room to test out some of the theories from McClintock when measured against the progression of this Scottish imperial moment as it relates to reactions by men and women to the creation and failure of an imperial venture.

Histories of women are gaining momentum in the field of migration history, but female participation is more often considered in the events of the nineteenth century. For example, Linda Reeder’s “When the Men Left Sutera: Sicilian Women and Mass Migration 1880-1920” explains how women maintained businesses, generated revenue, and encouraged the men of their families to migrate temporarily to America and return with money to build and improve both family and community. This dissertation shows that seventeenth-century Darien women also facilitated migration in similar patterns to Reeder’s subjects. Akram Khater’s *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870-1920* shows how women’s circular migrating reshaped the nature of life in their home country once they returned from their own economic pursuits in America. So too, the Darien shaped the cultural perceptions of women’s economic opportunities from Atlantic investments associated with mobility and transatlantic commerce. Even E. G. Ravenstein’s “The Laws of Migration,” published in 1898, is still

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<sup>26</sup> Anna McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 357.

<sup>27</sup> McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 359.

relevant today and addresses how women and men moved within national borders.<sup>28</sup> Though he examines migrations within England, Ravenstein's approach is a useful model for asking whether the women of Scotland saw the draw of Edinburgh or Glasgow as desirable destinations to increase their own earning potential. Ravenstein's model is useful compliment, as he questions of his data sources to explain why English women left the safety of remote agricultural family networks for more favorable urban centers, knowing full well that the lack of supportive networks of family and kin left them vulnerable to unknown dangers of urban locales. This dissertation makes similar arguments about Scotswomen, their immediate families, and subsequent generations in decades before and after the colonizing venture that began in 1698. These migration studies shape the research and are useful texts for illustrating shifting trends towards clarifying women's influence on early modern migrations.

Foundational to all works of early modern women is Merry Wiesner-Hanks' many editions of *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, which is especially useful for contextualizing broader trends of women's relationships to the economy and work.<sup>29</sup> Marsha Hamilton examines the networks connecting Britain to Massachusetts beginning in the early seventeenth century, and briefly mentions the Darien colony in *Social and Economic Networks in Early Massachusetts: Atlantic Connections*. She examines the myriad of nations participating in the Massachusetts economy, including the French, Irish, English and Scottish merchants in Massachusetts. She highlights the Scots' Charitable

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28 E. G. Ravenstein, "The Laws of Migration," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 52, no. 2 (1898): 241-305.

29 Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 112-156. The Invisible Hands: Women and Work Conference took place at the University of Glasgow in May 2018 and Wiesner-Hanks called for historians to look beyond merely English history as a way to understand women and work and to look for geographic diversity for a more complex understanding of women's roles in the early modern era.

Society of Boston that aided to the Darien survivors when they landed there and acknowledges the importance of second- and third-generation migrations to America.<sup>30</sup> Because of the wider net she casts when dealing with networks and the economy of this particular New England region, the Scottish people comprise only a portion of her analysis. Her work is not a gendered analysis of these networks and largely examines a unidirectional mobility of mercantile networks connecting Massachusetts to the wider Atlantic world.

Early colonial migration studies like Allyson Poska's *Gendered Crossings; Women and Migration in the Spanish Empire* offers more closely aligned model for comparison for the Darien women. She shows how colonial women of the Spanish empire maneuvered their influence and status to increase their own economic standing while also meeting the needs of the state when Spain hoped to maintain footholds of power in the West.<sup>31</sup> Women of Poska's monograph were tempted with promises about the conditions in America and made decisions to travel trusting information given by the government. While some found advantages in the West, others returned to Spain disenchanted. Like some Spanish women of Poska's study, most Scottish women in this study were not inclined to stay in America after the failure of the venture in Panama. The same type of circular migration, as well as decisions to not re-migrate, are exemplified in both models showing that women and mobility, whether moving towards or away from empire, go hand in hand.

Turning the focus to histories of economy and mobility associated with

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30 Marsha L. Hamilton, *Social and Economic Networks in Early Massachusetts: Atlantic Connections* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019).

31 Allyson M. Poska, *Gendered Crossings: Women and Migration in the Spanish Empire* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2016), 207.

Scotswomen one must first acknowledge Karen Cullen, whose work examines famine in the 1690s and the influence of food shortages across Scotland that drove many to move both internally within Scotland and outside its borders. She describes migrations from Highland to Lowland regions and rural to urban as the usual trends of migration when individuals sought aid from charitable societies and larger city centers that could offer them basic necessities of food and shelter.<sup>32</sup> This dissertation adds subtle complexity to the two patterns she describes to prove that the waterways of the Firth of Forth, associated with Edinburgh, and the River Clyde, so important to Glasgow's trade, were important destinations for those seeking to find profit through labor associated with the Company's two separate ventures in 1698 and 1699.

Siobhan Talbott tackles migrations, identities, and laboring women her article "Scottish Women and the Scandinavian Wars of the Seventeenth Century" to successfully argue that "women who travelled abroad with their husbands were, of course, not with their husbands day and night, and it is staggering that their activities during the time their husbands were not present has not been previously examined."<sup>33</sup> Talbott's work coincides chronologically with in my research and is useful for verifying women's autonomy at the time of the Darien. Rosalind Carr, likewise, places elite Scotswomen at the forefront of eighteenth-century life in "Female Correspondence and Early Modern Scottish Political History: A Case Study of the Anglo-Scottish Union." The Hamilton clan worked directly in political ways within their established kin networks and Anne and Katherine Hamilton, and Katherine Skeen were each important powerbrokers whose activities "occurred in the

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32 Karen J. Cullen, "Fleeing the Famine: Migration and Emigrations" in *Famine in Scotland: The 'Ill Years' of the 1690s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010): 157-186.

33 Siobhan Talbot, "Scottish Women and the Scandinavian Wars of the Seventeenth Century," *Northern Studies* 40 (2007): 126.

formal but nevertheless public spheres of the street and household.”<sup>34</sup> Carr’s consideration of elite, literate women proves the influence of some women within their own kin networks to argue against the union between England and Scotland in 1707. Based on her study of these three elite women working in public ways to influence their political agendas there is room to argue for a reduced influence of public and private sphere in middling and lower-class women seen in the Darien ledgers.<sup>35</sup>

Rosalind Marshall’s further clarifies the elite life of Anne Hamilton in *The Days of Duchess Anne: Life in the Household of Duchess of Hamilton, 1650-1716* explores the role of an elite woman in the earliest modern period of Scotland’s history.<sup>36</sup> More recently, Amy Froide examines the ways that women participated in investing schemes, primarily in England and roughly matches the same chronology of this dissertation. As her 2017 monograph, *Silent Partners: Women as Public Investors during Britain’s Financial Revolution, 1690-1750*, concludes, she asks for more research “to be done to uncover the extent of Scots...women’s experiences of the Financial Revolution” and the degree to which they participated in the Darien Company.<sup>37</sup> This recent call by Froide substantiates the value of any study dealing of Scotland and investors, and specifically the Darien women of this research.

Misha Ewen, likewise, considers of English woman investors as early as the 1640s, in “Women Investors and the Virginia Company in the Early Seventeenth Century,”

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34 Rosalind Carr, “Female Correspondence and Early Modern Scottish Political History: A Case Study of the Anglo-Scottish Union,” *Historical Reflections* 37, no. 2, (2011): 52.

35 Carr, “Female Correspondence and Early Modern Scottish Political History,” 41. Also making the argument for women’s public agency in the years leading up to the Union, see, Karin Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion and the Anglo-Scottish Union, 1699-1707* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2007).

36 Rosalind K. Marshall, *The Days of Duchess Anne Life in the Household of Duchess of Hamilton 1650-1716* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000).

37 Amy M. Froide, *Silent Partners: Women as Public Investors during Britain’s Financial Revolution, 1690-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 210.

to show that English “women actively managed global investment portfolios, and took advantage of expanding opportunities for trade and colonization.”<sup>38</sup> Her work is particularly useful for moving the chronology of women’s involvement in the Atlantic world to a much earlier period.

Helen Dingwall’s “The Power Behind the Merchant? Women and the Economy of Late-Seventeenth Century Edinburgh” utilizes Poll Tax records and port books, each previously culled by historians to reinsert women into their own histories. Some women in Edinburgh were uniquely placed in the economic networks due to Merchant Company Guilds that allowed some women membership due to their skills, unlike legal, and religious structures that banned women’s participation in leadership roles. Dingwall’s focus on women like Elizabeth Antone, an Edinburgh moneylender in 1699, and Mary Campbell, a guild member who in 1690 imported “20,000 pins ... together with quantities of crepe, soap and needles” proves the various opportunities open to women in Scottish society prior to industrialization that changed the gender dynamics that relegated women to a more peripheral status in the coming centuries.<sup>39</sup>

These historians form the basis of the historiography for the present research and offer a means to advance the understanding of Darien women operating in public sphere in various ways in the Atlantic world. Froide, Dingwall, Carr, and others each illustrate the importance of women’s work and investments in the early modern era. This study is a response to the void in the history that directly engages with Scotswomen who chose to

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38 Misha Ewen, “Women Investors and the Virginia Company in the Early Seventeenth Century,” *The Historical Journal* 62, 4 (2019): 874.

39 Helen Dingwall, “The Power Behind the Merchant? Women and the Economy in Late-Seventeenth Century Edinburgh,” *Women in Scotland c. 1100-c. 1750*, edited by Elizabeth Ewan and Maureen M. Meikle (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), 157.



engage with the Company. Arguably, it is impossible to understand the wider Atlantic world of the seventeenth century without conducting research on the women and their networks associated with The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies.

This dissertation proves that women engaged with the Company directors and their agents in ways that were more robust than previously understood. Answering questions about who was participating in the earliest stages of a colonial venture shows that all members of the sending society were needed to ensure the success of the venture.

A brief description of the ensuing chapters explains the trajectory of the research beginning with chapter one that examines the women as investors. The economic and social networks associated with these women are traced to prove the influence of some women in Scotland had when they chose to invest their money with the Company. Not all women in this group were elite, nor as influential as the Hamilton family, but compelling insights emerge when looking reasons some might have for investing. This chapter also shows that women outside of Glasgow and Edinburgh also invested, and added to the collection of almost 100 women, of both elite and lower status, each with aspirations of profit when they invested in the Company.

Chapter two considers women producing goods or working as laborers in preparation for and in support of the two separate expeditions to Panama in 1698 and 1699. Their acts of labor and the production of goods, predominantly performed by women from the westerly region of Scotland, offered some women some monetary return from their association with the Company. The goods these women made also filled barrels and crates full of items for trade or provided for the needs of the colony in the west. This chapter further reveals that women producing goods for the Darien venture were not

limited to Scotland alone, as a handful women from Amsterdam and Hamburg profited directly from providing lumber, metal works, and other goods to The Company in 1699.

The third chapter addresses the process of migration for those who answered the call to travel, that was so necessary for the colony's success. Narratives of the physical migration across the Atlantic and to the colony, both fictively through the use of propaganda and first-hand accounts, are used to demonstrate the various ways that the directors of The Company, located in Scotland, and the council in Panama understood the need to create impressions of safety and normalcy to encourage migration. This chapter uses parish records and other sources to reveal the influences that caused some women to migrate while others remained home.

A fourth chapter examines the decision many were faced, after having survived several dangerous ocean journeys; whether to risk another Atlantic voyage back home to Scotland. By 1701 the colony's failure was certain. Its failure and aftermath are considered through the lens of the much-reduced number of Scottish wayfarers, possibly a hundred or so individuals. Here the influence of the the printed word was important for shaping the memory of the migration in Scotland. This chapter examines the various reasons some survivors made to return home to Scotland while others stayed on the southern shores of what would later become Georgia, the Carolinas, New York, or Massachusetts.

Adding to this chapter are accounts written by men make up the totality of documents recording actions in the colony. Ignacio Gallop-Diaz's *The Door of the Seas and Key to the Universe: Indian Politics and Imperial Rivalry in the Darién* offers an examination of Spanish sources and provides important secondary and primary evidence

about the Kuna people and their impressions of the Scots. People wrote about the colonists' daily activities, including the challenge of feeding and housing the travelers. Their diaries and letters home discussed military actions and engagements with the indigenous Kuna people. Where possible, this chapter explores the role of the Kuna women in addition to the Scottish women whose own voices are seldom recorded. These documents are useful for recovering how the individuals who decided to stay were influenced by earlier migrations of Scots to various regions of Britain's North American colonies who belonged to either kin or fictive kin networks.

The final chapter demonstrates the ways that women's connections to courts and The Company extended beyond the life of the colony. Women who lost family members attended to court business to secure back wages and other compensations owed them when sons, fathers, brothers, and others died. Other women pleaded for financial relief from situations that had nothing to do with the Darien but managed to gain some economic advantage from the royal edict, known as the Equivalent. A short conclusion shows the historical legacy of the Darien Scheme today and proves the value gained when positioning women of the Darien within the framework of The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies that expands the history of the seventeenth century Atlantic world.

## Chapter 1: Investing Women

An examination of the subscription list for The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies reveals that women from all social and economic groups made up five percent of the investors to the Company and were integral to sustaining the creation of the Darien venture.<sup>1</sup> Men and women alike were moved to join in the venture for various reasons, including “a patriotic desire for national enrichment and economic independence” for Scotland.<sup>2</sup> Traders chafed under the Navigation Acts that restricted their trade in the wider Atlantic, so economic independence emerging from a venture such as the Scottish Company had the potential to boost the financial circumstances of individual investors, numbering approximately 2,000 individuals.<sup>3</sup> If the Company succeeded, then merchants believed that all living within Scotland’s borders stood to benefit.

The situations of some of the investors, especially the women, required foresight while planning for their own economic future, especially when ensuring the security of their kin groups. To this end, family and peers were influential in motivating some investors to risk banking on the Company’s efforts in the Indies, suggesting that for some it was less about national pride and more about financial betterment. Social pressures associated with status may have also influenced some to invest, whether individually or

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1 Jones, “The Bold Adventure,” 30.

2 Christopher A. Whatley and Derek J. Patrick, *The Scots and the Union* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 168; also mentioning patriotism as a key motivator is Watt, “The Management of Capital by the Company of Scotland,” 102; Watt, *The Price of Scotland*, 86.

3 Watt, “The Management of Capital by the Company of Scotland,” 103.

within their kin groups. Looking at individual investors' lives clarifies the ways that women maneuvered family economies in the early modern era.

The last decade of the seventeenth century was particularly difficult for many Scottish families. Low yields of staple crops, famine, and disease affected many areas of the country.<sup>4</sup> Some writers have compared the situation to conditions in Ireland in the 1840s, which caused many to consider internal or external migrations. Subscription lists for the Darien Scheme prove that, despite such hardships, men and women from all of Scotland's classes found ways to invest in the plan.

Women subscribed as a matter of practical investment, striving to contribute to their own economic survival and the futures of their children. Tracing risk-based investments and the participation of women in various economic opportunities within the early modern era expand what is known about women's role in history. The case of the Darien venture, although devastating to some merchant economies in Scotland and partially responsible for the union of England and Scotland in 1707, offers innovative insights into the lives of some Scottish women who were brave to consider financial risks as a means to reinforce or diversify family economies in the seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup>

Company directors, all of them men, were responsible for the planning and implementation of the company venture. Once the plans were in place, it was necessary to get the word out into the community. One of the ways that both women and men

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4 Cullen, "Fleeing the Famine: Migration and Emigrations," 157-186.

5 For an example of early modern English women investors in the Virginia Company see Misha Ewan, "Women Investors and the Virginia Company in the Early Seventeenth Century," *The Historical Journal* 62, no. 4 (2019): 853-874.

learned of where and when to subscribe and the events associated with the Darien colony was by reading broadsides, pamphlets, and shared by word of mouth.<sup>6</sup>

A broadside from 1696 offers some of the earliest evidence of public education on the topic, but it also proves that women were central to and part of the Company's investment plans from the very beginning.<sup>7</sup>

The COMPANY of  
**SCOTLAND,**  
Trading to  
**Africa and the Indies,**  
Do hereby give Notice.

**T**HAT their Bookes of Subscription, will be opened at *Edinburgh on Wednesday the 26 of this Instant February* at the House of Mrs. *Pardee* in the North side of the High-Street over against the Cross, and will continue every day of the Week, *Lord's Days* only excepted, from Ten in the Clock in the Morning till Twelve, and from Two in the Afternoon till four, untill the day of *March* next, or untill the Compleat Sum of Three Hundred Thousand Pounds *Sterling* shall be Subscribed; One Quarter part whereof shall be payed to Two, or more of the Persons Named in the Act of Parliament, upon or before the first day of *June* now next ensuing: But in Regard of the occasion the Company may have for present Money, such as pay in the same sooner, will be allowed a Discount, at the Rate of Twelve *per Cent. per Annum*, or Eight pences *per Diem* upon each Hundred Pound *Sterling*, from the time of their payment to the said first of *June*.

And for the greater Ease and Convenience of such as are willing to be Concerned: The Company do further Declare, That for such as live at a distance, or cannot come in person to Subscribe; A Deputation in Writing to any other to Subscribe for him her, or them, together with one Fourth part of the Money to be Subscribed, or Bond for the same payable the first of *June* next will be accepted by the Company, and be as sufficient, as if the parties were personally present themselves to Subscribe.

And as to the Remaining Three fourth parts of Every Mans Subscription to be payed to the Company whensoever the same shall be called in, it shall be in Three equal parts or payments. The first whereof will not be called for in less than a Year to come, And for the Two last payments, The Company Resolve to let them Remain as a Fund of Security to the Company, and not to call for the same or any part thereof, unless upon some pressing occasion; And further that no Advantage or Forfeiture will be taken by the Company for the Non-payment of the Remaining parts of any ones Subscription; But the Company will only Sell or Dispose of such a share of Stock in the Company to pay the Money to be advanced, And the Remainder thereof shall be returned to the Owners thereof.

*Here followeth a Copy of the Preamble for Subscription.*

*Edinburgh,* 1696

**P**Uissant to an Act of Parliament, Entituled, *All for a Company Trading to Africa and the Indies*, We under-Subscribers, do each of us for himself, become obliged for the payment of the Respective Sums severally Subscribed by us subject to the Rules, Conditions, and Constitutions of the said Company.

Do hereby Depute  
To Subscribe for me in the  
Books of the Company of *Scotland*, Trading to *Africa* and the *Indies* the  
Sum of \_\_\_\_\_ pound *Sterling*.

*Form of a Receipt to be given upon the first Payment.*

*Edinburgh* 1696

**R**Eceived then of \_\_\_\_\_ Being the First  
The Sum of \_\_\_\_\_ Fourth part of his Subscription in the Capital Fund of the Company of  
*Scotland*, Trading to *Africa* and the *Indies*, We say Received for the  
use of the said Company.  
By Us.

*The Form of the Bond, to be Subscribed by such as do not pay in their Fourth Parts.*

**I** Oblige me my Heirs and  
Executors to pay to the Company of *Scotland*, Trading to *Africa* and  
the *Indies*, or to whom they shall appoint the Sum of \_\_\_\_\_  
As the Fourth part of the  
Sum Subscribed for by me, in the Capital Stock or Fund of the said  
Company, and that betwixt and the first day of *June* Next, with the Sum  
of \_\_\_\_\_ Money forelaid of Liquidate  
Expenses in case of Failure by and at our the said Principal Sum with the  
due, and ordinary Annual rent of the said Principal Sum after the said day  
of Payment, Yearly, Monthly, and proportionally, during the not pay-  
ment And for the more Security I am content and Consent, That this  
Prefets be Registrate in the Books of Council and Session, or in any  
other Judges Books competent, to have the Strength of a Decree of any  
of the Judges thereof interponed hereon, That Letters and Executorial  
of Hiving and pointing on a Charge of six Days, and all others needful  
may als hereupon in Form as Affairs; And for that Effect constitute  
In Wines whereof I have Subscribed these Prefents at \_\_\_\_\_  
The Day of \_\_\_\_\_ My Procurator:  
and \_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_ One Thousand six Hundred

<sup>6</sup> For an explanation of literacy associate with Scotland and how literacy influenced public opinion, see Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion*, 20-31.

<sup>7</sup> Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies, *The Company of Scotland trading to Africa and the Indies, do hereby give notice That Their books of subscription, will be opened at Edinburgh on Wednesday the 26 of this instant February* (Edinburgh: 1696).

*Notice for the opening of Subscriptions*

A close inspection of this published advertisement for the Company and how interested parties could subscribe shows that a Mrs. Purdie was involved and present from its very launch into the public arena. She was solicited by the Company directors very early in the planning stages, and her contract with them was to provide “Chamber rent before the Company bought their house.”<sup>8</sup> Hers was not a temporary or seasonal business in Edinburgh. Rather it was a brick and mortar centerpiece among the many commercial businesses found along Edinburgh’s High Street and Purdie exemplified the type of rental opportunities taking place in this city.<sup>9</sup> Anyone considering investing was directed along the cobbled road to Purdie’s place as the first step in fulfilling their personal aspirations as adventurer in a joint stock company. Like the imaginary rhumb lines of a map, Purdie’s was the venture’s epicenter and women like her were present from its inception.

In 1698, The Company Trading to Africa and the Indies moved from renting space from Mrs. Purdie to constructing its own building to conduct business. This allowed them more space to manage the growing numbers of subscribers’ accounts and the many meetings associated with the management of the Company. The structure, called the Darien House, no longer stands. But descriptions of the building help us imagine the “two-

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<sup>8</sup> Adv.Ms.83.3.2, 1. Later, in 1715 as the Royal Bank of Scotland sought property for office space and “decided that ‘the large house at the foot of the Ship Close’ then in the joint occupancy of two tenants, Mrs. Cotton and Mr. Marishall, Limner, was suitable, ‘being in a central place and detached from other houses, which guards against fire’. On 1st September Mrs. Cotton was reported to the Board as willing to remove elsewhere for ‘a compliment of £50’; and Mr. Marishall was equally agreeable to ‘flit’ for a compensation of £25”; Neil Munro, *The History of the Royal Bank of Scotland 1727-1927* (Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, 1929), 40. As proven in later chapters, women like Purdie and Cotton were competent negotiators who profited from dealings with the Company and the remnants, after its failure.

<sup>9</sup> T. M. Devine, “The Merchant Class of the Larger Scottish Towns in the Later Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Scottish Urban History*, ed. George Gordon and Brian Dicks (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1983): 106.

storeyed and substantial edifice, built of polished freestone, with the high-pitched roof that came into fashion with William of Orange.”<sup>10</sup> Its architects designed the building with dreams of the success of the Darien venture in mind, as evident from the “eight arched niches” that were decoratively designed to display the busts of its founders.<sup>11</sup> The likenesses of William Paterson and other elite men like the Duke of Hamilton (William Douglas) would loom large over Edinburghians as they passed below. It is unclear whether Duchess Anne of Hamilton, the Company’s very first investor, had a place reserved for her alongside the other seven niches. The Company’s failure, however, relegates any discussion about who might have appeared as figureheads to supposition. The Company and the colony disbanding in a few short years. As time passed, the Darien House, once the center for transatlantic commerce for some merchants in Scotland, was transformed into a “lunatic asylum for the paupers” and Edinburgh’s less fortunate until 1871, when it was torn down and replaced by more modern structures.<sup>12</sup>

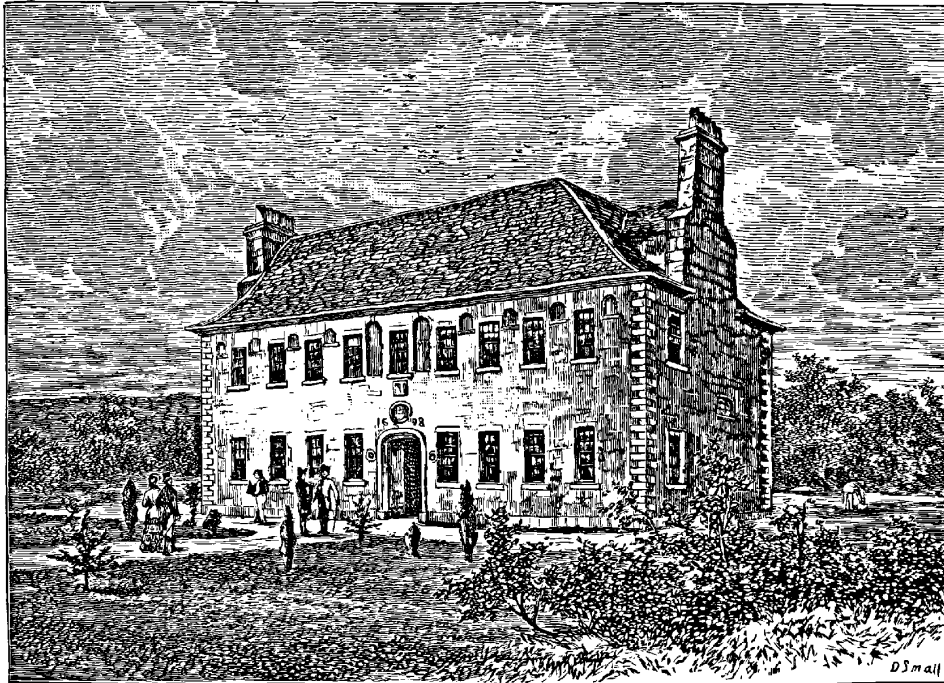
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10 James Grant, *Old and New Edinburgh*, vol. 4 (Lang Syne Publishers, 1979), 323

11 Grant, *Old and New Edinburgh*, 323.

12 Grant, *Old and New Edinburgh*, 324.





DARIEN HOUSE, 1750.

*The Darien House from Grant's Old and New Edinburgh*

Might the transformation of the building and its legacy coincide with the erasure of the activities of the women associated with the Darien venture? The 1800s ushered in the Industrial Revolution in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and histories record the influence of important men who transformed the nation's economic landscape into one of thriving international trade. Glasgow became known as a center for the ship building trade, along with textile and coal, and Edinburgh's position as a center for banking and politics is well regarded.<sup>13</sup> Old buildings like the Darien House were repurposed or removed for the sake of progress. It is reasonable to conclude that the booming trade of the industrial revolution of the 1800s obscured these women from the view of histories written about the Darien

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<sup>13</sup> Devine, "The Merchant Class of the Larger Scottish Towns," 93.

Scheme. Based on rigorous competition, the successes of Scotland's industrialization and modernization fomented a hyper-masculine space where steel and political influence reigned, overshadowing the complexity of the less noted, but equally significant, people who lived during the Darien moment. It is clear that, with the emergence of Scotland's industrial age, the influence of these Darien women was forgotten. Catherine Spence convincingly argues that an increase of competitive markets pushed many women out of local and international earning enterprises in the sixteenth century in Edinburgh.<sup>14</sup> It is clear from the Darien records that some women still managed a firm grip on maintaining their influence as transatlantic goods producers.

The engagement of women as investors speaks to the degree of economic mobility present during the Darien moment in the late seventeenth century. Just as women were used to help normalize colonized spaces in dangerous lands far afield, the presence of investing women not only added to the economic strength of the Company, but served as evidence of the safety of early modern investments.<sup>15</sup> If daughters, wives, and mothers were quick to subscribe, then all others could enjoy a measure of comfort should they choose to invest. There is no need to look deeply into the subscription lists to find women asserting their influence and position as investors—the first people to subscribe to the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies were women.

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14 Cathryn Spence, "Women and Business in Sixteenth-Century Edinburgh: Evidence from their Testaments," *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 28, no. 1 (2008): 6.

15 For recent monographs dealing with English women investors see Froide, *Silent Partners*; Ewen, "Women Investors and the Virginia Company in the Early Seventeenth Century"; Mark Freeman, Robin Pearson, and James Taylor, "'A Doe in the City': Women Shareholders in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Britain," *Accounting, Business & Financial History* 16, no. 2 (July 1, 2006). Allyson M. Poska addresses women and migration from Spain in *Gendered Crossings: Women and Migration in the Spanish Empire* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2016).

On February 26, 1696, three elite women stepped out of brisk Edinburgh weather and into Mrs. Purdie's place of business on the north side of High Street. Anne Duchess of Hamilton, Margaret Countess of Rothesse, and Lady Margaret Hope of Hopetoun surely coordinated efforts to ensure they were the first people in line that day. The ledger book begins "pursuant to an Act of Parliament, entitled, Act for a Company trading to Africa and the Indies, We, under Subscribers, do each of us for himself become obliged by us, subject to the Rules, Conditions and Constitutions of the said Company," and each of these women believed herself equal in economic ability to the men who waited behind them in the subscription line.<sup>16</sup> Collectively, these three women promised £8,000. Of the sixty-nine people who subscribed on the opening day of the subscription books, only one other matched the promise of £3,000 offered by Duchess Anne Hamilton; it was Lord John Bellhaven.

The fact that no other women subscribed this day says a great deal about the coordinated efforts of these three and the possibility that they had been asked by the Company directors to join in the opening day transactions to boost interest and give an impression of safe investment. Some describe the duchess as receiving "intense pressure from [William] Paterson" to subscribe in the venture, further illustrating the power of women as symbols of stability and economic support.<sup>17</sup> She believed it to be "a good thing for the nation" and was "resolved to give what assistance I can to it."<sup>18</sup>

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16 Adv.Ms.83.1.1, 1. Historians working on the subject can be certain of the order of individuals walking into Purdie's place of business and the days that they invested due to the preservation of the Company's documents. Investors names appear in order and their signature indicates their presence in the historical moment in 1696. Consequently, a clear understanding can be gained regarding any questions that formed and whether friends, families, and acquaintances invested at the same time or on different days.

17 Watt, "The Management of Capital by the Company of Scotland," 105.

18 Marshall, *The Days of Duchess Anne*, 220.

Regardless of any coordination on the part of the Company, these women served as encouragement for other men and women to subscribe. One early twentieth-century source suggests that the “scheme appealed strongly to the ladies of Scotland.”<sup>19</sup> They also symbolized a strong feminine presence that demanded that any Scotsman sitting on the fence on the matter of whether or not to subscribe to the Company should evaluate his own masculine position before declining such an opportunity.

On February 29, 1699 Marion Cleghorn subscribed like the first three elite women who subscribed before her three days before.<sup>20</sup> Like them, she earned the recognition of being the first subscriber on that day. Her £100 promise was half that of Adam Cleghorn, her kin and likely nephew, who joined her in line and signed for the value of £200 for the Company. Her husband Thomas Robertson had served as witness to Adam’s baptism back in 1674 and she was most certainly at his side during the family’s celebration.<sup>21</sup> Marion was a woman approaching her seventies at the time of her subscription, and she enjoyed the benefit of her twenty-two year old Adam as he escorted her to Mrs. Purdie’s. Adam’s support of the Company was further exemplified when he traveled to New York in April 1699 upon the Company’s direction to help the straggling ships as they made their way to ports in New England colonies of North America.<sup>22</sup> In August 14, 1699 he wrote from New York, explaining the poor health of those who were fortunate to survive the

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19 Barbour, *A History of Paterson and the Darien Company with Illustrations and Appendices*, 25.

20 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 515.

21 Adam Cleghorn’s Baptism, *Old Parish Registers*, 685/1 70, 436.

22 Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies, *The Darien Papers Being a Selection of Original Letters and Official Documents Relating to the Establishment of a Colony at Darien by the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies, 1695-1700*, (Edinburgh, Bannatyne Club: Thomas Constable and selected and edited by John H. Burton, 1849), 36-37 hereafter listed as Burton, *The Darien Papers*, 148.

“tragically period of our Scotts African affairs.”<sup>23</sup> At the same time that Adam wrote of the ill health of the colonists, Marion’s health began to wane and she passed away on September 8, 1699 never witnessing the failure of the Company. Adam returned to Scotland and managed to secure what was due to himself and Marion in 1707.<sup>24</sup> It is clear that Marion’s interests in the Company transitions from concern about profit to concern about family and their connection with the Company, when she learned that Adam would be traveling to New York.

Marion Cleghorn’s family is considered a merchant elite as her husband served as Baillie for Edinburgh. While she may have had the means to invest more her subscription is offered here also as an example of the minimum investment that any one person or a collection of people could promise when hoping to profit through the Company.<sup>25</sup> Burghs, guilds, towns, and universities came together and pooled their smaller denominations to meet this minimum. Towns like Irving and Dunbar each managed to amass £100 collectively, while the largest cities like Edinburgh and Glasgow promised £3000. Cobbling together these smaller amounts ensured that all who wished to might have a way to participate, each to his or her own ability. Collectivizing subscriptions allowed individuals to rally behind the idea of imperial dreams while also mitigating financial dangers of larger losses for those who may have only brought £5. Clearly any loss risked impacting the family or individual investor. It is widely agreed upon that women also engaged in these collective investments, but the degree to which they did so is difficult to determine. Jones describes fourteen women from the town of Brechin’s collective

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23 Burton, *The Darien Papers*, 149.

24 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 515.

25 Watt, *The Price of Scotland*, 28.

subscription investing as little as £5, but efforts in the archives associated with this dissertation have yet to identify of these women or their stories and will require more research.<sup>26</sup> Misha Ewan's research of women as part of the English investors in the Virginia Company found that £12.10 of English money per share in the early 1600s was an amount that was "relatively affordable."<sup>27</sup> By comparison, women like Marion Cleghorn's £100 promise was more than their English counterparts, based on the minimum allowed. Tracking the single digit investors in the Scottish company may match more closely to Ewan's findings of English investors, though more work is needed to determine the identities and amounts to compare the groups.

Under the watchful eye of Mrs. Purdie's warm hospitality, the first fires of empire were stoked. In this germinal period in the formation of The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies, the dreams of some Scots were realized, and men and women with the desire or means imagined ways of benefiting from far-off markets. Over ninety women ultimately were investors or recipients of subscriptions, and all were willing to open their purse strings according to their economic affluence and ability. Approximately £19,200 pounds sterling was collected from these subscribing women. The purchasing power afforded to the Company from the money that these women subscribed exceeded the £18,921 that was paid to outfit the cargoes all five ships that left Scotland on the first expedition.<sup>28</sup> Another way to contextualize the economic input of these women is illustrated when examining the cost two of the Company's ships; the *Unicorn* cost £8,687 and the *Caledonia* was £10,715 for a total of £19,400. Either figure, when calculated

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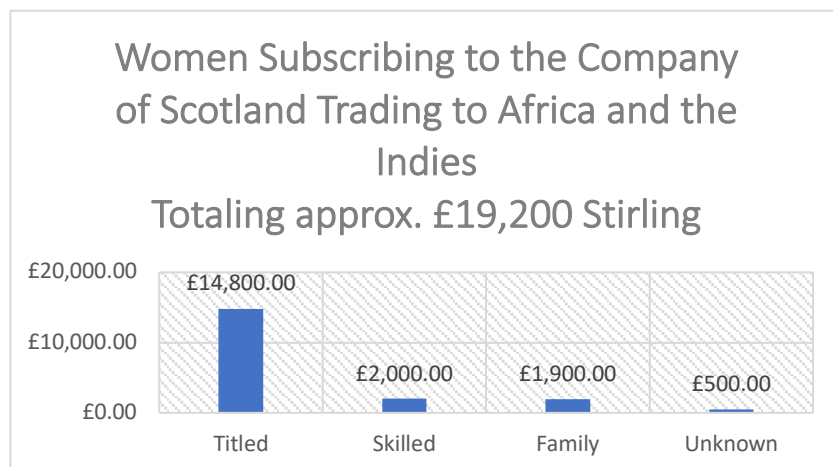
26 Jones, "The Bold Adventurers," 34.

27 Ewan, "Women Investors and the Virginia Company in the Early Seventeenth Century," 6.

28 Watt, "The Management of Capital by the Company of Scotland," 110.

against these two examples helps to assert that need the Company had in gathering as many investors as possible. Placing these women's subscriptions alongside expenses incurred by the Company proves the critical financial reward the directors saw when including investing women. Additionally, it is clear from Ewan's work that women had a long history of investing and the Scottish directors were replicating investment patterns familiar during the time.

These women can be separated into four categories. The first is made up of thirty-nine women identified as having peerage or elite status or having links to men with military titles. These individuals together gave £14,800. The second category is made up of nineteen women whose families belonged to skilled or merchant trades, and this group contributed £2,000 to the scheme. Occupations such as merchants, professors, ministers, doctors, and a winemaker fall within this group. Seventeen women in a third category either identified themselves only with family designations such as Mrs., relict, sister, or daughter of a man, and £1,900 was their financial commitment. The final group is comprised of women who merely appeared as names without any additional descriptors. Five such women were mentioned by first or last name only, and they promised a total of £500 to the cause. This snapshot is useful for contextualizing the general demographics of women investors and will prove useful for beginning a discussion of their reasons for investment.



*Women subscription broken down by category*

Elite women from the first group made up a little over seventy-five percent of the total collected from all women who subscribed. Anne, Duchess of Hamilton's investment of £3,000 matched the amount invested by any Scottish man willing to gamble on the company.<sup>29</sup> While this amount afforded Duchess Anne the opportunity to see a larger return on her investment than other women in this analysis, it also positioned her as one with the most to lose. Anne's elite status could not protect her from economic losses associated with the Darien venture. The failure was devastating for all its investors, as well as the burghs and businesses that subscribed. Even after the colony was deserted, Anne used her elite status to discourage family members and elite peers from supporting Scotland's redoubled efforts to form a joint stock company and, more importantly, to resist the offered union between England and Scotland.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> List of Subscribers. The Duke of Hamilton also invested in the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies, however each of the couple's investments appears as an individual entry in the subscription book.

<sup>30</sup> Rosalind Carr, "Female Correspondence and Early Modern Scottish Political History: A Case Study of the Anglo-Scottish Union," 39–57; Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion and the Anglo-Scottish Union*, 147 and 156; Rosalind K Marshall, "Hamilton, Katherine, Duchess of Atholl (1662–1707)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.



One group of women that provides some of the strongest evidence indicating why women chose to invest were those with children under the age of fifteen. Of all of the women investors, this group perhaps faced the most unique set of circumstances when it came time to deciding whether or not to invest in the Company. Regardless of their economic standing as elite or non-elite women, the reasons they invested were likely different from and more urgent than those without minors in the home who needed care.<sup>31</sup> Investor Elizabeth Scott offers a composite of what life events drove some of these women towards the considerable risks associated with empire investing.

Elizabeth Scott was a widow with young children when she invested in the Company. Clerks recorded her status as “relict,” a more common term to categorize people whose spouses had died. She and her husband, Captain James Wauchope, were a well-connected couple in Edinburgh, as evidenced by the people with whom they surrounded themselves. Together they had at least four children before James died sometime before 1696, and many within their network are found in the baptismal records associated with their children’s births. When Elizabeth subscribed to the venture

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31 The age for determining children’s categorization into a group is gleaned from Act anent the poor, 1 September 1698. *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, K.M. Brown et al eds (St Andrews, 2007-2018), 1698/7/165. Likely some young men and women of this age could be married. Taking cues from this 1698 source seems useful as it this act indicates that after the age of fifteen a child was legally able to maneuver adulthood with some degree of autonomy. Children falling on hard times under the age of fifteen required protection from state or church. The age of 15 is also a defining age from child to adult as seen in 1695 from the “Decreet for the heirs of Sir Thomas Nicolson of Carnock and their husbands against Sir Thomas Nicolson of Tillcoultry” in the *Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707* [1695/5/131]. The term pupillarity was one of the measures of child’s minor status. George A. Mackay utilized this term in *Practice of the Scottish Poor Law in 1907*, when addressing legal age when children were considered within or outside the purview of paternal care in the family. The *Concise Scots Dictionary* states that the term pupillarity being used in legal circles in Scotland in the late 1600s. John Erskine’s *The Principles of the Law of Scotland* (1754) define the “stages of life principally distinguished in law are, pupillarity, puberty, or minority, and majority. A child is under pupillarity from the birth till 14 years of age if a male, and till 12 if a female. Minority begins where pupillarity ends, and continues till majority, which, by the law of Scotland, is the age of 21 years compleat, both in males and females; but minority in a large sense includes all under age, whether pupils or puberes. Because pupils cannot in any degree act for themselves, and minors seldom with discretion, pupils are put by law under the power of tutors, and minors may be put themselves under the direction of curators,” 77-78.

promising to invest £100 in 1696 her oldest son John was only eleven, followed by ten-year-old Andrew, eight-year-old James, and seven-year-old Elizabeth. The baptismal records show that the couple's family and friends network included people like doctors, merchant guild leaders, and others with some degree of political influence. These were the people whom Elizabeth would lean on and who lent emotional support and advice as she maneuvered through the first years of her widowhood with young children under her care.<sup>32</sup>

Elizabeth Scott remarried, this time to Captain John Steuart of Livingston, and together they had two more children, Ann and a son who was unnamed in the record. Elizabeth's life fell into the more predictable work and rhythm of motherhood as they raised the children in this newly blended family. At some time she viewed the task of money management as a more suitable task for John or a matter of mere convenience, when she transferred responsibility of her stock investment to him, leaving it to him to coordinate the matter of collecting the £60.8 that was due her on August 29, 1707.<sup>33</sup>

When life conditions were unsure, the widowed Elizabeth took the necessary steps to manage her own investments and utilized the Darien venture because of its potential to evolve into a sturdy, dependable source of funds for herself and her children. A shift occurred once Elizabeth married. She no longer inserted herself into dealings with the Company. She passed these responsibilities to her second husband, who also managed

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<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth's family and friend network is determined from those people who served as witness to the birth of James and Elizabeth's children. See James Wauchope's Baptism, NRS, 685/1 100, 223; Elizabeth Wauchope's Baptism, NRS, 685/1 110, 88. It was customary for men to serve as witnesses to baptisms. This custom requires more research from historians when extrapolating women's connections to the men appearing in the parish records associated with a particular baptism.

<sup>33</sup> Adv.Ms.83.2.4, 2.

the affairs associated with the Company for her brother, Francis Scott of Mangertoun.<sup>34</sup> In this example Elizabeth Scott's involvement with the Company expanded and contracted based on her own needs, which changed depending upon her situation.

Bessie Bogle was another young, widowed mother who also sought economic advantage in the Company. She married Robert Bogle, a Glasgow merchant of some renown, in 1682. Within ten years they had at least six children, the youngest being around three years of age in 1696 when Bessie invested £100 and was identified as "relict of Robert Bogle." The Bogles family included many members who were engaged in the sugar and tobacco trade in the West, and their degree of social and economic status left Bessie well-provided for after the death of her husband.<sup>35</sup> Bessie was not one to rely only on her family connections and their business practices to help her maneuver her family's finances. Her investment reflected her knowledge gained from living alongside Atlantic trader members of her family.

Once the subscription books were close, people like Bessie and Elizabeth received notice from the Company directors to begin paying portions of the money that promise. It is not necessary to speculate about the creditworthiness of the subscribing women; their payments speak for themselves. The work of Company clerks indicate that early modern women were qualified and able to manage their own accounts. An examination of the payments made by these women over time proves that a woman's signature promising to pay was worth much more than just her word.

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<sup>34</sup> Relationships between Francis and Elizabeth clarified through The Papers of the Montague-Douglas-Scott Family, Dukes of Buccleuch, National Records of Scotland, GC224.

<sup>35</sup> As naming patterns were different in Scotland and women retained their surnames, it is very likely that Bessie and Robert were kin; Whatley, *The Scots and the Union*, 125.

Scotswomen promising to pay debts overwhelmingly demonstrated their creditworthiness. The Company papers were categorized in such a way that individual names were recorded along with each person's timely payment, sometimes referred to as payments "called up," and were assigned to one of four different categories. The first, and most numerous, lists those who paid all their portion to the Company, indicated by the notation "all." A second categorization lists those who met three-fourths of their payments. The amounts called up for this group were 25%, 7.5%, and 5% of the total promised by the subscriber. A third category were those who only paid half of what was owed, that being 25% and 7.5% of their promised subscription when required by the company. A fourth category was those only making one payment of 25%.<sup>36</sup>

One woman appearing in this last category was Rachel Johnston, also known as Lady Jerviswood. She had high hopes for her £200 investment in 1696, but she would not live long enough to see the first ships leave for the colony, as funeral records indicate her internment in Greyfriars Cemetery in February 1697.<sup>37</sup> In the mid-1690s financial difficulties associated with crop failures and inflation caused Company directors to alert "any subscriber who had not paid by 10 August was to have their shareholding pursued according to the law or disposed of."<sup>38</sup> No women appear as non-payers. The absence of women in this list of non-payers proves that women in the seventeenth century possessed money management skills sufficient to manage their participation in joint stock companies.<sup>39</sup>

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36 Adv.Ms.823.2.6.

37 Scottish Records Society, *Index to Genealogies, Birthbriefs and Funeral Escutcheons Recorded in the Lyon Office*, (Edinburgh: James Skinner & Co, 1908), 30.

38 Watt, "The Management of Capital by the Company of Scotland," 107.

39 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 508.

Women, like men, were held financially accountable for making payments called up by The Company on six different dates between June 1, 1696, and February 2, 1700, and not all of the money promised was collected, due to the colony's failure. The amount refunded to the investors was just over £219,000, calculated at £153,448 paid by the investors plus the five percent interest owed to them.<sup>40</sup> This repayment was known as the Equivalent and will be explained more completely in chapter six of this dissertation.

The fifteenth Article of the Treaty of Union between England and Scotland granted the investors in the dissolved colonizing effort five percent out of the Equivalent accounts.<sup>41</sup> In response, in 1707 a list was tabulated of all of the men and women who had subscribed and made payments to determine which "sundry persons their acct of debt standing out" on their full subscription "they not having paid the first  $\frac{1}{4}$  nor any part thereof and therefore is there brought over to their account of debt standing out."<sup>42</sup>

Barbara Fraizer is an example of one of the many women who made good on all of her financial obligations to the Company. Barbara took her accounting obligations seriously, as did the fifty-five other women who managed to meet all financial deadlines as they were called up. She made the choice to invest alongside her daughter, Elizabeth Sterling. Barbara was a newly widowed mother in her mid-forties with at least six children. Her sons, James and Patrick, were thirteen and eleven when she invested £200 for herself and £100 for her daughter Elizabeth.<sup>43</sup> She exemplifies a category of women who

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40 Whatley, *The Scots and the Union*, 254.

41 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 608.

42 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 507.

43 Barbara and George's children are discovered through the baptismal records from Edinburgh and are as follows: George (November 12, 1672), Mary (July 31, 1675), William (August 17, 1677), Robert (September 25, 1679), James (December 20, 1682), and Patrick (November 21, 1684). Barbara's last name was recorded as "Frizzell" on her son's George baptismal record, leading some to separate this Barbara and Elizabeth from their family groupings. However, I can say with certainty that they are one in the same. In George, the elder's, testament George younger is listed as the eldest son to the deceased

looked at the Darien venture as a means to add a measure of economic control to their lives, while understanding that life offered no guarantees. George Stirling's standing as a doctor in Edinburgh likely meant that Barbara Frazier had sufficient means to guarantee her own financial safety and creature comforts after her husband died. She made four timely payments and earned 5% interest on them.<sup>44</sup> Neither she, nor any other investor, realized the full measure of economic success she had hoped for when the Company failed. But her intentions and actions prove the ways that these early modern women investors were good money managers, and their capital was important to the venture.

Not all women were as conscientious of deadlines when paying funds due to the Company as Barbara Frazier. Another group of people who paid all but one payment towards their subscribed amount called up, including women. Like the previous group, many of these women were elite. Henrietta Murray, known also as Lady Glenae, was married only ten years when she and her sister-in-law, Agnes Dalyell, both subscribed to the venture. Agnes paid more attention to deadlines or was more financially able to make all the payments whereas Henrietta, her sister-in-law, was not.<sup>45</sup>

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George Stirling churigeon/apothecary. This proves the family connections from George younger to elder. More information confirms Barbara and George links to the larger family unit when looking at their second child, Mary. Here, Barbara's name is recorded as Fraizer, confirming maternal name matches. Additionally, baby's George and Mary's baptisms are witnessed by the same individuals: George Corkburn, Doctor Michael Young, Thomas Kinkaid and John Murray. The death records of George and the baptismal records of the two eldest children remove any question about the death or testament of elder George and the misidentification of Barbara's last name at the time of her first child. A baptismal record for Elizabeth has yet to be discovered. It is possible that she is a seventh child whose document did not survive. Or perhaps Elizabeth was baptized as Mary but over time a middle or given name of Elizabeth may have emerged as her preferred name. Regardless, the Darien documents add nuance to the family and give visibility to a daughter who does not immediately appear in the parish documents. This family's network helps to emphasize the importance of looking for women in unusual places. It also helps position the rest of the young children within the family group.

<sup>44</sup> Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 534 and 535

<sup>45</sup> See Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 542 for Henrietta's payment and Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 555 for Agnes.

Twelve women were among those who managed to make timely subscription payments for two of the four requests called up by the Company. Like the other groupings, the majority of women found here were also elite; nine of the twelve fell into this category. In this group there were two amounts subscribed by investors; amounts of £200 and £100. Almost half of the women promised to provide £200 support to the venture; Veronica Areskine,<sup>46</sup> Lady Susan Campbell,<sup>47</sup> Margaret Hamilton (also known as Lady Bangour),<sup>48</sup> and Christian Dundass.<sup>49</sup> Five other women—Cicilia Fotheringham,<sup>50</sup> Marie Douglas,<sup>51</sup> Helen Johnston,<sup>52</sup> Jean Mercer,<sup>53</sup> and Janet Carse<sup>54</sup>—each signed promissory notes that guaranteed their support to the Company fronting £100. It is unclear why these women were able to only meet half of their payments, especially given the elite status of some. Possibly, they simply overlooked due dates for payments to the Company or lacked ready funds. Life changes, too, could also present obstacles for women, influencing their ability to pay.

Looking at these women through the lens of the Darien ledgers illustrates that even when fifty-five women of various economic categories met all obligations with the Company, other women who enjoyed an elite status had trouble meeting their financial obligations like the women above. Is it possible to determine and compare how women of lower social or economic status understood their financial obligations to the Company?

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46 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 548.

47 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 543.

48 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 534.

49 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 541.

50 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 535.

51 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 555.

52 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 546.

53 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 548.

54 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 533.

Three merchant/middling class women also appear in this fifty-percent category. And their payment history reveals that they managed their accounts similarly to their elite counterparts. The first considered here is Margaret Murehead. James Murehead, one of Edinburgh's surgeon apothecaries, had at least two daughters, Margaret and Elizabeth. He was responsible for the purchase of shares for both women. James was one of the first people to make his way to Mrs. Purdie's coffeehouse on February 28, 1696 and subscribed £200 for the venture. His enthusiasm for the venture is exemplified when he returned later that same day to purchase two £100 individual shares for each of his daughters.<sup>55</sup>

Asking why James and others invested in this manner is useful for understanding changes in the minds of investors. It also shows that while the distribution of subscriptions may have been a safety net for the family collectively, individual members may have lacked the means to meet the obligations promised, in proxy, by others in the family. One can imagine also that a discussion took place between the two sisters and their father that compelled him to subscribe for them after he had already subscribed for himself earlier in the day. Perhaps it was the presence of another woman, Isobell Cranston, who was a sister to Dr. Cranston, another surgeon and peer of James Muirhead, that prompted him to consider extending the chance for economic gain directly to his daughters.

Peer investments of this type were common in the journals for the Company. Some type of pressure or encouragement must have been applied to James Muirhead to make him return. He encountered some of his peers on the way to or from Mrs. Purdie's and

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<sup>55</sup> Burton, *The Darien Papers*, 375. Keep in mind the order of the investors as they came into the shop to subscribe can be traced from the records and helps to determine Murehead returned later the same day.



this illustrates the spontaneous nature of investing was sometimes based on external forces like peer or social groups. People may have been swept up in the enthusiasm of the moment or hoped to increase their social status among their peers by investing. Some, like the three first original investors, were both willing and able to invest. Margaret and others in the group of those making only half of their promised payments may have been less enthusiastic or less able to pay after signing their names for the promised amounts.

While Margaret struggled to make payments, her sister Elizabeth did not. Elizabeth and Margaret were young girls when their father invested for them. A current search of parish records provides no information for either of the girl's baptism dates or the identity of their mother. James seemed to be a healthy man who passed away unexpectedly in Edinburgh on January 16, 1702.<sup>56</sup> And were Elizabeth older, it would explain why she was able to make all portions of payments, whereas Margaret either could not or elected not to. It is also highly likely that Margaret did not survive to the same level of adulthood as her sister since her name does not appear in their father's later Testament Dative. Complications associated with piecing together these two sisters' lives illustrate the challenges that hinder us in learning much about their day-to-day activities. But the Darien documents preserve a partial record of these siblings who managed their financial accounts, however successfully, at a time in history when some view women as having been relegated to living their lives in the private sphere of domesticity. In the Muirhead example subscriptions in their own names made by their father can be interpreted by some as patriarchal investment initiated by the father. But an examination

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<sup>56</sup> James Muirhead's death, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 685/1 850 21.

of continued support associated with payments when they were called up shows some women either elected to continue business transitions on their own or elected to quit making payments.<sup>57</sup> In either case, these two young, unmarried women managed risky investments in ways that connected them to the wider Atlantic economies.

Mary Simson was another woman who made only fifty percent of her required payments to the Company, and a close examination of her circumstances reveals that changes beyond her control contributed to her inability to sustain promises she made in 1696. Mary was a mother with children who depended upon her for their care. She married Robert Lundie on August 26, 1672, a few years after he was admitted into the ministry in 1669. For a time, they lived in the central region of Scotland in Dysart, just north of Edinburgh and the Firth of Forth. Robert's responsibilities took the newlyweds and their small son David farther north to Leuchars in 1684.<sup>58</sup> In 1692 Robert passed away, leaving Mary and at least three sons behind. The couple's move to Leuchars separated her from kin who might have provided some degree of emotional and economic support. Here, Mary was economically vulnerable and had to rely on her own abilities to secure what was owed to her. Robert left a detailed list of accounts that allowed for a degree economic stability, but it required Mary's keen negotiation skills and other means to maneuver the courts when she pursued compensation due to her upon his death. His Testament Dative included a lengthy list of people who owed him money for improvements made to the family's home, furnished to them by the parish he served.

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<sup>57</sup> Douglas, "The Bold Adventurers," 36. Muirhead subscribed for his daughters "that were clearly intended as dowries." This could have been James's intent, though the details within the wording of the document do not indicate that *tocher*, which was a type of dowry, is specifically mentioned. As the record shows, many women invested or received compensation from subscriptions, regardless of marital intent.

<sup>58</sup> Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae: The Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Oliver and Boyd, 1928), 89.

Robert also kept exacting accounts of his expenses when serving as a minister to the Leuchars community.

The lists of debts that the family accrued there and the amount that was owed by them by the congregation helps to explain how and why Mary was able to risk an investment in the Company in 1696. Despite being miles away from Edinburgh or Glasgow, Mary learned about the Company and its potential as an investing opportunity. Records show that many people investing were ministers or married to ministers. At first glance Mary's status as a "relict of Mr. Robert Lundie, minister at Leuchars" may leave the impression that she was elderly and used money from her widow's portion as a way to sustain her through the last years of her life. This was hardly the case. Mary's decision to invest in 1696 can be attributed to the fact that she had at least two young children under the age of ten who looked to her for their care.<sup>59</sup> The Darien venture offered her a chance to diversify her early modern portfolio. She imagined investing in the Company was a way to bring in money to the family should the people on her husband's list of creditors fail to repay what was owed. From her we learn how the Scottish Company in the seventeenth century offered women another option to supplement the family economy.

Robert Lundie's will shows that while some owed Mary money, her immediate financial future was unstable due to the debt that the couple owed to others. She faced looming debt as a result of her husband's illness and eventual passing. It appears that her children, too, were treated for illnesses. Medical debts from purchasing "drugs," on

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<sup>59</sup> Son, Robert Ludie was baptized in Leuchars on July 12, 1686 and Charles was baptized on Aug. 28, 1688. Though Mary Simson did have an older son who was in the majority, Charles and Robert still were under the protection of their mother.

credit from apothecaries in Kirkaldy, Elie, and St. Andrews were mounting.<sup>60</sup> Mary had to manage finding sufficient funds to pay Jean Wann, a woman she hired to help care for her husband and her young children, who was due her annual pay of £12 for her labor. Robert Orrok was also owed £22 for miscellaneous services provided for the family over the course of one year.<sup>61</sup> In addition to the medical care and other necessary bills accrued, the widowed mother understood the urgency of receiving prompt payment from those who owed her money from her husband's list of accounts to manage her own debt. Had the Darien venture succeeded, she would have seen a large return on her investment that would help her pay what was owed and help with the expenses associated with raising her minor children.

Also, in this non-elite fifty percent group was Margaret Hepburn. She was different from the two young Muirhead sisters whose father had subscribed in their name or the newly married or the widowed Mary Simson with several young children under the age of ten. Margaret Hepburn was an unmarried young woman and eldest daughter of Margaret Glen and George Hepburn, a merchant family. Theirs was a family that began when the two married in Edinburgh in February 1676. The couple soon had at least five children by 1684, and Margaret was born in December 1677, making her only nineteen when she committed £100 in support of the Company. Her status is preserved in the ledger as "Margaret Hepburn, daughter to the deceased George Hepburn Merchant in Edinburgh."<sup>62</sup>

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60 Robert Lundie's Will, NRS, Wills and Testaments, CC20/4/15, 542-544.

61 Lundie Will, NRS, Wills and Testaments, CC20/4/15, 542-544.

62 Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies, *A Perfect List of the Several Persons Residenters in Scotland, who have subscribed as Adventurers in the Joynt-Stock Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies Together with the Respective Sums which They Have Severally Subscribed In the Books of the Said Company, Amounting to the Whole to the Sum of £400,000* (Edinburgh: Printed and sold by the heirs and successors of Andrew Anderson, Printer to the Kings most excellent Majesty, 1698), 17.

The Hepburn family's merchant class status meant that Margaret grew up surrounded by money and business much like the Bogle family in Glasgow mentioned earlier in the chapter. This made her particularly well-equipped to step in as a surrogate parent for her younger siblings and make financial decisions that she had watched her family members make as they practiced their trade. Though mourning the loss of their father and husband, the family maintained a degree of economic stability after his passing.

In 1696 Margaret met and married James Cumming, an up-and-coming young merchant in Edinburgh. Perhaps a shared upbringing in merchant families and the social networks they shared brought them together. Proof that Margaret, the investor, and Margaret, the bride, were one and the same is found in the parish records, as the clerk recorded her as "daughter of the deceast George Hepburn, wright."<sup>63</sup> The intersection between intimate concerns like marriages and the celebrations of special days shared at the birth and baptism of children alongside business documents found in ledgers and receipts proves valuable for revealing the complex public and private lives of women of Scotland during this era.

Margaret Hepburn made her payment for the first call of twenty-five percent asked for by the Company and the second of seven and a half percent. Perhaps it was the impending marriage that caused Margaret to stop making payments to the Company. Certainly, the birth of their first child George, named after her father, in September 1697 influenced the direction of funds in new ways for these new parents.<sup>64</sup> From 1697 on, Margaret was busy raising her large family, and at least seven more children were born

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63 Adv.Ms.83.2.4.

64 George Cumming's Baptism, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 685/1 130, 126.

to the couple before 1718. Margaret's skill as an educated merchant-class woman meant that markets and earnings were never far from her mind.

The baptisms of the couple's first two children, George and Margaret, reveal networks connecting the Darien to other members of the merchant middling class. George was baptized and was witnessed by five men: George Clerk, George Farquar, John Chalto, Alexander Boswell, and Charles Lumsden. All of these men were merchants, and only one was not from Edinburgh; Farquar was a merchant in Leith, just across the Firth of Forth.<sup>65</sup> Two of these men, Clerk and Chalto, were investors in the Scottish Company, and together they combined for a subscription promising £1,100. The Cummings' daughter Margaret also had five merchants witness her baptism in November 1698: James Marjoribanks, James Byers, John Chalto, Edward Brown, and Robert Wilson. Combined these men, or their kin directly associated with them, represented £1,600 in subscription contracts. These business networks extended into their social sphere, helping to sustain Margaret after the death of her father. Investing in the Company and other trade practices was part of what bound her network together. Investing patterns that she began before her marriage also sustained her through the transitions into married life.

Margaret Hepburn is exceptional for another reason. She is one of the few non-titled or elite women in the Darien documents whom historians can trace from her birth to death and burial in Edinburgh on September 24, 1733.<sup>66</sup> As a member of this very small group, she is illustrative of the rewards gained when working to string together the life of a single woman when measured against the larger biographies of early modern men who

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<sup>65</sup> Cumming's Baptism, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 685/1 130, 126.

<sup>66</sup> Margt Hepburn's Death, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 685/1 890, 364.

shaped the Darien moment. These women's failure to meet every single request for payment made by the Company does not detract from the benefits gleaned when asking new questions about the events that may have driving women to invest or move away from investment opportunities in the early modern era.

Even though there were some women who were unable to make every payment to the Company when the funds were called up by the directors, it is clear that women were a safe source of revenue for the company. Most were able to meet their financial obligations. Women's creditworthiness is illustrated by the numbers of women in all stages of life who supported the venture.

Ominous news arrived from the Americas about the colony's failure and the archives show some women still continued to pay their financial obligations to the Company. As late as June 9, 1701, women like Rachel Zeaman did not waver on their promise.<sup>67</sup> The cold Edinburgh winter did not keep Helen Trotter from making her payment to the Company on December 8, 1701.<sup>68</sup> Even as rumor of the Union between England and Scotland swirled through all of the burghs across Scotland, Elizabeth Stirling made another instalment payment of £10 in January 1705.<sup>69</sup> It is clear from the ledger that economic support for the venture was dropping in this period, and people were less apt to come forward to make payment on their accounts. Nevertheless, Isobel Cranston did not waver; she still paid her share in March 1706.<sup>70</sup>

While Isobell's economic support of the venture remained intact throughout every phase of the venture, some women chose to transfer their subscriptions. In May 25, 1699,

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67 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 469.

68 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 476.

69 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 493.

70 Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 496.

three years after the initial books were opened in Edinburgh, Ann Hamilton transferred her £100 shares to her mother, Dame Rachel Nicholson, Relict of Sr. William Hamilton of Preston. What might have caused the daughter to transfer ownership of the stock to her mother is unclear. Both women agreed to the transaction and signed their names in front of witnesses in Edinburgh. This transfer between mother and daughter is an unusual case. The more common transfer happened as elder family members transferred shares down to children or grandchildren as a way of offering financial protecting.

Three years prior to Isobell's transfer, the directors made plans for just such an eventuality. And while concerned about how such transfers were negotiated, directors made the importance of women clear for all to see in their wording on public documents. In 1696 they ensured that "the manner of transferring and aliening the joynt-stock, or Capital-Fund of this COMPANY, shall be an entry in some one or other of the Books of the COMPANY, signed by the person, or persons, bodies-politick or Corporate, Transferring the same, or by someone or other by Him, Her, or Them thereunto Deputed in Writing." The word "her" appears again when describing what those making such transaction "by Him or Her, or Them thereunto" might expect when "signifying His, Her, or Their Acceptance thereof."<sup>71</sup> This proves the Darien venture was a space that was accepting of women's participation and solicited women in every stage of the subscription efforts, whether when purchasing them on their own behalf or transferring subscriptions to others.

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<sup>71</sup> Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies, *At Edinburgh, the 15 of June, 1696 The Council-General of the Company of Scotland, Trading to Africa and the Indie, 1641-1700 / 2510:07* (Edinburgh: s.n., 1696).



Margaret Adamson was certainly aware of this policy when she purchased a £100 subscription in 1696, which she later transferred. She was identified as the “eldest lawful daughter to Patrick Adamson, Merchant in Kelso.” An examination of the parish records reveals that Margaret was twenty years old when she invested, having been baptized in Kelso on April 25, 1675.<sup>72</sup> Her father Patrick died in 1690, and his will was presented to the court by his wife Margaret Ormiston in January 1691 and reveals that Margaret was one of four daughters, others being Agnes, Jennet, and Issabell.

Margaret, as the oldest daughter, saw investing as a way to help reinvigorate the family’s economic opportunities after the death of her father, much like Margaret Hepburn earlier in this chapter. It is well understood that wives and daughters of merchants often conducted business in the absence of or alongside male family members. Consequently, Margaret’s skills were unexceptional, though important to the family business.

Within a few years Margaret experienced a change of heart regarding her subscription. In June 1700 she contracted the services of an attorney to manage the transfer of her stock to William Sheil, who lived in Todshaugh, a small town outside of Edinburgh.<sup>73</sup> Neither Margaret nor William Sheil was present for the transfer of the stock, showing that even from a distance, a young woman like Margaret used her connections to serve her business purposes. Margaret was aware of how to acquire legal representation to manage the exchange for her. She also had sufficient disposable cash to pay for the advocate to stand in her place when conducting the transaction in Edinburgh

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<sup>72</sup> Margaret Adamsone’s Baptism, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 793/ 20, 140.

<sup>73</sup> Adv.Ms.83.2.2, 84.

on her behalf. Margaret's case demonstrates that distance of 60 miles between Kelso and Todshaugh did not sway women from conducting business with the Company.<sup>74</sup>

So far this chapter has proven that women in Scotland subscribed, made payment on their investments, and transferred shares associated with the Company. Another financial transaction involving women was borrowing money. In 1696 the Company sought to add to its bottom line by extending credit through loans and charging interest to anyone finding themselves in need of larger sums of ready cash. Cathryn Spence describes urban centers like Edinburgh were spaces that allowed women opportunities to engaged in credit transactions in ways that replicated their male counterparts.<sup>75</sup> A small group of women took advantage of this opportunity by borrowing money. The plan was for all loans to be repaid "in three months with interest at 4 p cent per annum."<sup>76</sup> An examination of women's borrowing habits proves that they were a safe source of revenue for the company. However, the directors soon discontinued this practice because loaning money proved ineffective and "hopeless from the start; the whole of the Company's paid-up capital, with borrowed money in addition, was inadequate to finance its legitimate colonization scheme, and the convertibility of the notes was always dubious since it was never certain that there would be, at any moment, sufficient 'till money.'"<sup>77</sup> Every women found in the record as borrower money was also an investor. It is important to emphasize that none of these women defaulted on loans made with the Company, though records

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74 Adv. Ms.83.2.2, 84. Many locations in Scotland can still be located on contemporary maps and Todshaugh shares a border with Edinburgh Airport.

75 Cathryn Spence "Women, Gender, and Credit in Early Modern Western European Towns," in *The Routledge History Handbook of Gender and the Urban Experience* edited by Deborah Simonton (London: Routledge, 2017), 29-30.

76 Neil Munro, *The History of the Royal Bank of Scotland 1727-1927* (Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, 1928), 14-15; 4

77 Munro, *The History of the Royal Bank of Scotland*, 15.

show that women, like the men, were less able to make their payments within the three-month period that the Company had hoped for. Comparison of the subscribing and borrowing practices of these women proves that enthusiasm for making regular payments associated with transatlantic ventures was more desirable than making timely payments of loans close to home.<sup>78</sup>

Remembering Henrietta Murray and Agnes Dalyell's role as investor earlier in this chapter, they fit here as examples of women who invested and borrowed from the Company. Henrietta borrowed £32 on August 1696 and Agnes borrowed the same amount.<sup>79</sup> It took Henrietta a year to repay what she owed to the Company; ledger accounts show that the Company earned £1.6 shillings from her on August 9, 1697. Agnes managed to pay her loan back in seven months, making her interest paid less than that of Henrietta.<sup>80</sup>

Isobel Yeaman had multiple transactions with the Company, as well. First, she subscribed £100 in February 1696, then she took out a loan in August of the same year for £16. Isobel was more prompt than Henrietta; she paid the Company back five months later.<sup>81</sup> Isobel Foulis likewise borrowed £16 and also paid her loan back with interest in five months.<sup>82</sup> Allison Kerr was a young woman who married John Kerr, a merchant in Kelso. He passed away sometime before the Subscriptions opened for the Company in 1696, where she was listed as relict. Like Isobel Yeaman, Alison Kerr was both an investor

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78 For a consideration of women and credit in the between 1560 and 1640, see Spence "Women, Gender, and Credit in Early Modern Western European Towns."

79 Adv.Ms.83.3.8, 4 and 30; Adv.Ms.83.3.8, 8 and 24.

80 Adv.Ms.83.3.8, 24; Adv.Ms.83.3.8, 30.

81 Adv.Ms.83.3.8, 8.

82 Adv.Ms.83.3.8, 17.

in the Company, subscribing £100 on March 30, 1696 who borrowed £16 and paid her debt back to the Company “19 months 4 days” after the loan was initially made to her.<sup>83</sup> At the time of her payment, she was still recorded as relict of John Kerr. Her marital status soon changed when she married Robert Rutherford in December of the following year.<sup>84</sup> Isobel Cranston also borrowed money from the Company on September 16, 1696, for the same amount of money as Allison Kerr. She took some time to repay her loan, making her final payment with interest £16:16:10 on January 5, 1698.<sup>85</sup>

Margaret Countess of Weems is an exception to the other women in this group because she borrowed the largest sums of money. She was an elite woman who subscribed £2000 in March 1696 and in October of the same year borrowed £332. On December 3, 1697, she paid £100 towards her balance.<sup>86</sup> A few days later on December 7 she paid £200, leaving £32 still left to be paid on her account.<sup>87</sup> It took her more time to make the final payment on her account, and in January 1698 she paid all of the remaining balance plus the interest due on her loan from 1696.<sup>88</sup> The following year she transferred her subscription to “David Lord Elcho, my son.”<sup>89</sup> Margaret Weems exemplifies how some people managed to subscribe, borrow, and transfer capital with the Company, proving how some elite Scottish women engaged with early modern joint stock companies in multiple ways.

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83 Adv.Ms.83.3.8, 61.

84 Adv.Ms.83.2.4.

85 Adv.Ms.83.3.8, Adv.Ms.83.3.9.

86 Adv.Ms.83.3.8, 42.

87 Adv.Ms.83.3.8, 43.

88 Adv.Ms.83.3.8, 51.

89 Adv.Ms.83.2.2, 53; Her first husband Sir James Wemyss of Burntisland died in 1682. In 1684 she was engaged in a court case over a contested sum of money. In April 1700 she married Sir George MacKenzie of Tarbat, a man at least thirty years older.

Lady Elizabeth Stanhope was not one of the original investing women who made their way to Edinburgh in 1696. Her investment was a quiet transaction was managed from a location sixty miles north of Edinburgh, in Dundee. Perhaps her recent marriage in 1691 kept her too busy to join the earlier investors. In May 1699 a Dundee merchant in named John Man sold his subscription of £100 to her.<sup>90</sup> John Thomson, a young divinity student, was hired to do the legwork and traveled to Edinburgh and back to ratify the transaction. Elizabeth and John Man collaboratively arranged for the transfer of shares from his name to hers, all while she was almost eight months pregnant with her fourth child.<sup>91</sup>

She made her investment after Alexander Hamilton, a member of the colony in Panama who had arrived back in Edinburgh. Hamilton's return from the colony marks a turning point when the public was made aware that the colony was in a fragile state. This was important news for the investors, some of whom may have begun to fear that their investment was in danger of not producing the expected return. His visit led to a redoubling of efforts in May when the Company scrambled to provide more provisions and people to the colonists in Panama.

Elizabeth's investment offers an interesting example of the ways that elites managed business with the Company. Not all elites sought visibility or hoped to influence others when they subscribed. Elizabeth's investment was small in comparison to the first women in 1696, like Duchess of Hamilton with her large £3000. Had she been closer to Edinburgh and not in the last stages of her pregnancy, perhaps she would have made the journey to Scotland's financial center. Intermediaries, like the young ministerial student she hired

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90 Adv.Ms.83.2.2, 68, for the purchase and Adv.Ms.83.2.6, 563 to show that all of her account was current and paid in full.

91 Baptism of Charles Lyon to John Earl of Strathmore Lyon and Elizabeth.

to travel as substitutes, allowed some people living in the Northern regions of Scotland, like Elizabeth, to engage in Atlantic trading companies when they were unable to travel on their own.

Prior to King William's retracting his support of the Scottish venture, women outside of Scotland also expressed an interest in The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies. The Insh papers in the National Library of Scotland prove that English women, too, were interested in taking a chance on the venture. The list of English investors is less detailed and provides no clue as to the networks or geography of the individual investors. Only the names of women and the amount they promised were recorded on December 12, 1695: Carolina Wood (£200), Mary Dodd (£200), Ann Wise (£100), Ann Charlton (£500), and Lydia Smyth (£1,000), all of whom apparently considered the potential for profits in the west worth the risk.<sup>92</sup>

While the Darien Scheme is generally labeled as a failure, this examination of the data shows that women directly contributed in tangible ways to Scottish migration and colonizing. This chapter demonstrates the importance of women as investors, even as life situations shaped and reshaped how women managed their financial relationship with the Company. Some were steadfast and never wavered from their investment. Death, marriage, and mobility sometimes determined whether women were able to maneuver the logistics required to meet their commitments. Ultimately, the great majority of the investing women conducted their business honorably. Even when determining that the

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<sup>92</sup> "A list of all the persons living in England who are Proprietors in the Joynt-Stock of the Company of Scotland Trading to Affrica and the Indies" in George Pratt Insh Papers, DEP 344, Box 3 "Photocopies of material in the Public Record Office London Company and Thomas Muir." Activities of English women investing in various joint stock companies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reveal that women enjoyed economic connections to Atlantic markets much earlier than had been understood only decades before.

risks associated with investing in expanding transatlantic markets was more than they had bargained for, women executed the necessary transfers to meet their obligations.

Various publications have reproduced the subscribers list. But the appearance of the large number of women serving as investors in these published accounts has failed to capture the attention of researchers, leaving the history of these investing women largely unexamined. Some argue that issues of gender and the hegemonic influence of British history have “doubly marginalized” Scottish women’s actions in their own time.<sup>93</sup> This chapter answers the call to reinsert these women into their place in Scotland’s history. The investing women of the Darien are undeniably the most visible transatlantic female investors from Scotland in the early modern period. Jones wrote in 2001 that he was unclear of what “conclusions may be drawn from these observations [about women investors], the simple fact that women of all classes were included should not be overlooked. In fact, female investors tended to follow the same trends as their male counterparts with respect to the timing and amount of their entries.”<sup>94</sup> This chapter reveals what can be learned when focusing on the details of these women’s lives. Indeed, they played an important role supporting the colonial migration of approximately 3,000 Scottish people to a small strip of land dividing North America from South America and Atlantic from the Pacific. Monographs dealing with the fruitless efforts of Scotland, which failed in an “age of national state-building,” and its subsequent decision to join in union to England in 1707, have obscured the complexities of these women’s economic role in the early Atlantic world.<sup>95</sup>

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93 Ewan, “A New Trumpet,” 437.

94 Jones, “The Bold Adventurers,” 31.

95 Whatley and Patrick, *The Scots and the Union*, 5.

## Chapter 2: **Women, Goods, and Work**

From the very beginning of the venture, elite, middling, and workingwomen of Edinburgh and Glasgow were contracting with the Company directly and in their own names. These women each profited, in some degree, by binding themselves contractually to The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies. As seen in the previous chapter, Lady Margaret of Hopetoun bore the distinction among a handful of like-minded elite women of being among the first to subscribe to the list in February 1696 when she promised £1000 for herself and £2000 for her son, the fifteen-year-old Charles who would later become the first Earl of Hopetoun.<sup>1</sup> Not only did Lady Margaret profit from interests associated with the subscriptions for herself and her son, she also contracted for and managed the delivery of lead for the Company's use. She provided eighteen tons of lead at a rate of £23 per ton. Her word was good, as evidenced by an advanced payment of £200 for the anticipated delivery at a later date, which supports the conclusion that the community recognized Lady Margaret as a shrewd and reliable businesswoman.<sup>2</sup> The relationship between Company and Lady Margaret proved to be mutually beneficial when, two and a half years later, she provided another fourteen tons of lead extracted from the Hopetoun lands. Company records show that she was paid a little over £145 on October 8, 1698, for this additional shipment.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Adv.Ms.83.1.1.

2 Adv.Ms.83.4.4.

3 Adv.Ms.83.4.5.



Lady Margaret was an elite Scotswoman who was accustomed to managing such transactions. Adding her earnings from the Company contracts allowed her to more incoming funds to help for the construction of the Hopetoun estate that she put into motion only days before the second delivery on September 28, 1698. Money paid to her quickly entered into the community in the form of wages and material that reinforced her wealth and position.

It is clear that the role of seventeenth century women who contracted their labor and goods have been overlooked by historians when looking at the Darien venture. Amy Froide recently asked for more research “to be done to uncover the extent of Scots....women’s experiences of the Financial Revolution” and the degree to which they participated with the Darien Company.<sup>4</sup> Like the investing women in the prior chapter, wage-earning women associated with the Company were positioned as players in the financial revolution of the early modern era, of which the Darien venture was a part. This chapter takes a fresh look at the Darien documents and offers explanations of the ways that women and their work influenced mercantile activities associated with Atlantic trade in the seventeenth century.

Household ledgers of the Yester estate and Grisell Baillie’s household accounts are utilized to help to contextualize the various ways women were working outside the sphere of the Company Directors.<sup>5</sup> Whether or not some of the women working for the Yester estate also worked for the Company may never be known; nevertheless we can

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4 Froide, *Silent Partners*, 210.

5 “Transactions through George Douglas, Chamberlain of Yester, Relating Chiefly to Farm and Estate Matters,” MS.14624-MS.14625 and MS 14627, Manuscripts Collection, National Library of Scotland; Personal and Household Grisell Baillie and Robert Scott-Moncrieff, *The Household Book of Lady Grisell Baillie, 1692-1733* (Edinburgh: University Press by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1911). The Yester Estate records receipts in NLS MS14625 indicate Scots money for payments appearing in the ledger, see NLS MS14625, 9, 37, and 45 for examples of Scots money paid.

see these women performing many of the same tasks in roughly the same time period as the Darien women. The purpose of including the Yester and Baillie documents is two-fold. First, they help to reveal how the documentation of women's work was commonplace. Second, they allow for a comparison of wages for some tasks. The heightened attention to detail and bookkeeping associated with the Darien moment required clerks to track hundreds of people carrying out specific tasks associated with goods and duties within a larger logistical chain. Consequently, many of the transactions appear in several places and were recorded by various hands as protection from fraud and theft. Such exacting detail makes these sources useful for evaluating women and work in the seventeenth century.

This dissertation repositions women as active participants in the colonizing workforce of colonization that was necessary for joint stock companies and nations hoping to assert their positions as traders in the seventeenth century. Reading against the grain of the legacy of failure associated with the Darien venture allows for an important clarification about the roles of working women in Scotland and the influence that their word had the wider Atlantic world.

Even though some women's lives were so economically fragile that they may have lacked funds or the desire to invest in the venture, some working women in Scotland participated in ways and in numbers that exceeding their investor-women counterparts. They managed to profit from the Company by producing goods and providing services needed for the mass migration of men, women, and children who made their way to Panama. This cooperative relationship between the men and women who chose to participate in the colonial enterprise and the Company underscores the argument that

women were not excluded from performing labor necessary to mount such a venture, with the exception of serving as a director in Scotland or as governors in the colony.<sup>6</sup> The Darien venture, despite its failure, is an event that proves that women from every stratum of society, along with the networks of men connected to them, engaged their labor in response to the imperial and economic goals of nation-building, and were central to migration enterprises during the seventeenth century.

To understand the receipts associated with Company transactions for goods and services it is important to first examine women's naming practices at the time the receipts were written. Women in Scotland overwhelmingly utilized their given surnames rather than adopting their spouses' last names when contracting and selling their goods and labor to the Company. This uniquely Scottish naming tradition makes pinpointing specific women associated with contracts more identifiable. In fact, the receipts show that even in the rare cases where the Company identified a woman by her husband's name, she often signed her own given name upon payment for goods for the goods she delivered. Whether by choice or as an illustration of the way she had always conducted business when signing her name, she asserted her identity and individuality. Her signature provides interesting and useful clues about her family connections and sustainability of her own kin networks that worked either separately or alongside those of her husband. Tracing signatures on the receipts in this way makes it possible to position these women within their immediate and extended family groupings, revealing larger occupational similarities

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<sup>6</sup> Steve Murdoch offers an exceptional example of a black woman traveling as a soldier for the English Royal African Company in 1693 in "John Brown: A Black Female Soldier in the Royal African Company" *World History Connected* 1 no. 2 (2004): 1. This shows that women could appear as sailors but the numbers were small and rare. I have yet to encounter a woman being hired for such a position in the Darien records.

associated with the family while also showing the merchandise or work they were paid for.

Critics of the venture, like Sir Paul Rycault, reported the activities spurred by the creation of the Company. In 1697 he wrote a less than favorable description of Scottish merchants and other local manufactories who scrambling to gather provisions for the venture, working in a frenzy fueled by “contempt and scorn” to such a degree that “they were resolved to let ye world see that they could stand upon their owne leggs” in a scheme “to which their people had freely and unanimously contributed.”<sup>7</sup>

To be sure, Rycault’s words were an exaggeration, since not all Scots people were unanimous in their support for or belief in the successful outcome of the venture. His words resonated jealousy rather than anger, given that the Scots had a long history of being savvy merchants with wide-reaching networks sufficient to support international trade.<sup>8</sup> But Rycault’s words show that even critics of the plan were fully aware of the labor necessary for such an expedition. Mobilization of Scotland’s workforce was a monumental task requiring any who supported it to engage in any way possible. Women, so often left out of academic consideration when discussing the Darien Scheme, were part and parcel of the collective workforce that contributed its products and sweat equity in the venture.

Various historians arrive at differing theories for why women’s work has been so long ignored. Labor historian Joan Scott posited in 1987 that long-held tropes of gendered language about women’s activities prevents academics from arriving at a more authentic reflection of working-class women and men. She called for “a more sophisticated theory

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<sup>7</sup> Letter from Rycault to Turnbull, 17 November, 1697, *Papers Relating to the Ships and Voyages of the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies, 1696-1707*, edited by G. Pratt Insh (Edinburgh 1924), 13.

<sup>8</sup> For more information see Zickermann, *Across the German Sea*.

of language [that] will also open the way for a needed reconsideration of the politics of contemporary labor historians.”<sup>9</sup> Scott believed that those in the field of labor history “uncritically accept masculine conceptions of class and rule out feminist demands for attention to women and gender” that are integral to a more accurate understanding of the history of women and work.<sup>10</sup> Such preconceptions are surely one of the reasons for the scarcity of historical focus on the matter of women’s labor found so abundantly in the Darien records.

Maria Ågren’s work on women’s work offers more analysis on women’s ability to work and earn.<sup>11</sup> The theory, based on a transition away from viewing male work as more dominant or superior over female labor, challenges notions of women’s labor primarily reserved for tasks associated with domestic duties linked to raising children. To prove that women’s work was more nuanced than childcare alone, tracing the verbs show women’s action rather than presumptions of work attributed to titled occupations or proper names. Findings show how a two-supporter model better reflected work patterns where “both spouses contributed in various ways, though not necessarily financially, to the household economy.” Defined in this way, historians show that numbers of women working in the early modern era rose to a remarkable level.<sup>12</sup>

Ågren’s datasets, such as those compiled from civil court and police records, are particularly helpful for such analysis. My own research similarly utilizes numbers of transactions found in the Darien ledger documents and adopts a modified version of this

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9 Joan W. Scott, “On Language, Gender, and Working-Class History,” *International Labor and Working Class-History*, no 31, (Spring, 1987), 12.

10 Scott, “On Language, Gender, and Working-Class History,” 12.

11 Maria Ågren, *Making a Living, Making a Difference: Gender and Work in Early Modern European Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2.

12 Ågren, *Making a living Making a Difference*, 2.

methodology. Whereas the research used by Ågren, was dependent upon verb tracking, in the Darien documents work is not consistently described in verb form but rather in the items produced. Fortunately, most clerks meticulously recorded both men's and women's work, allowing this dissertation the advantage of directly identifying women's labor. It is also clear that Ågren's two-supporter model is equally applicable to the women's work employed to meet Scotland's overwhelming need to for materials and labor in the last years of the 1600s.

The populations of people coming into the burgh cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh was growing in the late 1600s. Food shortages linked to agriculture and market integration, including trade with Africa and the subsequent transatlantic slave trade and plantation sugar boom, drove merchants to Glasgow and Edinburgh.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, soldiers gathered in these port cities and were needed to secure the Scottish colony once their ships landed in Panama. Meeting the needs of these newly assembling labor forces required the Company to provide food and housing for the soldiers, sailors, and other laborers before they were able to board ships and leave Scotland. Women were a part of the necessary support of the soldier workers. Goods, labor, and housing were all a part of this national enterprise. Women worked in significant numbers and in all manner of ways. Most of the women investors were from Edinburgh. Laboring women, on the other hand, were more often from Glasgow and often positioned around the Clyde River, which was convenient for the transportation of goods and in close proximity to sailors and soldiers working around the ships as they prepared for the venture.<sup>14</sup>

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13 Cullen, "Fleeing the Famine: Migration and Emigrations," 157-186.

14 Insh, *The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies*, 170-171.

James Mackenney was one such laborer who spent most of the late fall and early winter of 1698 earning a wage as a carpenter and sailor in Port Glasgow on the ships docked there in preparation for departure to Panama in the spring. He was working far enough away from home that it limited his ability to return home to be with family. He was another one of the many people who traveled within Scotland and earned a wage. The Company thought enough of James's work that they hired Jean Armour to prepare the meals and feed him and the other "for the dyet of ten of ye seaman;" five men for three weeks and three days, another two men for two weeks and four days, and two more were fed for one week and three days. In all, she received over £5 for all of them.<sup>15</sup> Grizell Baxter, Marion Dick, and Agnes Taylor were some of the other women in Glasgow who also earned wages by preparing meals and feeding the sailors.<sup>16</sup> Jean Armour and the cooks listed here make up part of the sixteen individuals found working in service to the Company and introduce the work performed by women in this chapter.

The chart below offers a category breakdown that is useful to understand the types of labor or goods women performed or provided to the company.

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15 Adv.Ms.83.6.5, 6.

16 Adv.Ms.83.4.2, 51.

Categories	Examples
Raw Materials	Livestock
	Grain
	Wood/Timber
Manufactures	Textiles
	Iron
	Equipment
Consumer Goods	Food & Drink
	Clothing
	House wares
	Fuel
	Books/paper
Services	Cooking
	Burial
	Cleaning
	Rent

*Categories of Labor*

The first category reflects work done by women who provided raw materials such as livestock, wool, grain, wood or timber, and iron to the Company. The second category includes women who provided items such as sails, ropes, tiles, or other products that were associated with shipbuilding. Those who produced consumable and tradable goods, including clothing, tobacco pipes, food and drink, housewares to be used on ship and in the colony, fuel, or books and paper products are part of the third category. The final, and largest, number of women fall into jobs associated with the service industry and reflect women like Armour, mentioned previously. Some of these women cooked and cleaned for the Company while others nursed those injured when working on the ships. Historians



have already proven the need for rental property was a means for women earn.<sup>17</sup> Storage was logistical issue for the Company, and women with excess space to rent for warehousing were also compensated in cash, allowing these women to see profit because of the Darien venture.

Some exceptional women like Lady Margaret of Hopetoun made a great deal of money when dealing with the Company by providing it with many tons of lead from her lands. However, she was exceptional, and this places her among the top earners among all the women involved. Less substantial transactions made up most women found in the ledgers, such as Janet Gow selling brimstone. In 1699, Janet and Patrick Gow were collectively paid at a rate of £1:04:02 for 100 pounds of brimstone.<sup>18</sup> Patrick provided 100 pounds of sulfur, whereas Janet was paid for the almost 72 pounds, for which she was paid £0:17:04.<sup>19</sup> Their names appear on the same receipt and help to establish their kin connection and her skills as a woman qualified to conduct business.

Janet Gow was a part of a large merchant family in Glasgow. Burgh records indicate that Patrick Gow, her kin, was part of a larger network of merchants like the Arbuckles, Struthers, and Cochranes, and help to explain why she possessed the skills that made her appearance as a woman conducting business with the Company unremarkable.<sup>20</sup>

We learn from the Gow receipts that Janet handled the transactions and documented payments for her kin, and likely father or at least close kin, Patrick.<sup>21</sup> Her

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17 Spence, "Gender and Credit in Early Modern European Towns," 29.

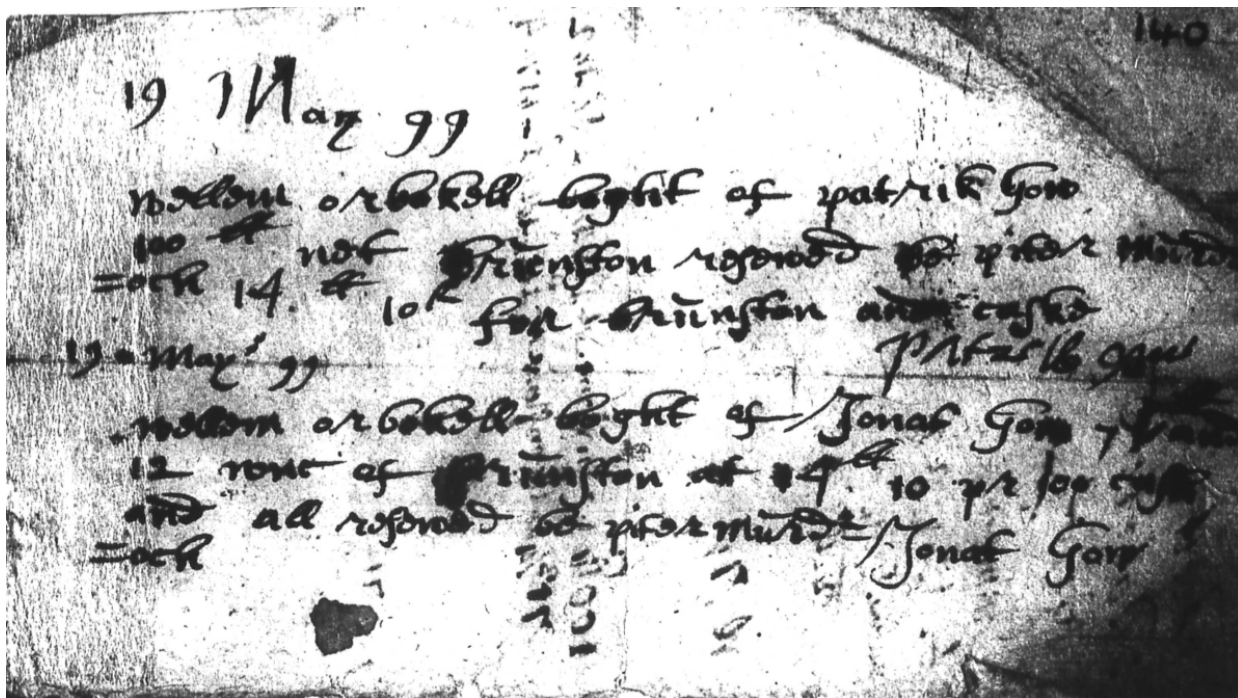
18 Adv.Ms.83.8.1, 140.

19 Adv.Ms.83.8.1, 140.

20 J.D. Marwick and R Renwick, *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow, 1573-17: 1691-1717* (Edinburgh: Scottish Burgh Record Society, 1908), 273.

21 Adv.Ms.83.8.1, 140.

signature for one of the of the family transactions positions her as an important business partner with the Gow family and proves her links to the transatlantic commercial efforts associated with the Scottish Company.<sup>22</sup>



*Gow Receipt for Brimstone*

The document, dated 19 May 1699, shows how William Arbuckle, a merchant in Glasgow who was put in charge of a Committee for Equipping Ships, and compensated people who provided merchandise. An examination of the signatures of each person on the single Gow receipt exemplifies the skills necessary for conducting business with the Company. Janet wrote this receipt herself for money that was owed to both Patrick and her, and the money that each received from Arbuckle on behalf of the Company. The partially legible signature of Patrick Gow appears to the right of the first portion of the receipt. Janet's name appears at the bottom of the document and is clear and concise.

<sup>22</sup> Adv.Ms.83.8.1, 140.

Additionally, the letter contains a description of what was provided and details of the transaction. A comparison of the handwriting proves that her signature and the receipt itself were written by the same hand: Janet's. Arbuckle did not pen this receipt, nor did Patrick or another unnamed clerk associated with the Company. It was Janet who coordinated the transactions with the Company. She prepared receipts and documented the flow of goods, in this case brimstone. She tracked financial accounts showing where and when monies came back into the family's merchant business. The receipt, free of cross outs or errors, proves her level of education, and the skills she possessed that made her a valuable asset to the family business. She was clearly confident conducting business transactions.<sup>23</sup> Janet's education exceeded the skill necessary to place her in a category of one who merely collected brimstone on an occasional basis to supplement and sustain a family's meager income. In fact, her education is presumably more in line with that of a person suited to a finely trained craft, so this documentation of a simple brimstone sale is useful in the way that affirms the many skills women possessed that supported commercial trading associated with the Darien venture.

Though it is not possible to glean enough information from the record to say for certain when Janet was born, we can tell from marriage and baptism records associated with her that she was a woman of childbearing age when she wrote this receipt, as she had married John Gray in 1686. Together they had at least five children, two of whom were twins born in November 1694. Witnessing the twin's baptism were Patrick Gow and Findley Gray. Patrick's presence on both the Darien documents and the parish record indicate with a high degree of certainty that these two people are one and the same.

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<sup>23</sup> Arbuckle background collected from Prebble, *The Darien Disaster*, 97.

Likewise, it proves that Janet was a mother who clearly worked outside of the home while simultaneously sharing the care of all five children with her husband, much like the people in Ågren's two-person model. Janet would have to make arrangements for at least the twin three-year-old boys, Andrew and William, who were certainly too young to be left on their own. It would be necessary for them to be under the care of another responsible person while Janet was away dealing with Company business. There is also the possibility that the boys were within sight or earshot of their mother on various occasions when she was managing her family's accounts. Her skills as a seasoned negotiator were certainly an asset to her husband John, who was also a merchant.<sup>24</sup>

Interestingly, the price paid for brimstone by the Yester estate in May 1694 was £0:03:06 for half a pound of brimstone, suggests that perhaps dealing with the Company was not as lucrative as having direct dealings with individual purchasers.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, people working for the Yester estate had to wait sometimes for a year or two to receive wages owed to them. The Darien Company was about the business of paying wages rather quickly, in comparison. For example, selling such large quantities of brimstone to the Company meant those lucky enough to land contracts were at the company's mercy to accept prices that were lower than those for smaller quantities on the market. But unlike the Yester accounts, they were paid much faster. Should people like Janet balk at the price, others would be quick to step in and provide the much-needed material.

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<sup>24</sup> Andrew Gray's Baptism, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 644/1 70, 210.

<sup>25</sup> Payment for brimstone recorded in *Personal and Household and Yester Estates: 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess of Tweeddale*, National Library of Scotland Archives, *Monthly Lists of Incidental Expenses*, 1675-1697, MS.14627, 162.

Another woman providing material for the Company was Magdelan Crauford, the wife of James Crauford, a merchant in Greenock. She signed, and was paid, for the delivery of “rossen” (most certainly rosin), for the ship *Rising Sun*, along with oak timber that was to be carved into rails for the ship *Hope*.<sup>26</sup> In total, she signed her name for and received £7:19:07 from William Arbuckle, the same merchant and Company appointee who dealt with Janet Gow. It is doubtful that Magdelan chopped the oak for the ship’s railings herself; this task likely went to another individual. But the ability to know which timbers were more suited to for such rails could have fallen to either her husband or her. Magdelan was part of the collective work force that supported the family economy. Just like the raising of children, the sustaining of a business benefited from the support of both husband and wife, and Magdelan’s signature carried as much weight as James’ when it came to receiving “in full and complete payment of the above acct....and discharged by the African Company.”<sup>27</sup> Her signature, signed with confidence, suggests that this was a role where Magdelan was accomplished. She would work in this way in and around Greenock while simultaneously becoming pregnant and delivering a daughter in the summer of 1700.<sup>28</sup> Magdelan’s work is useful here to illustrate how women’s roles were not fixed within the sphere of home.

Effie Trumble also contracted with the Company. Working out of Glasgow, she provided 700 tiles “for the building for the Companies ship cambuss” for the ship *Hope* in July 1699.<sup>29</sup> A cambuss is a seventeenth-century term describing a storage space, similar to a cellar, constructed to prolong the shelf life of perishable goods. Another use of the

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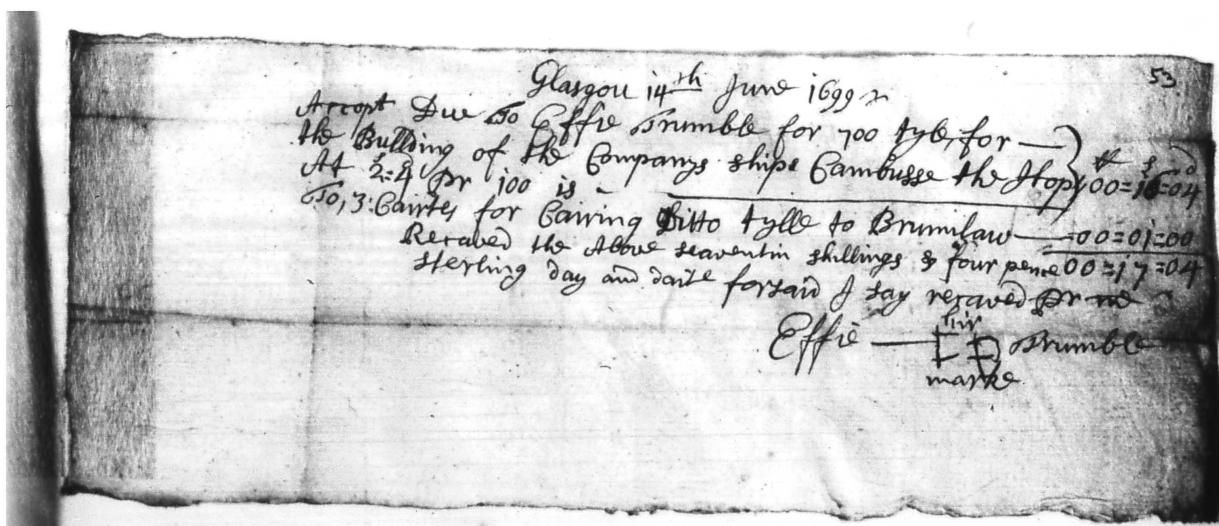
26 Adv.Ms.83.8.1, 90.

27 Adv.Ms.83.8.1, 90.

28 Sarah Crawford’s Baptism, NRS, Old Parish Register, 564/3 10,14.

29 Adv.Ms.83.8.2, 53.

term describes the area around the ovens used by the cooks on board ships to protect the supporting wooden walls of the ships from the oven's flames when cooking. It is difficult to pull any type of family connections from the sparse details of Effie's receipt, pictured below.<sup>30</sup>



Effie Trumble's receipt for "tyle"

No other names appear on the receipt, nor does the document show another person contracting in her name. But a great deal is learned about the labor performed as a result of this one transaction and its relation to the production of "tyle" (tile). To begin with, it is clear that Effie was not fully literate, though her ability to write exceeded that of some men who were only able to authenticate their connections to the company by signing an "X." Effie's initials authenticate that she received her payment of 16 shillings and 4 pence for the delivery of the merchandise. Three other men identified as "carters" took the goods to Brumilaw and were also compensated as a direct result of the Trumble contract: Effie returned one shilling to them that was certainly divided in three ways between these

<sup>30</sup> Adv.Ms.83.8.2, 53.

unnamed men. The Trumble receipt does not state that she, or anyone else, was paid for installation of the tile into the ship's kitchen or storage space; Glasgow has a long history of tile manufacturing, and Effie is likely one of the first women whose names can be associated so early with its production or sales, despite her inability to write her name in full. |

Whereas Effie would have to gather clay from the fields and creek beds to meet her end of the Company contract, Isobel Wilson did much of her work for the Company indoors from her home in Edinburgh. She was hired to mend "78 dozens" of "Aberdeen Stockings" purchased by the Company.<sup>31</sup> Isobel repaired and dyed the dozens of wool stockings in different vats to meet the requirements of the Company's request for a supply of legwear in three different hues. It is unclear whether her reputation or skills were the reason she was chosen by the Company. Records show that Isobel married her husband, James Bickertoun, a wright, in Edinburgh in September 1661, meaning that she would have been older than many of the other women who worked for the Company.<sup>32</sup> While Isobel worked, she was surely surrounded by her grandchildren from the three of her children who had survived to adulthood. Isobel was in her late fifties or early sixties when she darned the stockings for the soldiers and seamen onboard the ships, and she is a useful example of how age did not necessarily prevent women from using skills they possessed to earn a wage from the Company.

At least two women, Agnes Campbell and Martha Stevenson, both of Edinburgh, provided large numbers of books, bibles, and other paper goods that were placed

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<sup>31</sup> Burton, *The Darien Papers*, 36-37.

<sup>32</sup> Bickertoun/Wilson Marriage, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 685/1 440, 58.

onboard the ships bound west. Both women continued the printing businesses that were already well-established prior their husband's death.

Martha Stevenson was certainly "amongst the most prosperous" according to Rosalind Marshall, who reserved several paragraphs to her in *Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080-1980*.<sup>33</sup> Because of this she was selected to provide various types of papers and other goods associated with the book trade to the Company.<sup>34</sup> Martha wrote regularly to her customers offering the newest books and also proved to be a savvy manager who was not shy about explaining that her charges were fair and her customers were among the most elite in Scotland. A comprehensive article explains how she came into possession of the bookbinding and publishing business after the death of her husband, Alexander Ogden.<sup>35</sup> While she provided goods used in the West Indies, she was also concerned with the needs of the people closer to home. Helping the poor was an ever-present concern to leaders of the community, and she published and made the newest books on the matter available, hoping to address poverty and the large numbers of homeless living in its streets.<sup>36</sup>

Agnes Campbell was also a widow who contracted with the Company for 400 bibles, over 130 dozen catechisms, and other religious tracts, and she received £50 for her efforts.<sup>37</sup> Agnes wielded much more power in her community, as her former husband Andrew Anderson was awarded the title of His Majesty's printer for Scotland.<sup>38</sup> Like

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33 Marshall, *Virgins and Viragos*, 155-156.

34 Adv.Ms.83.8.6.

35 R. H. Carnie, "Alexander Ogstoun and His Family," *Bulletin; Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand*, vol. 6, no. 3 (1982): 141-148.

36 Anon., *A Letter from one in the Country, to a member of Parliament, Intreating this Session, may take to their Consideration, the Lamentable Condition of the Poor* (Scotland; 1700), 3.

37 Adv.Ms.83.4.4.

38 Elizabeth Ewan et al., eds., *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women: From the Earliest Times to 2004* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 61-62.



Margaret Hamilton, who received a cash advance for the extraction of lead from her lands, Agnes was also afforded an advance in November 1696 when the goods she provided were first requested.<sup>39</sup> Agnes was an astute businesswoman known for defending the extension of her rights as printer to the king and fiercely challenging competitors who may have looked for ways to filter business away from her printing business.<sup>40</sup> This is best evidenced by a decision in her favor when she was married for a second time to Patrick Telfer and sought protection from the court not to be held accountable for his debts accrued before his marriage to her. She retained her right to “contract in her own name, to grand bonds, which may be the foundation of diligence against her person and estate, and discharges and all other writs, as also to exact bonds and other obligations or rights without the concurrence, consent or advice of her said husband.”<sup>41</sup> The importance of Agnes’s wealth emerging from her business sense extended beyond her own lifetime. The *Caledonian Mercury* ran an advertisement that an auction was held to sell off the remaining goods she produced, those being “a considerable parcel of books, in sheets; as also, a considerable parcel of paper, begin the remaining goods of the deceast Agnes Campbel Relict of Andrew Anderson Hist Majesty’s Printer” and “in her will she left the remarkable fortune of £78,197 Scots.”<sup>42</sup> This small insert in the town’s paper illustrates how Agnes continued to hang onto the legacy of her publishing years. These two book merchants and publishers were each successful in their own right, prior to and after the Darien moment. They prove that, while the failure of the colony impacted some, the

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39 Adv.Ms.83.4.4.

40 The Rev. A. W. Cornelius Hallen, *The Scottish Antiquary or Northern Notes and Queries* (Edinburgh: T. and A Constable, 1891), 162-163.

41 “Act in Favour of Agnes Campbell” Parliamentary Register 1693, 18 April, Edinburgh, *Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, rps.ac.uk.

42 “Advertisements,” *The Caledonia Mercury* (Edinburgh) June 23, 1720, 6; Ewan, *The Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women: From the Earliest Times to 2004*, 62.

downturn was not sufficient to keep either woman from continuing business practices. Their ability to maneuver in their business community was due in part to lack of limitations imposed upon them by guild organizations in other fields.<sup>43</sup> Documenting events for the Company directors in the Darien House in Edinburgh, writing letters home to loved ones in Scotland, mapping out plans for the colony's designs, reading scripture to comfort people far from home, or pursuing religious goals of converting others to the Protestant faith all required paper and books; materials that were, in part, produced and sold by women to the Company.

Simply because people were travelling far afield did not mean that travelers were willing to give up all of their creature comforts. Smoking was a popular pastime and pipes an important trade commodity, and Jean Weems was an Edinburgh clay pipe manufacturer who contracted, along with several men, to provide the materials requested by the Company for smoking tobacco. They were married September 1685 "before famous witnesses."<sup>44</sup> She continued her husband, Peter Crawford's, tobacco pipe business after his death, occurring sometime before 1696.<sup>45</sup> The sheer number of transatlantic items purchased from Weems makes this early modern businesswoman a stunning example of the power of productivity that some women were able to achieve in the early modern era. Despite her prolific status as a wise businesswoman, much of her work is erroneously ascribed to her husband by researchers today.

Archeological digs conducted in the region of Panama in the 1970s uncovered many pipes in the region of New Caledonia. These archeologists used evidence from

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43 Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion*, 49.

44 Weems/Crawford Marriage, NRS, Old Parish Register Marriages, 685/2 30, 245.

45 This date is inferred from her subscription and designation as relict in 1696 and contracts cited in her transactions, included in this chapter.

some of the Darien records to calculate that “a quart of a million pipes between 1696 and 1699 were purchased for the Darien Company.”<sup>46</sup> An academic report by the Biggar Archaeology Group in 2011 described Patrick Crawford as “probably the most prominent of the Edinburgh pipe manufacturers in the late seventeenth century,” with no mention given to Weems for continuing his business for years after his death.<sup>47</sup> While it is difficult to establish the exact years when Patrick and Jean worked together or separately in the pipe business, it is clear from the Edinburgh Hearth Tax records that between 1691 and 1694 a Patrick Crawford was alive and working as a merchant in Edinburgh.<sup>48</sup> A merchant by the name of Patrick Crawford also subscribed to the Company to Africa and the Indies in April 1696, and it is highly likely that this is Jean’s husband’s or at least a member of his kin group. A look at the Darien ledger points specifically to Jean’s marital status as a widow on August 28, 1696, and she went on to contract with the Company directly for at least four more years. Regardless of the lack of precise connections to prove which Patrick subscribed to the Company, it is clear that Jean was responsible for a large portion of the quarter of a million pipes archeologists claim were brought to Darien, some of which bear the Crawford/Weems marking.

The Darien ledgers offer the most precise evidence of the numbers of pipes she produced; yet Weems and this source are often ignored. Janet produced and provided 75 barrels of “900 gross pypes at 14 £ Scots per gross,” for which she was paid over £52 Scots on December 15, 1698.<sup>49</sup> And still later, in 1699, she was paid an additional £10

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46 Dennis Gallagher, “Special Report: Study of the Tobacco Pipes from Biggar Archaeology Group’s Projects 1981-2010,” 2011, 26.

47 Gallagher, “Special Report,” 26.

48 Hearth Tax Records 1691-1695 for Midlothian, volume 2, Edinburgh City E69/16/2/21. More research is needed to determine the death has been found for Peter Crawford, all searches at present have been unsuccessful.

49 Adv.Ms.83.4.4.

Scots, presumably for more pipes that were sent on the second expedition. The minimum number of pipes making their way across the Atlantic that can be attributed to Janet Weems, based on this evidence from the Darien ledgers, is 129,600.<sup>50</sup> Jean Weems continued the legacy of women trading goods overseas that has been explored by Martin Rorke, whose research uncovered custom books showing that “women exporters in Edinburgh were overwhelmingly the widows of merchants” in the 1500s who sold their ‘wares, including large quantities of imports, long after their exporting careers ended.”<sup>51</sup>

Other women in Edinburgh provided large quantities of fabric for bedding. Widow Johnston was paid over £10 for coverings for 50 travelers to sleep on as they made their journey.<sup>52</sup> Margaret Law earned over £20 for the hundreds of ells of fabric she provided. And Anna Walker was also paid for fabric used onboard the ships.<sup>53</sup> An Edinburgh woman named McKell was paid over £3 “for towes and pack thread for packing” of the some of the more bulky goods that required towes, “a rope, cord, or length of strong twine” to bind them for shipping.<sup>54</sup>

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50 At present I am unable to locate will for Crawford or Weems, nor do I find children from their union. All likelihood is that this was a later age marriage for the both of them, as we know that Peter was at least married to one other woman prior to his marriage to Jean. More research is needed to explain how Crawford transferred his business to Weems upon his death and whether there were other children, or kin who had died, were unable, or had moved leaving Jean the last choice. There is a possibility is that she was the expert most able to continue his business and perhaps as in other guild relationships he came to his business through the marriage to Jean (or another woman prior to his marriage to her) via apprenticeship. A badly damaged parish record offers a speculation for another source potentially linked to the same Jean Weems that could tell something about her death. The name “Jean Wemyss reli...” is legible in the Old Parish Register of Deaths 685/3 220, 9 in Canongate showing this person’s decease on May 9, 1744. More research is needed to see if anything can be learned from this damaged record. Likewise, there is a death record for a daughter born to “Patrick Crawfoord pypemaker” on December 8, 1688, see Old Parish Deaths 685/1 810, 3. It is not possible to confirm whether Jean was mother, as it is possible that Patrick may have had children from another marriage prior to marrying Jean in 1685.

51 Martin Rorke, “Women Overseas Traders in Sixteenth Century Scotland,” *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 25, no 2 2005, 93-96.

52 Adv.Ms.83.4.4.

53 Adv.Ms.83.5.4. Ells was a unit of measurement for textiles and represented roughly thirty-seven inches.

54 Adv.Ms.83.4.4; definition of towe comes from Robinson, *Concise Scots Dictionary*, 730.

Whereas Edinburghian women like Jean Weems, Martha Stevenson, or Agnes Campbell provided goods to the company, Mrs. Neilson made or sold nothing, but she profited, nonetheless. She owned property in Edinburgh that was useful because of its proximity to the Company activities. Like Mrs. Purdie, the Company directors contracted with Neilson for the use of her property. They rented her cellar space to store many goods like medicine, food stores, trade goods, and other creature comforts until the time was right to load the commodities onboard the ships. She rented out her cellar from January 22, 1698 to July 19, 1698 to house goods in preparation for the ships departing from the Firth of Forth.<sup>55</sup> After the first expedition, news came back to the directors that rotting foot, packed in barrels that sat in warehouses for months at a time in preparation for the journey, was a constant problem. Storage was a logistical issue and warehousing goods in places like Mrs. Neilson's basement proved to be the solution for their needs.

A large contingent of women in Glasgow and the surrounding areas west took economic advantage of this change and managed to profit from the city's close proximity to Port Glasgow. The need to provide basic services for the influx of sailors, laborers, and other men mobilized for the venture was central to the needs of the Company. Glasgow was where an overwhelming majority of laboring women either resided or traded their goods. Women were very much a part of the service industry in Glasgow, as seen from the examples of several anonymous Glaswegian women paid for "attending a sick man who dyd," another for "attending on[e] of the companys servants when sick," or another "for taking a care of a seaman that came ashore of ye rising sun sick."<sup>56</sup> Women also took care of sailors who received work-related injuries as they prepared to leave Scotland.

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55 Adv.Ms.83.4.4.

56 Adv.Ms.83.4.2; Adv. Ms. 83.8.4.

Margaret Gentle nursed and fed John Cod when a misstep onboard the *Rising Sun* caused a debilitating injury, “having his arms broke” by some of the ship’s cables.<sup>57</sup> Margaret Tallifar also received compensation for her work associated with nursing sick sailors.<sup>58</sup> It is hardly surprising to find women working as caregivers to the sick, but it is worth remarking that, despite the preservation of so many of these women in the records, little attention is given to their role within the Darien venture.

Many more women cooked for sailors and laborers in Glasgow as they worked on the ships while in port. Elizabeth Smith was well accustomed to the needs of sailors preparing to take long sea journeys. She married her husband Robert Russell in 1692 in Glasgow.<sup>59</sup> He was a skipper in Glasgow, and over the course of their marriage, she likely hosted many men who worked alongside him. On December 9, 1698 she prepared meals for eight unnamed men who travelled with provisions for the ship *Rising Sun*. She fed seven men for four days beginning on January 9, 1699. For this single transaction she was paid services she was paid over £36 Scots.<sup>60</sup>

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57 Adv.Ms.83.4.2.

58 Adv.Ms.83.4.2.

59 Russell/Smith Marriage, NRS, Old Parish Registers,644/1 240, 29.

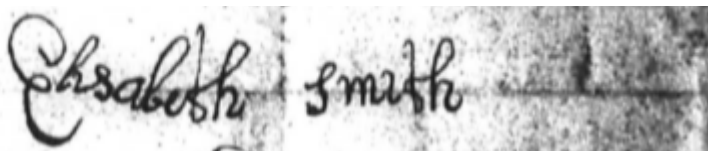
60 Adv.Ms.83.8.1. This receipt is helpful to illustrate that even though Company ledgers recorded subscriptions in sterling, it is not out of the ordinary to see contracts made with individuals for goods in the records.

9 December  
 1698

And amoyd Dow to Elisabeth Smith spent to Robert  
 Fuzze skipper in Glasgow, for eight men's dyet, meat  
 and drinke, two dayes upon they came up for provisions  
 belonging to the ship called the Pyffing Queen,  
 The summe of Enolde pmds eight in shilling stob, 12 - 18 - 00  
 more Dow to the said Elisabeth Smith  
 9 January, spent to Robert Fuzze, for seavens men belonging  
 1699 To the Pyffing Queen, who had stovne stob  
 for four dayes meat and drinke the summe of  
 Enolde thre pmds four shilling stob - - - 23. 04. 00.  
 In all it - 36 - 02 - 00

Elizabeth Smith's receipt for "dyet, meat and drink" of seamen in Glasgow

Literacy was not required for tasks such as with cooking and cleaning up after sailors. Elizabeth's literacy skills were certainly an asset to her husband, whose chosen profession took him away from shore for long periods of time, as was the case with many families with occupations associated with the sea.<sup>61</sup> She was literate and capable of handling her own transactions as well as her husband's, and she signed her name in such a way that historians should use caution when concluding that working-class women were less literate than women or men of merchant or elite classes.<sup>62</sup>



Signature of Elizabeth Smith

Elizabeth managed to accomplish Company business with her young five-year-old son, Robert, under foot. He would have entertained the guests with the high jinx and antics

<sup>61</sup> For an example of the ways some women in Britain managed seafaring labor, see Margaret R. Hunt see "The Sailor's Wife, War Finance, and Coverture" in *Married Women and the Law: Coverture in England and the Common Law World* (Canada: McGill-Queens University Press, 2013).

<sup>62</sup> Adv.Ms.83.8.

that one associates with a child of his age. Educated and capable Elizabeth managed to juggle private and public responsibilities with ease and was compensated accordingly. Her marital status implied that she was limited to *jus mariti*, a Roman law that gave the husband “absolute right due to the personal subjection of the wife” giving him “almost all powers and privileges of a right of property” over the wife.<sup>63</sup> Rebecca Mason argues in “Women, Marital Status, and Law: The Marital Spectrum in Seventeenth-Century Glasgow” that there was more room for women like Elizabeth to maneuver around their *jus meriti* status.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, Elizabeth could continue “business with his knowledge and consent” and her authority extended “for contract for necessaries and furnishing for the household” and “contracting of loans if these were proper and for the family purposes.”<sup>65</sup> This *praepositura* status extended the authority for Scottish women and proves that public and private role of women was far from ridged.

Katherine Proudly earned more than Elizabeth when she fed David Drysdale, David Downy, David Donald, John Bane, and James Bruce in Glasgow. These men worked in some capacity onboard the ship *Hope* from the last part of May 1699 to end of July. She was paid £117:15:0 Scots for her efforts.<sup>66</sup> This sum of money equaled roughly £12 sterling at the time, and speaks to the level of work required of her as she gathered, prepared, and cleaned up after preparing the food for these five men over two months. For Katherine, it was not necessary for her to subscribe to the Company to imagine any

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63 G. Campbell H. Paton, “Husband and Wife-Property Rights and Relationships,” in *An Introduction to Scottish Legal History* (Edinburgh: Stair Society, 1958), 100.

64 Rebecca Mason, “Women, Marital Status, and Law: The Martial Spectrum in Seventeenth-Century Glasgow,” *Journal of British Studies* 58 (October 2019), 789.

65 G. Campbell H. Paton, “Husband and Wife-Property Rights and Relationships,” 106.

66 Adv.Ms.83.8.4, 430.



coin from the Atlantic venture; her labor generated funds that helped sustain herself and those living with her.

Women like Katherine and Elizabeth certainly provided the same food to their own families that was served to the men whom they were contracted to feed. Cooking multiple meals or eating separately would present logistical challenges in seventeenth-century kitchens. These working women cooked for the men and certainly feed themselves and their families at virtually no additional cost, allowing them to stretch their family budgets in other ways. Presumably these men also ate with the family, sharing at least a few moments that reminded them of their own homes. There is also the possibility that women delivered midday meals to the men while they worked in port or onboard the ships. In Elizabeth's case, a trip to the ships to deliver meals would have offered her young Robert a chance to see, up close, the business of empire.

Evening meals spent with these working men were less public and more personal. Moments centered on food production and service were spaces where fictive kin networks could be created and strengthened, as many of the carpenters working in the Port Glasgow region stayed for months at a time in the homes of Glaswegian women who were then compensated by the Company. These spaces afforded women and their families a chance to listen to stories told by the workers at the end of a long day. They certainly would have had the opportunity to share their own views of the Company's activities. Over time, these women associated themselves more directly with the events of empire and became part of a larger information or gossip network when they exchanged details that they had learned from conversations held over meals or deliveries to the ports days before. Though not recorded in the Company ledgers, these women

were also indirectly part of the propaganda effort that either benefited or hindered public opinion of the Company, depending upon the types of stories they heard and views they held about the venture.

There is no evidence that Janet Weir, from Glasgow, cooked for the soldiers and sailors. However, she provided cooking and serving utensils necessary to feed the people onboard the ships, and that would then be transferred onshore for the colonists' use once they reached Panama.<sup>67</sup> Robert Weir was a merchant and guild member of some note with strong ties to the Bogle family, also noted merchants. Janet was part of the larger kin merchant group that allowed her to provide at least thirty-seven dozen ram horn spoons, 360 wooden trenchers, 134 bowls and platters, and 170 tumblers, for which she was paid over £9.<sup>68</sup> It is revealing to compare her payment of £1 for the many dozens of spoons to the amount paid to James Witherspoon, who also provided thirty-seven dozen ram horn spoons but only earned eighteen shillings, six pence. Janet was paid eight shillings per dozen whereas James was paid six. This suggests one of two things: either James's spoons were smaller in size and therefore valued at a lesser amount, or perhaps Janet's spoons were a superior quality, garnering her more pay for her goods. In another transaction, Janet was asked to provide more horn spoons, and she was paid twelve shillings per dozen.<sup>69</sup> Either way, looking at the amount paid to men and women shows that, at least in this example, men selling goods to the Company were not compensated more merely because of their gender or status as businessmen. Women were equal

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67 Adv.Ms.83.4.2; Adv.Ms.83.6.5.

68 Adv.Ms.83.4.2.

69 Adv.Ms.83.6.5.

partners in the competitive transatlantic market economy when viewed through the lens of the Darien legers.

Creating a sense of unity among the hundreds of sailors and soldiers onboard the ships leaving Glasgow on the second expedition was imperative to the Company. Margaret Gemmill was selected to produce 660 “Blue Bonnets” and twelve dozen white bonnets to address the unity of the crews and the perception of a viable company in the wider Atlantic.<sup>70</sup> These “soft flat brimless” hats were worn usually by men and boys, and were likely worn by members of the ships’ the crews, though it is possible some were for trade.<sup>71</sup> Margaret’s merchant skills were not only associated with the production or procurement of bonnets for the Company. She also was contracted to provide reams of paper for the Company’s use. It is possible to watch the flow of money from place to place as it made its way back to Margaret’s hand. The details recorded on one slip of paper (pictured below) mark when Margaret’s goods were loaded onto the *Rising Sun* in July 1699.<sup>72</sup> Then Company assignees received money from the Company coffers to pay for the goods on August 31, as seen two-thirds of the way down the page. Finally, Margaret received her payment of over £268 on September 19, 1699, completing the transaction for goods used onboard the *Rising Sun* that, by that time, was positioned somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>73</sup>

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70 Adv.Ms.83.5.6.

71 Robinson, *Concise Scots Dictionary*, 53.

72 Adv.Ms.83.8.2.

73 Adv.Ms.83.8.2.

21 July 99  
 Ane acct of bonats bought from Margrat Gimmell for which the African & Indian Company is to pay

10 1/2 doz	blew bonats whit	at 3: 2	35: 14: =
1/2 doz	ditto marked A	at 3: 4	1: 12: = 6
1 1/2 doz	B	at 3: 12	5: 08: =
1 doz	C	at 4: 2	4: 02: =
2 doz	D	at 3: 18	7: 16: =
1 doz	E	at 3: 06	13: 04: =
2 1/2 doz	T	at 3: 8	9: 12: 8
2 doz	H	at 3: 6	6: 12: =
2 1/2 doz	H	at 4: 6: 8	12: 05: 8
3 1/2 doz	L	at 4: 5	14: 06: 8
2 doz	F	at 3: 14	7: 08: =
10 doz	D	at 3: 11	35: 10: =
3 doz	S	at 3: 8	10: 04: =
6 2 doz	H	at 3: 5	21: 02: 6
3 doz	O	at 3: 7	10: 01: =
55 doz			195: 00: 00
8	Rimer paper	at 3: 12	15: 04: =
19	9 doz blew bonats O	at 3: 13: 7	33: = =
3	doz ditto C	at 3: 18	11: 14: =
67	doz advance 1/2 doz of profit	13: = 8: =	268: 06: = =

Alex. Bryer  
 Glasgow 31 August 1699  
 Pay to Margrat Gimmell the above two hundred  
 sixty eight pound p<sup>ts</sup> and take hir ret<sup>er</sup> heire  
 and it shal be allowed you in your account with  
 Africa Company  
 William Schiburke  
 Will Woodrop  
 Glasgow 19 Sept 1699  
 Received the above two hundred sixty eight  
 pound p<sup>ts</sup> from Alexander Bryer  
 Margrat Gimmell

Itemized list of bonnets provided by Gimmell and her signature.

Surprisingly, Scotswomen were not the only women providing provisions to the Darien venture. At least six women operating in Amsterdam profited from dealings with Company officials. Widow Ybrant Jansse provided planks and timbers of various sizes along with nails for the *Rising Sun*. Jansse's influence and status as a businesswoman is evident, as she was responsible for paying carpenters out of the 1168 guilders she received.<sup>74</sup>

Catherine Degheus and Margrett Mulders, two more women living in Amsterdam, performed more traditional hospitality tasks like the women of Glasgow. For over three months, Margarett Mulders washed, fed, and housed Daniel Thomas, who labored as a carpenter onboard the *Rising Sun* while it was under construction in Amsterdam.<sup>75</sup> Captain Leys also enjoyed Mulder's hospitality, and Scottish Company directors insured that Mulders was paid for his lodging and washing in the amount of 40 guilders.<sup>76</sup> The Darien documents show that she received over 73 guilders in total. Degheus, on the other hand, was paid seventeen guilders for brandy that she provided to the *Dolphine*, one of the ships that sailed on the first expedition.

Some women in Amsterdam provided goods rather than services to the Company, as evidenced by Widow Cornelius Moy. She possessed knowledge of the needs of maritime trade and access to these goods that economically benefited her when she sold seven different types of rope for a profit of almost three hundred guilders.<sup>77</sup> Widow

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74 Adv.Ms.83.6.2.

75 Adv.Ms.83.6.2; Adv.Ms.83.7.9.

76 Adv.Ms.83.6.2.

77 Adv.Ms.83.6.2; There is a high probability that Widow Moy and Direek Moi are related to one another. Dutch East Indian Company records show a Cornelius Moi departing from Amsterdam in May 1694 and returning home January 1695. Dirk Mooi is listed as kin. Direek Moy was paid by Darien representatives for provisions of butter, peas, beef, cheese, pork and other necessary goods and was paid 2107 guilders and 306 guilders on various times in 1699. The VOC documents suggest a linkage

Christophell Roose was another woman from Amsterdam who was paid for nails of various types along with brimstone, earthen pots, paper, brooms, oil, and other miscellaneous necessities for the ship. Roose received 312 guilders in all by the Company.<sup>78</sup> Widow Van Slinga also filled a small order of ropes for the company's ship docked in the Amsterdam harbor.<sup>79</sup>

Whether these women were chosen because of their strong business connections with their deceased husbands' networks is not known. What is clear, however, is that of the six women identified as receiving payments from Company representatives, four were widows, and they collectively infused money earned from Scotland's Company into Amsterdam's economy.

A few women from Hamburg, in what is now Germany, also had dealings with Company representatives. These non-Scottish women likely were operating within the trade networks that were established decades earlier when policies enacted in Hamburg encouraged trade outside of its own borders.<sup>80</sup> Likewise, Robert Jolly assigned as one of the members of the Council in New Caledonia in Panama, was a Scotsman who had settled in Hamburg prior to the Darien moment and likely shared his knowledge of trading networks between the two countries.<sup>81</sup> These women did not provide the hospitality services offered by the women in Amsterdam. Overwhelmingly, these Hamburgian women were in the business of iron and lumber. Three of them, Jean Henrich, Widow Medropp, and Margaret Schenkell, are recorded as providing bolts for the ships.<sup>82</sup> Two,

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between Widow Moi and Direek and more research will likely support the importance kin networks and women were useful to the Company in all aspects of the Darien venture, even beyond Scotland's borders.

78 Adv.Ms.83.6.2.

79 Adv.Ms.83.6.2.

80 Zickermann, "Across the German Sea," 35.

81 Burton, *The Darien Papers*, 49; Zickermann, "Across the German Sea," 46, 69-71.

82 Adv.Ms.83.6.1; Adv.Ms.83.7.8; Adv.Ms.83.7.8.

Margaret and Jean, are specifically listed as “bolt makers,” whereas Widow Meldrop bears the title “a smith.” The fourth woman from Hamburg found contracting with and profiting from the Darien venture was Anna Tinkins, a “woodseller” who enjoyed a longstanding relationship with the Company.<sup>83</sup> In 1696, she filled an order by delivered firewood to the Company representative who was charged with managing activities and accounts for the *Caledonia* while it was docked off the port of Hamburg.<sup>84</sup> The following year, Anna worked closely with goods taken to the *Insuration* and dealt with John Tomblo to fill orders for lumber and trees on three separate occasions.<sup>85</sup> Just as assumptions of a singularly male workforce should be questioned when viewing Company activities in the early modern era, so too should questions of a purely intra-national influence not be assumed, even when looking at issues of women’s labor. More research is needed to explain how these

Certainly, not all work on behalf of the Company or its representatives made its way into the ledger books. The unpaid or invisible labor do not show in the receipts of people who stood in as substitutes when people joined the Company and traveled west. These invisible laborers could be caretakers of children or elderly parents. They could also or perform land or business management tasks. Whatever the case, their unrecorded labor allowed others the freedom to migrate to Panama. Francis Borland was a beneficiary of this type of non-visible, substitutional labor. Though unnamed, the work of others becomes visible when examining the baptismal records, marriage documents, and wills associated with his family group.

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83 Adv.Ms.83.6.1.

84 Adv.Ms.83.6.1.

85 Adv.Ms.83.6.1, Adv.Ms.83.6.4.

Francis Borland was a Presbyterian minister who was born in Ireland in 1661. His Scottish parents sought refuge outside Scotland for a time, but returned country after Francis's birth.<sup>86</sup> At the age of thirty-eight, he married Rachael Hall, and soon thereafter he and Rachael had three daughters: Cecile, baptized November 1693;<sup>87</sup> Anna, baptized in September 1695;<sup>88</sup> and a third daughter, Euphame, baptized in January 1697.<sup>89</sup> Their marriage would last until April 7, 1699, when Rachael died, leaving him with the care of their three young girls. Only a few months after Rachael's passing, Francis was offered and accepted a ministry position with the Company that would take him far away from his daughters. Given that Borland and Hall were married in Glassford, it is probable that they were part of a larger kin network that allowed Francis a degree of freedom to travel while, at the same time, also providing sufficient care and guardianship over his children in his absence. Borland survived the round-trip journey and he was reunited with his children.

Though Borland's helpers remain nameless in the historical record, it is clear that some family member or close kin, almost certainly a woman, was charged with the day-to-day feeding, education, nurturing, and support of his children. Each of the daughters survived while their father was away, and each would go on to marry and build families of their own in the 1720s. Borland's will shows that he chose Cecile, his eldest, as executrix and she managed his affairs after his death in December 1722, and the other daughters were mentioned in his will.<sup>90</sup> The sort of unrecorded labor or caregiving services exemplified by provided to Cecile, Anna, and Euphame prove the complex structures of

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86 Borland. *Memoirs of Darien Giving a Short Description of That Countrey*; Jack C. Ramsay. "Francis Borland: Presbyterian Missioner to the Americas," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 62, no. 1 (1984): 4.

87 Old Parish Registers Births, 645/10, 5.

88 Old Parish Registers Births, 645/10, 9.

89 Old Parish Registers Births, 545/10, 11.

90 Francis Borland's will, NRS, Wills and Testaments, CC9/7/52, 86-87.



labor needed that allowed for migration both men and women leaving Scotland with the Company.

At least one unnamed woman was identified by others as “whore” when she worked for William Jamison, captain of the *Olive Branch*, providing him companionship and sexual services for some rate of exchange. Though clerks did not record her service and she was not on the payroll for the Company, the sexual services she rendered were associated with the Darien venture and, consequently, can be viewed as service tasks similar to those women who cooked, washed, housed, and nursed others in conjunction with Scotland’s imperial goals. An unknown writer described in a letter sent back home to Scotland the “whore w[hi]ch Jamieson had brought along with him” for the journey.<sup>91</sup> Some conflict arose onboard the ship when she made a complaint against one of the men. Jamison, protecting the unnamed woman’s position onboard ship and asserting his ownership of her body (at least while she served him), had the offender confined. While isolated from the others, the man “was drawing brandy [from its container], he let the candle fall among the brandy.”<sup>92</sup> It ignited the liquor and soon the entire ship and its contents went up in flames while docked in Caledonia Bay. The writer noted to the letter’s recipients how the “wreck of w[hi]ch is to be seen to this day” was still burning at the time he composed the information for those to read back in Scotland.<sup>93</sup> Minister, Alexander Shields described the “wicked neglect and want of care while Jameson and his mate were cutting others throats for a Whore.”<sup>94</sup> This noteworthy event captured the attention of

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91 Unknown, “Contemporary Copy of A Short Account of Our Voyage into Darien and yt happned after we came to the place,” University of Glasgow Special Collection, Ms Gen 1685/7.

92 Unknown, “Contemporary copy of A Short Account of Our Voyage,” Ms. Gen 1685/7.

93 Unknown, “Contemporary copy of A Short Account of Our Voyage,” Ms. Gen 1685/7.

94 Alexander Shields, Letter “From on Board the Rising Sun in Caledonia Bay,” December 25, 1699, University of Glasgow Special Collections, MS Gen 1685/15.

several writers. Had the *Olive Branch* avoided such a calamity, the woman known as a whore and her contractual relationship exchanging sexual activity with Jamison for some form of compensation would likely have gone unrecorded. Sea and sex work often go hand in hand as illustrated by others working in the field of women's history.<sup>95</sup> This woman provided an unmeasured and broadly defined company and sexual services to the captain. Though not listed in the ship's ledgers, hers was a role that many other unnamed women found themselves in whether in Glasgow, Edinburgh, or ports further afield.

Scottish women performed various labor tasks and material goods for the Company and in association with Darien venture, yet their participation is overshadowed by the actions of the men who hoped to save it from the economic and national shame of failing to establish, protect, and grow a thriving mercantile entrepot in Panama. An examination of women's labor and earning potential emerging from the Darien venture reveal women's material contributions were integral to trading company and their larger transatlantic trade networks. The Darien documents are also useful source for understanding the lives of women in the seventeenth century and their proximity to labor. By following these women as they worked towards empire, this chapter proves women's influence and ability as actors in Scotland's economic and political history. Examining their roles allows for a more refined understanding of the power of women and work in the early modern transatlantic world.

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95 Talbott, "Scottish Women and the Scandinavian Wars of the Seventeenth Century," 112-113.

### Chapter 3: **Women and Migration**

Late in life, Marion Veitch, the wife of a Presbyterian minister, reflected on what she thought about her chance for a transatlantic migration when she was young. Faced with the possibility of making a journey to the Carolinas in the 1680s, she wrote in the last years of her life that she “could have no heart for such a voyage, and leave these covenanted lands.”<sup>1</sup> But as a young woman, she was willing to allow her faith to direct her path and she was “content, if He [God] had more service for me and mine in another land” she would cross the Atlantic.<sup>2</sup> Here she viewed travel as inherently linked to her family’s religious calling. If God willed her to travel far from home, she “would hang my harp upon the willows when I remembered Scotland.”<sup>3</sup> Marion’s words offer a view of a seventeenth-century woman’s readiness to venture far afield, even prior to the Darien moment. Her sentiments, as one connected to Scottish kin and lands, are useful for understanding general views of place and home that every man and woman faced when deciding to migrate.

Marion’s memoir shows she was spared from making a transatlantic journey. But questions on the topic of migration reemerged for her family when her adult children grappled with their own willingness to travel for profit with the founding of The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies. Her sons Samuel and William grew into men of some regard, and each accepted a position working for the Company in the last years

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1 Free Church of Scotland, Committee for the Publication of the Works of Scottish Reformers and Divines, and Marion Veitch, *Memoirs of Mrs. William Veitch, Thomas Hog of Kiltarn, Henry Erskine and John Carstairs* (Edinburgh: Assembly’s Committee, 1846), 7.

2 Veitch, *Memoirs of Mrs. William Veitch*, 7.

3 Veitch, *Memoirs of Mrs. William Veitch*, 7.

of 1690s. Samuel left Scotland for Panama in 1698. William's health prevented him from travelling with his brother, but he soon followed in the second expedition in 1699.

Women across Scotland, much like Marion, were certainly aware of the hardships their sons and daughters faced in deciding to travel to New Caledonia in Panama. Marion said as much when she expressed disappointment in the venture. She "looked for good, behold evil came for it pleased the Lord to let the enemy break their design of planting a gospel church in that place in the world."<sup>4</sup> Even though her sons were men who did not follow in their ministerial footsteps, Marion maintained a steadfast belief that the Company was both guided in its success and doomed to fail dependent upon God's will. The Company did have ministers as a part of its migration, but religion was only a peripheral interest. Marion, on the other hand, like other faithful followers saw, saw the Company as part of a supernatural battle of good versus evil. As the success of the Company came into question a "storm rose higher" in her spirit, and word came that her "eldest son [William] was dead."<sup>5</sup> This devastating news challenged her faith in God's promise of protection for herself and her family. She believed that any professions of faith and divine protection promised to the colony was lost. With William "dead in a strange land, and thy prayers are to no purpose," Marion grew strong in the belief that nothing but despair could result from the venture.<sup>6</sup>

This account from one who never left Scotland is illustrative of the impact the Darien migration had on one Scottish family. She viewed the Caledonian colonizing effort as "a thorn in the flesh to keep me humble."<sup>7</sup> The personal loss for her family was great.

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4 Veitch, *Memoirs of Mrs. William Veitch*, 54.

5 Veitch, *Memoirs of Mrs. William Veitch*, 55.

6 Veitch, *Memoirs of Mrs. William Veitch*, 55.

7 Veitch, *Memoirs of Mrs. William Veitch*, 58.

Her feelings were likely shared by many family members across Scotland with family members who travelled west. Each faced worry and uncertainty when one from their fold considered the value of traveling to the Indies. Marion's words, not her harp hanging from a tree in Carolina, are symbolic of the hopes and heartbreaks of so many whose own words, like their kin, were lost to history.

Samuel Sewell was a minister well known for his participation in the Salem Witch trials, that occurred in the same decade as the Darien venture. He followed the activities of both from his home in the Massachusetts colony in North America. Sewell viewed the migration in a positive light and found opportunities to mention it to those in his congregation. He recorded that "news of Some of the Fleet of the Scotland Company being at Jamaica; and tis rumor'd they intend to settle on the American Isthmus, on Golden Island just by it." Sewell thought so much of their arrival that he sent copies of several sermons to "them to welcome them into the New World."<sup>8</sup> An examination of his regularly recorded prayers shows that The Company of Scotland was on his mind and in his prayers and he shared his concerns for the travelers with his congregation at Boston's South Church.<sup>9</sup>

Neither detractors and or supporters of the venture could escape thoughts of mobility, regardless of their feeling on the matter. Across the Atlantic, word spread of the progress of their journey. Public concerns for travelers were aired from pulpits while,

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<sup>8</sup> Samuel Sewall, *Diary of Samuel Sewall. 1674-1729*. v. 1 [-3] (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1878), 488. He also compares them traveling into a land of dry bones and Ezekiel 37 and wrote that "I could not but thing of the Expedition of the Scots" when reading this scripture, p 490. People that Sewall shared the "Scotland Acts, Subscriptions, Contributions which Mr Jackson left with me this day" were Mr. Walter and Madam Dudley, Mr Hubbard, White and Newman, page 489. Clearly, Reverend Sewall ran in circles of people who had interest in the Scotland's colony long before its failure in December 1698.

<sup>9</sup> Sewall, *Diary of Samuel Sewall*, 492.

privately, people worried or welcomed a chance to imagine such a journey. This chapter addresses the decision to travel and the ways that wives, widows, mothers, and unmarried women responded to opportunities to migrate for the sake of the Company. Like Marion Veitch, some grew to view the events and activities with distain, whereas others saw the venture as a means to keep families together or as adventure for the sake of employment in ways that were similar to their male counterparts. Some women followed their hearts and traveling with loved ones, while others left Scotland behind when kin connections were frayed beyond repair. Some women saw the Atlantic as an extension of their job responsibilities. Employment as a companion or servant was, for some, preferable to living in a fragile economic state. Tracing the trajectories of such women's lives reveals that their motives often paralleled those of men. Women migrated in support of economic ventures, created or maintained family groups, and sought new opportunities in the transatlantic world.

Scotland is understood by historians as being a place particularly attuned to mobility, and women living there shared this trait.<sup>10</sup> Women, like men, were not always focused on one-time, unidirectional travel. Some moves were short-term and associated with labor and fell within the range of less than ten miles when measured within Scotland's borders.<sup>11</sup> Marriages could also influence women to relocate to other regions within Scotland, England, or further afield. The visibility of women provided comfort to those considering taking the journey. Some returned home after experiencing life, however

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<sup>10</sup> Landsman, *Scotland and its First American Colony*; Cullen, *Famine in Scotland*, 157-158.

<sup>11</sup> Cullen, *Famine in Scotland*, 157.

brief, in the West, and some living in Scotland voluntarily left their homeland and never returned.<sup>12</sup>

Scottish merchants hoped to position themselves alongside other joint-stock companies seeking profit in the west. There was a belief across Europe that sending large numbers of people on colonizing ventures for the sake of the nation-state placed the sending societies in a deficit when it came to labor and population. Some in Scotland believed there was “no danger in Hurt that way, for we could spare several thousands every year” without impacting Scots remaining at home.<sup>13</sup> They imagined that “there might in an Age, as large and plentiful a Conly of Scots-Men, be abroad as Scotland is at home, not inferior to Scotland in number, and far exceeding it in Riches, and all other Conveniences.”<sup>14</sup> The Darien moment was the embodiment of this dream, for all who supported the cause.

Scottish migrations to the Americas in the seventeenth century are commonly associated with plantation management. These journeys usually involved single men who, traveling on their own and hoping to stay only a short time, quickly earned a great deal of money.<sup>15</sup> After reaching their financial goals, they hoped to return home to Scotland where they would settle down, raise a family, and start a trade. Other migrations included those who were found guilty of crimes committed in England or Scotland and

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12 For an example of this see Alan L. Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun: Scottish Migrants in Jamaica and the Chesapeake, 1740-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

13 Anonymous, *A Brief Account of the Provençe of East-New-Jarsey in America Published by the Scots Proprietors Having Interest There, for the Information of Such as May Have desire to transport themselves or their families thither; wherein the nature and Advantage of, and interest in a forraign plantation to the country is demonstrated* (Edinburgh: Printed by John Reid, 1683), 3.

14 Anonymous, *A Brief Account of the Provençe of East-New-Jarsey*, 3.

15 Cullen, *Famine in Scotland*, 169.

were forcibly relocated; these migrations are usually associated with Scottish migration to the southern regions of British North America.<sup>16</sup>

Nor was the Darien venture Scotland's first attempt at colonization. A Nova Scotia charter from James I in 1621 was extended to Scotland and led to a settlement of less than one hundred Scotsmen. These colonists held only fragile control over the region, and the land ultimately changed hands in 1632 when the French successfully removed the much-reduced number of Scotsmen from the region.<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that a small number of women took part in this venture, as illustrated by a letter from 1628, seventy years prior to the Darien Moment, mentioning at least two women living in the Scottish Colony of Nova Scotia.<sup>18</sup>

From the outset, the Darien venture was strictly a volunteer migration that is described as "the largest single movement of Scots to America in the 1690s," strengthening the significance of a study of women's connection to the migration of people from one Atlantic region to another.<sup>19</sup> The Company encouraged migrations through a series of well-orchestrated promotions on the part of the Company Directors once the initial charter was accepted by the king, and women were part of this promotion. The

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16 Cullen, *Famine in Scotland*, 174.

17 For a history of the region see Christopher Hodson's 2012, *Acadian Diaspora: An Eighteenth-Century History* and N.E.S. Griffiths and John G Reid, "New Evidence on New Scotland, 1629" *William and Mary Quarterly* 49, no 3 (July, 1992), 492-508.

18 William Maxwell to Sir John Maxwell, Nov. 23, 1628, in William Frasier, ed., *Memoirs of the Maxwells of Pollok*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1863), vol. 2, 200. Griffiths and Reid point out in the transcription in "New Evidence" of Richard Guthry's letter of conditions in Nova Scotia that "there were two of my Lords Company married" and "that eight households" (p 505) were part of the settlement suggesting that residences were structured in a way that was similar to a familial dwelling rather than barrack or military dwellings; See also David Dobson, "Seventeenth-Century Scottish Communities in the Americas" in *Scottish Communities Abroad in the Early Modern Period*, eds., Alexia Grosjean and Steve Murdoch, (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 105-132.

19 Cullen, *Famine in Scotland*, 175. Cullen is clear that while the Darien migration offers the highest numbers of Scots migrating to Americas in the 1690s Ulster was the destination of choice for the largest numbers of Scots who traveled outside of the nation's border.



Company sought ways to draw in potential voyagers by touting the viability, sustainability, and inevitable success they believed was possible for the venture. It was incumbent upon them to promise, at least on paper, the well-being of any potential migrant. The Company's efforts, particularly those focused on the second fleet of adventurers who arrived in Panama in 1699, helped create an impression of safety. The governing rules of the colony reveal that the Company's directors, based in Scotland, and the appointed colonial Governors in Panama looked for ways to mitigate danger and exacted punishment on any person threatening the safety or success of the enterprise.

The rules established by the leadership of the Colony were written in Panama after the colonists arrived. These laws regulated the language used by colonists and forbade some types of physical violence. They were also explicit regarding the protection of women, whether European or indigenous. The directors were serious about monitoring relationships created while in Panama, with the purpose of insuring that bad actors within the colony would not negatively impact the sustainability and security of the colonial government that Scotland hoped to establish there.

Broadsides reported the safety that one could expect when traveling with the Company throughout Scottish burghs and towns, and these fliers were enough to create the necessary buzz on the street. The first expedition was comprised of roughly 1,200 people, most of them laborers and military men tasked with securing the space and preparing for the arrival of later colonists on the second fleet of ships.<sup>20</sup> Marion's son Samuel was a member of this first group, and much of its focus was defensive. It adhered

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<sup>20</sup> No ship manifest accurately provides an exact number of those taking either the first or second expeditions to Panama. Consequently, all numbers are estimates. Barbour, *A History of Paterson and the Darien Company with Illustrations and Appendices*, 127; Julie Orr, *Scotland, Darien, and the Atlantic World: 1698-1700* (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 7.

to standard military law while on ship and on land. The enthusiasm for soldiers/sailors to meant that “many more people wished to take part in the settlement than there were actual places for them.”<sup>21</sup> The second venture was a more mixed lot of individuals, including families, ministers, and those looking to participate in the merchant entrepot market system, and William Veitch embarked for Panama with this second set of ships.

The Company promised a house to every man willing to leave Scotland and work in the colony. In addition to a home in Panama, Scotsmen could receive three separate plots of land: one for cultivation, one as a space to work as a merchant, and a final plot of land for a home site, built at the colony’s expense and with colonial labor.<sup>22</sup> These promises far exceeded those of the indenture system that were so important in populating the Virginia colonies.

Understanding the need for a broad base of support, the Company’s propaganda was choreographed to win the hearts and minds of Scots, and also targeted women. Every woman choosing to travel to Panama did so free of charge. Those who did not travel were incentivized to view the migration of others in a positive light. Should the worst happen and a woman’s husband was to die while working for the colony, all lands that were guaranteed to him would be transferred directly to her. Extended family, too, were also advantaged should family members meet an unfortunate end, through the promise of free passage paid for by the Company.<sup>23</sup>

Land division in Scotland was less inclined to replicate the patterns of primogeniture so often seen in England. Land ownership, like naming, followed “collateral

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21 Cullen, *Famine in Scotland*, 175.

22 Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, *Publications of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society vol. 6* (Edinburgh; George Watterson & Sons, 1906), 32; Prebble, *The Darien Disaster*, 99,

23 Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, *Publications of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*, 163.

rather than lineal descent,” mirroring many of the clan structures so familiar to Scotland. Women and men were considered equally important in the family lines that culminated in the birth of a child. Historian Ned Landsman describes partible inheritance, not primogeniture, as the dominant means of passing lands from one generation to another in this period.<sup>24</sup> Partible inheritance allowed the Company additional leverage to sway women to the ideas of empire. Scotswomen’s access to land certainly influenced the Company to include women in the plan and to extend patterns of land ownership that replicated land patterns in their home country. Women would be more apt to support the venture if they received what they believed was their just reward for having trusted, invested in, and supported the migration of their spouses and other family members.

Should the worst happen, the directors envisioned Panama as a logical place for survivors to live out profitable and successful lives that would honor the loss of deceased kin who perished for the sake of Company and country. Their deaths were not in vain if the Company could convince these families to continue to live on the land and continue on with the legacy their loved ones had dreamed of when they lost their lives. Linking memory, honor, and land in this way allowed the Company to create a system with the potential to quickly multiply the colony’s population. Women could travel to the colony to take possession of lands owed them because of the passing of their kin.<sup>25</sup> Any wife who chose to leave Scotland and relocate in the West would theoretically counterbalance the loss of population resulting from the husband’s death. Over time, natural increase would take hold, increasing the numbers of Scots living in the region and virtually guaranteeing the colony’s survival. The presence of these legacy women and the promise of future

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<sup>24</sup> Landsman, *Scotland and its First American Colony*, 46.

<sup>25</sup> Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, *Publications of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*, 163.

children born to them would expand the workforce. The Company also anticipated that these women would bring along several others from their extended contingent of kin groups. The colony's abrupt end did not allow enough time for the plans that the Company put into place to evolve into a stable community. But this example of women and land ownership shows that the Company had long considered and incorporated women into the larger mechanism it developed to create a strong colony so necessary to those engaged in trade in the Atlantic.

The press, along with word of mouth successfully created the necessary interest in the Company when approximately 1,300 people came forward to take advantage of the opportunity to travel for the second expedition in late spring 1699.<sup>26</sup> A letter by James Byers, an elite Edinburgh merchant, helps to explain the enthusiasm for some to consider the venture. He rose to the top of the list of potential migrants when he offered his "humble services to the directors in anything whatsoever they think I can be usefull abroad."<sup>27</sup> It was a generous letter, but his request in his offer came with certain conditions he hoped would be honored.

James was selective about which ship he would be placed on, requesting to be one of those who travelled on the *Rising Sun*. So, the Company found itself drawing in customers and meeting their demands as each considered how best to make their way across the Atlantic. Byers also exemplifies how the directors' plans were successful in magnifying the population of the colonizing effort. James offered a readymade network that included kin and labor to the Company. He hoped that his brother-in-law "may be allowed to be with me seeing he and I intend to follow on business jointly and to take with

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<sup>26</sup> Insh, *The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies*, 170.

<sup>27</sup> ADV.MS. 83.8.2, 279.

me a young man, who is my apprentice.”<sup>28</sup> James increased the numbers of people in his group, benefiting the Company through the increase of people willing to work. Byers also benefited and saw this migration as a way to increase his collective business knowledge, influence, and future success. The Company accepted James’s offer, and together his group made the journey onboard the *Rising Sun*.

Men like James were not the only ones who volunteered to travel for the sake of the Company. Women, too, voluntarily made their way to port cities within Scotland to find work. Theirs were short-distance migrations that may or may not have resulted in permanent relocations. The larger Darien moment created a ripple of micro-migrations that changed the populations and earning potentials of the receiving port cities. Jonet Bannantine of Greenock who was tasked with ensuring the well-being of sailor Thomas Foulter and was one of these traveling women.

Foulter certainly possessed important maritime skills necessary for the ship *Speedy Return* since the Company went to some effort on his behalf. The ship left Port Glasgow in November 1699 and carried much-needed supplies to the colony. Prior to its departure, the Company hired Jonet Bannantine to travel to Port Glasgow and prepare meals for Foulter worked in port. What the ledger does not reveal is that Thomas and Jonet had married in Greenock on September 20, 1699, in a community that well understood the risks of earning a living on the sea.<sup>29</sup> Men like Thomas worked along Scotland’s coastal communities or had longer contracts with jobs that took them into deeper waters of the Atlantic and beyond. Danger was so much a part of the lives of families who made their living from the sea that in 1697 a group of people from Greenock requested that a special

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28 Adv.Ms.83.8.2, 279.

29 Foulter/Bannantine Marriage, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 564/3 40, 4.

section of pews be reserved for sailors as a symbol of comfort for maritime families from their town. It also helped reinforce a collective identity for all who earned their living at sea. A small-scale wooden ship hung from the rafters of the church to signify the importance of mariner's position within the community and bonds of support they could expect to find from all living there.<sup>30</sup> Thomas and Jonet's story is representative of the ways that a sailor's personal life and work converged. The two travelled together for the sake of the Company, and the ledgers show that Jonet was assigned the account number 31 in the ledger. She received payment of 6 shillings "for gowing from Greenock to Pt Glasgow abt the meal sufferance" to feed Thomas.<sup>31</sup> The Company agreed to pay Jonet money to pay for her travel expenses is significant, as it shows the value in some women's labor and the need to compensate them in for the work the employer's hoped to hire them for. The Company viewed her skills as a necessary expense for doing business and illustrates women's position within the larger framework of Atlantic commerce, even though her earnings were meager in comparison to the larger potential earnings of the Company. While Thomas readied himself and the *Speedy Return* for departure, Jonet was paid 4 shillings a week for "three weeks dyet to Thomas Foulter, sailor from the 20 of October to the 11 of November."<sup>32</sup> Her short journey from Greenock to Port Glasgow exemplifies the localized migrations made by some women for the sake of the Company.

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30 Robert Murry Smith, *History of Greenock*. (S.I.: The Grian Press, 2016, originally published by Orr Pollock & Co, Greenock, 1921), 111.

31 Adv.Ms.83.6.5, 2.

32 Adv.Ms.83.6.5; Parish Records, Scotland Select Marriages, 1561-1910. Thomas was paid £2:6:0 as two months advance for his wages on November the 8, 1699, which presumably also were kept by Jonet while he was away, *The Darien Papers*, 200. Thomas did not survive, and his will was filed with the Edinburgh Commissary Court, 2 February, 1708. This will evidences the marriage between Jonet and John Lyon.

Thomas and Jonet's time together as man and wife lasted a little over a month before he left Scotland for Panama. Janet's contract with the Company came to an end, and she returned the short distance home to Greenock to wait for Thomas's safe return home.<sup>33</sup> Soon letters written home made their way across the Atlantic and brought news of the hardships encountered by the colonists. Fortunate for the Company, the *Speedy Return* did manage return to Scotland with its passengers reduced and weary, but Thomas was not onboard. He died sometime during one of its crossings.<sup>34</sup> The *Speedy Return* set out on one last venture for the Company in May 1701, this time to Africa. It sailed without Foulter and the hundreds of other sailors who had been aboard when it first headed west, leaving Janet and hundreds of others in Scotland to find ways to reconstruct their lives and uncertain futures. Over time Jonet moved on from her grief.<sup>35</sup> There is no record of how Jonet learned of her first husband's passing. They had no children together and no letter is found in the archives that is a record her feelings on this moment or the sorrow she felt about the loss of her husband. Nevertheless, Jonet did manage to leave a historical thread for historians to follow about the importance of the moment and the significance that her first husband had on her life.

A partially legible parish document from Greenock shows that Jonet married John Lyon the last weeks of December 1701. John, a butcher, was a man with no occupational links to the sea. The couple settled down and soon began a family when Jonet gave birth

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<sup>33</sup> When Jonet returned is unclear, but we can be certain that she did return as seen in the Greenock Parish in 1701.

<sup>34</sup> Insh, *The Company of Scotland*, 177. Insh states that "there is no definite indication of when the *Speedy Return* arrived back in the Glasgow area" (255). The *Speedy Return* made its way to Africa in May 1701. Onboard were Janet Wier's twelve wooden bowls, platters and ladles (Inch, 332).

<sup>35</sup> The Testate Datives for the sailors who worked for the Company often lacked dates of decease. Therefore, it is virtually impossible to note specifically when individuals died.

to a daughter, Mary.<sup>36</sup> Their next child, a son, was born in 1711, and together Jonet and John agreed upon the name Thomas.<sup>37</sup> The selection his name virtually guaranteed that Jonet would recollect her first husband when calling their boy to dinner, to bath, or to bed. John and Jonet named their son Thomas on purpose, highlighting the importance of the Darien moment to the couple and the community. This act of naming illustrates that the powerful legacy of loss extended well beyond the generation of people who experienced the personal loss associated with the hardships of colony-building, firsthand.

Wee Thomas, born in 1711, was the embodiment of loss associated with this historical memory. Like so many non-elite women who fail to capture the gaze of historians, Jonet's feelings of the Darien moment would be invisible had she not named her son Thomas. The couple recorded them in the naming of their child. This naming shaped the cultural memory of the Darien moment for her family and her wider port town of Greenock and memorialized the good name and sacrifice of her first husband, Thomas. John Lyon's character and feeling for the moment is also revealed. His genuine respect towards the man who was once married to his wife, now dead because of his travels for the Company, beyond the life of the sailor who lost his life at sea. Non-elite women like Jonet may have lacked economic means, status, or education to explain their feelings of loss associated with the historical event. But it is clear from this example that some found ways to archive their feelings and leave a legacy explaining their connection to loved ones lost in sacrifice for the colony.

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36 Mary Lyon Baptism, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 564/3 10, 54.

37 Thomas Lyon Baptism, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 564/3 10, 103.



Jonet's experience took place at a time when the Company shifted its effort to Scotland's western ports, and specifically to the Clyde River communities.<sup>38</sup> And while Jonet was not pregnant during her time in Port Glasgow, it is clear that many women were. An interesting anomaly appears when looking at this westerly migration regarding pregnancy, migration, and the Darien venture.<sup>39</sup> Measuring the population increase data on baptisms against the timeline of Darien ship departures leaving the River Clyde region reveals an interesting pattern that can be interpreted as a spike in sexual interactions between men and women as they prepared themselves for long-term separation. This cycle of baby booms and busts resembles population shifts during the twentieth century's World War years.

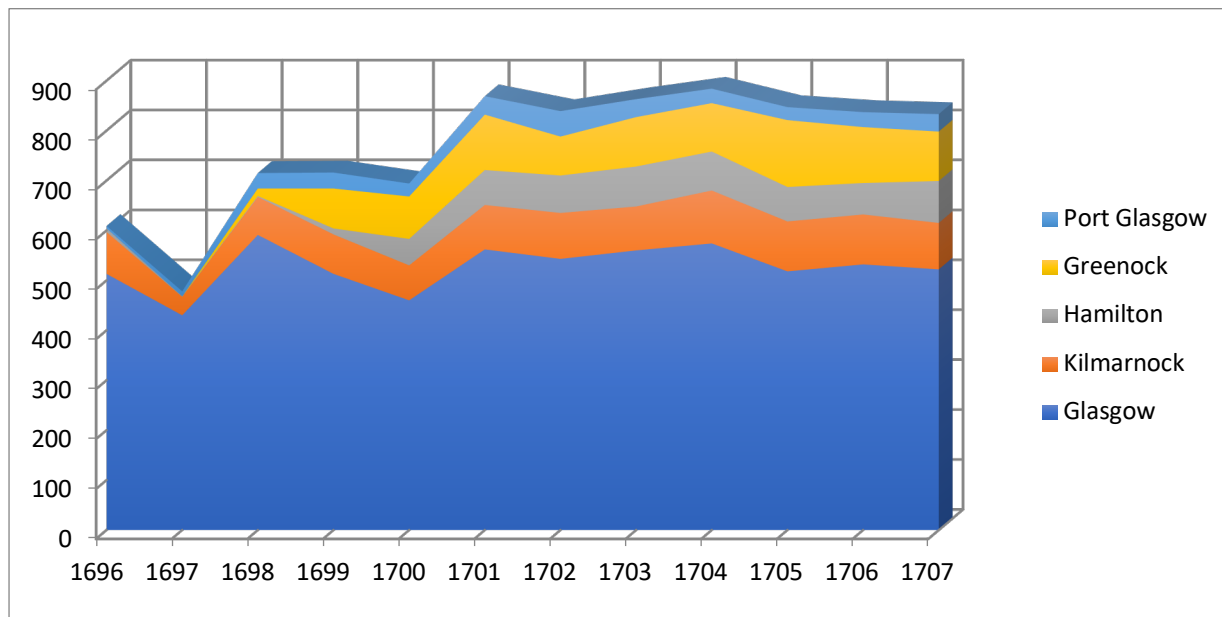
First, a note about what can and cannot be gleaned from baptismal records from this era. It is naive to assume that all sexual encounters and births emerged from loving or consensual relationships. It is equally certain that conceiving children was not the desired outcome of all sexual interactions, nor did all amorous activity result in childbirth. These nuances aside, baptismal records are some of the most reliable early modern

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<sup>38</sup> Insh, *The Company of Scotland*, 171.

<sup>39</sup> In 1977 Micheal Flinn focused on researching demographic shifts in Scotland's populations in the seventeenth century. Famine and disease are key features of Flinn's research and help to explain some of the reasons for Glasgow's exceptional growth. It is hardly surprising that the Darien moment garnered so little attention in his book, given the short time between 1696 and 1707 and the sum total losses as a result of the venture. Likewise, the cultural turn in 1960-1970s was only beginning to take hold and women roles in migration were hardly believed to be noteworthy when Flinn compiled his data. Asking new questions about women and their importance in migration leads to new possibilities for explaining Glasgow's growth. Is it possible that through the exploration of women connected to the Darien we actually are seeing the growth of Glasgow in the Darien Moment? The appearance of women workers in Glasgow like Jonet were part of the population increase explained by Flinn. We know that women receiving payment to travel to Glasgow. This necessity of bringing men to the Port Glasgow/Greenock region should leave indicators of their presence in the region. And if so, then such a spike in the growth of Glasgow lies just below the surface of the larger data used to examine the demographic shifts of Flinn attributes primarily to famine and disease. To illustrate how this increase of women might shape demographics it is helpful to look at the numbers of women who gave birth and had children baptized in west Scotland, and Glasgow specifically. Viewing the microcosm of women in context and coincides with the shifting demographics supports Flinn's population study and finds that these women were a part Glasgow's unique growth.

sources for understanding demographic shifts in Scotland.<sup>40</sup> From January to June 1698, much of the work loading the first fleet of ships took place.<sup>41</sup> On July 14, the first fleet of ships left from Leith heading west. The second expedition left the Clyde harbor on August 18, 1699. These dates offer a rough timeframe to anticipate peaks and valleys in populations and births.



*Baptismal Records from 1696 to 1700 for Westery Region of Scotland*

As seen in the chart above, the initial dip in the number of baptisms, the number on the left-hand side of Chart 1, between 1696 and 1697, may be a result of famine and illness, as shown in Cullen's work. The dramatic spike occurred in Glasgow, Kilmarnock, Hamilton, and to a lesser degree of certainty in Greenock and Port Glasgow from 1697

40 To accomplish this, baptismal records were taken from the online data provided by the National Library of Scotland and made available through Scotlandspeople.uk.org. I hoped to reveal that pregnancies might be transferable in some kind of measurable degree to baptisms and that these births would then help to tell us something about the movement of women into the Glasgow region.

41 The ships leaving on this first venture were the *Caledonia*, *Saint Andrew* and the *Unicorn*. Two additional ships joined the fleet and those were the *Endeavor* and the *Dolphin*. The second venture was made up by the *Rising Sun*, *Duke of Hamilton*, *Hope of Bo'ness* and the *Hope*.

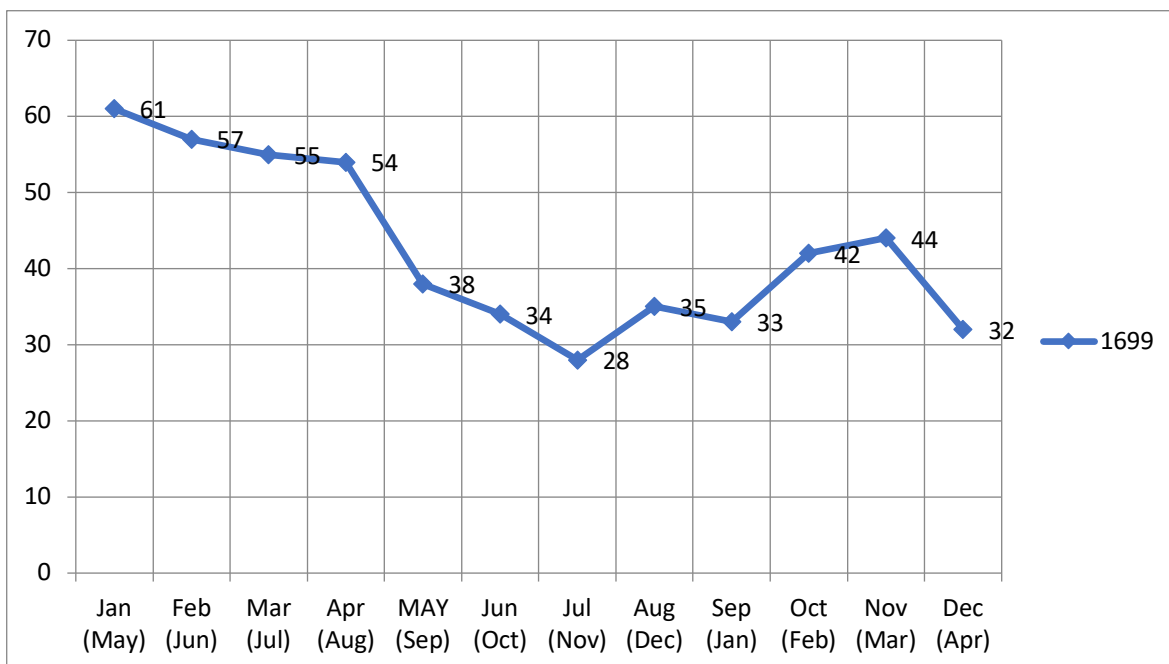
to 1698 that can be connected to the Darien Venture.<sup>42</sup> These baptisms coincide with the gathering of goods, gear, and laborers for the Company and can be attributed directly to the increase of sexual partners available from in-migration to the region. Glasgow's initial drop was a decrease of 16% from 1696 to 1697. But the same city witnessed a 37% upsurge of baptisms through the end of December 1698. Numbers in Glasgow would again drop for two more years in a row; first 13% in 1699 and then another 10% in 1700.

A month-by-month examination of the same data taken from Glasgow in 1699 offers even more detail. Like the chart before it, the numbers of baptisms in January 1699, appearing on the left-hand side of the graph, show that sixty-one baptisms were performed, and these children would have been conceived in or around May 1698, the month in parenthesis.<sup>43</sup> Keeping in mind that the first expedition left from Leith in July 1698, an eastern port near Edinburgh, it is necessary to account for numbers of sailors leaving western ports to join the expedition. Glasgow, like other Scottish communities with access to the sea, had many men with occupations linked to water transport and shipping.

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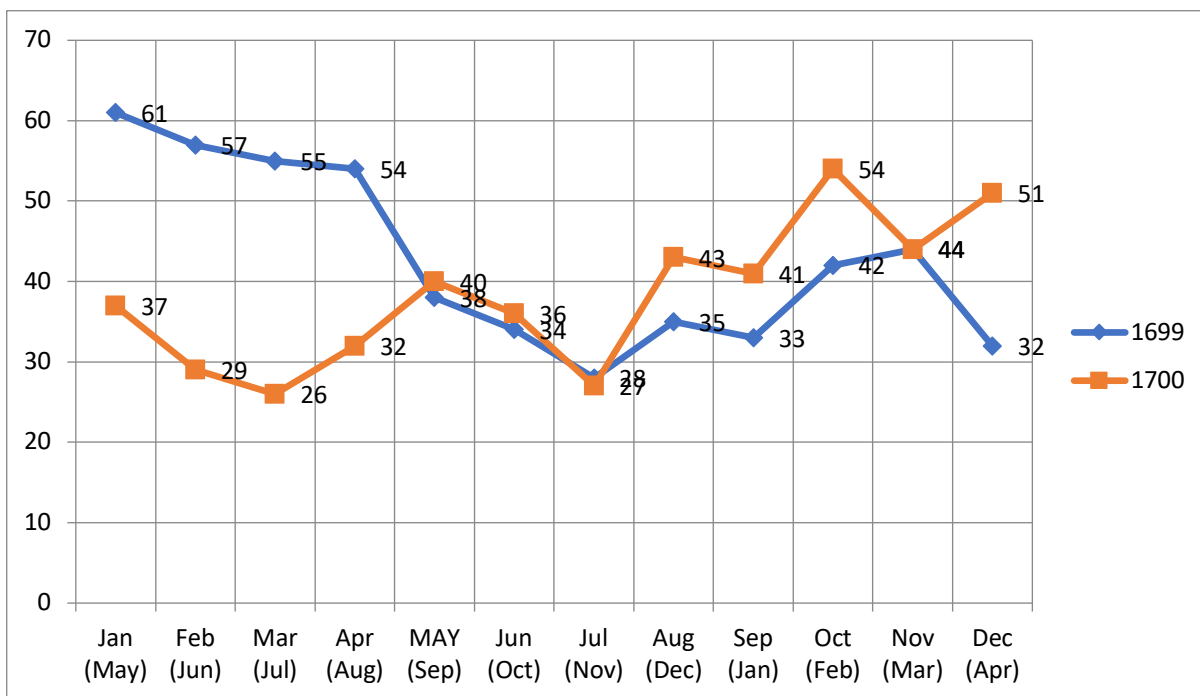
<sup>42</sup> My reasons for the questioning the data in the first two years is due to inconsistencies in the data that appear to be a lack of record keeping in the parish accounts. Port Glasgow reports only 15 baptisms for three years leading up to 1698, according to data from the National Records of Scotland online database. But in 1698 more predictable numbers begin to emerge, when 31 baptisms are registered by the parish ministry. Greenock reports no baptisms for 1696 or 1697. In 1698 15 baptisms are registered and by 1699 the number is 81% increase from the previous year. While Flinn does state that Greenock, Glasgow, and other regions in the west experienced growth unlike other regions, in this particular instance the jump found in the Greenock numbers is a bookkeeping matter. For the purpose of this dissertation I lean on the 1698 date for Port Glasgow and 1699 for Greenock.

<sup>43</sup> Conception dates by month appear in parenthesis and are an approximation, understanding that not all children are born full term and that menstruation cycles might vary depending on health of the woman, diet, and other factors.



*Glasgow Baptismal Data by Month for 1699*

Changes in population began to emerge when examining 1700, appearing in red below. At no time in the year of 1700 are the baptismal numbers equal to the large number of baptisms seen in January 1699. The second expedition made its departure from the River Clyde in the west side of Scotland.



*Glasgow Baptism by Month for 1699 and 1700*

I attribute some of this loss directly to outmigration associated with the venture. Looking at the data through the lens of the Darien moment shows large numbers of men and women coming into the region and then a decline of sexual partners when men left the region for the West Indies. Women like Jonet Bannantine subsequently returned home and increases in baptisms coincide with the timing of the failure of the colony. After that time that births and subsequent baptisms began to increase, eventually returning to patterns more similar to their previous numbers.

It is clear that the departure of thousands of men like Thomas Foulter and James Byers would directly impact populations. Most of these men left as a part of their search for wages as mariners. Others, as seen previously in the example of Byers, volunteered to travel as colonists. Although no surviving evidence indicates that women wrote letters asking to be considered to go to Scotland's new colony like James Byers did, women did travel to Panama. It is important to note that no comprehensive list survives of the men

and women who took part in the actual migration. Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that approximately 2,500 to 3,000 people traveled to Panama.<sup>44</sup> Watt's claim that the Company hoped to secure the support of 100 women willing to travel as a way to show the "long term commitment" and success of the colony though arguably the number could be higher.<sup>45</sup> For some of these women, marriage and migration went hand-in-hand. These women acted as willing participants in the venture in ways that suggest a different type of volunteerism than Byers initiated with the Company. Placing key life events into a larger timeline clarifies, at least in part, the agency that these women had when accepting offers of marriage. Such was the case with at least three women: Elizabeth Park, Margaret Broun, and Hannah Kemp, the wife of William Patterson.

Clues offering reasons that might compel a woman to consider a transatlantic migration are found when examining Elizabeth Park's life. She was born in 1676 into a merchant-class family in Edinburgh to parents, James Park and Jean Scott, who were married in 1673.<sup>46</sup> Elizabeth was the fourth child of at least six who were baptized in the Canongate Parish and the Park family enjoyed a few years of happiness. But a series of dramatic events in 1682 changed the structure of the family. In 1682, Jean became pregnant with her sixth child. Baby Marie was baptized on September 20, 1682, by the clergy, but unlike all of the earlier baptisms of her siblings, no witnesses were recorded from the baptism.<sup>47</sup> In fact, the word "witt:" was scratched out by the person recording the

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44 Cullen, *Famine in Scotland*, 175 mentions 2,800 people traveling to the colony in Darien.

45 Watt, *The Price of Scotland*, 17, 183.

46 Marriage of James Park and Jean Scott, Old Parish Registers, 685/1 440, 145. Parish Records of marriage and baptismal records associated with this family indicate that James was a writer in Edinburgh. This occupation is noted during seventeenth-century Scotland as one working as a lawyer or related field.

47 Baptism of Marie Park, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 685/3 60,115.

baptism.<sup>48</sup> A will from October 21, 1684, entered into court record for James Parks, states that he died in October 1682, possibly days after the birth of his youngest daughter.<sup>49</sup> The Commissary Court appointed Mr. James Corkburn, a goldsmith in Edinburgh, as tutor dative and he acted as guardian to James and Jean's children in 1684.<sup>50</sup> The goldsmith, not the mother Jean, acted on behalf of the Park children. And while Elizabeth was listed as one of the four children requiring oversight, along with her brothers Charles, Richard, and John, their youngest sister, Marie, was remarkably absent.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, the five-year-old Elizabeth and her siblings lost their father mere weeks after the birth of their youngest sister. Further loss rocked the family when, in the span of two years, baby Marie and the children's mother presumably died, as they vanish from the record.<sup>52</sup> The surviving Park children found themselves in the care of Corkburn. A gap in the knowledge regarding the lives of these children exists between James's will in 1684 and the Darien moment in the 1690s. Elizabeth reemerges in the record on July 9, 1699, when the twenty-two-year-old married Archibald Stobo in Edinburgh.<sup>53</sup>

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48 Baptism of Marie Park, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 685/3 60,115.

49 Will for James Park, NRS, Wills and Testaments, CC8/8/77, 570.

50 Will for James Park, NRS, Wills and Testaments, CC8/8/77, 570.

51 *The Records of the Cockburn Family by Robert Cockburn*, published in 1913 is helpful for explaining some of the relationships of James and Madgalene's relationship. My research into the lives of the Scott Cockburn supports the fact that as new research and documents are examined some of Cockburn's published accounts of the genealogy of the family are not correct, or at least are deserving of further study. This is not to slight Cockburn's efforts to document the lineage but to illustrate that such sources are useful as a springboard to improve on earlier research. He intent was not to explain or explore the Scott line. Doing so with current access to online data and documents, like that of the James Park will, illustrate a more complete understanding of their relationship. Placing women in the center of research, rather than peripherally, reveals subtle details that move them beyond people who were born, married and died. This is the purpose of the dissertation.

52 Will of James Park, NRS, Wills and Testaments, CC8.8.77, 570. It is likely that mother and child died as a result of childbirth, as was sometimes the case. Further increasing the likelihood that the children lost both parents within weeks of Marie's birth. While one dislikes imagining what might have befallen the family, it is possible to imagine that suicide or an influenza might account for the births falling so close together.

53 Marriage of Elizabeth Park and Archibald Stobo, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 685/1 450, 64.

Elizabeth understood migration would play a part in her marriage. A letter written on June 7, 1699, informed Alexander Sheilds, another Scottish minister, informed Sheilds that he had been selected along with other “ministers of New Edinburgh in Caledonia and thereby promoting all suitable incouragment and that he should have right to all the yearly allowances liberties and priveldges which by former acts of the said court have been allowed or granted to anie[any] minister for that station.”<sup>54</sup> Archibald Stobo was surely “one of the ministers” indicated in this letter that was written a month before he and Elizabeth married. She would have known that she faced the difficult choice between living on opposite shores from her husband or becoming part of the second migrating party and traveling alongside him. If staying behind was important to Elizabeth, she would have had enough time between when Stobo was first informed of his selection by the directors and the time of her marriage to call off their joining and remain in Scotland or make arrangements to live separately until his return.

The Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland had Archibald in their sights as one of a handful of ministers chosen to make the journey for the second venture to Panama.<sup>55</sup> Elizabeth was not needed to care for elderly parents, since hers had both passed away many years before. Nor, it seems, did she possess other close family ties that might aid her in childbirth or rearing after her marriage.<sup>56</sup> She, like many other women, shared affections with men who were quick to volunteer for the Company,

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<sup>54</sup> *Instruments in favor of Captain John Baillie*, Dated 7th June, 1699. Spencer Collection, MS GEN 1685/10.

<sup>55</sup> Prebble, *The Darien Disaster*, 225.

<sup>56</sup> One genealogist places Magdalen Scott’s date of death as occurring in sometime in 1698, within a year’s time of Elizabeth and Archibald’s wedding. Presumably Magdalen is the sister to Jean Scott and James Cockburn, goldsmith, is brother-in-law. Should this prove to be true then Elizabeth is further removed from close kin perhaps driving her closer to establishing her own family and kin in the West. Source: History Linked to My Family Tree titled “James Cockburn – The Family Goldsmith” by Elizabeth Grieve posted Monday, 27 August 2012 and accessed May 20, 2020.



and her lack of other kin ties undoubtedly shaped her decision to cross the Atlantic on August 18, 1699, just weeks after her marriage to Archibald.

Elizabeth's story shows that women may not have directly volunteered for the Company like Byers and so many other men did, but they were nevertheless willing to marry such men. They knew from the moment they married that their lives were forever linked to the migration to Panama. Migrating to the colony was an adventure that offered a future and new beginnings for some women like Elizabeth.

Margaret Broun and Alexander Dalglish also married in Edinburgh on June 29, 1699, just prior to the second Darien departure and he was another minister assigned to the Company. Like Elizabeth, Margaret was certainly aware that her husband's chosen occupation would take her away from Scotland, since he was also appointed by the Commission of General Assembly "to Accompany the First Expedition to Darien the 6<sup>th</sup> July 1698."<sup>57</sup> And while Alexander was intended as one who would leave on the first venture, for reasons that are unclear, he and Margaret left Scotland from Glasgow on the second set of ships. A letter dated July 1698 shows that almost a year passed between his learning of his appointment and his marriage to Margaret, leaving her even more time than Elizabeth to consider her impending wedding. Had Margaret chosen to, she could have changed her mind about marrying a man whose work would take him so far away from his homeland and those who loved him. Her willingness to marry and travel alongside her husband exemplifies the interconnected spirit of imperial volunteerism exhibited by Park. Just as men made a promise to honor their obligations, women also

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<sup>57</sup> Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, 663.

perceived a measure of honor in committing themselves, though indirectly, making them more likely to travel for the sake of the Company.

Margaret's kin were not based in Edinburgh but were from St. Andrews, approximately fifty miles away, making her an example of a woman who made both short-distance and transatlantic migrations for the purpose of the Company. Her father was a merchant and had business ties to Edinburgh, which made it possible for Margaret and Alexander's paths to cross. Margaret had family who would have helped her maneuver through the early stages of marriage and other life events. A historical understanding of the conditions she found herself in and what Margaret left behind when she chose to leave Scotland is significant because Margaret's situation was different from Elizabeth's, at least in the beginning phases of her journey. Margaret was visibly pregnant when she first decided to migrate. Earlier sea voyages during the 1680s were noted for carrying people from Aberdeen to the mouth of the Delaware River in North America.<sup>58</sup> On one of these journeys, one passenger commented, were "several women, and children, not above 4" and of those that "had been at Sea before, not one dyed, nor was sick by the way."<sup>59</sup> It is not clear whether Margaret believed that travel was safe, but she made the journey anyway.

Her husband became ill en route, and an account tells of how "Mr Alx Dagleish minister [was] buried and much Regreated" at sea along with the "one two or three every day the particular list of all our dead in the Voyage."<sup>60</sup> Alexander Sheild's letter shows the dire conditions onboard several ships, where the numbers of dead "amounts to about 150

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58 Anonymous, *A Brief account of the province of East-New-Jarsey*, 14.

59 Anonymous, *A Brief account of the province of East-New-Jarsey*, 14.

60 Anonymous, *A Brief account of the province of East-New-Jarsey*, 14.

whereof about 60 out of our ship.”<sup>61</sup> Sheilds attributed many of the deaths to “crowded numbers,” and water in casks that were “very bad and unclean, our beef much of it rotten.”<sup>62</sup> Pregnant and grieving for her husband, Margaret surely saw the chances of her own survival dwindling when she witnessed the daily ritual of sailors preparing bodies for water burials. Concern grew for Margaret onboard the ship. Some advocated for the “poor afflicted wife” and insisted that she “return home [to Scotland] with the first ships that shall be dispatched from here.”<sup>63</sup> “Big with child,” Margaret quickly left the colony and made her home by way of Jamaica onboard the *Society*, since those onboard the *Rising Sun* were “not in condition so to treat her as her circumstances and good behavior require.”<sup>64</sup> As she made her way back to Scotland, she was “kindly received and entertained by strangers, till the Lord directed them severally by right ways, and carried them at last to places of comfort and refreshment, by a series of wonderful, gracious, and well ordered providences.”<sup>65</sup> Margaret and Alexander’s child, however, did not survive the ocean journey, and presumably was buried at sea.<sup>66</sup> The certainness Margaret’s survival is seen when she was compensated for her husband’s labor and loss of life on August 28, 1707. The Commissary Court of Edinburgh delivered to her new husband, Mr. William Hardie, £70 that were due to her.<sup>67</sup>

Margaret Brown left Scotland for the sake of maintaining her family unit but some women made the decision to leave Scotland for reasons that had nothing to do with love.

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61 Alexander Sheilds, *From on Board the Rising Sun in Caledonia Bay*, December 25, 1699. Spencer Collection, MS Gen 1685/15.

62 Sheilds, *From on Board the Rising Sun*.

63 Sheilds, *From on Board the Rising Sun*.

64 Prebble, *The Darien Disaster*, 252.

65 Borland, *Memoirs of Darien, Giving a Short Description of That Countrey*, 79.

66 Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, 663.

67 Adv.Ms.83.2.4, 120.

This is best exemplified by the anonymous young woman who traveled with Margaret and Alexander, who history can only identify by her occupation as “maid.” She was employed by the Dalgleish family to take the journey and was paid an undisclosed small wage to do so. Women in this group worked as servants to others who made the journey. Unfortunately, there is little evidence of the reasons for their decision to leave, but it is reasonable to assume that this maid may have agreed to take the journey as part of her hiring. But given the economic downturn taking place across Scotland in the 1690s, this may have been her only choice. The only reason she is visible in the archive is because she was one of the ones who died somewhere along the journey, along with her employer, the Reverend Dalgleish.<sup>68</sup>

William Paterson and his wife Hannah Kemp also brought along with them several people as employees. Like the Dalgleishs, they hired an anonymous woman, identified only as a “maid” who “went on board the *Unicorn* on 16<sup>th</sup> July.”<sup>69</sup> There is no record of whether she lived through the journey to Darien or subsequent travels to North America or home to Scotland. There is also the possibility that she was from England, as Paterson was involved in the creation of the Bank of England and spent a great deal of time there prior to the venture.<sup>70</sup> If this could be proven, then it would mean that this woman’s job required that she travel over land to Edinburgh from England, and then make her way across the ocean to Panama with people who hired her as a companion for Hannah Kemp. Hannah survived the journey to New Caledonia, but she soon became ill and was “buried with solemn honours, some dropping guns being fired on the occasion” and was

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68 Borland, *History of Darien*, 85.

69 Barbour, *A History of Paterson*, 56.

70 Barbour, *A History of Paterson*, 4.

one of the first to be buried in the Scottish colony.<sup>71</sup> Hannah Kemp migrated alongside her husband but these two maids show how some women migrated for the sake of their jobs. These women earned wages in ways that are not reflected in the ledger books. Finding men who earned a living traveling as soldiers and sailors is reasonably simple, since wages paid to them reflect their mobility for sake of the country. Women, in these two cases, do not appear as wage earners paid by the Company. While they are anonymous their status as “maids” preserves evidence of their mobility and laborers associated with the venture. Since it is believed that approximately 350 travelers were women, it is then possible that a large number of these women decided to leave for reasons of employment, similar to the soldiers and sailors on the venture.

This chapter proves some of the ways that Darien women archives travelled across the Atlantic and complicate any false impression that women of the early modern era were relegated to staying onshore waiting for husbands, brothers, and fathers to return. Migrating women of the Darien venture replicated many of the transatlantic migration patterns exemplified by their male counterparts. Unnamed women whose wages did not come out of the Company ledgers, but rather those of their employers, also travelled to earn a wage and meet their end of an employment contract. Undocumented labor drove some women to migrate and theirs was not necessarily a one-way trip. Like some of the soldiers and sailors, they took wage jobs and certainly imagined returning back home. Other Darien women used the ocean as a means of connecting families who were associated with sea travel. Margaret Broun was compensated for her husband Archibald's loss of life, but not for her child's death or the hardships she faced returning back to her

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<sup>71</sup> Barbour, *A History of Paterson*, 90.

home country. Elizabeth and Archibald Stobo do not appear to have been compensated in any way for their journey, which eventually saw them settle in South Carolina, as discussed in the next chapter.

Women understood the danger of Atlantic travel and nevertheless chose to journey to the New World. Their multidirectional mobility underscores the larger argument of this dissertation that women were accustomed to traveling and often did so for the sake of their belief in a national effort to colonize in the West. Though these women were not solicited by the Company to travel far from Scotland, they voluntarily chose to connect themselves to individuals and responsibilities that would inspire them to make the journey.

## **Chapter 4:**

### **The Decision to Stay or Return**

Once the colony began to fail in the early summer of 1699, the colony's leadership in New Caledonia felt the need to send their ships from Panama carrying the survivors to seek shelter and recuperate along the coastlines of the Americas. Some landed in Jamaica; later, others docked along the Carolinas and at New York. Colonists' loyalties to the Company were less clear than they had been only months before. The idea of honor and status derived from the colony now posed challenges for the survivors in ways that had not been imagined before the failure. This led some on both sides of the Atlantic to wonder whether regaining a foothold in the West Indies was reason enough to continue their emotional and economic support of the venture. Others, on a personal level, questioned the viability of directing more of their own funds into a mercantile venture positioned thousands of miles away. The much-depleted numbers of travelers scattered throughout the Atlantic world and they certainly parsed out questions of whether return to Scottish soil or to construct somewhat different lives in the west. Any who decided to stay in the Americas sought to reconstruct blood or fictive networks.

Captain Alexander Campbell of Fonab, is an example of some of the well-known returners. He led an attack on Spanish forces that rose up to evict the Scots from the region. The Scots experienced a brief moment of success at the Battle of Toubacanti when Spain withdrew its forces, making Campbell a hero in the eyes of Scotland.<sup>1</sup> A subsequent battle took place and Spain reasserted their authority over the region in a

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<sup>1</sup> Insh, *The Company of Scotland*, 188-192.

final victorious push. Scottish colonists and military men surrendered and agreed to a truce. The remaining colonists left New Caledonia with military honors, “their colours flying and drums beating together with all their arms and ammunition and all of their goods and provisions” and a few ships salvaged to make the trip home.<sup>2</sup> When Campbell returned home to Scotland, he was awarded a medal for his heroic efforts.<sup>3</sup> Fanfare that Campbell received was not afforded to others who returned, including the women.

While surrender to Spain’s military force, honor was preferred over life by some of the soldiers of the colony. A Spanish account of one Scots surrender was retold in a letter sent to Spain. It stated one Scottish soldier wrote that “Having seen your letter which you offer us terms of capitulation, which in all good will we were inclined to consider, we reply that those you offer are unworthy acceptance by men of honour, so shameful that to comply with them would so stigmatize us that we could never return to Scotland nor show ourselves in any of her ports. Wherefore we consider it better to die honorably than live without honour.”<sup>4</sup> Colonists observing the military battle from a distance understood that once they left New Caledonia, they were part of the history of surrender associated with the Company. They traveled north remembering when the plan for the colony in 1696 was to “carry on this undertaking to the honour and profit of themselves and the Nation.”<sup>5</sup>

William Paterson was either credited or blamed for his leading role in the creation of the Company, after its failure returned from Panama and lived the remainder of his days in England. Samuel Veitch established himself as a successful merchant in Boston

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2 Insh, *The Company of Scotland*, 197.

3 Insh, *The Company of Scotland*, 184-185.

4 Francis Russell Hart, *The Disaster of Darien, The Story of the Scots Settlement and the Causes of its Failure: 1699-1701* (London: 1930), 388-389.

5 Hart, *The Disaster of Darien*, 24.



after the venture ended and was later made governor of Nova Scotia. These are the people whom history has usually associated with the Darien and are celebrated as survivors who met with a measure of praise for their efforts. This chapter explores the many ways that less well-known wayfarers' dreams of migration were fractured, leading them to make individual, rather than collective, decisions about whether to return to Scotland. Survivors were no longer as interested in honor to Company and country. How migration was imagined after the failure of the colony is the focus of this chapter. Families and the kin networks connected to them influenced their decisions, especially for women travelers.

Men struggled to understand the best path for their lives after the Darien moment. Loyalty and honor were often associated with elite men and their position within the Company, whether in Scotland or New Edinburgh. However, the expression of these qualities in letters and actions related to the decision to return deserves more attention. Men of the Darien often chose whether to travel or not based on these elusive considerations of honor. Women's mobility associated with honor are less clear since so little direct evidence remains of their reasons for relocating. However, tracing the various remnants of the survivor's lives in letters, memoirs, and life events illustrates some of the complicated decisions these women faced, what a reunion with their homeland looked like, and the logistics necessary to make such a reunion possible.

Rebuilding and reunion were complicated ideas for these travelers, and men and women with stronger kin networks were afforded more comforts as they determined their own path, regardless of where they landed. Migrants with weaker connections to people

and places on either side of the Atlantic found themselves in more precarious positions, and their outcomes and futures were less certain.

Elizabeth Park Stobo reappears as a prime example of a woman who traveled with the Company. The weak networks in her home country, coupled with conditions outside of her control in the west, influenced her migratory choices and suggest that reconstructing migration networks was necessary for every migrant. Each person made choices about which side of the Atlantic they would call home and if Elizabeth had plans of returning, it is clear that her mind changed on the matter. The Americas were a place that offered protections from the dangers of travel; for others it offered a place to dissolve into the landscape.

No letters written by Elizabeth Park Stobo survive, if she wrote any. But a minister, Alexander Sheilds, travelled the same path and worked alongside her husband, Archibald Stobo, in Panama. Her voice is found in both men's letters, and each reveal the differences in the ways that the couple each demanded to be free to leave the colony. Elizabeth's desire to return to Scotland was evident almost immediately upon their arrival in the West. Sheilds wrote back to Scotland that "Mr Stobo: his wife is much discouraged to stay behind her and is very pressing to have her husband sent home with her. We cannot for the time yield [sic] to this but would fain encourage one another to wrestle out the difficulties of the next year, and he that can give the best and strongest reasons for his returning may then be dismissed."<sup>6</sup> The needs of the colony were of primary concern to the Company and wives, like Elizabeth, were of peripheral interest to the colony's

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<sup>6</sup> Shields, *From on Board the Rising Sun in Caledonia Bay*, December 25, 1699, Spencer Collection, University of Glasgow Special Collections.

leadership as it attempted to maintain its tenuous hold on the goods, gear, and patriotic spirits of the colonists.

Another letter written two months later by Archibald Stobo as he voiced his own resolve to leave and was not veiled in niceties. The letter is a marked difference between the way this husband and his wife expressed their desire to leave. Archibald left no room for debate when he wrote, "I cannot stay any longer in this place."<sup>7</sup> Surprisingly, however, nowhere in his letter did this newly married minister directly reference his wife's safety or her desire to leave, expressed to the colony's directors only weeks before. He did not reference any perceived duty related to masculine responsibility as Elizabeth's husband. His words lacked any advocacy for her on account of supposed feminine vulnerability or the safety of either of them. Elizabeth was absent from his pleas when he concluded his letter, finding "nothing here yt can be fit for me in ye circumstances I am in." These two separate accounts from husband and wife reflect a difference in language and complicate the expressions of expected gender roles one would expect within their marriage. Panama offered new vistas and opportunities for economic advancement, but it also created a sense of instability y that contributed to the unexpected gender dynamic between man and wife.

In the Stobo case, notions of gendered protections offered by patriarchy were not evident in Archibald's words. Likewise, Elizabeth pushed aside any expectation of submissiveness within this Presbyterian family unit. Elizabeth rose to the challenge of advocating for her own safety and the safety of her husband, whereas Archibald's actions were more centered upon self-preservation. A clear understanding of each partner's goals

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<sup>7</sup> A Stobo, *Letter from A. Stobo, Dated Feb. 1, 1700, One Board Ye Hop of Borrowstownness Riding in Caledonia Bay in America*, Spencer Collection, University of Glasgow Special Collections.

is seen in these two accounts, despite the common goal of trying to make their way back home to Scotland. And while it is not possible to determine if all women colonists were as insistent to leave as Elizabeth, it is clear that speaking up required a significant degree of social influence within the larger group of colonists. It was Elizabeth who made public pronouncements regarding safety for herself and her spouse. She was successful in having her demands heard, so much so that the force of her words were recorded in the letters written by others back home to Scotland.

The Stobos experienced a change of heart once they left Darien. The *Rising Sun* docked in South Carolina, only to be broken apart and lost to the sea by a hurricane that struck the region in the early days of September 1700. Elizabeth Stobo, her husband, and thirteen other people were saved from death only because they had decided to go on shore for a short time prior to the storm's arrival. Hundreds of the other people onboard the ship lost their lives. The Carolina region the group found itself in was described by some as being somewhat hostile to Scottish outsiders. Elite merchants from England "enjoyed deep roots and considerable prosperity, and resentment of Scottish merchants was endemic."<sup>8</sup> Other accounts found in letters written five years prior to the Darien venture support the idea that Carolina was initially unwelcoming to Scots, who found "some upon the place who wold be esteemed grate men there, who not only did what they could to discouradge us to setle here, but also both used us uncivilie and dealt with severall of our number to deserte us, which some did."<sup>9</sup> Francis Borland noted a shift in

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<sup>8</sup> Paul M. Pressly, "Scottish Merchants and the Shaping of Colonial Georgia," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 91, no. 2 (2007): 155.

<sup>9</sup> Sir Peter Colleton's letter from Lord Cardross and Wm. Dunlop, transcribed in George Pratt Insh "The "Carolina Merchant": Advice of Arrival," *The Scottish Historical Review* 25, no. 98 (January 1928), 100.

the Stobo family's desire to return to Scotland after "the vessel in which he sailed was overtaken by storm in Charleston Harbour South Carolina, and greatly damaged, The Puritan congregation at Charleston (vacant through the death of John Cotton, 8 September 1699) learning that a Scottish min. [minister] was on board, welcomed him amongst them and gave him a call."<sup>10</sup> The Stobos accepted this opportunity to recuperate, and over time they grew to see the Carolinas as an advantageous location to rebuild their lives and establish roots.

In addition to hurricanes and a damaged ship, Elizabeth faced another issue that complicated her family's decision to return to Scotland. At some point along the way, either in Panama or in the Carolinas, she learned she was pregnant. As a result, in 1701 Archibald and Elizabeth gave birth to their first child, a healthy daughter they named Jean, in the Carolinas. She would grow into adulthood knowing only of a life lived on American soil. It is hard to imagine that this pregnancy was a planned event. A comparison between marriage and baptismal records around this period shows that pregnancy and children often came very quickly to families after their marriage. Women traveling the Atlantic with spouses were certainly aware of the possibility of delivering children in new and unfamiliar territories. Patricia Romero's comparison of women and pregnancy in the early modern era documents the presence of women delivering children onboard ships with soldiers and seamen.<sup>11</sup> These ships, though primarily filled with men focused on empire, were also floating replicas of the types of heterogeneous spaces that people encountered on land in their home communities. Pregnancies on ships or land were justifiable reasons for

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<sup>10</sup> Borland, *Memoirs of Darien*, 665.

<sup>11</sup> Patricia Romero, "The Health Issues Pertaining to French Huguenot Women and Children at the Cape of Good Hope and in Charles Town, Carolina, 1685-1720" *Historia* 50, no. 2 (2005): 1-23.

making decisions to delay, at least for a time, any return home. These Scottish families were aware of the vulnerability of their newborn children, and the Stobos found themselves once and for all, decided to live in the receiving society that they found in the Carolinas.

John Lawson, an Englishman travelling in the Carolinas in the last days of 1700, encountered an unnamed “honest Scot” living in what was called Dix’s Island.<sup>12</sup> The two strangers spoke of how Darien migrants first arrived to the region, offering a hint of the serendipitous ways that some networks reinforced bonds connecting Scots to their homeland. Lawson described a Scotsman he met while traveling through the region who “gave us the best reception his dwelling afforded, being well provided of oatmeal.”<sup>13</sup> That evening the man told him that many of the things he used that evening to entertain guests were scavenged from the wreck of the *Rising Sun*, the same ship that had brought the Stobos and hundreds of other survivors from Panama. The host certainly knew firsthand the fifteen people who survived, since he called several by name. He also commented on the bodies of the hundreds of corpses that languished on the shore after the “terrible gust which happen’d,” until they were finally “carefully interr’d buy Mr. Graham, their Lieutenant, who happily was on shore during the Tempest.”<sup>14</sup> The memory of the moment was significant enough for this Scotsman living so far from home that he retold to others, kept alive, if only for a moment, the memory of the hundreds of his countrymen who lay

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12 John Lawson, “A New Voyage to Carolina; Containing the Exact Description and Natural History of That Country: Together with the Present State Thereof. And a Journal of a Thousand Miles, Travel’d Thro’ Several Nations of Indians. Giving a Particular Account of Their Customs, Manners, &c.,” 7. A current positioning of Dix’s Island is described as Dewee’s Island by Scott Huler, *A Delicious Country: Rediscovering the Carolinas along the Route of John Lawson’s 1700 Expedition*, 17. I am particularly thankful for the time spent with Dr. Kimberly Sherman who alerted me to the Lawson source, as we discussed the migrations of Scots to the Carolinas after the Darien moment.

13 Lawson, “A New Voyage,” 7.

14 Lawson, “A New Voyage,” 8.

strewn on the beach. At the same time, it was the oatmeal and other provisions that afforded him a tactile connection to Scotland that filled his belly and stirred memories of home. The Scotsman could have entertained Lawson without divulging how he acquired these goods. But the pride in his connections to home was evident as he shared his story with his English visitors. We are left to speculate whether the man Lawson encountered was an immigrant from an earlier migration to the west or one of the survivors of the Darien. Regardless, he exemplifies the presence of receiving networks, however tenuous, created by Scots already living in the Carolinas that were ready to accept people like the Stobos. Those in the West were linked to their homeland through influxes of migrants like the Darien survivors. The arrival of new Scots in the region allowed those already there to tell the stories of Scotland and its people to the wider community and helped keep alive their memory of Scotland, if only for a moment.

Finding accounts that describe what life was like for Darien survivors who returned to Scotland presents certain challenges. One fictional interpretation offers a glimpse of what an anonymous Darien survivor may have noticed about Scotland when they stepped off a ship docked in the Leith harbor:

You know I went away to Darien. After we were forced to leave that Colony, because K[ing] William emitted Proclamations, discharging his English Subjects to furnish us with firing, bread, water, or any other conveniency of Life. I came to one of the English Plantations, where I have lived sometimes well enough, and sometimes meanly enough; At last I resolved to visit my native Country, and finding a Ship Bound for Newcastle, I arrived there last Week, and in a Boat, which was returning from thence, I came about Three Hours agoe to Leith. But pray let me ask you one question, I see a great Alteration in this City of Edinburgh, and a strange peevish pensive aspect in every Bodie's Contenance, What's become of the Nobility and Gentry? I see few or none of them walking in the streets, I do not hear the Gingling of

their Coaches, I see a vast many Houses empty and Shops shut up, and all my old Acquaintances gone.<sup>15</sup>

The character so addressed responds that “this place is deserted a Third of its Inhabitants since the Union”<sup>16</sup> In this fictional tale, Scotland was noticeably changed and was likely felt by those who survived the Darien moment.

This new and changed Edinburgh greeted Margaret Colvill when she completed her circular journey to and from New Caledonia. Margaret was a young woman who began her travels with the intention of joining her husband, John Merston, who had traveled on the first expedition. Parish records show that Margaret married John sometime prior to 1686. John earned a living as a “grafter,” a term usually associated with men who constructed trenches or dug graves. Over time he developed leadership skills that made him valuable for military service, and he found himself promoted to “sargent in ye royal regiment of foot Under Captain John Sterling.”<sup>17</sup> There is no indication of what kinds of work Margaret did to add to their economic stability, but given the status of those working as manual laborers and the family’s subsequent career advances, it is clear that she and John were both accustomed to hard work. They were just the sort of people the Company needed.

From 1686 to the middle of the 1690s, Margaret gave birth to at least three children. John meanwhile saw an opportunity to increase the family’s prospects and to advance himself when news of the Scottish colony began to circulate in 1696. While

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15 George Lockhart, *A Dialogue Betwixt a Burgess of Edinburgh, and a gentleman lately arrived in the Scotland, concerning the union and behavior of the Presbyterian ministers in that great affair* (Edinburgh: 1713), 1-2.

16 Lockhart, *A Dialogue Betwixt a Burgess of Edinburgh*, 2.

17 John Merstoun Will, NRS, Will and Testaments, CC8/8/83, 469; John’s career advancements are noted through the baptisms of his children and his assignment in 1691 is confirmed at the baptismal recording of his son, John, February 22, 1691; “grafter” definition found in Mairi Robinson, *The Concise Scots Dictionary* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1985), 243.



Margaret worked in and out of the home while caring for their children, John was able to secure a position as a laborer in Lord Lindsey's Regiment. John understood that his work would soon take him to Panama and required he leave Margaret and their children behind. But John and Margaret had plans to reunite the family as soon as possible.

The opportunity presented itself when relief ships left the western port of Scotland, near Glasgow, departing from the River Clyde in 1699. Margaret managed to coordinate the overland travel from Edinburgh to Port Glasgow and Greenock for herself and her children, now ages thirteen, eight, and six, to board the ship bound for the Americas.<sup>18</sup> She arranged on April 27, 1699, £5 due to John, possibly as his advance pay--a common practice among sailors when they prepared to leave.<sup>19</sup> While she made preparations in Scotland, John's diligence serving The Company was rewarded when he received a promotion to Lieutenant in Lindsey's Regiment. However, John would not realize any economic advantages from his newly awarded position because, somewhere along the journey he, like so many others, died. His will, prepared just before departure, insured that his wife received any funds due him in the eventuality of his death. Unaware of his passing, Margaret left Scotland on a ship bound for Panama, with children surely at her side, in the belief that she would join her husband and they would establish roots in

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<sup>18</sup> It is documented that children travelled on the journey to the colony. The lack of manifests limits our understanding of exactly how many children took the trip, and we have little evidence of what happened to them during or after. More often than not, historians know that children made the journey when they were taken captive, as was the case with eleven-year-old, David Wilson, who was held captive in Spain for a time and returned to England in 1700. Mary Jaffray was the daughter of John Jaffray, a firemaster and bombardier, who lost her life while making the journey. Current efforts to bring details regarding her life or the Jaffray family into my dissertation have been unsuccessful. Orr, *Scotland, Darien and the Atlantic World*, 1698-1700 p. 81. Other letters shared news that children had been buried at sea. Knowing that children made the journey, it is fair to assume that Margaret would take the journey with the intent of staying in the colony. David Dobson's, *The Original Scots Colonists of Early America*, 1612-1783 indicates that Margaret goes on the journey to Panama but does not indicate children. My examination of Baptismal records for Lothian provide proof of the birth of at least three children; Marion, John, and James.

<sup>19</sup> Adv.Ms.83.4.4., 222.

Central America. She arrived at the colony sometime after the first fleet had deserted the region, only to learn of the death of her husband.

Margaret returned to Scotland, and in 1707 she received moneys from her husband's backpay and profits from a small subscription given to him with six percent interest from the Equivalent.<sup>20</sup> The status of her children was not revealed in the records, and it is unclear whether they survived the arduous journey there and back or if they, like their father, perished along the way. Margaret Colvill's journey is evidence that circumstances could quickly change for travelers. These changes were beyond any individual's control and forced some women to return to Scotland much earlier than they had anticipated. Margaret could have stayed behind in one of the several coastal North American communities willing to take her in, just as Elizabeth and Archibald Stobo did in Charlestown, but she chose not to. The Stobos had ecclesiastical ties that supported them to a greater degree and advantaged them over those entering an unfamiliar region who lacked any obvious family or friend networks.

The Scots Charity Society, based out of Boston, was quick to provide food, lodgings, and other needs to ships making their way north from Panama. But new arrivals needing assistance were uncertain of how long the Society would continue to help them, and Margaret likely understood that she could not depend upon the good will of well-meaning Scots to sustain her for longer periods of time. Margaret perceived her kin ties back in Scotland as much stronger than Elizabeth did, especially as Elizabeth had lost her father, mother, and extended kin prior to her departure to Panama.<sup>21</sup> Margaret's return

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<sup>20</sup> Merstoun's Will, NRS, Wills and Testaments, CC8/8/83, 469.

<sup>21</sup> A Margaret Colvile was buried in Torryburn, just north of the Firth of Forth, on February 27, 1713. Parish records indicate that she was "relict of John Colvil." Further examination of kin networks is

exemplifies how some women viewed a return home to Scotland more favorably than remaining in the West. Fears of facing another transatlantic crossing proved insufficient when some women finally parsed out their own decisions of whether to re-migrate. Reconstituting family networks in Scotland, as in Margaret's case, could be sufficient reason to face an uncertain journey home.

Unlike Margaret Colvill, at least one woman initially had no desire to leave Panama with the other colonists. A single mention of an unnamed woman in a footnote found in a 1907 account reports this woman, along with a small number of other colonists, volunteered to stay behind in New Edinburgh and wait for the second set of ships to arrive. They were collectively described as "about twelve of their number, including three lieutenants and a carpenter and his wife."<sup>22</sup> Everyone except for this group sailed for Jamaica, where they hoped to find more provisions and consider whether to stay in the west or perhaps head home. Barbour does not indicate the original source indicating where he found accounts of those who remained behind. Insh also describes "a small party of Scots who had decided to remain with the friendly Indians," although he does not specifically mention a woman among them.<sup>23</sup> In Prebble's work from 1969, not only is the carpenter's wife missing from those who remained behind, but the number staying behind is reduced to "six sick men."<sup>24</sup> This woman's life was literally a footnote in 1907, and we see her historically disappear with each new publication written about Darien between the 1920s and the 1960s.

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needed to determine whether this was the same Margaret, but it is reasonable to consider this person and the person of the Darien crossing were one and the same.

<sup>22</sup> Barbour, *The History of William Paterson*, 131-132.

<sup>23</sup> Insh, *The Company of Scotland*, 193.

<sup>24</sup> Prebble, *The Darien Disaster*, 332.

Despite her erasure, her position as a woman deciding to remain on the Panamanian coastline is significant because it shows that women were able and willing to place themselves in unfamiliar situations. It is reasonable to imagine that this carpenter's wife crossed paths with Kuna people in the time between the departure of the majority of migrants leaving for Jamaica and the subsequent arrival months later of a second fleet of Scotspeople. She likely viewed herself as possessing important skills that were useful for those who remained. Her presence was likely seen as an asset rather than a burden to others who were part of this smaller group. And while a stereotype of "friendly Indians" is an oversimplification, the Kuna did not pose a personal threat sufficient to cause much concern for the few that remained.<sup>25</sup> Given that this group of thirteen was cohesive enough to remain behind when other Scots were quick to leave suggests that these people had established new networks onboard their ships that were strengthened during their time onshore. The carpenter and his wife and others who stayed behind offered security, and these networks arguably extended, if only peripherally, into the networks of the Kuna people.<sup>26</sup>

While safety and connections to networks were central reasons that women decided to stay in the West or return to Scotland, men expressed notions of shame or valor to justify decisions of mobility. Some men found Panama a less restrictive environment that provided them the opportunity to explore ways of living different from

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25 On the relationship between the Kuna people and the Scottish colonists see Ignacio Gallup-Diaz, *The Door of The Seas and Key to the Universe: Indian Politics and Imperial Rivalry in the Darien, 1640-1750* (Ithaca: Columbia University Press, 2004).

26 Evidence is lacking showing whether Scots women and Kuna women interacted with one another and what those kinds of exchanges were like. The carpenter's wife's decision to remain behind offers the best chance for historians to imagine about their relationships or interactions. Given that she would have added to the labor required for living in New Edinburgh, she would have worked alongside the men and perhaps sought assistance from the Kuna people, learning techniques useful for food preparation of unfamiliar plant and animals indigenous to the region.

what they had experienced under the watchful eye of family in Scotland. This was best illustrated by James Anderson in a letter to John Sterling, principal of the College of Glasgow in 1716, expressing his concerns about the behavior of Scotsmen living around “Newcastle upon Delaware.” Anderson came to America around 1711 and found that the men there had lost many of the desirable qualities necessary for happy and sober living:

There are a great many young men merchants who come from your parts [Scotland], soberly (I believe) educated & brought up att home, who, when they arrive here, are meer rakes, stap or stand att no sin or vice almost that falls in their way, swearing whoring Sabbath breaking drunkennesse are as common vices, with a great many of them, as if they tho't there wos no evil in the commission of any of these; and as to their contenance of ministers yt are of ye principes of ye Church of Scotland, they are so far from yt [that], yt [that] they carry as if they were assamed of their moyr [mother] Church her principes & ways, whatever is the religion of their pot & lascivious companions yt is theirs. So yt really a great many of them (yr are some, tho'ver vew exceptions) are a perfect scandal to all religion & discgrace to yt part of ye world from whence they come, from which other & better things has been her expected; I am sure if ye parents and principals of some of ym knew their carriage and behavior in these parts it would be matter of very great sorrow & greif to them.<sup>27</sup>

This type of behavior was perceived as so out-of-hand by Anderson that he proposed that “parents & imployers could not oblidge them to bring certificates of their inafensive beheavor buring their abode in these parts from ministers here to their own minsrs &c att home.”<sup>28</sup> Anderson’s description illustrates the environment that many of the Darien survivors found themselves in, especially sailors and merchants and other men who hoped to make money in the West afforded some the space to challenge conventional notions of acceptability.

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<sup>27</sup> Charles A Briggs, *American Presbyterianism: Its Origin and Early History: Together with an Appendix of Letters and Documents, Many of Which Have Recently Been Discovered* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1885); lxxii-lxxiii.

<sup>28</sup> Briggs, *American Presbyterianism: Its Origin and Early History*, lxxiii.

Panama was a place where some of the more religious Scots believed that challenges to social norms were spreading like wildfire, similar to patterns observed by Anderson. An anonymous account reveals that the more permissive attitudes in Panama could be seen in the slang used by the Scots in the colony. The Kuna people picked up phrases from the uninvited, yet tolerated, Scots who had arrived unannounced to their coastline. Some Kunas were described as willing and eager to learn from them, and not all of the lessons taught by the Scots were associated with trade or religion. An anonymous writer described how the Kuna men and women picked up phrases “learned of our people wicked ways when anything anoyes or offends them, they will say God dam you for a Son of a Bich.”<sup>29</sup> The Kuna community were taught wicked ways in jest or were the target of these insults by the Scottish travelers, or the Kuna could have picked up this terminology through passive observation by other travelers. The use of profanity was acknowledged by the letter writer to be clearly outside the norm for polite society. The colonists took liberties with cultural norms, stretching the meaning of appropriate behavior in Panama where customs could be dismissed as useless, frivolous, or unnecessary.

Francis Hislope’s experience while in New Caledonia provides another lens to understand how some men associated their actions with valor or shame, dependent upon the mood of the moment. Hislope understood migration to Panama as an honorable service to his country. And just as honor motivated him to travel far afield, honor led him to stay despite his desire to flee the colony. He wrote that he would have returned “if it were not the respect I have for my country and the scandal it should bring upon by

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<sup>29</sup> Unknown, *Contemporary Copy of A Short Account of Our Voyage into Darien, and Yt Happened after We Came to the Place, 1699*, Spencer Collection, University of Glasgow Special Collections.

strangers I had left the St. Andra [sic; *Saint Andrew*] before this tyme.”<sup>30</sup> Francis feared that others would judge his actions as less valorous. As the *St. Andrew* sat docked in Jamaica, Hislope described himself as being “in none of the best condition wt out either money or credite and ane empty ship,” illustrating that hardships and illnesses also gave some men pause when they decided to stay behind in Jamaica rather than return home.<sup>31</sup> It is unclear what became of Francis Hislope; as he wrote from the Port Royal harbor, perhaps he was one who “for want of bread to eat” looked for ways to support themselves and decided to work on the island of Jamaica.<sup>32</sup>

The Company directors in Scotland pointed to honor of the colony and country when some deserted New Edinburgh and fled to Jamaica. A letter written in May 1700 described these men and women as acting cowardly and lacking judgment. The Company expected more from those who were called to serve and defend Scotland’s interests in Panama. From the comfort and safety of their meeting place in Edinburgh, Company officials could not “pass over the censuring of that hasty and dishonourable resolution of sending all the men supernumerary of five hundred to be disposed of in Jamaica, than which nothing could be more disgracefull to either the Company or Colony, nor of more pernicious consequences to the men themselves...wherefore it would have been much

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30 Fra Hislope, *Letter from Fra. Islope to Capt. Blakeder [Blackader] in Coll. Fergusons Regiment to Be Left at the Affrican Copy March 15, 1700*, Spencer Collection, University of Glasgow Special Collections.

31 Hilslope, *Letter from Fra. Islope to Capt. Blackader*.

32 Prebble, *The Darien Disaster*, 206. A testament for a Francis Hislop was recorded in Edinburgh Court in December 28, 1708. More research is needed to determine if this is the same person. If it can be proven that these two documents are concerning the same person then it is certain that Francis did survive his time in Jamaica and returned to Scotland and enlisted with the Earl of Angus’s Regiment and his will was passed along to John Bowman, a merchant in Glasgow, who was executor. It is relevant to note that while the Hislop will does not mention any participation with the Darien, the expenses due to Bowman as a result of Hislop’s will were paid out of the equivalent, as was the case for many men serving during the Darien moment. But it is equally important to point out that others who served under Queen Anne’s reign were also paid out of the equivalent, so any direct proof cannot be established at this time, without further research. Francis Hislop Will, record CC8/8/84.

more honourable for the Company's and Colony's interest and reputation to have sent any such number of men upon some honorable expedition pursuant to the instructions" given by the directors in Scotland.<sup>33</sup> As quickly as honor was ascribed to all who ventured to travel for the Company's their honor was hastily called into question when conditions became unbearable for those who made the journey. Considerations of success and failure influenced each survivor's measure of his or her own actions against the censure of the Company.

Roger Oswald managed to complete the circular migration from and back to Scotland, claiming that honor influenced his consideration of the value of returning home. Born in 1697 to Sir James Oswald of Fingleton and Elizabeth Gillespie, Robert was a young man who sought adventure and willingly volunteered to make the journey to Panama.<sup>34</sup> His experiences exemplified the shame and difficulty felt by some of the lucky few survivors who lived long enough to decide whether to return to Scotland. Robert wrote candidly to his friend, Thomas Aiken, of his feelings of the shame of survival when so many others had perished. He struggled with the knowledge that others might judge his survival as a dishonor since he had not given his all for the cause of the nation and the Company:

I am mightily sorry that I should have angered my father, but necessity has no laws. I wish he would forget my fault when I am gone, I know not wither but certainly it is to misfortune, for I see plainly that my life is composed of labyrinth of my own out of which I will never get an outgate but by death's door. I design not to go back to Caledonia but to somewhere else wherever my fate leads me, though it was one of my resolutions to go back and lay

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<sup>33</sup> Burton, *The Darien Papers*, 291.

<sup>34</sup> Roger Osswald's Baptism, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 685/1 80, 260; Collection of Epitaphs and Monumental Inscriptions, Chiefly in Scotland ..." p 13-14; Prebble, *The Darien Disaster*, 103-104. Prebble erroneously identified James Oswald's title as "Sir James Oswald of Singleton," yet a consultation of his monument subscription and will show it was Fingletoune, or variations thereof. This error was likely due to confusion between the f for s and a capital F.



down my life cheerfully for my country's sake. Since it pleased God that I have preserved it still, and had not the good fortune (if I may term it so) to loose it in that place, and so have been happy by wanting the sight of so many miseries that have come upon myself and others of my relations which I have got notice of since I came to this town. I never intended, nor do intend, to trouble my father any more... Only I hope you will acquaint him that I wish him long life, wealth and happiness, and more comfort in the rest of his children than he has had in me.<sup>35</sup>

Prebble's account of the young man's life leaves readers with the impression that Oswald preferred to languish in Glasgow rather than face the shame of returning home to Edinburgh. However, this dissertation indicates a much different outcome for Oswald.<sup>36</sup> While Oswald's letter illustrates how travelers suffered from depression and some may have had suicidal thoughts, these feelings did not always last. A few years after his arrival home, Oswald met and married Hellen Sydserfe, who was from the coastal town of in Dirleton, near Edinburgh. Though a marriage date cannot be confirmed, the parish records in Edinburgh and Prestonpans establish that they had at least five children beginning in 1705 and that Oswald was successful in at least giving the impression of a man who had reintegrated himself into the rhythm of life in Edinburgh.

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35 Prebble, *The Darien Disaster*, 269. Prebble provided details to this source that he likely attributed to Oswald letters held in the Roberston-Aikman MMS, housed at the Hamilton Public Library in Scotland. Difficulties in locating the actual letters result in my use of Prebble for Oswald's words until further research can verify correctness of source.

36 The tale of a broken Oswald still resonates today. A 2013 script by the successful Scottish film, stage, and TV actor, Angus MacFadyen and co-writer Eric Belgaut, *A Mighty Hand*, is an artistic and fictional retelling of the events of the Darien. The final scene of the script is built around the actions of an angry mob who encounter Roger Oswald after the Darien failure. They "look at him and judge from the color of his jaundiced skin that he is one of the survivors of Darien. They curse and hit on him, kick him til he's down, then saunter away. He slides down the marble steps, a bloodied mess, and curls up to sleep." Next, the scene is followed with Oswald being transported by his memories to his journey, and his view below the surface of a swimming hole in the Darien jungle where Kuna children laugh and swim above his submerged body. It is to MacFadyen and Belgaut's credit that they do include women within the script, with the inclusion of Hanna Kemp "Paterson" as a character within *A Mighty Hand*, <http://www.angusmacfadyen.com/Works/Script-Library>; accessed May 25, 2020.

Rather than a disappointing life lived in Glasgow as Prebble described in his 1960s account, the Oswald family was surrounded by family and friends in Edinburgh who witnessed the baptism of their first son, including members of Oswald's mother's family (his father had passed away). Other friends were also present for the celebration, including his brother George and his friend Thomas Aikman, both recipients of the sorrowful letters written by Oswald soon after his return.<sup>37</sup> Baptisms of the couple's other children were similarly attended by friends and family, demonstrating that Oswald was not as isolated from supportive networks. Certainly, it is possible that others whose families or fortunes did not survive the Darien were more apt to judge the survivors unfairly. However, Oswald example illustrates that, over time, his resentment softened to such a degree that it allowed him to reconnect with kith and kin.

Roger Oswald went on to become a writer to the Signet in Edinburgh, a legal position of some esteem in a lawyer's office. His life was complicated by the death of his son in 1714 at the age of three.<sup>38</sup> He also helped his wife through the difficult loss of her father, John Sydserff, who died in July 1717.<sup>39</sup> Oswald was made executor to his father-in-law's estate and managed the details of reclaiming moneys due to the family. He also lived long enough to see the birth of his daughter Helen in 1717. Oswald, who was one of seven sons and grew up in a family full of brothers, had at least four sons prior to his daughter's birth. This survivor managed to rebuild a life that replicated the highs and lows of others living in Edinburgh. Though his life was interrupted by the hardships of the

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<sup>37</sup> Family networks connecting Aikman with Oswald go back at least one generation. The fathers of Roger and Thomas both subscribed to the subscription list, one after the next, on August 1, 1696. James Oswald promised £500 to the venture and William Aikman, £200.

<sup>38</sup> Death of George Oswald and son to Roger Oswald, NRS, Old Parish Registers of Deaths, 685/1 860, 535. Hellen Sydserff would live until June 6, 1733, Old Parish Registers Deaths, 685/1 890, 358.

<sup>39</sup> John Sydserff's Will, NRS, Wills and Testaments, CC8/8/87, 110.

Darien, after some time he and others like him managed to fall into rhythms of life that matched those who had not made the journey.

Not all who served the Company were able to find comfort in ideas of honor that helped some through the hardships of migration. Desertion from the colony was such a concern to the colony's council leaders that James Byers reported in letters back to Scotland that something needed to be done about the deserters who were becoming a problem in the second expedition. Alexander Campbell (not Captain Alexander Campbell from earlier in this chapter but a carpenter from Glasgow) was found guilty by the Company Directors appointed in New Caledonia for inciting what was interpreted as a plot of mutiny. Alexander and others were unhappy with the way the colony was managed and, according to letters published by Byers, Campbell and "a great many officers, volunteirs, planters and seamen had a design and well layd contrivance for seising the persons of the Counsellors, and hanging them altogether in case they would not divest themelves of the Government in favours of the Conspirators." Those hoping to escape "were to take possession of the Company's two proper ships The Rising Sun and Hope" along with the money onboard.<sup>40</sup> According to testimony given by Andrew Logan, the captured ships would go to England or Ireland rather than returning home to Scotland.<sup>41</sup> Archibald Campbell was hanged for his crime. Reports of additional desertions told of "nine villains run away with our eight oare boat in the night tyme" and "whether or not they were encouraged by our plotters so to doe, we cannot tell, only t'is hard otherwise to give account of their design. None of them are yet returned, ableit it be fourteen days since

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40 James Byers, *A Letter to a Friend at Edinburgh from Roterdam; Giving an Account of the Scots Affairs in Darien*. (Edinburgh: 1702), 38.

41 Byers, *A Letter to a Friend*, 43-44.

they deserted.”<sup>42</sup> Hardships of colonial life meant that conditions could change within the minds of the colonists, causing them to abandon their colony and risk surviving on their own rather than staying the course of empire.

Desertion was a remedy for some men who either lacked the desire to continue supporting The Company agenda or saw better opportunities than those offered by staying with the colonists. Several cases of desertion also occurred in Scotland when some men, who had either been hired and paid to travel or who had volunteered themselves in hopes of gaining glory and adventure in the West, began to question whether the promises made by the Company were worth the journey so far away from the things they held dear. Prebble, known for his journalism rather than his historical precision, described how, on a dark evening in July 1698, when the ship *Dolphin* was moored a distance from the Scottish shoreline in Kirkcaldy, a sailor named David Dalrymple “stared at the windows and chimneys” from his place aboard the ship “trying to pick out his own house. When he could endure his homesickness no longer, he slipped over the tender’s stern and into a dory with another deserter, John Wilson.”<sup>43</sup> Ascribing these men’s feelings to homesickness and not fear of Atlantic journey paints them in a more acceptable light. However, the act of leaving a post so needed for the colonizing venture was a threat to success if others were inclined to follow suit. The Council in Edinburgh saw a clear connections between “the honour and interest of this Kingdom being now so firmly and inseparably linked with that of your Colony” and expressed them often in letters to the colonists in Panama.<sup>44</sup> Honor played a part in how men volunteered

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42 Byers, *A Letter to a Friend*, 25.

43 Prebble, *The Darien Disaster*, 117.

44 Burton, *The Darien Papers*, 129.

and viewed their responsibility to the colony, but honor proved insufficient to ensure that all men remained within the Company's fold, whether in Scotland, Panama, Jamaica, or beyond.

Back in Britain, the shame of Scotland's venture and its failure was inescapable. Popular culture framed how other European colonies throughout the New World and their homelands in the Old World viewed Scotland after the venture's failure. Survivors who returned were sure to encounter hints of the general public's opinion as they reintegrated themselves back into life in Scotland and then later in the unified Great Britain after 1707. Ideas of valor, ignorance, or shame were compounded in the form of plays, poems, and epitaphs used to describe them. Gendered expectations of feminine or masculine qualities were overtly employed by supporters and detractors of the venture. Writers penned poems and plays on the subject. Some veiled comparisons in nuanced ways merely hinting at Scotland's failure and weakness. Others exaggerated Scotland's role to convey its folly or valor.

William Burnaby included barbs at Scotland's status both prior to and after the colony's failure in his 1702 play *The Ladies Visiting-Day: A Comedy*. The character of an elite Englishwoman is asked why she prefers wearing clothing and frivolous adornments from far-off lands rather than goods produced in England or Scotland. The elite English character responds with lines crafted by the playwright to stir the audience to uproarious laughter, saying "Ha, ha, ha! Nay, as to the Scotch, I don't know how they may be improv'd since they liv'd at Darien: But before that I wou'd no more ha' Traded with their Country,

than ha' Travail'd thither."<sup>45</sup> The other actor then responds with an aside to the audience, "I wish you were Married there to a Calydonian Corporal, by Gingo!"<sup>46</sup> The Caledonian Corporal is a reference to any of the many soldiers or sailors who made the journey to Panama. It is worth noting that a large number of the men serving onboard the ships were hired by the Company and had no filial connection to Scotland. Perceptions of Scottishness were ascribed by the general public at the time in examples like this, whereas monographs on the subject now show the diversity of nations that participated.<sup>47</sup>

Scotland was interpreted by the playwright as a place that was undesirable before the Company was created and used this to advance the comedy by showing that the nation was still viewed in a negative light thereafter. This exchange, written just months after the Company failed, shows how popular culture was infused with ideas of the Darien venture. It also exemplifies how the failure of the Company was represented in the artistic culture of its time. This references the speed at which news traveled and a popular culture that was quick to lampoon the hardships of those who thought the effort was foolish from the start.<sup>48</sup> Scotland and its travelers faced the shame of the failure in various ways in the arts, likely influencing how men and women viewed their return to Scotland and interpreted the decisions to repatriate themselves into a society where they would be judged by the failure.

Comparing the men and women associated with the return migration to Scotland leading up to and resulting from the Darien moment proves that no two experiences were

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<sup>45</sup> William Burnaby, *The Ladies Visiting-Day. A Comedy. As It Was Acted at the Theatre in Lincolns-Inn-Fields, by His Majesties Servants. With the Addition of a New Scene. By the Author of The Reformed Wife* (London, 1701), 26.

<sup>46</sup> Burnaby, *The Ladies Visiting-Day*, 26.

<sup>47</sup> See Julie Orr's *Scotland, Darien and the Atlantic World 1698-1700*.

<sup>48</sup> Burnaby, *The Ladies Visiting-Day*, 26.

exactly alike. While it is true that only a handful of women were present on the first journey of the venture, women leaving on later ships did not wait to learn whether conditions were favorable for them to travel. Like the men who went before them, these women made bold choices to travel when their safety and the safety of their families was not guaranteed. If residents of seventeenth-century coastal communities were well accustomed to living with the dangers associated with maritime businesses, then it is clear that the women who made the journey understood that they were not immune from the same dangers that men faced when they decided to travel. These women could have waited until the Company and colony fell into predictable rhythms of a profitable trading community similar to what they were familiar with at home, but they chose not to.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **Women and the Equivalent**

The *Rising Sun* was built from the Company's dream of empire, though these dreams lasted only a few short years. From Amsterdam, where it was contracted and built specifically for the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies, the ship sailed to its temporary harbor along the Clyde River, "at Rosneath, in Courock Bay, in Rothesay Bay." Next, it travelled across the Atlantic Ocean, where it would "see blockade by Spanish men-of-war of the Scottish settlement on the Isthmus" in Panama in a region that Scotland renamed New Caledonia.<sup>1</sup> After the colony's collapse the fragile survivors left Caribbean waters and arrived at what became the ship's final resting place off the shoreline of Charleston, South Carolina.

It is easy to imagine how the travelers onboard may have come to view the *Rising Sun* as their last remnant linking them back home to Scotland. The *Rising Sun* was a constant presence for these wayfarers, people whose lives had changed so much over a few short months. When Elizabeth Park first stepped aboard its deck the ship's smells and layout were foreign and unfamiliar. By the end of the Atlantic crossing she and the passengers aboard it had adapted to the rhythms of the ship and its hull had become a temporary, yet dependable feature of their lives at sea. But any impressions of safety that the vessel offered her was dashed. Elizabeth was among handful of others who were fortunate enough to have disembarked on the Carolina shore hurricane winds broke the *Rising Sun* into pieces upon the shallow harbor. The loss of the *Rising Sun* effectively ended the story of mass migration from Scotland heading west. This dissertation now

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<sup>1</sup> Insh, *The Company of Scotland*, 85-86.



moves from its failure to explain the ways that people were compensated for the loss of those who perished far from Scotland's shores, each with complex connections to the Darien moment.

People in Scotland who lost loved ones in various ways during the short life of the Darien, while somber, were thrown into a hectic scramble to collect proof of wills, marriages, and other slips of papers to prove their relationships to the deceased. Some described them as being "repelled by the surrender of their national sovereignty, but at the same time willing to take the cash and opportunities it offers."<sup>2</sup> Decades earlier Scotswomen were accustomed petitioning courts for back wages from their deceased kin who lost their lives as soldiers and sailors, whether home in Scotland or abroad.<sup>3</sup> Folded papers once served as shallow reminders of loved ones who were transformed into remunerations with the potential to transform the economic futures of those who had already lost so much.

In exchange for accepting the union with England after the failure of the Darien, Scotland was compensated in two ways. £398,085 pounds was set aside to be used to purchase the subscriptions that had been made to the Company by subscribers, plus the five-percent interest promised. According to Whatley, "£153,448 of the company's £400,000 stock that was actually called up, plus interest," making the total amount associated with the Darien venture £219,094.<sup>4</sup> Another portion of the total was earmarked to pay the back wages of sailors and soldiers who had served the Company.

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<sup>2</sup> Watt, *The Price of Scotland*, xvii.

<sup>3</sup> Steve Murdoch and Kathrin Zickermann, "Bereft of all Human Help?: Scottish Widows during the Thirty Years War, 1618-1648" *Northern Studies* 50, 129-130.

<sup>4</sup> Whatley, *The Scots and the Union*, 254; Graham, "In Defence of Scottish Maritime Interest," 104; Munro, *Royal Bank of Scotland*, 20-33.

Still others were compensated for losses not related to the Darien directly, for example loss of goods and gear at the hands of French privateers or from military service, some as far back as the late 1680s.<sup>5</sup> The Equivalent, passed by Queen Anne and agreed to by the Scots in 1707, also contained an article that extended to families of the deceased men the right to claim wages and other money due them. The Union between Scotland and England became official on May 1, 1707. On August 9, 1707 the books were opened, and the business of portioning out what was owed to subscribers began on August 12, while other “unhappy, inarticulate creditors, it was decided, should have to wait with patience till the more picturesque and clamant demands of the Darien Company proprietors were satisfied.”<sup>6</sup> The distribution of the subscription funds lasted until January 1709. Some compensations associated with seamen’s wages or other economic insecurities continued until the mid 1720s. A complicated set of events associated with the Equivalent transformed what was the “Equivalent Company, which became the immediate and legitimate parent of the Royal Bank of Scotland” in 1724, and then on May 31, 1727 “a charter was got under the Great Seal of Scotland, sealed 8<sup>th</sup> July, for banking in Scotland only.”<sup>7</sup> The beginnings of the Royal Bank of Scotland are therefore rooted in the distribution of funds to men and women whose lives were touched by the Darien Scheme.

Compensation from the Equivalent was most often associated with name of the ships that the deceased had served. The death count was in the thousands and no ship

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5 Whatley, *The Scots and the Union*, 243-269. Another element of the Equivalent was designed to enliven businesses in Scotland and provide eager English companies access to necessary goods to fill orders for the transatlantic trade; those being salt, fish, and coal.

6 Munro, *Royal Bank of Scotland*, 21.

7 Munro, *Royal Bank of Scotland*, 32-33.

connected with the voyages evaded the clerks' pens as they managed the affairs of the failure. The abundance of sources available far exceeds the scope of this chapter. Where possible, the men from the *Rising Sun* and the women associated with them are used as a representative sample to prove that women continued to be economic actors in relation to their association with the Company even after empire was no longer an option.

The fact that fathers, sons, uncles, and brothers rushed to collect compensations due them is hardly surprising, and archival holdings provide ample evidence of their transactions. Men acted on their own behalf for all public business transactions and an example of this type of transaction is found in the interactions between two brothers, Walter and George Buchanan, as they sought compensation for the £4:3:0 in unpaid wages earned by their deceased brother William, a sailor, who was among those who lost their lives on the *Rising Sun*. These two brothers were well acquainted with the maneuvers necessary to conduct business and court dealings as each was very involved in the guilds in Glasgow.<sup>8</sup> Thousands of people like the brothers were required to verify all accounts coming in for the Equivalent. The appeals for funds made by surviving families, friends, and investors required proof be provided as stated in either a will or testament or receipt of payment made to the Company and examined by the "commissioners named by her majestie for managing and disposing of the equivalent."<sup>9</sup> In the Buchanans' case, an additional document shows that the process was even more complicated when assigned commissioners were required to publicly post information "confirmation of Testaments understanding that after due summonding and lawfull

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<sup>8</sup> Robert MacNeil Buchanan, *Notes on the Members of the Buchanan Society, Numbers 1 to 366* (1725-1829) (Glasgow: Jackson, 1931), 6-7.

<sup>9</sup> William Buchanan's Will, NRS, Wills and Testaments, CC8/8/83.

wairning made be publict form of edict openly as offeirs of the Executors Testamentars Spouse bairns if any be & intromettars with the goods gear & debts of the said umquill William Buchanan.”<sup>10</sup> Anyone contesting the award had a small window of opportunity to contact the court.

Completing this step opened the door for the two men to receive the funds from their brother on December 4, 1707.<sup>11</sup> Their family business, based out of Glasgow, required that the two stay close to home so they hired the services of a writer, similar in tasks to that of an attorney, from Edinburgh to conduct their affairs for them with the courts. It took almost two weeks for them to receive the funds promised to them from their brother’s account, which marked the end of their entanglement with the Company.<sup>12</sup> Not all transactions were exactly the same, but the majority of the records associated with the Equivalent found in the Royal Bank of Scotland’s archives generally follow this pattern.

Women, too, collected money and created paper trails documenting the various ways they maneuvered through lawyers’ offices and court sessions in Edinburgh. Some handled the paperwork with a level of skill associated with the women who worked in merchant societies, discussed in previous chapters. Others sought out representatives, often called “factors,” when distance, business, age, illness, weather, or caring for children at home limited their ability to travel. Factors allowed even the frailest of women the legal authority to acquire what was due to them.

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10 RBS, *Darien Papers*, D/7/1, 27. Note: Hereafter all documents found in the Royal Bank of Scotland holdings of Company of Scotland Crew receipts for Arrears of Pay folder D/7/1 are listed in this dissertation as RBS with documents within the folder indicated individually by their corresponding number.

11 RBS, *Darien Papers*, D/7/1, 27.

12 RBS, *Darien Papers*, D/7/1, 26.

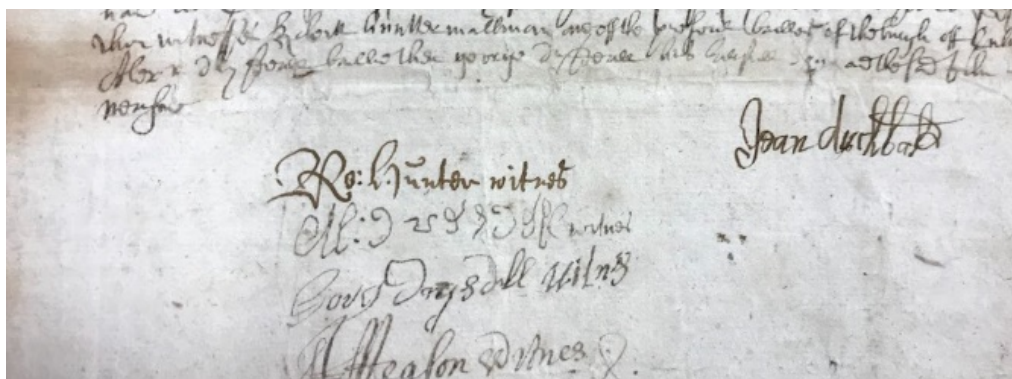
This chapter reveals the many ways that large numbers of women sought backpay and reimbursement of investments made either by themselves or their kin in connection with the Darien venture. It also demonstrates the ways that other women fared the economic hardship associated with missing family members who died at sea. Women fervently sought compensation in ways that mirrored the actions of their male counterparts, like the Buchanan brothers. Given that women were present in every aspect of the Darien venture, it is hardly surprising that Scotswomen viewed themselves as entitled and able to glean benefits from the Company. Even in moments of the Company's failure, women were active on their own behalf.

A surprising detail emerges regarding some of the women found in the Equivalent archives. Most had very little interaction with the Company prior to its failure. They were unlikely to be found among the investors, producers, or wayfarers described in previous chapters. Some women who never invested in the Company in 1696 were brought into the sphere of empire when they received subscription funds from family members who did not survive long enough to earn interest on any portion they invested. Deaths at home allowed these women to receive funds from Commissioners of the Equivalent through their secondary or tertiary associations with the Company.

Women were advantaged despite the waning success of the Darien. They gained a measure of economic autonomy for themselves when they claimed rights to their share of funds. The Equivalent documents explain how women with varied degrees of literacy and social power gleaned economic opportunities out of the failed colony and challenging notions of how historians have, to date, written on the subject of women, the Darien venture, and its failure. Much is made of elite Scots who bankrolled large sums of money

from the Equivalent. However, this section reveals how smaller transactions influenced the lives of women living more modestly.

Jean Archibald was one such woman.<sup>13</sup> Her connection to empire and her extended social networks are revealed in the details of a document bearing her signature. Her story begins with the precarious position she found herself in August 1707, as she appealed to the courts for the £6:6:6 money due her from the death of her husband, David Drysdale. Her petition, pictured below, was witnessed by Robert Hunter, George Drysdale, and others living near her.<sup>14</sup> Jean Archibald was a mother with several children, some still nursing, when David died while in service to the Company onboard the *Rising Sun*.<sup>15</sup>



*Jean Archibald's signature associated with her Equivalent petition*

Jean married David in 1683 in Culross, and shortly thereafter they had their first child, named John and two men named John and James Barcklay served as witnesses to the boy's baptism.<sup>16</sup> Several more children soon followed, including Jennet in 1695 and William in 1698. Another man, George Drysdale, also witnessed each of these later

<sup>13</sup> RBS, *Darien Papers*, D/7/1, 3-5.

<sup>14</sup> RBS, *Darien Papers*, D/7/1, 4.

<sup>15</sup> RBS, *Darien Papers*, D/7/1, 4.

<sup>16</sup> John Drysdall's Baptism, NRS, Old Parish Registers Births 343/ 10, 307; Marriage of David Drysdall and Jean Archibald, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 343/10, 406.

baptisms and was probably either the father or brother to David, the father of the child.<sup>17</sup> George Drysdale also served as witness another baptism in 1682. He stood alongside James Barcklay and Bessie Archibald for the solemnization of their daughter, Jean.<sup>18</sup> Baby Jean's baptismal record confirms the likelihood of a direct kinship link connecting Bessie and Jean, who were probably sisters. Regardless, the Drysdales, Archibalds, and the Barcklays were networked together by marriage and by blood and each of these families lived in the town of Culross.

David Drysdale was hired to work for the Company and traveled to Port Glasgow for the second Darien expedition, aboard the *Rising Sun*. Just before leaving in August 1699 he made his wife executrix to all his worldly goods.<sup>19</sup> He also requested that Jean should receive any backpay due him should he die while away. In 1707, and with at least three children under the age of fifteen under her care, Jean relied upon not only her ability to acquire her deceased husband's earnings, but she also garnered the support of her community to assist her—a community that included the extended family network described above.

Kin connections between the Archibald, Barcklay, and Drysdale families sustained her throughout the course of the Darien failure. George Drysdale was an important node in the wider network of support. She was not alone when maneuvering the stages of mourning and widowhood. Jean's experience illustrates how some widows managed to survive the intermittent years of economic hardship associated with the Darien, and how

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17 William Drysdall's Baptism, NRS, Old Parish Registers Births 343/ 20, 70.

18 Jean Barclay's Birth, NRS, Old Parish Registers Births 343/ 10, 290.

19 David Drysdale's Will, NRS, Wills and Testaments CC8/8/83, 642.

they urgently required aid from the Equivalent funds for their children's rearing. Jean was awarded £6:6:6 on August 15, 1707.<sup>20</sup>

To understand what compensation from the Equivalent meant to women like Jean, it is useful to examine the cost of food and the typical wages earned during at time in Scotland. Important commodities like grain, peas, wheatbread, and other goods were recorded by the town councils of Scotland in the 1690s. Their prices reflect the volatile economic conditions within Scotland as a result of the colonizing venture. For example, in Glasgow an ounce of wheatbread in the decades surrounding the Darien moment ranged anywhere from .8 pence in 1688 to 1 pence in 1708.<sup>21</sup> But one year stands out. In 1698 there was a marked increase of prices that drove the cost of bread to as much as 1.7 pence per ounce. Ten years later, after the market had stabilized, monies received from the Equivalent allowed families like Jean's a greater degree of purchasing power when buying ready-made bread in the marketplace at a price of just .86 pence per ounce in 1707.<sup>22</sup> Jean's award of her husband's earnings meant that she would have a greater degree of flexibility in managing her family's budget. Her spending also increased the circulation of money within Scotland's economy, helping to stabilize merchant businesses within the wider community.

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20 The Scottish Archives Network recommends several websites to help contextualize the purchasing power of currency from the early modern era. Based on the input of data found at [measuringworth.com](http://measuringworth.com) £6:6:6 equals the purchasing power of roughly £1,000 today.

21 J.D. Marwick and Renwick, R. (eds.), *Extracts from the records of the burgh of Glasgow, 1573-1759* (Scottish Burgh Records Society, vols. 11-12, 16, 19, 22, and 29, Glasgow, 1876-1911) compiled by IISH's Scottish Economic History Database. The prices of goods were legally dictated by the burghs in Scotland, but set price were, at times, difficult to enforce. Nevertheless, using the burgh records to determining purchasing power is still useful. A J S Gibson and T C Smout, *Prices, Food, and Wages in Scotland, 1550-1780*, 19.

22 Marwick and Rewick, *Extracts form the Records*; Gibson and Smout, *Prices, Food, and Wages*, 19.



It is also possible to measure Jean's award in terms of the wages that women earned in this period. Corresponding with the increase of bread prices paid by the community during the heyday of production for the venture, employers also compensated day laborers with increased wages, as seen in the Yester estates records. Lord Yester's records show that men and women working as day laborers or domestic help were paid 6 shillings every year as a standard rate, except for in 1697, when the rate increased to 6 shillings and 8 pence.<sup>23</sup> Jean's husband's earnings therefore far exceeded any yearly wages she would have earned on her own during or after this time.

A careful reading of Jean's family baptism and Equivalent records helps to paint a picture of how women imposed a degree of pressure upon structures of empire. England was aware that any agreement between Scotland regarding the issue of a union would require a groundswell of support. Without the union, these wages might have forever gone unpaid. Jean's community was stabilized through the purchasing power the Equivalent brought to their communities after receiving the funds.<sup>24</sup> Although women had access to compensation for imperial enterprises like the Darien, the wheels of government were slow to address their economic needs. From the time that the first colonists left Scotland in 1698 until the institution of the Article 15 by Queen Anne in 1707, ten years had passed, during which Jean and women with families similar to hers still had to manage the food, care, clothing, and any remaining business debt of their kin. The fact that women were able to maneuver through these years of hardships suggests that some kinship groups

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23 J.G. Dunbar, 'The building of Yester House, 1670-1878', Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists Society, 13, (1972); 20-42, taken from IISH Scottish Economic History Database, Yester day-labourers' wages; 1671-1764.

24 For an example of widow debts associated with the Darien documents after a husband's passing, see Mary Simson and Robert Lundie in chapter two of this dissertation.

like the Drysdale family network were particularly strong and sustained widows and their children until other ways of helping family the economy emerged.

Others were less fortunate, as seen in the case of Agnes Smith. She represents the ways some women's receipt of Equivalent moneys did little to take them out of precarious economic situations that they found themselves. Agnes and her husband Thomas Douglas were from South Leith. After their marriage they began having children in the late 1670s and early 1680s. Thomas was described in documents of the time as an "indweller" of Leith rather than a man associated with any particular trade. Men with specialized businesses or connections to trades were usually identified as such in wills, baptismal records, or marriages. This geographic identification rather than one associated with an occupation implies that he earned a living as a laborer of some type. Though of low status, the couple ensured that their children were raised with a degree of education that allowed them to read and write. Their son, Thomas Douglas, was a young man of eighteen when he signed his name designating his mother as executrix on August 16, 1699.<sup>25</sup> In addition to any other items he possessed, Agnes was to receive the wages that he earned while onboard the *Rising Sun*.

Andrew's name does not appear in the wills associated with the Darien in the National Records of Scotland. One weather-worn document appearing in the Equivalent records in the Royal Bank of Scotland Records rescues him from the list of unnamed sailors onboard the *Rising Sun*. Agnes's fate is further revealed in the South Leith parish records where a minister recorded "Agnes Smith relict of the deceased Thomas Douglas Indweller in Leith, died at the back of Babylon, about the ninety fifth year of her age on

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<sup>25</sup> RBS, D/7/2, 28.

the third day & was buried the fourth day” of 1724.<sup>26</sup> A book published in 1865 described the region where she died as a place with buildings of multiple stories “of great height” built on top of one another in a “singular pile.” The section of Leith had a reputation of being a place where “no rents were ever sought or paid” and “sailors and stragglers from various countries found refuge.”<sup>27</sup> Agnes Smith died here where “the scene of boisterous revelry, and the shouts of noisy inebriates were heard proceeding from it at all hours, by day and by night.”<sup>28</sup> Any hope that Andrew had for his mother’s comfort if he failed to return to Scotland and care for her in her later years were not realized. It is easy to imagine that many more women experienced hardships like those of Agnes Smith.

Another woman compensated from the death of her husband was Margaret Bowden, who had married Captain John Baillie just weeks prior to the departure of the second ships leaving for Panama.<sup>29</sup> Margaret was an eighteen-year-old newlywed who either elected or was convinced by her family to remain behind in Scotland while her husband captained the ill-fated *Rising Sun*. She and Elizabeth Park, mentioned in the previous chapters, each married their husbands on the same day and in the same parish church. Their names appear one after the other in the record, suggesting that they

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26 Agnes SMITH’s death, NRS, Old Parish Registers Deaths, 692/2 140, 91.

27 William Huchison, *Tales, Traditions and Antiquities of Leith: With Notices of Its Trade, Commerce, &c.* (Leith, Scotland: Charles Drummond, 1865), 247.

28 William Huchison, *Tales, Traditions and Antiquities of Leith*, 247. A note regarding Agnes Smith’s age. A comparison of the date of births for Agnes and Thomas’s four children is helpful for making the case that Agnes was younger than the ninety-five years that the minister perceived. Margaret was the first child’s birth recorded in the baptismal records in 1676. If Agnes were in her min nineties when she died, then that would place her at an age of roughly forty-seven years old at Margaret’s birth. Even more unlikely, it would make her approximately fifty-seven years old when the last recorded child to the union appears in the parish records in 1685. This age is beyond what is expected of women for childbearing years. All sources prove that this was the same family unit, despite the discrepancy in age. Agnes was perceived to be older than her actual than her years indicate making it more likely that economic hardships associated a life lived in Babylon, as described by some, took its toll on Agnes.

29 Bowden and Baillie married on the same day as Elizabeth Park and Archibald Stobo and it is likely they all knew one another, as Baillie was a captain of the *Rising Sun*. As noted previously, women do not appear as witnesses to baptisms during this time.

encountered one another on that day and may have enjoyed a preexisting friendship. The intertwining lives of these two women illustrate not only the interconnectedness of social groups amongst those supporting colonial migration of Scottish people abroad, but also as testament to the flurry of weddings performed while ships were primed for departures west.

Margaret's father, James Bowden, was a merchant in Edinburgh and he stood as witness to the marriage, with his wife Jean McClellan almost certainly at his side.<sup>30</sup> When Margaret made the decision to not travel with her husband a few weeks later, she certainly continued to live her parent's home and slept in the same room that she and her younger sister, Mary. The newlyweds had little time to select a new place to live amidst all of the planning for his sailing with the Company and Margaret's husband and her brother, James Bowden, imagined what lay ahead of them in the West while she stayed behind.

Neither Margaret's brother nor her spouse survived to make the journey home. Margaret presented a request to the Equivalent court Edinburgh in March 1707 for compensation she claimed was due to her. She described how her husband John "went with the *Rising Sun* as a captain and overseer to the Darien settlement, and died in the place in February 1700, and being but lately married to me before he went from this place."<sup>31</sup> Margaret believed that John's access to hard currency prior to leaving was insufficient for keeping him comfortable in the manner that someone of his station demanded as he traveled, though what she anticipated he would spend funds on was not made clear. She remedied her husband's financial shortcoming when she told the courts

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30 Baillie/Bowden Marriage, NRS, Old Parish Registers Marriages 685/1 450, 64. Women's names were not recorded as witnesses to baptisms in the decades surrounding the Darien venture.

31 *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, K.M. Brown et al eds (St Andrews, 2007-2019), A1706/10/47.

how John was “provided by me and my friends with money and other effects, which I never got any return of, nor ever had anything by him. And likewise I had the misfortune to lose my Brother James Bowden, and all his effects, which were considerable, in the said expedition.”<sup>32</sup> While it is certain she and her family mourned the loss of their family members, Margaret did not have the luxury of time to dwell on emotional sentiments. She needed to make it clear to the courts that the economic losses associated with the passing of these men extended into the community that supported him prior to his departure from Scotland. Margaret also had an additional reason for advocating so strongly for what she believed she was due her: her father had passed away in 1701.<sup>33</sup>

Margaret certainly consoled her mother, and was witness to her mother’s petition in the Parliament for compensations due her for her husband’s £100 shares in profits from her husband’s engagement with a cloth manufacturing company after his passing.<sup>34</sup> Sisters, Margaret and Mary, and their mother Jean managed to make their way without the benefit of a man to handle these affairs. It is hardly surprising then that when the Equivalent was announced, Margaret applied the knowledge she had gleaned from her mother’s experiences to confidently maneuver her own way through the courts and successfully argue for compensation from “the dead stock of the African and Indian Company.”<sup>35</sup> Margaret’s actions demonstrate that women, even very young widows like

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<sup>32</sup> *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, K.M. Brown et al eds (St Andrews, 2007-2019), A1706/10/47.

<sup>33</sup> James Bowdoun’s Will, NRS, Wills and Testaments CC8/8/81, 359.

<sup>34</sup> William Scott, *The Records of a Scottish Cloth Manufactory at New Mills, Haddingtonshire, 1681-1703* (Edinburgh, Printed at the University press by T. and A. Constable, for the Scottish History society, 1905), 249.

<sup>35</sup> *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, K.M. Brown et al eds (St Andrews, 2007-2019), A1706/10/47.

Margaret, were willing and able to advocate for themselves with the Company and the courts.

Some women's backgrounds are less clear than Margaret Bowden's. Margaret Mitchell appears for a moment in the documentary record, only to disappear as quickly without offering any clues to contextualize her encounter with the company. Margaret acted as executrix to her brother John Mitchell's earnings and accounts when he joined the *Rising Sun* crew. It is impossible to determine whether she strained to make ends meet or if extra money brought into her home in Bo'ness from the Equivalent was used frivolously. Nevertheless, women like Margaret Mitchell, whose histories are lost, still add to our understanding of the sum total of women profiting from empire in the early modern world.<sup>36</sup>

Women investors in the Company faced situations that were less tenuous than those who experienced loss of family members. The investing women may not have experienced the same urgency to claim monies of deceased kin but their actions make up another type of compensation associated with the Company. Dame Helen Fleeming, discussed in Chapter Two, is an example of an elite woman who invested in the Company in 1696 on her own accord. Her husband, Alexander Gibson, had passed away in 1693. By the 1700s she was a woman in her eighties who still managed to wield a measure of authority over her own accounts, as seen in a letter from August 1707, when she wrote to the Commissioners of the Equivalent, "Gentlemen, Be pleased to delyvor to Thomas Gibson my son any certificate of what is due to me out of your books payable out of the Equivalent."<sup>37</sup> Helen did not bother herself with sifting through shelves of papers to prove

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<sup>36</sup> James Mitchell's Will, NRS, Wills and Testaments, CC8/8/83.

<sup>37</sup> Adv.Ms.83.9.1, 10.

her investment. Neither was she concerned with the exact balance of the accounts due her prior to this moment. Clerks sifted through the account ledgers on her behalf so that she could take advantage of the economic opportunity extended to her via Article fifteen. Through Helen's exchange, we see that not only were commissioners called upon to determine who should receive money when documentation was lacking, but also how the paperwork of empire demanded that clerks field requests to examine the Company accounts to make up for less-than-careful domestic bookkeeping practices.

Another woman, Hellen Barclay, managed her affairs with equal confidence, though her status in the community was far below the social standing of Dame Helen Fleeming. Her request was not based on investment, but rather as executrix of her brother's wages, goods, and gear. Barclay's brother, William, had acquired a position onboard the *Rising Sun* as a sailor, and, like so many others, he died somewhere along the journey. Helen was not elite. She supported herself from the small-scale business she conducted selling hardy vegetables like cabbage and kale even before the Darien dream began. The Darien documents describe her as a "kaill seller on the street of Edinburgh."<sup>38</sup> While she achieved status and economic stability from her work as a grocer or green woman, the £54 coming to her from her brother's wages was certainly a boon when compared to the wages and cost of living described earlier in this chapter. Moreover, her case is a reminder that not all women were dependent upon a husband's or brother's wages to manage their affairs.

A document bearing Bessie Allen's name in bold broad letters warrants a closer look not only because of Bessie's penmanship, but also because of the more unusual

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38 William Barclay's Will, NRS, Wills and Testaments Reference CC8/8/83.

economic advantages that helped her. Bessie exemplifies how some women were compensated for wages of men that beyond their blood kin. Like many women receiving compensation from the Company, she does not appear to have been an investor in the Darien. Neither is there evidence that she provided goods to the venture. Bessie's father, David Allen, was a sailor on the waterways in and around the coastline just north of Edinburgh. He joined the ranks of mariners who sailed to Darien, serving onboard the *Unicorn* as it departed from the Leith harbor on July 14, 1698. Before leaving Scotland, he made his "eldest lawful daughter" executrix to his goods and wages owed to him should he not survive to return to Scotland.<sup>39</sup> Somewhere along the journey he died, leaving Bessie with authority to advocate for the money due to her.

Her father was not the only man aboard the *Unicorn* with connections to Bessie. Archibald Eagleton also elected to assign back wages due him to Bessie should he not survive. Both of the men in question were from Fisherrow, a small costal fishing community near Edinburgh. Seizing the opportunity for profits and possible land in Panama, it appears that the two men forged an agreement to join the Company at the same time. This arrangement would make the hardships of a two-month journey more palatable. Collectively, Bessie Allen received almost £300 after they lost their lives.<sup>40</sup> In 1707 Bessie secured the services of William Reid, who worked much like a lawyer's clerk in Edinburgh, to manage the transaction for her rather than going to Edinburgh on her own. The surviving document giving her authority to claim these shows that she possessed enough literacy to sign her name in large block lettering.<sup>41</sup>

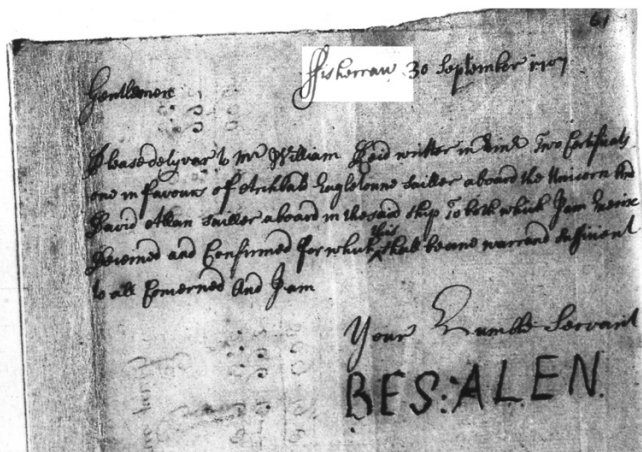
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39 David Allen's Testament Dative, NRS, Edinburgh Commissary Court, CC8/8/83.

40 Adv.Ms.83.9.1, 18.

41 Adv.Ms.83.9.1, 18; Steve Murdoch shows that elite wills and testaments often transferred assets to people within and beyond their kin groups. His examination of Rotterdam records show that





*Receipt and signature of Bessie Allen*

There is no record of her after this transaction, but the more than £300 she received for both men's wages equaled decades of wages for most people of the day, and it therefore must have transformed her life and impacted her community, regardless of how she spent her award.<sup>42</sup> It is clear from this example that non-elite men and women utilized extended assets to those outside of their immediate kin groups in wills and testaments and prove that limited literacy was not an obstacle for managing such transactions. Bessie understood enough about the courts to acquired the services of Reed to help her with these two transactions.

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'ordinary Scots' also practiced this pattern of transfer; see Murdoch, "The Repatriation of Capital to Scotland: A Case Study of seventeenth-century Dutch Testaments and Miscellaneous Notarial Instruments," in *Back to Caledonia: Scottish Homecomings from the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, ed. Mario Varricchio (Edinburgh; Birlinn, 2012), 46.

42 The Yester accounts (MS 14624) found in the National Library of Scotland provide insights to the earning potential of women in the decades surrounding the Darien moment. Mary Young was a washerwoman for the estate who was paid £60 Scots money for four years of service in 1683 (MS 14624, 77). Another woman, Elizabeth Youll, was paid for unknown labor totaling £105 in 1689; how many years she worked for this salary is not disclosed (MS 14624, 109). Rebecca Crockett was paid £24 Scots for the more than three years for the "milk furnished to the Catts" for the Lady Tweeddale in 1685 (MS14624, 163). In 1696 Patrick Watson was paid £24 Scots money for tending to the sheep for a year on the Yester estate, in addition to milled grains to supplement his pay. Bessie's award of £300 placed her in a strong economic position allowing her spending/purchasing power and social mobility exceeding people who she would have likely shared comparable earnings when or if she was paid for labors outside of her own home.

Like Bessie, Margaret Cubie also hired an advocate or factor to manage the wages due to her son Thomas Waddell after he died in service of the Company aboard the *Rising Sun*, and she received the payment of £6:6:6.<sup>43</sup> Trust was a major concern for women like Cubie, who managed business from afar, as they had to be certain of the trustworthiness of people chosen to handle their affairs in Edinburgh. On August 14, 1707 a half-page receipt recorded that the late Thomas Waddell was due wages from with his service and subsequent death associated with the Company. The Commissioners of the Equivalent relied upon “ship-lists given into the Lord Clerk Register” to verify Thomas’s service. Following this, a testament dative was filed and “faithfully made and given up be [by] Margaret Cuby Indweller in Prestonpans Relict of the said Deceased William Waddell and mother to the said umquhill Thomas and only executrix dative deserned as nearest in kin to him decret of the commissaries of Edinburgh” on September 3.<sup>44</sup> The next legal step came on the last day of September when David Banks, a pipemaker in Leith, and George Men, a glassier and burgess in Edinburgh, acted as cautioners, and the court confirmed the Waddells’ will.<sup>45</sup> Three days later William Clerk signed and received the money due to Cubie and on October 2, 1707 she signed her name to certify the “full payment of the contents hereof” and release Clerk of any further responsibility in the matter.<sup>46</sup>

Margaret’s story illustrates the time it took to complete some Equivalent transactions. Receiving money was complicated by the political wrangling of court bureaucracies and accounting clerks as they determined how best to compensate

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43 RBS, D/7/1, 82 and 83.

44 RBS D/7/1, 83; Waddell, Thomas Waddell’s Will, NRS, Wills and Testaments Reference CC8/8/83, 562.

45 RBS, D/7/1, 83.

46 RBS, D/7/1, 83.

investors and families of the deceased. Margaret's ability to obtain Equivalent funds was dependent upon her own tenacious focus, especially during the two months leading up to the final receipt of payment. Undoubtedly, the seven years it took to complete the transaction was exacerbated the emotional and financial difficulties this mother faced after losing her child on the *Rising Sun*.

Margaret Cubies' appearance in the Darien documents, like that of Bessie Allen, is significant because it is the only surviving evidence her life. Her marriage to William Waddel and the birth and baptism of her children, if she had them, were unrecorded in the National Records of Scotland. Nor was her death marked in the parish books. She exemplifies the challenges of researching women acting on their own in the early modern era, while at the same time confirming the ways that women were contracting on their own behalf, or by proxy, with joint stock companies in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Some men faced the prospect of proving their connections to women in their lives who were due money associated with the Company who either died or passed along Equivalent compensations to others; such was the case of David Adie. In July 1698 a minister by the name of Thomas James assigned his share of £100 stock in the Company to Elizabeth Adie and Thomas Cowie.<sup>47</sup> How these three individuals are linked is unclear. What is certain is that at the time of the transfer Elizabeth was a single woman living among her kin in Dunfermline.<sup>48</sup> Dunfermline was full of Adie and Cowie kin, making it plausible that the two were somehow related by blood. Another family of Adies lived in

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<sup>47</sup> Adie, Elizabeth Adie's Will, NRS, Wills and Testaments Reference CC20/4/16.

<sup>48</sup> Keeping in mind that it was tradition for women to keep their given last names, there is no reason to believe that Elizabeth was not an Adie by birth, therefore there is a strong likelihood that the Cowie connection came through her mother's family.

Dunfermline and David Adie, the elder, headed this family group. He was a maltman merchant and baillie and father to the son, David, younger, who followed in his father's footsteps.<sup>49</sup> Over time, a relationship emerged between Elizabeth and the younger David and they were married on December 19, 1700.<sup>50</sup> During the time of the transfer and through the marriage of the young couple, hopes were still high that the Company might see some success in Panama. The two left their family homes and settled into more urban living on the south side of High Street in Dunfermline.<sup>51</sup> Here they baptized three of their children. David Adie elder and a John Adie served as witness to all of their children's baptisms, making it highly likely that John Adie was Elizabeth's father. In addition to these two witnesses, John Chalmers was also present for their daughter Margaret's baptism in 1701, while John Cowie witnessed daughter Anna's baptism in 1702, and the Adie's son John's baptism in 1704 was attended by Andrew Symson and Jerome Cowie.<sup>52</sup>

The Cowie, Symson, and Adie family members who attended these celebrations illuminate the extensive kin network surrounding the Adie family. Difficult times struck this kin group when cousin Robert Adie and his wife required the family's help to cover the cost of burying their daughter, who was "smored in the heugh" (smothered from a fall from the cliffs) around Dunfermline.<sup>53</sup> Robert's other daughter required medical attention for a broken leg from the same tragic event. In October 1706, it was David's turn to seek aid and comfort from this kinship group when Elizabeth passed away.

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49 John William Edie, *The Edie Family [by] John William Edie and Associated Families*. (Marceline, Mo., Privately printed for the author by R. Wallace Pischel Print. Co., 1960), 28.

50 Marriage of David Adie and Elizabeth Adie, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 424/30, 658.

51 Ebenezer Henderson, *The Annals of Dunfermline and Vicinity: From the Earliest Authentic Period to the Present Time, A.D. 1069-1878; Interspersed with Explanatory Notes, Memorabilia, and Numerous Illustrative Engravings*. By Ebenezer Henderson (J. Tweed, 1879).

52 Margaret Adie's Baptism, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 424/30, 660; Anna Adie's Baptism, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 424/30, 671; John Adie's Baptism, NRS, Old Parish Registers, 424/30, 556.

53 Henderson, *The Annals of Dunfermline and Vicinity*, 385.

Less than a month after his wife's passing, he added his name to a letter rejecting any notion of Scotland joining the union with England. David, as a merchant and member of the town council, joined with others when they agreed:

Having seen and considered the Articles of the Union agreed upon by the Commissioners for the Kingdom of Scotland and England, in which they have agreed; That Scotland and England be united into one Kingdome, and that the United Kingdom Shall be Represented by one and the same Parliament: And seeing it does not evidently appear that such an incorporating Union, as is contained in the said Articles, is contrary to the Honour, Fundamental Laws, and Constitution of this Kingdom, Claim of Right, and Rights and Privileges, of the Burrows and Church Government, as by Law Established: And that the same is destructive to the true interest of this Nation; Therefore, We humbly beseech Your Grace, and the Honourable Estates, and do confidently expect that you will not allow any such Incorporating Union; but that you will Support and Preserve entire the Sovereignty and Independency of this Crown and Kingdom, and the Rights and Privileges of parliament, which have been so valiantly maintained by our Heroick Ancestors for near 2000 yeirs; That the same may be transmitted to succeeding Generations, as they have been conveyed to us: and we will heartily concur with you for Supporting and Maintaining our Sovereignty and Independency with our Lives and Fortunes conform to the Laws of the Nation.<sup>54</sup>

While other men and women had perished for the sake of Scotland's honor in the Atlantic, others at home believed honor emboldened them to reject the union. Even as English navigation acts limited their trade to open markets, members of the Adie, Drysdale, Cowie, Simpson, and Christy families all rallied alongside one another for the sake of resisting the union with England and preserving their autonomy as merchants with trading interests that extended beyond Scotland's borders.<sup>55</sup> Months passed and it became clear that the union would come to pass.

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<sup>54</sup> Henderson, *The Annals of Dunfermline and Vicinity*, 378-379.

<sup>55</sup> George Chrysty was also a signer of the anti-union document. David selected John Chrysty to act on his behalf regarding some of the transactions to recoup what was due to Elizabeth after her passing.

In 1707, with the union a reality and orders to distribute the Equivalent were required, David Adie had reason to revisit the Company business connected to his now deceased wife, Elizabeth. His testament dative regarding Elizabeth was processed in St. Andrews Commissary Court November 6, 1707. David provided a handwritten letter informing the Court to:

Receive from John Chrysty my contract of marriage and ane disposition from Mr Thomas James and likewise ane letter containing ane right to Elizabeth Adie my deceast wife and to Thomas Couy son to John Couy merchant in Dunfermline and we expect yet ye will be carefull in this business and whatever is needfull to be done ye may doe it and you shall be satisfied for your pains and what expence may be paid but by you this is all at present from, Sir, your humble servant David Adie.<sup>56</sup>

The web of individuals needed to prove his claim, as seen in this example, was extensive. David had once again utilized his kin networks, which were still important to the community long after the failure of the Darien colony in Panama.

This glimpse into the marriage of David and Elizabeth Adie proves an important point about the Darien venture: the lives of women like Elizabeth often intersected with the Darien because of preexisting networks. These networks help explain the direct and indirect ways that women receiving Equivalent money operated within the sphere of empire in the early transatlantic era evolving from the Union. In this one example men saw honor to Scotland more important than economic advantages over potential increase of trade. Examining their relationships and connectedness helps to highlight how peripheral connections were woven deeply into the fiber of Scotland's economic and political life, and the complicated ways that women and men were required to negotiate connections with early modern trading companies.

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<sup>56</sup> Adv.Ms.83.9.1, 35.

Some women, meanwhile, were compensated by the Equivalent courts for events that took place prior to the Darien moment of the 1690s. Henrietta Burnett was one of these women. Her activities associated with the equivalent demonstrate how transatlantic migrations and emerging nation-states attempting to construct empires left some women like Henrietta to grapple with the question of where their home actually was.

Henrietta's father, William Burnett, was an elite Scotsman with hopes that his daughter would marry his "brother's son William and failzing of him, his brother James, and she and her said spouse (if so God provide) to provide her sisters to competent portions" for the younger sisters in her family.<sup>57</sup> Henrietta showed her strength of will when she went against the wishes of her father and instead married John Steuart, a merchant in Edinburgh who later travelled to the Carolinas.<sup>58</sup> John wrote from Carolina in 1690 to friends in Scotland, describing the region as "the Darling Country of my Affections yea a Country that in my opinion is the very navell and paradise of America."<sup>59</sup> He viewed Carolina as a place where immigrants "may obtaine plenty of good society more numerous in its Inhabitants and so consequently become more formidable to its enemy how to eat drink ludge and lye betar and become better cloath'd more wealthy pleasant and happy."<sup>60</sup> Even though he shared his enthusiasm for the region in letters to friends, John made it clear that he was less than willing to have his wife join him there. Nevertheless, Henrietta either ignored his warnings or was not privy to them and took at least two known transatlantic voyages to Carolina in the early part of the 1690s. The

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57 Montgomery Burnett, *Genealogical Account of the Family of Burnett, of Burnetland and Barns, in the Sheriffdom and County of Peebles* (Edinburgh, 1880), Appendix, 42-43.

58 David Dobson, *Scottish Transatlantic Merchants, 1611-1785* (Baltimore: Printed for Clearfield Co. by Genealogical Pub. Co., 2007), 133.

59 John Stewart and J. G. Dunlop, "Letters from John Stewart to William Dunlop" April 27, 1690 *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, 32, no 1 (Jan 1931), 20.

60 Stewart and Dunlop, "Letters from John Stewart," 21.

events of the Darien Scheme allowed Henrietta a space to forge a measure of economic benefit for herself and her children after its failure.

She was certainly aware of the dangers of transatlantic travel and prepared the best she possibly could to voyage with her children in tow. What she could not account for, however, was the appearance of a French ship during a return journey from Carolina. Soon the French vessel was close enough that it allowed the privateers to board and scavenge the hold for goods and provisions. A French naval officer then allowed the unlucky ship to continue on its way, but not before his crew took Henrietta's goods and gear.<sup>61</sup>

In 1690 John wrote from South Carolina that he was "truly afraid she is dead and my 4 Infant Children thrown over on the naked Lap of Providence. God knows what insupportable agonies excrutiats my soul that I am in no Capacity to give her and them help."<sup>62</sup> He solicited help from friends in Scotland to "procure my wife a salary out of the Royall treasury as she thought to obtain'd in leat K James' reign on the account of her extream poverty."<sup>63</sup> Whether or not they were successful is not clear. It is important to note, however, that Henrietta's "poverty" was relative; she was clearly from an elite family in Edinburgh.

Things began to improve by 1693, when John wrote that he was hopeful that a job would present itself as result of a possible loan from Dunlop, enabling him to continue trading with Indigenous people from the Chickasaw and other tribes.<sup>64</sup> It seems that

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61 RBS, EQ/23/17, 3.

62 "Letters from John Stewart to William Dunlop (Continued)" written 23 June 1690, *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 32, no. 2 (April 1931), 83.

63 "Letters from John Stewart," 111.

64 "Letters from John Stewart to William Dunlop (Continued)" written October 20, 1693 from Virginia," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 32, no. 3 (July 1931), 172-173.



Henrietta's spending habits during this time gave John reason for concern. He implored friends to "not let my wife know that I am worth a groat, for as she ruind me befor by her folly to leave her all I had, and beggar and starve myself I am resolv'd to do so no more; Tho, Indeid, so soone as God by His providence shall bee pleased to bless me with such a competency as is fit to mentaince the constant charge of a family and myself sett'd somewher, then and not till then, can I be able to afford her a mentinance: a few years I hope will effectuate that."<sup>65</sup>

Henrietta took matters into her own hands and appealed to the Queen for Equivalent funds for the value of the goods lost to the French privateers, as well as an undetermined amount for personal hardship during the journey. In 1706 Queen Anne, swayed by her story and allowed for the payment of "ten pound sterling yearly."<sup>66</sup> Henrietta would be paid additional funds from the Equivalent throughout her life, until she passed away in Edinburgh in 1718.

In addition to her ability to gain compensation from events that had nothing to do with the Darien as a result of the Equivalent, Henrietta Burnet is also an exceptional example of the ways that women physically travelled across the Atlantic. Her complicated family dynamic challenges the notion that women remained behind while husbands, brothers, and fathers sailed toward danger and adventure in the Atlantic world. Henrietta's migrations replicate many of the patterns exemplified by her male counterparts. Her sights were not set on a unidirectional course. She used the ocean not as a method of escape but a means of connection.

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<sup>65</sup> "Letters from John Stewart (Continued)," 174.  
<sup>66</sup> RBS, EQ/23/17, 3.

Elizabeth Holiwell's history also expanded beyond the national boundaries of Scotland and demonstrated some of the ways that women living outside the borders of Scotland managed to make a profit. Her letters to the Company also offer examples of how people planned to utilize the money coming to them from the Equivalent. Elizabeth was the relict of James Japhray, minister of the Gospel at South Sheilds in England, and in her later life she brought her niece, Christian Holiwell, into her home.<sup>67</sup> Christian was to "take care of me during my seekiness."<sup>68</sup> In addition, Christian was to ensure that Elizabeth was buried properly and to handle all of the business "att the expence of my funerals."<sup>69</sup> Christian was given the right to pursue any money that was due Elizabeth from the Equivalent, as well as "money due by Mr. Chicken merchant in Newcastle or any other persone in England or Elsewhere."<sup>70</sup> Though Elizabeth's advanced age and ailing health was such that she required assistance, she still held authority over her business and expected her niece to do "every other thing necessary for recovering payt and delivery of my goods gear and debts as if I would have done myself."<sup>71</sup> It is highly unlikely that Elizabeth would have selected Christine for the task had her niece lacked the ability to carry out her wishes. In a firm, literate hand, Christian signed the back of the Equivalent form on the December 19, 1709 to certify her receipt of £10 in Edinburgh that July on behalf of her accounts.<sup>72</sup> The younger woman traveled to Scotland in order to handle her aunt's affairs and show the mobility and agency of women during this era

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67 A special thanks to Andy Burn, Kevin Hall, Brodie Waddell, and Alan MacDonald for their help identifying regions in England associated with Holiwell connections in November 2019.

68 RBS CEQ/38/5, 78.

69 RBS CEQ/38/5, 78.

70 RBS CEQ/38/5, 78.

71 RBS CEQ/38/5, 78.

72 RBS CEQ/38/5, 77.

Martha Johnston was another woman living just outside of London who received compensation from the Equivalent. She did not rely on family; rather she hired the services of George Douglass to act on her behalf “for me and in my name to take debentures for eighty pound sterling...for the arrears of my pension.”<sup>73</sup> Her letter, written in her own hand, proves her willingness and ability to manage business transactions from her residence in Twittenham, and she described Douglass as “being always accountable to me.”<sup>74</sup> Douglass, it seems from this document, was accustomed to being directed in business matters associated with Martha Johnson’s wishes. Another document from that same file shows that Martha and her sister, Mary, were both recipients of the £80, doubling the number of women outside Scotland in this family benefiting from this one transaction. It is clear from looking at Martha Johnson’s documents that women living beyond Scottish borders managed to conduct business as a result of the Darien failure and profited in ways that gave them a measure of economic autonomy, illustrating yet another of the ways that women in early modern Europe profited from empire.

Women who were beneficiaries of the Equivalent were allowed a degree of relief from economic hardships and financial loss. Some relief was sufficient to change their economic futures, as seen in the example of Bess Allen. Not all women were able to enjoy comforts imagined from the wages or compensation plus interest on the debts from the Company. There is no evidence that families were compensated for the deaths during the Atlantic passage to Panama of any of the approximately 350 women believed to have made the journey. Robert Turnbull’s pleas for the Company to send women laborers reveals that they were clearly viewed as assets to others serving the Company in the

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73 RBS CEQ/38/5, 77.

74 RBS EQ/23/17, 18. Johnson’s location is likely a derivative of Twickenham east of London.

colony, but perhaps women were not seen as part of the necessary labor force until after they arrived on land in Panama. Nevertheless, it is clear that that women in Scotland were viewed as important laborers, investors, and migrants for the Company, but their economic value and compensation associated with their own bodies disappeared in the eye of the Equivalent when they stepped foot onboard the ships heading west.

The decimation of the male populations associated with the Darien venture left many women to their own economic devices across Scotland and, to a much smaller extend, England after the Company's failure. They each found ways to come forward and work through the court systems to insure they received what was owed to them. The consequences of failure left an abundance of documents recording their actions.

The Equivalent documents show that despite some women's peripheral status to empire, they became central to the conclusion of the Darien story. The life of The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies began and ended so quickly that many of its key players were witness all of the phases of its birth and death. Women were part of this Darien generation, and this chapter proves how women sought and successfully managed to maneuver the courts to recoup losses, making it the perfect study for finding women utilizing legal and political influence in the earliest years of the eighteenth century.

## Conclusion

In 2000 the Darien Chest, a “tangible link with an important part of Scotland’s economic and social history,” was exhibited for the first time in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.<sup>1</sup> The large iron chest was used to hold the documents belonging to The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and The Indies and was acquired by the directors sometime in 1690s. Some argue that “up to £50,000—worth millions today—was stored inside its elaborate locking mechanism.”<sup>2</sup> It functioned much like a safe deposit box for the Company subscription payments and other important documents. It later was used by “The Bank of Scotland to store gold, silver, banknotes and accounting records.”<sup>3</sup> A decision was made in the 1860s to separate the lid, which housed a complex set of levers and cranks, from the strongly constructed body of the iron trunk. The lid became part of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland’s holdings while the larger trunk base, “almost 4 ft long by 2 ft wide and 2 ft high,” was kept by the Bank of Scotland.<sup>4</sup> For 150 years the chest and the lid were separated.

It was not until the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bank of Scotland that a decision was made to reunite the two pieces. A faxed transmission from the bank governors’ office, stored at the National Museum library, explains how Sir John Shaw remarked at the reception on the day of the reunion that “the great mystery is how the two halves—the

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1 Tara Womersley, “Relic of Colonial Disaster Goes On Show,” *The Daily Telegraph*, July 18, 2000.

2 “Relics to go on display at Museum of Scotland,” *Greenock Telegraph*, July 17, 2000.

3 “Relics to go on display,” *Greenock Telegraph*.

4 Alan Crawford, “Darien’s Treasure Chest Reveals Story of Scotland’s Ill-fated Empire,” *The Scotsman*, July 18, 2000.

base and the lid—of the chest were parted in the first place.”<sup>5</sup> Certainly there was parity between both the bank and the museum as they each saw value in bringing the two together in order to adequately tell the whole story of the how the Company directors secured the vast amounts of money collected for the venture. But reassembled and displayed together, the purpose of the chest became clear. Visitors could more completely imagine how directors, using two keys, unlocked and lifted the heavy lid. Museum goers could imagine Scotsmen from hundreds of years before leaning into the chest, placing the daily subscriptions and large amounts of money and then securing it each evening, all for the purpose of Scotland’s imperial dreams. It is fitting that “Helen Redmond-Cooper, an archivist for the Bank of Scotland, handed over the chest to the curator of Scottish collections Hugh Cheape.”<sup>6</sup> The coincidence of a woman archivist handing over the base of the chest cannot be overlooked given that women like Mrs. Purdie first rented space to the Company and Duchess Anne first subscribed to the venture. Women have a long history with the story of the Darien venture.

Like John Shaw’s speech describing the lack of knowledge about the separation of lid and base, questions remain regarding the precise moment when women’s roles associated with the Darien venture were separated from the histories written on the subject. Researchers have documented the roles of men as investors, laborers, migrants, soldiers, survivors, or bodies buried in Atlantic waters or Central American soil, all for the sake of the Company’s grand design. In the 1860s concerns of commerce, expansion, and profit caused some to decide to disassociate one part of the chest from the other,

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5 “Draft Speech for Sir John Shaw for Reception to mark the gift of the Darien Kist to the National Museums of Scotland by the Bank of Scotland, Monday, 17th July 2000,” 3.

6 Crawford, “Darien’s treasure chest reveals story of Scotland’s ill-fated empire.”

fracturing this remnant of the Darien. It is reasonable to argue that in the same decades when the chest was divided, histories were written of the great men of the Darien era that helped to slowly separate the intricate details of women's involvement with the Darien in favor of the more valorous histories of men associated with the scheme.

This dissertation joins women back into the history of The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies. Watt's solid argument that Company director's inability to manage money associated with the venture were instrumental in the failure of the Company. At the same time, Cullen's assertions of the importance of the famine of 1690s shows people living in Scotland faced hardships of food shortages and crop failures that motivated migration for some Scots.<sup>7</sup> Despite hardships described by Watt and Cullen, the Darien women of the preceding chapters are evidence of the ways that the Darien can be viewed as a creative force that energized women in spite of the failure associated with the hardships of Scotland's history in the beginnings of the long eighteenth century. The preceding chapters on women investors, workers, travelers, and those women who were not lucky enough to survive reveal the overwhelming evidence of women working within the Darien moment, and say a great deal about the larger influence of women living within the early age of empire. First, women were necessary for imperial designs. This was illustrated in the purchasing power of the monies they promised to the Company that totaled the amount paid for ships, even though the Company did not survive long enough to require full payment from its investors. The Company also needed the confidence of women when hoping to convince potential investors of the creditworthiness of any imperial designs a nation-state might hope to gain and was illustrated by the first elite

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<sup>7</sup> Watt, *The Price of Scotland*, 251-252; Cullen, *Famine in Scotland*, 189-191.

women who came forward to offer their financial support to the Company in 1696. They offered their symbolic stamp of approval for The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies the moment they walked into Mrs. Purdie's business. The Company needed the social capital of investors to garner interest from the wider community.

Secondly, some women possessed skills and a particular savvy that made them uniquely positioned to help the Company when soliciting trading goods, services, and naval supplies for the journey. Scots tradesmen dominated the ledgers numerically, but women also managed to land contracts with its agents. This proves the value of the goods and services they offered that were equal, if not superior in design, to that of their male counterparts.

Investor John Clerk composed a piece of music in honor of the Darien venture that exemplified the hopes and dreams for Scotland as it attempted to move into a position of power and influence in the Atlantic world. Lyrics to his composition reminded all who would listen that "Envious eyes surround our colonists. Fortune cast down the proud. May dear Scotland flourish in peace! May she possess propitious Darien! May her inhabitants work the land! May Scotland grow! May her expansion succeed!" Women, like the men, of Scotland were part of the many who were called by Clerk to "arise, come, hasten to this place with feet, hand and hearts! Take possession of Darien."<sup>8</sup> This dissertation shows that women were active in the transatlantic world and many answered the call. The Darien women, like those in Romney's *New Netherland Connections: Intimate Networks and Atlantic ties in the Seventeenth Century* or Ewan's *Virginia Women of the East India*

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<sup>8</sup> John Clerk, *The Lion of Scotland: Cantatas by John Clerk of Penicuik* (St. Andrew's Church, Glasgow Scotland; Produced by David McGuinness and Martin Dalby Hyperion, 1998) performed by Catherine Bott.



*Company* are part of the history of empire. While the Darien Scheme ultimately failed, the archives are full of documents revealing the many ways that Scottish women answered the call to engage, directly or indirectly, in an expanding era of trade in the transatlantic world.

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