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Genevieve C. King
17 December 2002
THE MICHIES

By Thomas Johnson Michie

1942

Library of Congress Number: CS 71 M 623 1942
I. THE MICHIES

Michies in Scotland

The standard work by Adam "The Clans, Septs* and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands" has the following to say with respect to Michies (p.135):

"Clan Forbes Septs"

"(1) The Bannermanns - .................

"(2) Fordyce - ............................

"(3) Michies - The name Michies appears for the first time about 1530 in Morayshire. Thence the Michies spread into Strathdon in Aberdeenshire. In the letter district they acquired considerable influence through their intermarriages with the Forbes’s, whose followers they became."

What is known as to the origin of the Michies was collected by Charles Michie of Edinburgh in his little pamphlet entitled "Michies Abroad." Charles Michie was a contemporary of my Father with whom he corresponded, collecting information about the American branch of the Family. When I went overseas in the First World War, I carried a letter of introduction to him, which I never had an opportunity to present. I cannot do better than quote freely from his pamphlet as to our origin:

"The Surname Michie

"Mr. J. F. George in 'Scottish notes and queries' of October, 1905, says: ‘some authorities assert that surname Michie is a debased Lowland form of MacEachan or Mac Ian. In either case, therefore, the sept would belong to the Clan MacDonald. A less interesting but perhaps more probable suggestion is that Michie is a diminutive of the once favorite Scottish Christian name Michael, Mickie being easily converted into Michie.’ ‘S’ in the same publication says Michie or Mickie is probably a corruption of Michael, which means ‘who like God.’

"Lower’s Dictionary of Names’ says Michie is a nursoname of Michael.

* A sept is a branch or sub-clan of a Scottish Clan.
"Strathdon, in the Western Highlands of Aberdeenshire, seems to have been the original habitat of the sept, many of whom were Catholics. How they came to be settled there is told in a letter from Mr. Alexander Michie, Maraisburg, Tramsvall, to his Brother Mr. A. S. Michie, Manager of the Royal Bank of Scotland, Glasgow, dated 22nd September 1905, in which he says that the account given by Mr. Thomas Michie, Brother-in-Law of Mr. Allanach, the Superintendent of Police in Hawick, fifty or sixty years ago is to the effect ‘that the first of the name Son of the then Chief of the MacDonald’s of the Isles. He was a younger son, and born on St. Michael’s day, and for that reason was named Michael. His oldest son was thought to be somewhat deficient in some of those qualifications, which were generally regarded as essential to a Chief of the right stamp. Michael and a younger brother formed a head of the Clan, but a stronger party rallied in his support, and in the fighting which followed, the party of the two rebels was defeated, and Michael had to fly for safety to the mainland. On the way over, the boat in which the fugitives were was overtaken by some of the pursuers. One of them had his hand on the edge of the boat, but with a thrust of a dagger, he was forced to let go his hold, and the fugitives escaped. That incident, it was said, gave rise to the crest of the bloody hand and a dagger. Michael found refuge in the upper part of Aberdeenshire, and for obvious reasons adopted Michie as a surname. Strathdon, I believe, was the district from which the members of the family (or Clan if that term sounds better) migrated to other localities. If my memory does not fail me, the Michies looked to the Forbes family as their superiors, but which branch I cannot tell. We were told, however, that a Lord Forbes married a Michie, who was said at the time to be the most beautiful lady in the North.

“Major John Forbes Michie, Toronto, also confirms the Michael theory. He says that ‘in our family the origin of the name was supposed to be Michael, from a Michael MacDonald. There were so many of the name that instead of Michael’s children they were called the Michies.’

“Mr. William Michie, farmer, Coull of Newe, Strathdon, one of the oldest inhabitants of the district, writes ‘now as to the origin of the name, I was told, from my early days, that it came from the MacDonald’s. When the Clan was full, they had to resort to names that would distinguish the one from the other, and to ascertain Michael MacDonald’s; they called his son “Micha.”

2.
“According to the ‘Baronage of Angus and Mearns’, by David Mac Gregor Peter, the “Mhic Ian” or Michie, deduces descent from the clan Mac Donald, through a branch of the Madderty Family. Madderty is a parish in Strathearn District, Perthshire.

“Finally, we have the authority of John Michie, Merchant, London, and Chairman of the East India Company in 1786, who is described in the Register House, Edinburgh, where his coat-of-arms was registered on 25th May, 1761, as of York Buildings in the Parish of St. Martine’s and County of Middlesex London, Secretary to Admiral Priock, and late Agent for victualling His Majesty’s Squadron in the East Indies. He was a son of Alexander Michie, Bucham, Strathdon, and Grandson of Donald Michie of the same place.

“Arms.

“Fess. -- Parted per fess undy argent and vert, an oak tree indicated in chief and a salmon naiant in base proper. (4th quarter)

“Lion. – Or a lion rampant gules, a canton argent, charged with a Dexter hand couped fess-ways holding a cross crosslet fitchee in pale of the second. (1st quarter as descended of Macdonald of Keppoch).

“Ship. -- Argent in a sea in base, a ship of war at anchor, sails furled and ensigns flying, all proper, in the Dexter chief point a double eagle displayed gules. (2nd and 3rd quarter).

Crest.

“ A Dexter hand couped fess wise, holding a digger in pale, proper, hilt and pommel, or.

Motto.

“'Pro Patria ET Libertate' (for fatherland and freedom). The motto adopted by the family of Major John Forbes Michie is ‘Per tot discriminate rerun’ (through so many crises of the MacKay’s and Mackies (also descended from the MacDonald’s) is similar to that of the Michies. Their motto is ‘Manu forti’ (with a firm hand) and curiously enough was also appropriated by the late Sir Archibald Michie, Q.C., Victoria.

Seat.

“The seat is supposed to be Culquhony Castle, Strathdon, Aberdeenshire, which tradition says built by Forbes of Towie (a cadet of the Putachio family, who married the heiress of Towie), early in the sixteenth century, but it was never finished”.
In “Michies Abroad” there follows a history of the Macdonals of Keppoch (on account of descent from whom the 1st quarter of the Michie Arms was derived). As this connection is pretty remote, I omit this passage, except the conclusion:

“.....They were last of the Highlanders who retained the system of predatory warfare, in which at one time all were engaged; and as it is not long since they became extinct, it may be said that they preserved the warlike and high-spirited character of the ancient Highlanders until it terminated with their own existence.

“Major John Forbes Michie, Toronto, has in his possession a china plate, which belonged to John Michie, Merchant, London, above referred to, and which is at least two hundred years old. On it is engraved the Michie Arms of an earlier date than that already described, and which shows in the second quarter a chevron between the three grads of the Stewarts). This would still further confirm the decent from the Macdonald’s of Keppoch.

“What is also of interest is the fact the Judge Letton of Lincoln, Nebraska, U.S.A., has in his possession a seal, which belonged to his Mother, whose maiden name was Michie, and on which is engraved the crest of the Glengarry Macdonald’s. This lady belonged to a family residing in Edinburgh.

The entire quotation from Scottish Notes and Queries which is only partly quoted in “Michies Abroad” seems worth inserting here, so I pick up with it where Mr. Charles Michie stopped.

Scottish Notes & Queries, Vol. VII,

Some authorities assert that the surname Michie is a debased Lowland from of MacEachan or MacIan. In either case, therefore, the sept would belong to the clan Macdonald. A less interesting but perhaps more probable suggestion is that Michie is a diminutive of the once favorite Scottish Christian name Michael, Mickie being easier converted into Michie. Michael still survives as a patronymic in Aberdeenshire. The name McMihi occurs in the Perthshire Highlands early in the 17th century, and about the same date mention is made of ‘pendicle’ called Michie’s Croft in Strathdon. This district seems to have been the original habitat of the sept, many of whom were Catholics. Subsequently the name became fairly common on Upper Deide. The Strathdon Michies, though not lairds, except as ‘wad setters, appear to have been the most important persons of the race, not infrequently intermarrying with the nation’s landed ‘aristocracy’. Among them were the
Michies in Buchaam, Lochans, and Colquhony. Alexander (Alistair) Michie in Buchaam married, about 1690, Ann, daughter of William Forbes, 6th of Newe. A great grandson of this marriage was the ancient Indian statesman, Jonathan Duncan, Governor of Bombay from 1795 till his premature death in 1811. This explains the presence in the East about the period of Captain Jonathan Michie (died 1811) of the Bombay Marine Service, and his Son, Lieut. Jonathan Michie (1815) of the Bombay Military Establishment. Governor Duncan was probably of some assistance in advancing the policies of his kinsman Charlie Forbes, of the great Bombay mercantile house — afterwards Sir Charles Forbes, first Bart of Newe. One of the latter’s brothers was ‘Michie’ Forbes ultimately ‘of Crimond’. The Governor’s oldest son, Jonathan (the ‘Dictionary of National Biography’, with its customary ‘delicacy’, neglects to say that he was illegitimate) was celebrated in his day as a currency reformer. He died at Notting Hill, London, in 1865, at the age of 66. The Michies of Lochans were also a family of good standing. ‘Staslin’ Laing, in a somewhat inaccurate Pedigree of the Foresees of Inverman in Donean Tourist, state that the first laird of that stock (whom he called Alexander) married Janet Michie of the ‘house of Lochans’. Perhaps Major Forbes can say if this be the case. The wife of George Forbes, Laird of Lodmacey and baker in Aberdeen, was certainly a Michie of that ‘house’. Some further information about the family, with precise details of their armorial bearings (which, if used, were never recorded), will be found in the Donean Tourist. Alexander Laing, the author, was the illegitimate son of one Michie, an advocate of Aberdeen. ‘Ed’, must not mistake the significance of his statement that the Michies were ‘long in possession’ of the lands of Colquhony. He simply means that they were tenants on or of the estate. A somewhat noted person of the same name, George Michie, lived at Newton-Gavin Drumblade, about a hundred years ago. He was of the Strathdon stock. One of the grandsons, Mr. George Bennett Michie, is Sheriff-Clerk-Deputy of Aberdeenshire, in charge of the commissary”. J. F. George)

I am not entirely sure that Mr. George was correct in the statement that the Michies had possessed Colquhony Castle only as tenants, for Thomas Michie of Colquhony is listed in Peter’s Baronage of Angus and Mearns and the title of the work would seem to imply that all of those listed were above the tenant class and in fact had some right to be considered as among the nobility — certainly among the gentry. This work also gives the coat of arms of Thomas Michie of Colquhony Castle and a coat of arms, I gather the Michie family, is given in the
Donean Tourist. While the language in each is slightly different from that in the description of the coat of arms quoted above (and from each other), it seems probable to me that all three descriptions reach the same result, though, being completely untrained in heraldry I cannot be sure.

Mr. George would also be in error in saying that the coat of arms was never registered. At least I assume that the coat of arms registered by John Michie, Chairman of the East India Company, in 1786 was the same; and, if I am not mistaken, registration was granted only to a coat of arms which could be proved to have been previously used.

Early spellings of the name vary as is, indeed, customary with nearly all surnames. Among those mentioned by Charles Michie as possibly all of the same family are Maike (1570), Maiky (1571), Makie (1601), Maikie (1618), Mikie (1682), Maich (1696), Meach (1758). He also refers to McKie, Mackay and Mackie, which do not appear in the Aberdeen Register before 1712 and may possibly have the same derivation as Michie, who had a son Andrew baptized on October 26, 1606. In the Strathdon register the name first appeared as Miki in 1606. In the Strathdon register the name first appears Miki in 1667 and becomes Michie in 1675. Yet in the Rent Roll of Lord Forbes in the year 1552 appears—William Michie and Molly Michie.

Other spellings of the name appear to have been Michie, Muichine, Muichen, Muiken, Michi, Meekie and even Mitchie, but the most common, aside from Michie. In early times was Miki, and this gave rise to a tradition that the name instead of deriving from Michael came straight from the Latin. In his book “Michie” Charles Michie says:

“Curiously in the same document are references to people called ‘Ego’ (Latin for I: Miki = ‘to me’.) This seems to give colour to the Latin Derivation of the name ‘Michie’. Two such names are Alexander Ego in Tragernick and Johne Ego in Larie. Also:-

“Finlay Ego in Neither Cults, browser, William Forbes and Thomas Michie in Strathdeun has a drivers and sundries times, als weill before as since the making of the proclamations, resett, hoorded, supplied and interteanned the saide rebellious and broken thieves and lymmars and their complies with the goods and geir reft and stolen by theme, and his furnished unto theme meate, drinke, hous, harbarie, and all other things necessary and comfortable unto theme, & c.”

And again, speaking of one Janet Michie of Glengairn, he says:

“Her father was born at Kinnacraig, Glengairn, and her Grandfather lived there, and so far as she knew, they went back centuries there. One tradition was that a Michie came over from Italy and had seven sons, who settled in Glengairn.
She and her brother in the Monastery at Fort Augustus are the only surviving members of the ‘Glengairn Michies’. The brother failed and went to the Monastery. The other Glengairn Michies chiefly went to America. Some of the Michies claimed descent from the Macdonalds and were ‘pitchy’ about it; they were prouder of that than of being Michies. They wore no special tartan”.

With respect to the possible Italian organ, Mr. Raymond L. Watkins, whose mother was one of our Virginia Michies, wrote me on January 21, 1939:—“referring to the tradition that a Michie went from Italy to Scotland: I was told that a Michie was a Doge of Venice. He was referred to as a ‘Venice of Dome by a descendant of Scotch John’. I haven’t tried very hard to check that statement, but I did once run across a coat of arms of a Florentine family named Michi. The coat of arms, however bore no resemblance to that of the Scotch Michies.

As I suppose is the case with all the Scotch Highland families, there has always been a great deal of badinage in the clan about cattle-thieving ancestry. Undoubtedly in the early days a forage into the lowlands in search of lowland cattle was a popular and profitable diversion of the hardy highlanders. And undoubtedly our Michie and Forbes ancestry engaged in it on a large scale. But there is no evidence that they were more proficient or indefatigable in that pursuit than their neighbors.

*Numerals following names indicate family and relationships to my children. The Roman numerals indicate families as treated in the different sections of this sketch, i.e., I for Michies, II for Watkins, III for Johnson’s, etc. The following Arabic numeral indicates the number of generations back from my children, counting them as one. Thus, I am I, 2. If a third number follows, the individual in question is not a direct ancestor. In this case, the Arabic numeral indicates the common ancestor and the third number, which is placed in parenthesis, indicates the number of generations between the common ancestor and the individual in question. Thus, my Uncle George is I, for Michie, 4 for my grandfather, and (1) for one generation down from the common ancestor; his daughter Virginia is I,4,(2); her daughter Margaret is I,4,(3); old Cousin Sarah Hewitt is I, for Michie, 6, for my great, great grandfather, Patrick Michie, the common ancestor, and (2) for two generations down from Patrick. This system enables any one of us knowing his position in the scheme to see immediately his relationship to any one referred to. Thus, Cousin Sarah was my first cousin twice removed.
The First of our ancestors to live in this country was John Michie (I,8), commonly referred to in the family of Scotch John, who was shipped over here for the good of Scotland after having taken part in the uprising under the "Old Pretender". James Stuart, in 1715. It is quite impossible to identify him definitely with any of the numerous Michies then living in Aberdeenshire as shown by Charles Michies books above mentions. I am tempted to guess that he may have been that John who was born in 1685, a son of Robert Michie (see Michie, P.41), in which event he would have been a brother of an ancestor of the Toronto Michies. On the other hand, I had always thought that he was probably younger than thirty at the time of his participation in the Rebellion in 1715. And it appears from "Michie" that there were a great many Michies living in Aberdeenshire in 1696, quite a number of whom were named John. There were, in fact, at least a dozen John Michies born in Scotland between 1680 and 1700, any one of whom might have been our "Scotch John."

A Mr. Robert Atkinson, who prepared a genealogy of Dr. Hugh H. Young, I, 8,6, says that Scotch John was a son of a Patrick Michie, a merchant of Newburg, Scotland, who in turn was a son of a William Michie, a merchant at Ellon, who in turn was one of the four sons (the others were John, Robert and Patrick) of a David Michie, who in turn was a son of that Andrew Michie who was a Burgess of Aberdeen in 1646 the first Michie Burgess, admitted in 1637 at the instance of the Earl of Seaforth. I have been unable to find out where Mr. Atkinson got this information and have grave doubts as to its reliability. At the time Mr. Atkinson’s work was prepared, the family was under the erroneous impression that Scotch John had been sent over after participating in the Rebellion of 1745 under the Young Pretender when in fact it was after the 1715 insurrection under the Old Pretender. Thus Mr. Atkinson was doubtless looking for information on the ancestry of a John Michie who participated in the rebellion of 1745 and anything he found on such a line would be of no help to us. However, the Christian names in the lineage given by Mr. Atkinson, with the exception of Andrew, are the names most commonly found among the early generations of Scotch John’s descendents.

Before leaving Scotland with our unidentified Scotch John, it may be interesting to cull a few more items from Charles Michie about our very, very distant cousins in Scotland and elsewhere.

First, let me say that so far as I can see, they were mostly very plain people, farmers, servants, tradesmen, shoemakers, tailors, laborers, weavers, etc. -and in this respect they were doubtless like most other families. If I say no more about this most numerous category of our cousins, it is not because they deserve to be ignored but because they differed, so far as we know, so little from the other wild Highlanders of their day. So for the rest here are some of a little distinction or with an eccentricity or an interesting characteristic that has been recorded:
I quote from "Michie":

"Extract from

"'Annals of Woodside and Newhills,' now the Burgh Hall. Mr. Alexander Michie was the first teacher appointed, and his style of teaching erected a new era in the History of Woodside. This school became a great blessing to the place. Mr. Michie could not be surpassed as a teacher to the young. He resigned in 1852.

"Temperance, & c.: Mr. John Michie was one of the 'chief rulers' of a branch society of the Rechabites, called the Thistle Tont, which was similar in its constitution to an Oddfellow Lodge, but on temperance principles."

George Michie.....had-----

"29th August, 1828, Charles, M. A., Aberdeen University; Rector, Silver Street Academy, Aberdeen; Assistant Librarian, Aberdeen University."

John Michie, Farmer, Badenyon (born 1688, died 1764, aged 76 years). He married Helen Gordon, a sister of John Gordon* the famous Jacobite General, better know as 'Old Glenbucket.'

William Michie, Town Councilor and Dairyman, Forfar, also Farmer at Lochside (Glanis). He says his grandfather Harry wore a kilt and was a great fiddler and singer of Jacobite songs. His grandmother used to talk of their coming from the Huntly direction. His grandfather left Aberdeenshire about the time of his marriage. The Michies were all musical."

"*John Gordon, after taking refuge in the hills at a place called the 'Glen's Bothy,' erected by the Michies, who also supplied him with food, fled to France, after the rebellion of 1745."
"James Michie, Tomintoul (born 6th August, 1820), was a son of William Michie, Bedenyon. He worked at the cutting Out of the railway from Ballater to Aberdeen; also at the Laying of the water from the Head of Cairnwell to Torry; which altogether occupied 30 years of his life. He is a Bachelor, almost totally blind, has a very retentive memory, but is in very poor circumstances. He is a Staunch Roman Catholic, and when I visited him in September, 1905, he told me that, given the opportunity, He could convert me! He says the Michies came from Deeside to Donside. The Michies are said to have been 700 years in Badenyon. The Broomhill Michies, he said, came of good stock."

"Tom Michie, Badenyon (brother of James as above). He had by Helen McHardy.

James (natural). He was farmer at Crofts of Corry, Glenlivet, and from there went to Fochabers. He was a great athlete and Challenged Donald Dinnie."

"Harry Michie (son of Harry Michie, farmer, Craigenniach), Merchant, Marywell Birse, born 1818, died 2nd January, 1896 aged 78 years.

He married Elizabeth Coutts (born 1824, died 16th October 1897, aged 73 years and had –

"29th July, 1861, John Coutts, A.R.S.A, Artist; educated in Edinburgh, Rome, Paris; received medal In Paris Salon, 1898."

Mary, Artist, Aberdeen."

"John Michie, Farmer, Corryhoul (son of James Michie, Torranbrech); born 1736, died 11th July, 1811 Age 75 years. He had –

"1806 Forbes, Captain of the Ship ‘Minden’; died at Balaklava, on 19th August 1855, aged 49 years."
If there is anything to my speculation as to the identity of Scotch John, this Forbes was his great nephew; another great nephew, Charles, came to Toronto, as did also this Charles' nephew, James, and Finally, this James' nephew, Major John Forbes Michie, who was the most Distinguished of the clan in Canada.

Continuing from “Michie”:

“John Michie, son of Alexander Michie, Buchan. He was born and died in London on 22nd November, 1788. He was a Merchant in London; Chairman of the East India Company in 1786; Deputy Chairman in 1788, being succeeded By William Devaynes on 2nd December 1788.

“In ‘An Ordinary of Arms in Scotland’ by Sir James Balfour Paul, Lyon King of Arms, the following appears under Date the 25th May 1761: -

“John Michie, Esquire, of York Buildings in the parish of St. Martines and County of Middlesex, London, Secretary To Admiral Priock, and late Agent for victualling his Majesty’s Squadron in the East Indies....” (giving His coat of arms.)

“Jean Michie, daughter of Alexander Michie, Bucham. She married James Duncan of Wards in 1750, and had—Johnathan Duncan. Governor of Bombay 1795-1811.”


“In the reign of Charles I, defiance of the law has been steadily increasing in the Highlands. One of the chief difficulties in asserting the law was there setting of offenders by the many persons who were bond to them by kinship or interest. Stringent enactments had been passed against these resetters, but to so little effect that batch after batch of them had to be summoned before the Council to answer for their contempt of law. At length in 1635 a special Commission was appointed for examining into the disorders in the North; and in 1636 another Commission was charged with the trial of a formidable List of resetters, among whom in different batches were the following Michies: --

John Mitchie  In Racharrachrie
John Michie   In Tullich
Patrick Michie In Whitehouse in Cromer
Thomas Michie In Glencarvie
Thomas Michie In Stradoun
Thomas Michie  In Tullich
William Michie  In Delbadie

"Various punishments were inflicted for the crime of resetting, fines, imprisonment, banishment, execution."

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"Bennfshire—

Robert James Michie, MA., born Banffshire, 3rd August, 1856; married 1900, Annie Crawford Smith; educated at schools in Scotland and Newcastle-on-Tyne; University of Aberdeen (Honors in Philosophy and Classics); Entered journalism, 1881, on sub editorial staffs successively of Reading Mercury till 1890 and Birmingham Daily Gazette till 1897; Editor of Western Morning News, Western Weekly News and Naval and Military Record, 1897-1902."

........................................

"William Michie was Schoolmaster of the Parish of Cleish, in Fifeshire, and became acquainted with Burns during his first visit to Edinburg, in 1787."

This was the William Michie of whom Burns wrote his well known Quatrain:

"Here lie Willie Michie’s bones;
O Satan, when ye tak him,
Gie him the schoolin’ o: your weans,
For clever deils he’ll mak em!

Again quoting from “Michie”:

“Thomas, who now follows his father’s occupation at Clunskea, and was for long a well-known figure in athletic circles.

“John, H. M. Commissioner, Balmoral.”

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12.
"Directors of Companies----

Andrew S. Michie, Royal Bank of Scotland
William Michie, Manager and Director of the Improved
Wood Pavement Co., Id., 46, Queen Victoria Street,
London, E.C.

"Allibone's Dictionary of English Literature---

Michie, Alexander—The Siberian Overland Route from
Pekin to Petersburg. Murray, 1864.
China revisited.
Missionaries in China
Li Hung Chang.
Japan—Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

"Michie, Sir Archibald, K.C.M.G., Q.C.—
1. The Hamlet Controversy? Was Hamlet Mad?
2. Readings in Melbourne (lectures), with an Essay
On the Resources and Prospects of Victoria. Low, 1879.

'He does not endeavor to influence either by rhetoric or sneers
but talks vigorous common sense; and if he does not exhibit the
logical order and accuracy of the trained teacher, he interests
and exemplifies with the aptness and humor of a student of
human nature.'

Spectator, III, 501."

"Michie, Charles
1. Life and Labours of the Apostle Paul.
2. Bible Words and Phrases explained and illustrated.

"Michie, Christopher Young, Forester, Cullen House—
1. The Larch: being a Practical Treatise on its Culture and
General Management.
2. The Practice of Forestry.

"Michie, J. G. —
History of Loch Kinnord.

"Michie, Peter Smith, Ph. D., M.A., born 1839 at Brechin,
Scotland; graduated at the U.S. Military Academy, 1863;
Served in the Federal Engineer Corps during the Civil War,
Becoming Brigadier-General of Volunteers in 1865, and
Captain in the regular army; Professor of Natural and
Experimental Philosophy at the Military Academy since 1871.

13.
1. Elements of Wave Motion relating to sound and light; Textbook for the U.S. Military Academy, West Point Illust. N. York, 1882 8vo.
2. The Life and Letters of Emory Upton, Colonel of 4th Regiment of Artillery, N. York, 1885, 12mo.
3. Elements of Analytical Mechanics, N. York, 1887, 8vo.
4. Hydromechanics, West Point, 1887

“A Dictionary of Artists by Algernon Gravos—

J. Michie, Acton, specialty Domestic.
John Coutis Michie, A.R.S.A. Aberdeen, specialty landscape
M. Coutts Michie, (Miss), Aberdeen, specialty Flowers.
John D. Michie, Edinburgh, specialty Landscape.

“Privy Council Register.

“1612. Complaint by Sir Thomas Hammiltoun of Byris, King’s Advocate, for His Majesty’s interest as follows: On 7th March last he had obtained decree before the Lords of Council and Session against certain persons for contravening the Acts of Parliament forbidding the taking of more than 10 per cent interest for money given out by them. Andro Michie of Auchraine is mentioned in list of names.

“1617-18 James Michie in Eschudie is one of a number of persons under Government prosecution for illegal carrying of firearms. He is fined 18 merks and is under caution for £100 for William Horne in Kinloch.

Vol. XII, p. 510 1620. Complaint by John Lord Erskine, that the following Persons refuse the authorized instructions in the craft of tanning, John Michie in Tullibo, & c., and not compearing they were denounced rebels.”

“Historical Papers relating to Jacobite period.

“In Lists of heritors giving bond for behavior 1699 appear the names of John Michie and Alexander Michie in Barns.

“Rebel in Elgin District—

“John Michie, West Achwauch, carried arms with the Rebels in 1745, and submitted at home.
"The Royal Victoria Order—

"Members 5th Class, M.V.O.
"John Michie, H.M. Commissioner, Balmoral."

Perhaps the John Michie mentioned above, as having participated in the rebellion of 1745 was the one whose ancestry was traced for several generations by Mr. Atkinson.

Michies in the Dominions and Colonies

Outside of Scotland we find that one Alexander Michie was Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai; and Sir Archibald Michie, "the last representative of a group of great men who were distinguished in Victoria (Australia).... years ago" belonged, we are told by the Melbourne Argus, "to a generation of public men in Victoria who were liberal by culture as well as in opinions; and who combined high character and rectitude of conduct with exceptional ability" and became a distinguished barrister and Attorney-General and Minister of Justice of the Province of Victoria.

In Toronto, one of the oldest establishments is Michie & Co., Ltd., wholesale grocers and hunters and trappers outfitters. The store has the highest standing, as have also the Michies who have conducted it for upwards of a hundred years. I once had lunch with a Toronto bond broker at a gentlemen’s club there who said that the then owner of Michie & Co., Ltd., took lunch at that club regularly and he planned to introduce me to him. Unfortunately, Mr. Michie did not come in that day. I should have liked to meet him if for no other reason than because I have never met a Michie who was not descended from Scotch John.

Michies in America

In the United States, besides our Virginia Michies, with all of whom we can trace our relationship, there have been a few other Michies scattered around. A Capt. Thomas Willoughby was granted 2900 acres of land in Norfolk County, Virginia, in 1654 for transporting 18 persons to Virginia including a John Michie (Cavaliers and Prisoners – Patent Book No. 3. Abstracts of Virginia land patents and grants – by Nell Marian Nugent, p.312). I find no other trace of this John Michie or of any descendant of his and doubtless like so many of the early settlers he died without issue.

There was a prominent family of Michies in South Carolina before the Revolution, many of whom were Tories who left South Carolina during the war. The most prominent member of this family was a James Michie. He was Speaker of the House of Commons of South Carolina in 1753-4, Judge of the Court of Vice Admiralty 1752, 1758 and1760, Member of the King’s Council 1756, Chief Justice of the Province 1759 to 1761, and
again Speaker of the Assembly 1758-1760. He died about 1761 and his estate was confiscated after the Revolution as his heirs were Tories. These South Carolina Michies were closely related to the Toronto Michies. I am inclined to believe that there are none of them left in South Carolina now, though J. L. Michie, who was living in Darlington, S. C., in 1907, may have been a descendant. An interesting letter of his is found in “Michies Abroad.” I quote only a small part of it:

“Some years ago when attending a Masonic gathering in N.C., I came across a bag of cut plug tobacco, called “Michie fine cut plug.” Struck with the name, I wrote the manufacturers in Va., asking them where they got it. They very kindly at once replied, saying their father gave the name to his best brand in recognition of the valuable medical services rendered by the family physician, Dr. Michie, to his most loved sister, or daughter, I forget which, but that this Dr. has since died leaving no children....”

I never heard of “Michie fine cut, plug”, but it seems quite likely that the Dr. Michie referred to was my great grandfather’s brother, Dr. William Michie, I,6,(2), is still living in Baltimore, Md., they all moved away from Petersburg years ago, which might well have caused it to be said there that Dr. Michie had died and left no children.

Perhaps more prominent even than the South Carolina Michies were the Cincinnati-West Point Michies. One William Michie, a watchmaker of Dundee, went to Cincinnati in 1843 and established a business, which several of his sons and possibly grandsons carried on for years as Michie Brothers, Watchmakers and Jewelers. One of the sons, however, Peter Smith Michie, did not go into the jewelry business but graduated from West Point second in his class on June 11, 1863 and rose to be a brigadier general before the end of the Civil War. Afterwards, he was for many years Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy and (I always thought, though “Michies Abroad” does not say so) Commandant at West Point. He was the author of a number of works on physics and military affairs and of a well thought of life of General McClellan. He was greatly respected in the Army and, though he died in 1901, he was remembered by some of the older men who I met when I served in the World War. I remember particularly an old General (whose name I’m afraid I have lost, though it may have been General Barry) speaking of him with the greatest admiration.

One of General Michie’s sons, Dennis Mahon Michie, attended West Point and was captain and coach of the first two football teams at West Point, having played at Dartmouth before entering West Point end before there were any teams at West Point. He managed to get killed at the Battle of San Juan Hill in the Spanish American War (as did a first cousin of my
mother’s, Alexander Wetherill XXV,4,(2)—I think they were about the only two). The athletic field at West Point is named Michie Field, whether after the General or his son, the football player, or both, I do not know.

For some strange reason, this West Point family adopted a pronunciation of the name with a long I, “Michie”, as you can hear any time during the football season when you pick up a broadcast of a game at West Point and are informed that it is coming from Michie Field.

Once, when we were living on Long Island, my grandmother came up to visit us, probably on her first visit. In those days, one had to ferry over to Long Island City from New York to get to points on Long Island. Father had arranged to meet Granny at the ferry but got there late, just in time to see it going out. He ran down to the water’s edge shouting, “Mother, mother”, but was too late to get on. The people on the ferry laughed and shouted, “Mother’s gone! Mother’s gone!” but a porter came up and asked father his name. He told him and the porter, a little puzzled, asked him to repeat it, whereupon, after father had done so, he said, “Your mother told me to tell you she had gone to the ______ Hotel.” Father, somewhat surprised, as he did not know why Granny would have picked that particular hotel, went there and found Mrs. Peter S. Michie, wife of the General, who had come in on the same train with Granny and had been expecting one of her sons to meet her. The porter had caught the difference between father’s pronunciation of the name and that of old Mrs. Michie and for that reason had asked him to repeat it.

There are also a number of other Michies scattered throughout the country, particularly in the North and Middle West, who have no traceable connection with our Virginia branch of the family, though doubtless all going back to common roots in the Highlands. Most of them are descendants of Michies who came to this county in relatively recent year. Among the best know are H. Stuart Michie of Worcester, Mass., who shares with my brother, A. Hewson Michie, the distinction of being the only two Michies listed in Who’s Who in America, the family of Andrew Y. Michie, owner of the Michie Textile Company of Philadelphia, and Allan A. Michie, newspaper men and essayist, who has written in the last several years a number of excellent magazine articles (Harpers, the New Republic, etc.) and is co-author with Frank Rhylick of an interesting book, ‘Dixie Demagogues.’

Before leaving this review of the Michies with whom we have no traceable connection, it may be worth while to mention the fact that there is a Mount Michie in Yukon, Canada, which rises 5,500 feet above sea-level and was named after General P.S. Michie, that there is (or was) a town called Michie in Michigan (which seems fairly appropriate) that had a population of sixty-two benighted souls according to the census of 1900 and that there is a hamlet called Michie, Tennessee, named after descendants of Scotch John who settled there. There was also once a Michie Town in Manitoba, the name of which was subsequently changed to
Lenore—“Quote the Raven, ‘Nevermore’”—which seems reasonably appropriate, as I do not find either Michie Town or Lenore on available maps of Manitoba.

There is a Lake Michie in North Carolina, which I imagine is named after John Chapman Michie, I, 7, 4, for many years City Engineer of Durham, N.C. There is a Fort Michie at New London, Conn., which I imagine is named after one of the West Point Michies. I am told that there is a Michie Hill in Scotland. Also in one of the issues of the National Geographic Magazine in the summer of 1939 appeared a picture of the Michie antelope. It is doubtless named after some scientist in the family, but I do not know who.

Virginia Michies

Our first ancestor in this country was that “Scotch John”, I, 8, as to whose family affiliations in Scotland I have already engaged in some speculation. My temptation to guess that he may have been that John, the son of Robert, who was born in 1685 is due to the following insubstantial reasons: (1) The names in this family, John, James, Robert, etc., to some extent parallel the names of Scotch John’s children; (2) There has been a tradition in the family that Scotch John received some financial aid from Scotland after coming to Virginia and this family held, I believe, a somewhat higher position in Scotland than most of the other branches of the family and were, therefore, probably in a better position to furnish such aid; and (3) Generally speaking, the descendants of this family seem to have been somewhat better than servants and tinsmiths which, to a believer in heredity, might account for John Michie’s success in Virginia under circumstances which would hardly have permitted success had he not inherited a certain degree of character and native ability. Opposing this guess, we have the fact that there are at least a dozen Johns of appropriate age listed in “Michie”, and doubtless there were many others who are not listed; and further, this particular John would have been thirty years old at the time of the insurrection of 1715, though I always thought that our Scotch John was quite a young man at the time. And since he did not die until 1777, he must have lived to the ripe old age of 92, if he was born in 1685.

At any rate, we have the picture of young John Michie and his friend, James Watson, employed harvesting hay on the land of Watson’s father, a small farmer or laird in Aberdeenshire. While so engaged, their attention was attracted by the sound of bagpipes and soon there came by a recruiting sergeant enlisting the Highland youth for service with the Old Pretender. Watson and Michie doubtless needed little persuasion and were soon off to war and ignoble surrender at Preston, where the Rebellion virtually came to an end. After the surrender, the prisoners were sentenced to death or deportation and were lined up to draw beans from a bag. Those who drew white beans were transported to Virginia and those who drew black beans were put to a speedier end by shooting. John Michie, being a bold brave man, thrust his hand promptly into the bag and pulled out a white bean.
James Watson (the poltroon) found his knees quaking beneath him and was unable to raise his hand from his side. Whereupon, Michie nonchalantly handed Watson the white bean he had just drawn (did either of them have a Murad?) and promptly drew another bean—also white. And those were the only white beans drawn that day!

That is the story as I have heard it told many times as a boy, except for my parenthetical remarks. "I gin it to you as it was gun to me." In support of it, I may say that after the insurrection many of the prisoners were executed and many were transported to Virginia and sold there as indentured servants— all as more fully shown in the quotation from an article by Lt. Col. Hume given below. Furthermore, the story substantially as I have given it above is said to have appeared in print, I believe in schoolbooks. I have never seen it, except in family writings. But when I was attending grammar school in Charlottesville my history teacher, a Miss Dabney, told it to our class, but Miss Dabney, and still more her mother, were some sort of friends of my grandmother and may have heard the story from Granny. There was, however, considerable of a thrill for me in her telling the story in class, though it was also the beginning of my disillusionment about it. She told it, not to illustrate the bravery of our noble ancestor, but the unpleasantness of life in Virginia at that time. The point was that. It one had to cross the sea in the vermin-infested, scurvy-laden ships of the day to be sold upon arrival (if alive) as a servant, bound to toil for a period of years in the malaria-stricken colony of Virginia, one might just as well draw another beam quickly and get it over with. There was another point in Miss Dahney’s story that jarred on me at first. She used no names in telling it, but after she finished she said that it was a true story and that descendents of both of the parties were in the class. The children all clamored to know who they were and Miss Dabney looked at me questioningly, as if to ask if I objected to her telling the names. I shook my head and she then looked at Fred Watson in the same way. Fred did not catch the questioning look, as he was not descended from the Watson of the story and had never heard the tale, but Miss Dabney told the names anyway, though she refused to say which was which. This did not disturb me particularly as I was satisfied that Miss Dabney had just taken this course to avoid hurting Fred’s feelings. However, later I was horrified to learn that the Watsons (those who were descended from the James in question) told the story completely turned around.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Thomas S. Watson (the father of the old gentleman of the same name who used to live in Charlottesville when I was a boy) tells the story in his sketch of James Watson (published in my father’s little book on “The Michie Family”) in a much milder and possibly truer form. For beans he substitutes ballots marked “Death” and “Transportation”. Instead of Watson and Michie being the only survivors he has only one ballot in ten marked for “Death”. And instead of having Watson or Michie draw a “Transportation” ballot and hand it to the other, he simply had the next to the last man in line (who is not identified) too unnerved
to draw, whereupon the officer asks the last man (Watson) to draw his ballot first, and the last ballot in the bag became the ballot for the next to the last man. My Uncle, George Michie, however, said that some of the Watson descendents in Louisa tell the story substantially as we so, giving John Michie credit for giving his white bean to James Watson, explaining that Michie was older than Watson and had induced him to join the rebellion and that, when the drawing took place, he took the position that he had gotten Watson into the mess and was going to get him out of it.

Now, if you are worried about the insinuation that our ancestor may not have been the hero of this tale, it may comfort you to know that two of John Michie’s sons, our ancestor Robert, I, 7, and his brother James, I, 8, (1) from whom all of the Louisa County Michies and, through subsequent intermarriages, a good many of the Albemarle branch, are descended, married daughters of James Watson, Anne, II, 7, and Elizabeth, II, 8, (1), so that whichever was the tale is told, most of us are descended from both the hero and—what shall I call the other participant?—coward seems hardly fair, for I venture to say that none of us would relish participation in that draw. At any rate, only those of the Albemarle County Michies who are not descended from James Watson, II, 8, can be concerned with which was which.

The most interesting account that I have seen of the Rising of 1715 and of Scotch John’s transportation to Virginia is contained in an article by Lt. Col. Edgar Erskine Hume in the July 1939, issue of Tyler’s Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine (Vol. XXI, p. 6) entitled “Memorial to George Hume, Esq.” With his permission I quote part of it:

“The Jacobite Rising of 1715.

“But to wanton me, to wanton to,
And ken ye what maist wad wanton me?
And see King James at Edinburgh cross,
Wi’ fifty thousand foot and horse,
And the usurper forced to flee,
O, this is what maist wad wanton me”.

“The Jacobite attempt of 1715 is less well know than that of 1745 chiefly because of the leadership in the “45 of one of the most romantic figures of history, Bonnie Prince Charlie. In 1715 everything was in readiness; Jacobite hopes ran high, no previous landing of King James VIII and III had taken place, and no serious deterrent measures had been taken against the participants in the abortive attempt of 1708. A real army was soon in being and money was not lacking. The English king de facto was a foreigner, almost unknown to the people, and what was known of him was cordially disliked. It only required a leader of spirit who would attack at once. Well might stout old Gordon of Glenbucket exclaim, ‘Oh, for one hour of Dundee!’ But the gallant Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount

20.