

Appendix 6

A Brief History of the Kers of Cessford and Kippilaw

The Kers are one of the oldest and most powerful of the Scottish Border families of the Scottish Middle March, having 2 main branches: the Kers of Cessford and the Kers of Ferniehirst. They regularly contested the Wardenship with each other during the 16th century. The Kers appear to have stayed together as one family until 1499, when the lands of Cessford were conferred on Walter Ker, from whom the Kers of Cessford were descended and whose chief is the Duke of Roxburgh. Walter's brother, Robert, was the ancestor of the Ferniehirst branch of the family whose chief is now the Marquis of Lothian.

It was from the Cessford Kers that the Kippilaw Karrs descended. After the original lands were conferred on Walter Ker, his descendants gained further lands as their power steadily grew. In 1565, Mark Ker received the lands of Kippilaw and Rowchester (Kippilaw Mains) in a feu charter from the Abbott of Kelso Abbey. Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew Ker (1620-1697) purchased the Kippilaw Estate in 1657 from his kinsman Thomas Karr. His grandson, John Karr, changed the spelling of his name (the name was spelt 'Karr' by John Seton Karr, but variously by others 'Kerr', 'Ker' and 'Carr'). When John Karr of Kippilaw died unmarried in 1746, the estate passed to his sister Katherine Karr, who married Gilbert Ramsay. Their eldest daughter, Jean Ramsay, was the eventual heir of the estate. Jean's 2 brothers, David and Andrew were successively the lairds of Kippilaw, taking the name Karr in addition to their own name of Ramsay. They both died without issue, in 1794 and 1799, respectively. So, according to the terms of his will of 1790, David Ramsay Karr, 'Surgeon of his Majestys Dock Yard at Portsmouth', left his 'Landed Estate of Kippilaw in the Shire of Roxburgh, Scotland' to his 'beloved brother Andrew Ramsay of Hatchford in Surry' and 'at his death the former to descend to the Heirs of entail of John Karr of Kippilaw my uncle' or, if he predeceases to 'John Seton Eldest son of my Sister Jean Seton & his issue'.¹ On 6 January 1795, The King granted Andrew Ramsay of Hatchford, the late governor of Bombay in the East-Indies, his Royal licence that he and his issue could assume the surname and bear the arms of 'Karr of Kippilaw' in addition to his present surname and the arms of

Ramsay 'in compliance with a Deed of Tailzie, by his maternal uncle, John Karr, of Kippilaw, in the shire of Roxburgh, in North-Britain, Esq. deceased'.² Thus, Andrew Ramsay Karr succeeded to the lairdship of Kippilaw from his brother David, for what was to be but a brief 5 years between 1795 and 1799. Jean Ramsay (d. 1766) had married (ca 1740) Daniel Seton of Powder Hall (d. 1782) and their eldest son, John Seton (1744-1815), succeeded to the estate in 1799.³ As a result of his inheritance, John Seton was also granted by Royal License, the additional surname of 'Karr of Kippilaw'. John Seton Karr died in 1815 without issue, leaving the estate to his nephew, Andrew Seton, son of his brother Daniel (Governor of Surat) and sister-in-law Sarah. The Seton Karr family continued to hold Kippilaw until Sir Henry Seton Carr sold it in 1914.⁴

¹ Last Will and Testament of David Ramsay Karr of Kippilaw, 1790: NRAS2970/Bundle 114. Masson, *David Ramsay Karr*.

² The St James Chronicle; or, British Evening-Post, Tuesday, January 6, to Thursday, January 8, 1795, page 5779; gale.com.

³ Naylor, *Historic Border Families & Houses*. Carre, *Border Memories*, 103, 112-115. Karr, *A Genealogical tree of the race of the house of Yair*. Mollie Seton Karr to Miriam Chisholm, 1954. Bower, *Description of the Abbey's of Melrose and Old Melrose*, 75. Burke, *The General Armory*, Vol 1, London: The Royal Armory, entry for Karr (Seton-Karr, Kippilaw, Co. Roxburgh), Supplement p. cx.

⁴ Karr, *A Genealogical tree of the race of the house of Yair*. Mollie Seton Karr to Miriam Chisholm, 1954. Bower, *Description of the Abbey's of Melrose and Old Melrose*.