

# James Hill, a Dumfries Neurosurgeon



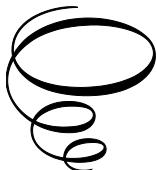
# James Hill, a Dumfries Neurosurgeon:

*His Background, Achievements,  
and Contributions*

By

Jeremy C. Ganz

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## INTRODUCTION

The reason for writing this book dates back to the time when the author was working on his PhD thesis, about the pathophysiology of intracranial epidural haematomas. These were first described systematically and adequately by W.H.A. Jacobson at Guys Hospital in 1886/7 (Jacobson 1886/7). In Jacobson's manuscript, there are descriptions of seventy patients with epidural haematomas, who had undergone an operation. Of these, thirteen had survived. Of these thirteen, two had been operated by James Hill of Dumfries. Two things made these two patients noteworthy. Firstly they were treated over 60 years before any of the other cases in the series. Secondly, Hill had written up his report over 20 years after the surgery, thus permitting an adequate follow-up assessment (Hill 1772).

Hill was born in 1703 and died in 1776. He was well known amongst colleagues during his life and for over one hundred years after his death, up to the time of Jacobsen's seminal monograph. Thereafter he has been forgotten. This does not seem appropriate, since his surgical results were better than those of distinguished contemporaries, who are still remembered today. The material which forms the foundation for the medical part of this book has been acquired using a technique of tabulation and time. In brief, the case histories of all the eighteenth-century surgeons with series of head injury patients have been analysed, using the data to be found within the texts. This permits the construction of tables of patient parameters including date, age, gender, type of trauma, type of injury, time from injury to treatment, timing of complications, need for surgery, complications of surgery, survival, death, cause of death and others. Analysis of these tables has provided interesting new data, including precise definition of differences in practice, mortality rates and discrepancies between statements of intent and actual practice.

This book is intended for anyone interested in medical history, particularly the history of neurosurgery. The book consists of three sections. The first section introduces some of the background milieu in which Hill's life was passed. His family and he lived in politically dramatic times very different from the twenty-first century and an outline of the social currents of his day gives some impression of the influences to which he would have been exposed. In the event, it would seem that the experiences of his formative

years had less effect on his subsequent behaviour than the influences of the Scottish Enlightenment. The second section outlines surgical practice and concepts during the eighteenth century. This is included to provide context. For a modern reader so much of it is unfamiliar, that a reasonably detailed description is necessary, or it is not possible to understand the contributions of a surgeon practising during that century.

In conclusion, the reader will hopefully find this a useful addition to current understanding of the seeds from which modern neurosurgery has grown. Any surgeon knows the tyranny of the telephone when on duty and the tension a telephone bell can produce even when on holiday. In Hill's world there were no telephones, so he was spared that stress. On the other hand, an emergency involved someone hurrying out on foot or horseback over dreadful roads to call him to the home of a patient. It is documented he never failed to respond to such a summons. This taken together with his results surely makes him a man who deserves our respect, attention, and remembrance.

## References

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# CHAPTER 1

## RELIGION AND POLITICS IN SCOTLAND

### Introduction

James Hill was born into a country and period which had just undergone decades of political and religious upheaval which was to continue way into the early part of his life. Since his father was an ordained minister this must have had a profound influence on his early years. This is not the place for a detailed analysis of the problems, but it seems appropriate to recount a little of the religious and political background which could have affected James Hill's feelings and opinions. At the time of writing this book there remains plenty of evidence in the world of the twenty-first century about the seriousness of conviction and the dangers of independent thinking. Religious intolerance had direct personal relevance for Hill since his mother's father died in prison far from Dumfries, after he was arrested for refusing to abandon his Presbyterian faith. Hill's father, as a minister of the kirk suffered due to political decisions which damaged his ability to do his job as he would have wished.

### Religious Differences

#### *Origins of Protestantism*

In view of James Hill's father's profession let us consider the religious elements first. Reaction against established religion had been growing for a long time. As early as the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, discontent with the papacy was developing, as shown by its reaction to the work of James Wycliffe (ca.1320 to 1384). Wycliffe translated parts of the New Testament into English and wrote critically of the papacy, which in his view was more involved in power politics than religious evangelism. This led to no great reaction in his lifetime, but the Catholic Church confirmed his criticisms after his death by causing his body to be dug up from its grave in Lutterworth in 1428. It was burned and the ashes thrown into the local River

Swift. The Church was particularly incensed at the translation of the bible into English an attitude which it justified as follows.

"The translation of the text of Holy Scripture out of one tongue into another is a dangerous thing; as blessed Jerome testifies, because it is not easy to make the sense in all respects the same; as the same blessed Jerome confesses that he made frequent mistakes in this business, although he was inspired: therefore we enact and ordain that no one henceforth do by his own authority translate any text of Holy Scripture into the English tongue or any other by way of book, pamphlet, or treatise. Nor let any such book, pamphlet, or treatise now lately composed in the time of John Wicklif aforesaid, or since, or hereafter to be composed, be read in whole or in part, in public or in private, under pain of the greater excommunication, till that translation have been approved by the diocesan of the place, or if occasion shall require, by a provincial Council. Let him that do contrary be punished in the same manner as a supporter of heresy and error" (Marlowe 1851).

It is easy to understand that the arrogance of such a response from an institution which had become increasingly political and decreasingly devout could induce a powerful response and opposition. The statement is fundamentally illogical, as the Bible in use was in Latin which was of course

itself a translation. It should be remembered that this was the period when the popes were in Avignon and profoundly involved with the power politics of the time.



**Figure 1.1**

The door to which Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses

### ***Martin Luther***

While Wycliffe did not engender a movement or systematic rebellion he nonetheless reflected the seeds of dissatisfaction which were finally to reach fruition in 1517 when Martin Luther (1483 to 1546) posted his 95 theses on the door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg (see Figure 1.1). In consequence, in 1521 when Luther refused to recant his writings the

following Edict of Worms was issued by the then Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. This stated that:

"For this reason we forbid anyone from this time forward to dare, either by words or by deeds, to receive, defend, sustain, or favour the said Martin Luther. On the contrary, we want him to be apprehended and punished as a notorious heretic, as he deserves, to be brought personally before us, or to be securely guarded until those who have captured him inform us,

whereupon we will order the appropriate manner of proceeding against the said Luther. Those who will help in his capture will be rewarded generously for their good work.” (Anon. 2014).

In addition, he was excommunicated by the pope. The above text underlines how much disagreeing with the Roman Catholic Church was a life and death matter. Luther escaped to Wartburg Castle in Eisenach where he translated the New Testament into German; an event which would be influential on J.S. Bach in the years to come. In so doing it is considered he had a profound influence not only on the spread of Christianity but on the subsequent development of the German language itself. This would also obviously not have been to the taste of the Church of Rome. The major sources of Luther’s concerns may be ascertained by reviewing a table of the words which occur most frequently among his theses (See Table 1) (Trueman 2014). The matter of indulgences refers to the practice of allocating freedom from punishment for already forgiven sins. However, it had become a means of purchasing forgiveness in this life and the next and had become an important source of income for the increasingly materialistic and corrupt Roman Catholic Church of the time.

Word	Occurrences
Indulgence	29
Pope/papal	24
Forgive (ness)	16
Church	15
Sin/Sinful	14
God	14
Pardon	10

**Table 1.1**

The above are the seven most frequent terms in the 95 theses taken from a modern translation. It may be seen that Luther was much more concerned with the papacy and the practice of indulgences than with almost any other topic, since forgiveness, sin, and pardon all refer to the practice of indulgences.

### *English Reformation*

Luther’s activities were seminal in the protestant movement which arose to combat the worldly excesses of the Roman Catholic Church. In Great Britain, the process was given a helping hand by King Henry VIII who could not obtain papal permission to divorce his first wife, Katherine of Aragon who had not provided a son and heir. In 1533 he pronounced himself Head of the Church and then to underline how different he was from the Catholic Church he dissolved the monasteries and appropriated their treasures to himself. The development of the Protestant movement varied in different countries and was coloured by the individuals involved. In England the changes were gradual beginning with Henry’s separation from Rome and excommunication continuing up to his death in 1547. This was followed by six years with the Protestant Edward VI, five years with the Roman Catholic

Mary I and then 45 years with Protestant Elizabeth I. There were no acts of parliament suddenly changing the relationship of church and state. The monarch following Henry VIII was the head of state and church as evidenced to this day by the FD or FID DEF on the coinage (Defender of the Faith).

### ***Scottish Reformation***

Henry VIII wanted Mary Queen of Scots to become engaged to his son Edward. In Scotland there were Roman Catholics who favoured an alliance with France and marriage to the heir to the French throne, which duly came to pass. In 1548 Mary was sent to France for her safety. In the meantime Henry bullied Scotland sending armies north across the border in the so called ‘rough wooing’. He desisted for a while after the Battle of Ancrum Moor (1545) where the English army was defeated. There were subsequent military incursions into Scotland, but they lie outside the scope of this book. A most important player in the drama to join the Scottish and English heirs was Cardinal Beaton, Archbishop of St. Andrews and the foremost Scotsman endeavouring to establish an alliance with France. He executed a leading Protestant, George Wishart of whom John Knox (1513 to 1572) had been a follower and indeed a bodyguard. Beaton was murdered in 1546 by Protestant noblemen. The religious squabbles within Scotland continued but the power gradually passed towards the Protestants culminating in the Confession of Faith Ratification Act produced under the leadership of John Knox in 1560. In the same year the Papal Jurisdiction Act 1560 was passed which denied that the pope had authority in Scotland. This was the formal foundation of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. This process differs greatly from the gradual Reformation in England. Protestantism in Scotland began suddenly and was backed up by Acts of Assembly in which Royalty was not involved. Moreover, as Buchan points out in his biography of the Marquis of Montrose, the Scottish Presbyterians were set on political involvement with a concomitant reduction of the state and also the King in the affairs of the Kirk (Buchan 1928).

### ***The Stuarts and Presbyterianism Early Years***

Thereafter the Roman Catholic Church was not really a major factor per se. However, there was strife between the different branches of the Protestant religion. The relationship between Scotland and England was drastically changed when Mary’s son James VI (1566 to 1625) of Scotland became James I of England in 1603. Scotland was increasingly Presbyterian, but the English Crown wanted conformity of religious practice throughout

the realm. Half-hearted attempts by James I did not produce any conclusive results other than the appointment of some bishops. The situation was exacerbated both in England and Scotland by James' son Charles I (1600 to 1649) who was less than clever with his man management skills. He was convinced he was King by divine right, and he was also as far from Presbyterian as a protestant could be. Today, he would be called high church

Also, he was married to a Roman Catholic. In 1637 at Charles' insistence a new Prayer Book was introduced in Scotland, drawn up by the Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud (1573 to 1645). It would seem Laud was a prime example of King Charles' lack of management skills. He was an appalling choice for his position, being pompous, arrogant, and quite capable of imprisoning and torturing those who disagreed with him in public. Attempts to read from his Anglican Prayer Book by the Dean in St Giles in Edinburgh on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1637 were greeted with violence and a lady called Jenny Geddes threw a stool at his head (see Figure 1.2). This was followed by rioting in the streets until nightfall. The Bishop and Dean of St Giles had their carriage overturned. The resistance to Episcopalianism persisted and was first encapsulated in the National Covenant distributed and signed all over the country in 1638. In Glasgow, the same year an assembly abolished all bishops. Presbyterianism was now the accepted national religion in Scotland. Those who followed it would thereafter be known as Covenanters. Amongst the people required to sign in 1638 were the members of the Barber Surgeon guild of Edinburgh. This applied to apprentices and servants who would be excluded in future if they failed to sign (Comrie 1927).



Figure 1.2

This is a picture according to its museum label of the very stool which was thrown at the Dean in St. Giles Cathedral, by a Mistress Geddes on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1637 when he was attempting to use the Laud Prayer Book. The stool is on display in the National Museum of Scotland, in Edinburgh.

### *The Restoration*

There followed changes of opinion and alliance throughout the period of the Commonwealth under Cromwell. There were royalist and parliamentarian supporters in Scotland and divisions within the various parties. This would all change in 1660 with the Restoration of the monarchy. Charles II (1630 to 1685) was crowned in Westminster Abbey on St George's Day, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1661. He had already been crowned in Scotland at Scone on New Year's Day 1651. That was the last time he ever visited

Scotland as he didn't like the place and particularly didn't like the way he'd been upbraided by the clergy. He considered Presbyterianism as:

"Not a Religion for Gentlemen" (Ross 2013d; Mackenzie 1841b).

It is not hard to understand that 'The Merry Monarch' with his love of life, women, horse-racing, and other pleasures would be ill at ease with the dour self-righteousness of the more rigid Presbyterians. Charles was an adept and subtle ruler but like his father and grandfather he desired unity of religion within his kingdom and obedience to the Crown. He may have been merry in London, but he was harsh and authoritarian in Scotland.

At the beginning things looked more promising. In 1650 he had made the Declaration of Dunfermline. In this it states:

"In order to which, he (the King) doth in the first place profess and declare, that he will have no enemies but the enemies of the covenant and that he will have no friends but the friends of the covenant. (Wodrow 1828a)"

This sounds promising. However, it should be remembered it was obtained under duress by the more radical covenanters (Mackenzie 1841b). Ten years later, in April 1660, prior to landing back in England, he made the Declaration of Breda at Breda in the Netherlands and had it sent to Parliament. In it he states:

"And, because the passion and uncharitableness of the times have produced several opinions in Religion, by which men are engaged in parties and animosities against each other, - which, when they shall hereafter unite in a freedom of conversation, will be composed or better understood, - We do declare a Liberty to Tender Consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matter of Religion, which do not disturb the peace of the Kingdom, and that We shall be ready to consent to such an Act of Parliament as, upon mature deliberation, shall be offered to Us, for the full granting that Indulgence. (Masson 1879)"

This again sounds promising. However, Charles true feelings were quite different and expressed in a letter to Dr. King, Dean of Tuam: where Tuam is an archdiocese in what is now the Republic of Ireland.

"Then his Majesty said, Mr. King, the Scots have dealt very ill with me, very ill." (Carte 1739)

Charles arrived back in Dover on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1660 and was in London by 29<sup>th</sup> May 1660. As stated above he was out of sympathy with the Covenanters and the Declaration of Dunfermline had been deeply humiliating and signed under duress. Thus, it is not surprising he showed little sympathy for the Presbyterian Kirk, and this was to lead to years of conflict. It started with

the initial acts of the Scottish Restoration Parliament, which met first on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1661. An Act Rescissory was passed which annulled all legislation passed since 1633. The Privy Council was reinstated in Edinburgh and the Church in Scotland was to take the form it had in 1633 with bishops (Ross 2013d). Scotland was to be governed by this Privy Council, a Royal Commissioner, and a Secretary of State in London. There were also the new bishops of whom the most influential would come to be James Sharp (1618 to 1679), who became Archbishop of St. Andrews and Primate of Scotland.

## Scotland's Rulers after the Restoration

### *Middleton*

The first Commissioner was John Middleton (c.1608 to 1674), and the Secretary of State was the Earl of Lauderdale, who came to be nicknamed the King of Scotland. The quotations in what follows reflect the view of the Covenanters which would have been close to the views of Minister James Hill. These are the thoughts and attitudes to which young James would have been exposed as a child. Middleton was characterised as follows in a History of Galloway.

“The King sent Lord Middleton to Scotland, as commissioner to the Scottish Parliament and viceroy of the kingdom. Middleton who had risen from the ranks.....possessed nearly all the bad qualities usually incidental to a soldier of fortune. He was attached to no religion himself, and he became the willing instrument of enforcing any that his master might choose to prescribe” (Mackenzie 1841b).

This is a loaded description since the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography informs us that:

“Middleton, John, first earl of Middleton (c.1608–1674), army officer, was the eldest son of Robert Middleton (d. 1645), laird of Caldham, Mearns, Kincardineshire, and his wife, Helen Strachan, a daughter of Alexander Strachan of Thornton in the same shire. The family had owned the lands of Middleton, Kincardineshire, from which they took their surname, since before 1154.” (Furgol 2004)

This is hardly the record of a social upstart described in the History of Galloway cited above. Its author was one William Mackenzie (1789 to 1854) who was from Kircudbright in southwest Scotland, educated at Edinburgh University and who worked as an English master in Kircudbright Academy before being ordained in 1843. Thereafter he was appointed the minister in Skirling in the central lowlands of Scotland until his death (Scott

1915). It would seem from the above quotations that the Presbyterians were quite as capable of propaganda as the government, no matter how just their cause would have seemed to them.

Middleton initiated the campaign for conformity of religious practice between England and Scotland enforcing Episcopalianism on the latter. Conformity also meant that the King was to be accepted as the head of state in spiritual as well as temporal matters. All parish ministers had to have their position confirmed by the lay patron and bishop. The degree of resentment evoked is well illustrated in the following passages about Charles II's attempts to dominate religion in Scotland.

"His agents for enforcing passive obedience and overturning Presbyterianism were the Earl of Middleton, whom he appointed King's Commissioner, and James Sharpe, who was made Archbishop of St. Andrews—the chief dignitary of the Episcopate which was introduced as soon as the old system was subverted. A packed Parliament, opened at Edinburgh in January, 1661, accomplished what Charles I. had for years attempted without success. In a series of sweeping decrees they annulled and overthrew those venerable institutions and wholesome enactments which their royal master and most of themselves had sworn to maintain inviolate." (McDowall 1873)

This parliament is further described:

"This Convention of the Estates has come to be known as the Drunken Parliament: a fitting name for it, whether we look to the personal conduct of its members—not a few of whom, Middleton included, caroused and legislated at the same time" (McDowall 1873).

The most important changes in the law consisted of the expulsion of ministers from their churches and the reintroduction of patronage whereby it was necessary for a laird and a bishop to confirm ministers in their posts. These regulations came into effect on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1663.

Some 260 clergy resigned their position mostly from Fife and the Southwest. The new Episcopalian curates who took their place were understandably treated with contempt (Ross 2013e). They were all too often uneducated and lacking in motivation to spread the gospel.

"Numbers of half-educated young men were suddenly called from the north of Scotland and appointed curates—the word used in North-Britain for parish ministers. These raw youths were devoid alike of piety, experience, and learning" (Mackenzie 1841b).

People who did not go to the churches with their new 'curates' were to be fined. The total amount was Scottish £1,017,535 6s 8d (£84,700 sterling)

(Wodrow 1828b). This was a severe punishment. This money was taken from over 850 people who are described by one historian as:

“The persons contained in this act of fines, as far as I can now learn about them were, generally speaking, of the best morals, and most shining piety in the places where they lived, and chargeable with nothing but being Presbyterians, and submitting to their conquerors when they could do no better.” (Wodrow 1828b)

The writer goes on to say:

“Middleton thought to have got all this money to himself and his dependents..... but he was balked in both” (Wodrow 1828b).

Not surprisingly Middleton was heartily disliked, and his actions gave his enemies the chance to topple him. The Secretary of State, the Earl of Lauderdale loathed Middleton, convinced the King that Middleton had exceeded his brief and indeed hindered the implementation of royal instructions (Wodrow 1835). He was permanently removed from office and replaced by the Earl of Rothes, who was dissolute and corrupt (Macintosh 2004).

### *The Earl of Rothes*

Of the Earl of Rothes it was written:

“he had a quick apprehension with a clear judgment: he had no advantage of education, no sort of literature, nor had he travelled abroad: all in him was mere nature, but it [was] nature very much depraved; for he seemed to have freed himself from all the impressions of virtue or religion, of honour or good nature. He delivered himself, without either restraint or decency, to all the pleasures of wine and women. He had but one maxim, to which he adhered firmly, that he was to do every thing, and deny himself in nothing, that might maintain his greatness, or gratify his appetites” (Burnet 1847b).

Thus, this second commissioner was unlike his predecessor being not even a half-hearted Episcopalian. On the other hand he would appear to have been an able administrator but more strikingly he was corrupt and venal. He used the military to enforce religious conformity and the collection of fines.

It was recorded:

“And first, at three several inroads which the Souldiers made into that Countrey, in the Years 1663; 1665, and 1666, they exacted from the People there, for adherringe to their old faithful Ministers, and not submitting to the Ministry of those whom the Prelates violently obtruded upon them, the Summes of Money underwritten” (Mackenzie 1841b)

It was recorded. The total sum acquired in this way was Scottish £41982 12s 0d (£3498 sterling) (Mackenzie 1841a).

### *Earl of Lauderdale and James Sharp*

The Secretary of State, John Maitland, Earl of Lauderdale (1616 to 1682) was also from a noble Scottish family. He had been a moderate Covenanter. At first he advised Charles to support the Kirk in Scotland. However, Middleton persuaded the King that he had a better insight into local feeling in Scotland and Charles was all too willing to accept the replacement of Presbyterianism with Episcopalianism (Hutton 2004). As mentioned above Lauderdale obtained the dismissal of Middleton and in 1667 he had to dismiss his friend Rothes.

To begin with the Presbyterian record looked favourably on Lauderdale. It was written that:

“The talented Earl of Lauderdale, indeed, who had both done and suffered much in the cause of Charles, strenuously advised the Sovereign to indulge his northern subjects in the undisturbed exercise of their favourite form of worship. But, though the King had accepted, and sworn to, the Solemn League and Covenant; he recollects with disgust the degradation and rigorous treatment to which he had been subjected by the Presbyterian clergy, who had used him more like a slave than a Sovereign. He, therefore, hated Presbytery in his heart, ....Charles at length came to the determination of rooting out Presbytery from every part of his dominions at the present favourable opportunity - the present season of loyalty and submission.” (Mackenzie 1841b)

Thus, there was initially a good feeling towards Lauderdale, who was as stated above initially a moderate Presbyterian and fought their cause. However, he was a trimmer changing policy to suit changing circumstances to ensure he retained or augmented his personal power and influence. Thus, he became enthusiastic in the Episcopalian cause. Under his aegis an Act was passed in June 1663 which stated:

“His Majesty, with the advice and consent of his estates in parliament, doth hereby statute, ordain, and declare, that all and every such person and persons, who shall hereafter ordinarily and wilfully withdraw and absent themselves from the ordinary meetings of divine worship in their own parish church on the Lord's day, whether upon account of Popery or other disaffection to the present government of the church, shall thereby incur the pains and penalties underwritten, viz. Each nobleman, gentleman, and heritor, the loss of a fourth part of each year's rent in which they shall be accused and convicted, and every yeoman, tenant, or farmer, the loss of such

a proportion of their moveables as his Majesty's council should think fit, not exceeding a fourth part thereof; and every burgess to lose the liberty of merchandizing, trading, and all other privileges within borough, and a fourth part of their moveables. In addition to the authority for exacting these penalties, the Council received the power of inflicting corporal punishment upon transgressors of the act." (Wodrow 1835)

This was powerful stuff. After 1663 Lauderdale continued to influence affairs in Scotland via various agents of whom the most notorious was James Sharp<sup>1</sup>. Sharp as the Minister in Crail in the Presbytery of St Andrews had gone to London to submit the cause of the Presbyterian Kirk and returned as the leading representative of the Episcopalian Church.

"James Sharpe, whom the clergy had sent to London, betrayed the cause he had been employed to advocate and as the reward of his apostacy was nominated Archbishop of St. Andrews and Primate of Scotland" (Mackenzie 1841b).

He went to London as a representative of the moderate Covenanters. During the time of the Commonwealth (in the 1650s) the Covenanters had divided into the more extreme 'Protesters' and the more moderate 'Resolutioners'. It was this latter group that Sharp represented. It is an important distinction because Sharp was blamed by the Protesters for letting down all Covenanters which was inaccurate. He negotiated for the Resolutioners' cause and was making headway when he was superseded by the actions of the Scottish Parliament. Thereafter, he was the tool of the political leadership in Scotland. He was much reviled, partly for deserting Presbyterianism and partly for being visible in the execution of policies which were designed to punish those who would not practice the Episcopalian style of worship. He was also hated for the viciousness of his behaviour as shall be shown. He was in the end murdered in 1679. Bearing in mind the fate of Archbishop Beaton in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Archbisporic of St. Andrews was a high-risk living.

### ***The Deteriorating Relationship between Kirk and Church***

The purpose of this introduction is not to present a chronological account of the post-Restoration troubles in Scotland but to describe highpoints which had relevance for the Hill family. The following events fall directly or indirectly into this category. There was a half-hearted rebellion where a group of Covenanters from the southwest of Scotland marched on

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<sup>1</sup> Sharp's name is spelled with a terminal 'e' in McDowall's 'History of Dumfries'. The spelling on his portrait in the National Gallery in Scotland is without the 'e'.

Edinburgh and then turned back to return home. They were overtaken by regular troops and a number were taken prisoner. It was recorded:

“The prisoners, the majority of whom were crowded into the ‘Haddock’s Hole’, a portion of the High Church of Edinburgh, had surrendered on a promise of mercy. But James Sharp presided at the Council; and mercy was not a word in his vocabulary. Eleven men were dragged before the Criminal Court; they pleaded the engagement that their lives should be spared. ‘You were pardoned as soldiers, the casuistic answer ran, but you are not acquitted as subjects.’ They were condemned to be hanged at the Cross. After death, their heads and right arms were to be cut off; the former to be placed above the City gates, the latter—the arms which a few days previously were lifted to swear the Covenant” (Smellie 1908).

After being ejected from their livings the Covenanter ministers had taken to preaching in the open air at events which came to be called ‘Conventicles’. At first people were fined for not going to the ecclesiastical church. In 1664 the Conventicles Act was passed making these meetings illegal. The punishment was a fine of Scottish £5 and 3 months in jail. The punishment could be inflicted by justices without a jury; an unusual arbitrary practise not in keeping with British judicial norms (Burnet 1847a). In 1670 a new act was introduced which made it a capital offense to preach at a conventicle and introduced severe punishments for those who attended. The hatred for Sharp reached such heights that he was eventually murdered in 1679. Finally, in 1684 an act was passed in Privy Council

“by which the military were empowered to kill the Cameronians in the fields without the formality of legal proceedings” (Mackenzie 1841d).

Cameronians were a group of extreme dissenting Presbyterians. However, the statement demonstrates the extent to which law and order had broken down. The following years during which these murderous executions were carried out were called the “Killing Time”. This was carried out by soldiers loyal to the King. chief amongst whom was John Graham of Claverhouse (1648? to 1689). It was he who led the troops that implemented the Killing Time earning himself the sobriquet of “Bluidy Clavers” (Linklater 2004).

Gradually towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the situation slowly improved. The throne was eventually given to King William III (1650 – 1702) who gained the crown in 1688. In 1689 there was the first Jacobite Rebellion in which Claverhouse, now Earl of Dundee was on the side of the Jacobites and was their general at the Battle of Killicrankie on 27<sup>th</sup> of July 1689 in which the King’s forces were defeated. However, in the same battle Dundee was killed and the Stuart army was defeated almost 3 weeks later

on August 16<sup>th</sup> 1689 at the Battle of Dunkeld, thus ending the first Jacobite rebellion (Ross 2013c). The next year, in 1690 the Presbyterian Kirk once again became the official Church of Scotland, which it remains to this day. Royal supremacy was abolished, and all ministers deposed since 1661 were reinstated (Ross 2013a).

## Political Events

From the beginning of his reign, William had a difficult relationship with Scotland. His major contribution to reducing the trials of his Stuart predecessors was to permit the Presbyterian Kirk as the state religion in Scotland. However, firstly the Stuarts made an inadequate challenge to William which ended as noted above at the Battle of Dundee. This was followed by the imposition of the oath of allegiance which ended up with the Massacre of Glencoe. This promoted enmity between the Highlands of Scotland and the British Crown and also with those Scottish families who aided the English King, especially the Campbells. The Glencoe affair would lead to growing unpopularity for the King (Maclean 2012). This would be compounded firstly by the famines which were hardly his fault. Legislation which resulted in tariff barriers which were to Scotland's disadvantage made matters worse. While William had not introduced these acts their practice did not increase his popularity. Finally, there was the disastrous attempt at a Scottish colonial empire at Darien in Central America, in which the English actively contributed to the failure of the scheme. Yet despite all these grounds of dislike and disagreement the two countries became joined under one parliament in London in the Act of Union of 1707. These events inevitably would have been of major importance to a young family in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and will thus be outlined below.

### *Massacre of Glencoe*

The British Civil wars had had a profound effect on all aspects of life in the islands, but they were over 25 years before Minister James Hill was born in 1676. During his young years a number of disasters occurred in Scotland. The first of these tragic events was the Massacre of Glencoe. To ensure his security the new King William III required that amongst others, clan chiefs in Scotland must take an oath of allegiance within a specified time limit. A local chieftain, Alasdair Macdonald of Glencoe, was late. This was due partly to dilatoriness and partly to bad weather. He arrived 3 days late at the deputy Sheriff's office where the oath should be taken but the official was not there. He thus did not take it until 6 days after the time limit. A company

of Campbell troops were sent to Glencoe and billeted in the cottages of the Macdonalds. They spent a fortnight socialising with the Macdonalds drinking and playing cards. The final decision to attack in Glencoe was taken on February 14<sup>th</sup> and the following order was sent:

“You are hereby ordered to fall upon the rebels, the MacDonalds of Glencoe, and to put all to the sword under seventy. You are to have a special care that the old fox and his sons do upon no account escape your hands. You are to secure all the avenues that no man escape. This you are to put in execution at five of the clock precisely; and by that time, or very shortly after it, I'll strive to be at you with a stronger party. If i do not come to you by five, you are not to tarry for me, but to fall on. This is by the King's special command, for the good and safety of the country, that these miscreants be cut off root and branch.” (Mackenzie 1841c; Roberts 2000).

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 1692 the massacre occurred, and the British Crown got the blame; not altogether fairly. While the above text suggests the massacre was at the King's command the matter is more complex. The history of Galloway records that after some argument the Sheriff of Argyllshire (Sir Colin Campbell) at Inveraray administered the oath and sent it by express to the Privy Council where it was suppressed by the Secretary for Scotland, Sir John Dalrymple of Stair who was a friend of John Campbell the Earl of Breadalbane who together with Archibald Campbell the Earl of Argyll formed a clique in the Scottish government. There was a longstanding feud between the Macdonalds, and the Campbells and the Macdonalds of Glencoe were particularly disliked. The allegiance document signed on 6<sup>th</sup> January was sent to the Privy Council but was concealed from the King on the advice of Stair. The King was on the contrary informed that these MacDonalds of Glencoe were bandits living off murder and rape. The King was also told that the traditional highland punishment for such people was extermination by fire and sword. In consequence, the King signed the order mentioned above. While the blame for the massacre has popularly been laid at the door of the English it was in fact organised, administered and carried out by one Scottish clan against another: as outlined above, the Campbells and the Macdonalds had an ancient history of interneccine conflict (Mackenzie 1841c).

### *Famine of the 1690s*

From 1696 to 1699 Scotland suffered years of severe famine and up to 15% of the population was thought to have died (Flinn et al. 1977). The relevance of this to the part of southwest Scotland to which this narrative refers is reported very negatively by Henry Graham in his classic “The