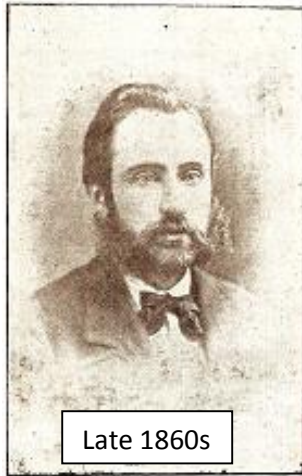


"Reminiscences" - Kinmundy and more

Alexander Penny's book "Reminiscences of 75 Years of My Life" was written 100 years ago - I have the copy that belonged to his brother, James - my great grandfather.



ALEXANDER PENNY IN LONDON

He was born at the "farm of Hallmoss on the Inverallochy estate" which at that time belonged to Colonel Fraser of Castle Fraser, near Aberdeen. The family moved to Nether Kinmundy when Alexander was pre-school age (maybe aged 3 in 1848).

In 1857 his grandmother died, when he was about 11, and he was sent to Hallmoss to stay with his grandfather (James 1781 - 1858). Having been at Longside School he then went to school at Inverallochy and returned to Nether Kinmundy a few months after his grandfather died - and back to Longside school. He comments that at the Kinmundy School, out of between 50 and 60 pupils, there were 26 Pennys at one time!

The farm at Hallmoss must have been run by Alexander's uncle (James 1816 - 1909) whose gravestone is in St Combs cemetery. His grandfather, William (1812 - 1891) is buried at Longside and was joined in 1936 by the last Penny to farm at Nether Kinmundy - Charles.

In his book there are descriptions of "Kinmundy in my day" which refer to his childhood, say, between 1850 and 1859 when he went to become an apprentice in the drapery trade in Peterhead at 7 pounds in his first year. In these extracts (*in italics*) when Alexander is talking past tense that means, roughly, between 1850 and 1860, and when he is talking present tense that is in the time of his visits in 1910 and 1920.

There was at one time a woollen mill, which stood back of our cart shed. It is now called the Calf Park - I just remember the ruins being taken away, but a row of houses which were built for the workers is still standing. It is called "Creeshy Raw". The carts that were, and still are, used are very heavy, with two wheels and a box. The horses are very large, as they need to be to haul those heavy carts with a load.

Our crops on the farm that were grown in my time, and are still grown today, are oats, turnips, hay, grass and potatoes. Turnips were very prolific and great fields were sown with them. 30 or 40 acres feed quite a number of cattle all the winter and spring.

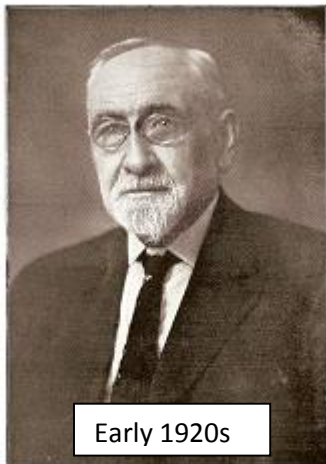
Alexander also gave an insight into the running of other farms in Buchan by Penny family members. Mains of Pitfour was a larger farm than Nether Kinmundy having three more harvest hands. Alexander's father took it over and *had his hands full buying and selling cattle, hiring the hands, and carrying on the farms*. It was taken over by Alexander's uncle in 1858 or 1859 but after two or three years he became sick and Alexander's father had to take over the management of it.

Towards the south of Kinmundy is a hill, where you can see the valley for 10 or 12 miles. At that distance was the Hill of Mormond, quite a mound rising abruptly out of the ground, reminding me of the great mound of the Field of Waterloo. The owner of this hill, or mound, had placed stones on the face of it that, at a distance, were in the form of a perfect horse. You could imagine it was alive. It is called the White Horse of Mormond.



Kinmundy is 2 ½ miles from Longside. It is also the name of the Estate. It has been offered (in 1921) for 36,000 pounds. The income is 1,700 pounds, with taxes and charge amounting to 500 pounds or odd. Besides the land, there is a fine home, barns, stables, threshing mills, all built of stone and roofed with slate.

At Kinmundy, we had five men and one woman who worked outside, and one woman in the house. My father did not do any of the farm work unless it was a rush time. My brother worked on the farm. I never did - only herded the cows one summer, and carried the dinners to the harvest field, and went to the merchants with the butter and eggs. This was only in the harvest time, but I was little over 13 when I went to be a merchant's apprentice. Our harvest hands at Kinmundy were two men cutting with scythes, two women gathering, two men binding, and one man stooking and one raking. The sheaves were stood up against each other, and it was at the side of these that the people ate their dinners. Perhaps one woman was hired for harvest time - the rest were all the year round men - ploughing, sowing, and attending to the cattle. Harvesting is altogether different now, as all farmers have reapers and binders.



Early 1920s

Alexander Penny

About 1922 / 23 Alexander's brother Charles bought Nether Kinmundy and had the Creeshieraw thrown in. This "greasy row" was a hamlet inhabited by people who worked in a nearby wool mill.

There is sufficient information in "Reminiscences" to trace out who in my wider Penny family had or ran farms in the 1800s. There are many more that are more distantly related.

Alexander moved to London then St Louis, Missouri where he established a "dry goods department store" - some stories for another day!

Contributed by Norman J Penny
An Invernessian living in Kent