

## MURDOCH Nisbet The New Testament in Scots<sup>1</sup>

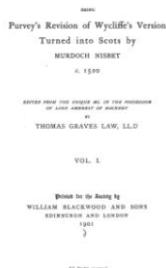
**MURDOCH Nisbet** (1470? - 1558) fled overseas after 1515 came back sometime between 1520 and 1539<sup>2</sup> wrote The New Testament in Scots.

*Not much is known about him, but he had a mighty impact in his day. He is believed to have been a "notary", a high-ranking civil servant.* Unknown if he had any brothers or uncles

Nisbet's house had been sited on land that later became Loudoun manse glebe, at the curve of a burn.

THE NEW TESTAMENT  
IN SCOTS

Apparently there are old foundations still there, marking the location of the building?



*Description: St. Margaret's Hill -Loudoun Manse stands on rising ground called St. Margaret's Hill on the right of the road from Newmilns to Galston, seen here looking north from the entrance to Mure Place. Built in 1768 it replaced the original manse situated nearby.*

Murdoch's Son --

## ALEXANDER son Nisbet of Hardhill (bef 1558 –Dec 1623<sup>3</sup>)

inherited the New Testament in Scots after his father.

ALEXANDER was married to JANET GILBERT, and at the time of his death, they had a son James and two daughters.

JAMES his son, was appointed, along with his mother, as executor for Alexander's testament. But as he was not of age when his father died, his mother was declared sole executor. (He then would have been born aft 1603)

ISOBELL their daughter, was married before 1621<sup>4</sup> to ADAM REID in Middlefield Ayr and at the time of her father's death was already a widow.

Their other daughter ELIZABETH married JOHN DONALDSON in Dalloy<sup>5</sup>

### **Extract of testament of ALEXANDER NISBET of HARDHILL**

*The testament testamentar and inventory of the goods, gear, debts and sums of money which pertained to the deceased Alexander Neisbit in Hardhill in the parish of Loudoun who died in December 1623*

#### **Inventory**

*A black horse worth £10 A heifer worth £3*

*2 cows, one tidy and one forrow, each worth 312 – total £24*

*12 head of sheep, young and old at 20shillings each - £12*

*6 bolls of corn at £5 the boll with the fodder – total £30 and 1 boll of Barley at £10*

*Estimate of the value of the contents of his house, his clothing and personal possessions - £10 Total - £98*

#### **Debts owed by him to:**

*Mareoun Baird - £30*

*Johnne Guthrie son of Johnne Guthrie - £16*

*Bessie Draffen - £6/13/4d*

*Johnne Donnaldsoun - £6/13/4d*

*Total - £59/6/8d*

*Free gear - £39*

*To be divided in three parts Quot – 13/-*

*Will Made at Hardhill, 9 December 1623. He appointed his spouse, Jonet Gilbert and James Neisbit, his son, as his executors. He named Thomas Gilbert in Overhall, Alexander Neisbit, his brother (sic), Johnne Donnaldsoun in Astingpoffel and Charles Hall notary in Newmylnes as overseers to them. He left 10 merks to his daughter, Issobell Neisbit, relict of Adame Reid in Midlefeild. He ordained that his wife, Jonet Gilbert as to have the liferent use of half his*

<sup>1</sup> I believe this line may have went extinct in 1728 with death of Sergeant James Nisbet

<sup>2</sup> It is possible that this is the same Murdoch that was the tutor for the children of Greenholm 1519 as he was a notary

<sup>3</sup> 1624 Aug 26 1624 ALEXANDER Neisbit in HARDHILL, parish of LOWDOUNE Glasgow Commissary Court Testament

<sup>4</sup> 30 May 1620 NISBET sasine Adam Reid and his spouse Isobel Nisbet in Middilfeild Ayr Sasines Ayr

<sup>5</sup> 1634 22 Jan 1618 23 Feb ELIZABETH Nisbet dau of ALEXANDER Nisbet in HARDHILL spouse of JOHN DONALDSOUN in DALLOY Sasines Ayr date is registration date NAS

20 Nov 1643 NISBET John Donaldsoun and spouse Elizabeth Nisbet in Staingate Ayr Sasines Ayr

house, kiln and yard and half **his thirty penny land in Hardhill** which he presently occupied. She was to pay half the duties on the above properties.

Written by Charles Hall, notary in Newmylnes and witnessed by Thomas Gilbert in Overhall, James Donnaldsounne in Dawy and Charles Hall

**There then follows the clause of confirmation in which Jonet Gilbert was confirmed as executor, her son then being still a minor**

At Glasgow, the 26 August 1624 Then follows a Bond of Caution in which Mr James Greg, minister at Newmylnes offered himself as cautioner for Jonet Gilbert

Alexander's Son ---

**James grandson of Murdoch Nisbet of Hardhill**

**JAMES Nisbet (aft 1603?- 1645?) inherited the New Testament in Scots in 1624,**

He had to have been born after 1603 as he was according to a clausal added to his father testament when it was registered not of age and therefore was not allowed to be one of his father's executors.

James inherited Murdochs New Testament in Scots and wrote in it in 1624

***I resauiet this buke in the yeir of God ane thowsand six honder tuenti four year at Youll.--JAMES NEISBIT with my hand*<sup>6</sup>**

JAMES married JANET GIBSON who died young and left him with two children JOHN and MARY <sup>1</sup>  
James lived a widow all the rest of his days.....

When he died he left the written New Testament to his son John, who was adorned with the humane advantages of a tall, strong, well-built body, and of a bold, daring, public spirit. He went abroad and joined the military, the knowledge of which was of great use to him in time of the after-persecution. Having spent some years thus in foreign countries, he returned to Scotland and swore the covenants when King Charles at his coronation swore them in Scoon, 1650.” <sup>1</sup>

James's Son ---

**John great grandson of Murdoch Nisbet of Hardhill**

**JOHN Nisbet the martyr (1627-1685)**

inherited the New Testament in Scots in and wrote in it 1645

***I resiuet this booke in the yeir of God ane thowsand sex hander fourti fyue years at the trid day of March.--JOHNE NESBEIT*<sup>1</sup>**

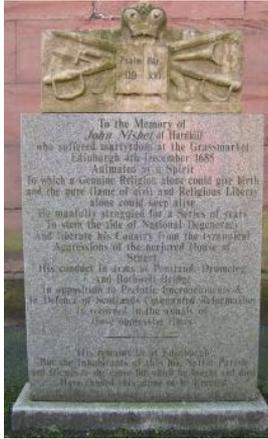
***I reseavit this booke the yeare of God 1645 the elewent day of March---JOHNE NEISBEIT with my hand*<sup>1</sup>**

He married Margaret Law and had four children. ***Margaret and some of her children have been reported to have died in a cave.*** <sup>7</sup> Their son James says he is the last of this old family so this would then mean the other children died with no descendants --and I would also think then there were possibly no other direct living male descendants of Murdock and definitely none for John the Martyr

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<sup>6</sup> THE NEW TESTAMENT IN SCOTS being Purvey's Revision of Wycliffe's Version Turned into Scots by Murdoch Nisbet c-1520 edited from the unique MS. In the possession of Lord Amherst of Hackney by Thomas Graves Law, Ild Vol. 1 printed for the society (Scottish Text Society) by William Blackwood and sons Edinburgh and London 1901

<sup>7</sup> 1683 MRS JOHN Nisbet and CHILDREN DIED OF ILLNESS brought by winter conditions while forced to live hidden in a cave *Convenanter of martyrs*



John the martyr took up arms for the covenant, was severely wounded at Pentland, “did good service” at Drumclog and Bothwell, and was finally captured and executed at Edinburgh *He was martyred aged 58 at the Grassmarket of Edinburgh on 4 December 1685.*

The treasured New Testament descended to his son and biographer, Sergeant James Nisbet, who died in 1728.

Son of John the martyr---

James great great grandson of Murdoch Nisbet of Hardhill

Sergeant JAMES Nisbet ( 1667?-1728)

inherited the New Testament in Scots

He was reported in 1728 to have said to Lord Grange that he **had no children and was last of this old family**

but he had a nephew who sold the book

As he is last of this old family **this nephew must then be a child of one of his wife’s (Agnes Woodburn) siblings and not a Nisbet** as many have thought. *I would guess not a Woodburn either but a son of one of her sisters as he should then probably have been mentioned in the apprentice records.*

What exactly happened to the book right after his death is unknown but everyone seems to agree that the nephew sold it and Sir Alexander Boswell ended up with it

**Wodrow in his “Analexta,” under the year 1728** (vol iii p518), continues the history of the family and book:-

“James Nisbet, son to John Nisbit of Hardhill, Ensing or Lieutenant in the Castle of Edinburgh, dyed some moneths ago. He was a very eminent and singular Christian---- **A little before his death, he gote my Lord Grange’s acquaintance, and he sometimes visited him in the Castle. He said to my Lord, He was the last of his old family, (and had no children), and had a nepheu** bound to be a barber, to whom he was to leave his papers, and an old Wickliffe’s Neu Testament, which had been in the family of Hardhill since the Reformation, and hisDiary That his papers about civil affairs wer in some disorder, and he had nobody he could trust those to till his nepheu greu up but his Lordship, and begged he would take the trouble of them.”

Lord Grange made some difficulty about undertaking this responsibility, and meanwhile “It pleased the Lord, as a great mercy to James Nisbit, to incline his nepheu to a liking to what is good and serious.... A feu dayes before his death he sent my Lord, and told nou he was a dying, and he had gote his papers and rights in some order, and could nou trust his nepheu...with them and the family Wickliffe’s Testament.”

**According to Mr Quaritch (Catalogue of Manuscripts, Dec 1893)**

James’s widow left the volume with Sir Alexander Boswell in trust for the young man. Who was not to receive it unless he should prove himself worthy of it. It was, however, presently handed over to him, and he sold it to Gavin Hamilton, in whose bookshop Boswell discovered it in 1745. He at once recovered the volume by purchase, and it remained at Auchinleck until the early part of 1893

*list of Fugitives Loudoun 1684*

**1684 HUGH Nisbet fugitive Loudoun son to the said JOHN Nisbet of ? Loudon**

"1684 HUGH Nisbet fugitive Loudoun son to the said JOHN Nisbet

(has been taken to have been from **HARDHILL?**) Loudon

the list is as follows

**JOHN Nisbet in HARDHILL**

John Woodburn in the MAINS of LOUDON

George Woodburn THERE

Robert Woodburn THERE

William Woodburn THERE

William Smith THERE servant (

**Hugh Nisbet son to the said John Nisbet** (*also the others that are listed the son is right after the father*)

**JAMES Nisbet in HIGHSIDE**

Thomas Donald SERVANT to **ALEXANDER Nisbet in KNAVACKLAW** " -*The history of the sufferings of the church of Scotland Proclamation with list of Fugitives Loudoun 1684*

*New Aberdeen or the Scotch Settlement of Monmouth County New Jersey by James Steen A.M. 1899*

**Has the following which I believe is the correct for Hugh but here there are two John's mentioned and no James in Highside but he has not written up the whole list**

**In Loudoun 1684**

**JOHN Nisbet in HARDHILL**

**HUGH Nisbet –servant to JOHN Nisbet in HIGHSIDE**

John Napier, Cooper in New Mills

**JOHN Nisbet LOUDON**

**The original record is to be found May 5, 1684, a list of fugitives the Privy Council in Edinburgh and the original would have to be checked to see what is the correct information**

**No where does it say any of these NISBETS fled to Ireland.**

**Both JOHN of HARDHILL and JAMES of HIGHSIDE were caught and hung in Scotland.**

**JAMES Nisbet son of John of HARDHILL was reported to have said that he is the last of this family see 1728**

We can then probably conclude that even if this Hugh was the son of John of Hardhill and brother of James he died before 1728 with no male heirs

### **Speculations**

1551-1570 James Beaton II **James Beaton was the last Catholic Archbishop before the Scottish Reformation.** Although there continued to be nominal archbishops of the see, they were no longer part of the Western Church.

Here we also have a **Murdoch that is a notary but as he is a notary and clerk for the Diocese of Glasgow rather doubt this is the same Murdoch but maybe a relation??**

What is of interest is that **Boswell of Auchinleck is witness in 1540 and it is a Boswell of Augenlech that ended up with Murdoch Bible translation.**

**It was the archbishop of Glasgow that granted my ancestors Auchinairn (DNA3) in Cadder and there is also a John Nisbet possibly an ancestor of mine in 1533 named as Baillie and Murdoch as NP and a Murdoch as clerk of Glasgow**

**Later John Nisbet is also mentioned as a clerk of the Diocese of Glasgow possibly an ancestor of mine**

**1531** 21 Oct Instrument narrating that Brother Thomas Ra [Rae], warden (gardianus) of the Friars Minor in the burgh of Are [Ayr], showed to John Campbell of Cesnok [Cessnock] an instrument of sasine under the hand of John McCharre, priest and notary, of half the 100 merkland of Carlton [Carleton] to Sibill Cathcart,. **Notary: MURDOCH Nesbit [Nisbet], CLERK OF DIOCESE OF GLASGOW, apostolic and imperial notary.** -*National Archives of Scotland Reference GD117/30*

**1533 16 Jun 1533** sasine Loudoun **JOHN Nesbit as Bailie** (John Loudoun and his heirs by Hugh Campbell) **witness to precept 20 Apr 1533 MURDAC Nesbit Notary Public witness to sasine MURDAC Nesbit Clerk of Glasgow** (#390 3280 Box 87) *Calendar of the Laing charters*

**1540** 21 Jul Instrument bearing that Alan, lord Cathcart, produced before George Campbell of Brintwood,. Witnesses: Hew, master of Eglintoun [Eglinton], John Cuninghame [Cunningham] of Caprintoun [Caprington], David Boswele [**Boswell**] of **Auchinlek** [Auchinleck], Mungo Mure [Muir] of Rowallan, Mr. William Montgomery of Stane, Robert Craufurd [Crawford] of Clolynane, William Cuninghame of Cuninghamede [Cunninghamhead] and David Cuninghame of Robertland. **Notary: MURDOCH Nesbit [Nisbet], CLERK OF THE DIOCESE OF GLASGOW, apostolic and imperial notary.** -*National Archives of Scotland Reference GD117/40*