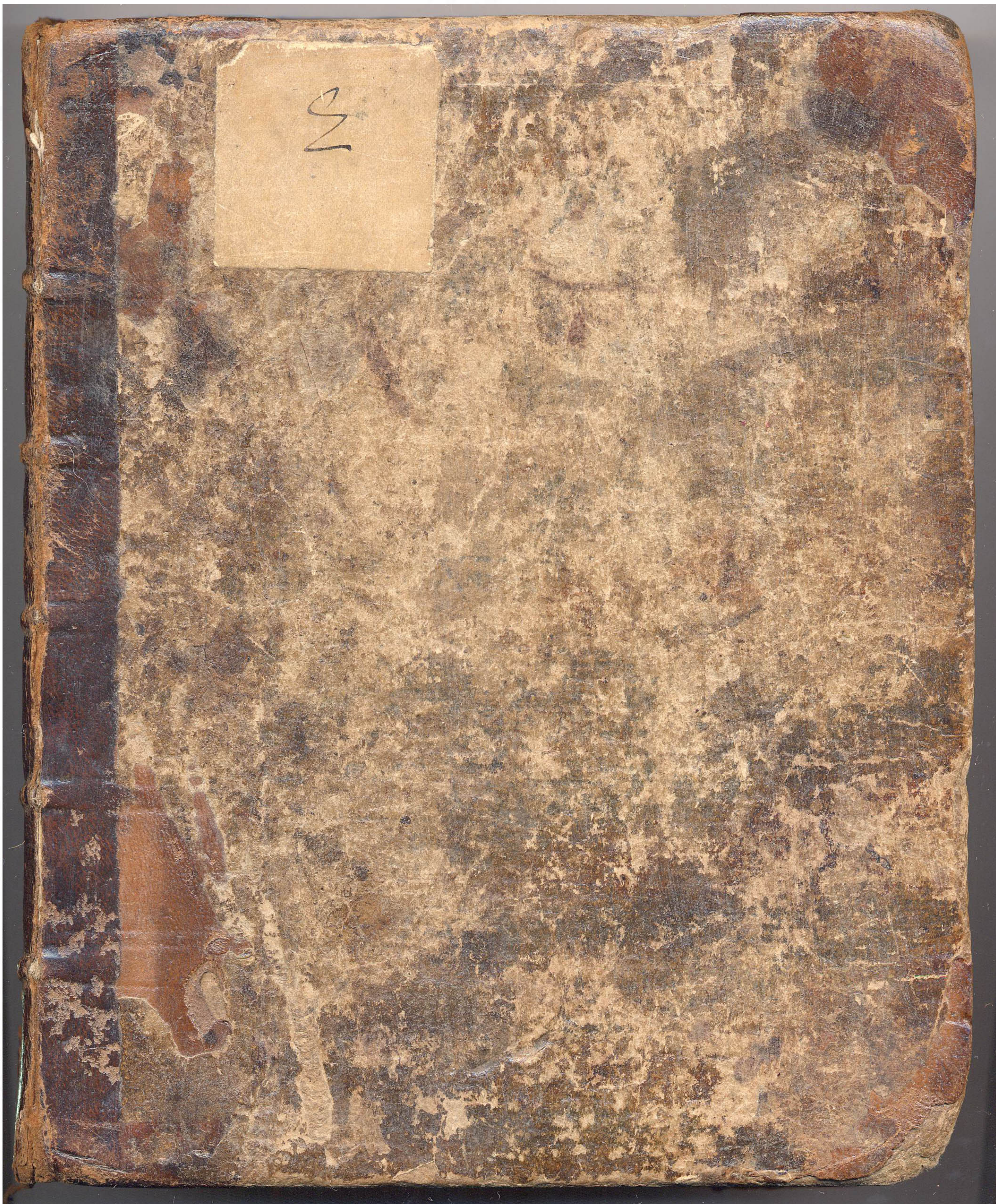




THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE EXTRACTS
FROM THE SESSION BOOK OF
MAUCHLINE PARISH KIRK - 1783 - 1789
A HANDFUL OF PAGES ARE INCLUDED RELATING TO
ROBERT BURNS, JEAN ARMOUR,
GEORGE GIBSON AND GAVIN HAMILTON

1787

Mauchline

The Minutes of

the Kirk Session of

Mauchline

from the 2^d 6th of Jan^{ry} 1783

To the — of — 1789

1703 Minutes of the Prothonotary of Machlun

Jan^y
26

Ann
Henderson

Session constitutes. Compared Ann
Henderson and Acknowledges her
self to be withchild in fornication
and being interogate as to the
father of her child she answered
that Joseph Gibb servant to Mr.
Boyan in Wotton is the father.

The Officer is ordered to
Summon the said Joseph Gibb
to attend the Session next Lord
days

Feb^y
12

Joseph
Gibb

Joseph Gibb having been Sum^d
called Compared and he is
ordered to be Sum^d for the second
time to attend the Session next
Lords day

9

Joseph Gibb having been Sum^d
called compared and he is or-
dered to be Sum^d for the third
time to attend next Lords day

Antient Bad
houses kept
in Machlin

add the following particulars
That there is a vagrant woman
called Agnes Wilson of bad fame in
the parish and places whence she
comes; who for more than six months
past has been haunted & entertained
by Elizabeth Black & George Gibson

That the bad reputation
of this woman as being lewd and
immoral in her practices has been
the occasion of a late disturbance
in this place which the Ssion
greatly disapprove of and resolve
to enquire into

That it is the opinion of the Ssion
that if this woman be allowed to
continue here, it will tend much
to corrupt the morals of the youth
and to disturb the peace of whole
inhabitants

That in these circumstances the
Ssion think it their duty in
regard there is no magistrate
it/

1786

information
concerning the
profanation of
the Sabbath

what he means to prove
23 April The Vestrymen of Snatchers
are informed that the Lord's day
is grossly profaned in this place
by both Men and Women particu-
larly the younger sort meeting
together in parties and Cables
after Sermon and are seen walk-
ing & traversing the fields high-
ways in an indecent manner
on the evenings of that holy day

The Vestry therefore
think it their duty to warn the
people in this congregation young
& old against the Sin of Sabbath
breaking and earnestly exhort Pa-
rents & heads of Families to command
their Children Servants & all within
their Gates to keep holy the day of
the Lord as he has commanded
& particularly to refrain from
the profanation of this holy
day by idly vaguing together

1786

But in the meantime appoint two of
their number Viz^t James Jamie and
William Fisher to speak to the parents
on this subject who it is hoped will be
ready to concur with the Sesion in every
thing dutiful & becoming & report

The Sesion being informed that Mary
Borland an unmarried woman is
with child order their officer to sum
her to attend As^t. Sabbath first

April 9. James Jamie reports that he spoke
to Mary Smith mother to Jean Armour
who told him that she did not sus-
pect her Daughter to be with child
that she was gone to Paisley to
see her friends & would return soon

Ed Fortimation was made from the
Desk that the seats in the last 10/1
are to be set by roup upon Thursday
first at evening 6x for ready money
only for behoof of the poor One

1786

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self withheld and declared that
James Bryan in Nelson is the
father.

Jennell

James Bryan
denies guilt

Jessie Compeared James Bryan
being deposed by the trial: to
whom he spoke privately to attend
the session this evening & having
been exhorted to be vigorous
in his answer to the accusation
brought against him by the said
Robert Hamilton James Bryan
being present denied his being
guilty with the said Robert
Hamilton or the father of her
child.

The officer is ordered to summon
Robert Hamilton to attend against
Sabbath first to give on her pre-
sumptions.

The session being informed that
Jean Armour is withheld order
their officer to summon her to
attend upon Sabbath first
Jessie Compeared Jean Armour called from
appeared not but sent a letter
directed.

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1786

Directed to the Hon^r. the Baron when
of fellows

Dear Sir

John Armour

I am heartily sorry that I have
given and must give your session
trouble on my account I acknowledge
that I am with child and
Robert Burns in prospect is the
father I am with great respect
Your most hu^l Serv.

Yours John Armour

13 June 1786

The officer is ordered to summon
Robert Burns to attend this day
eight days

June 18th John Armour compared Isobel Hamilton
and informs the session that after
Jas. Bryan and she had been
lying together at her Bed in the
said James Bryans kitchen Janet
Gibb her neighbours servant came
in and after opening the door and
found

1786

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June 18

Hamiltons
presumption

found them both at the Bedside and spoke to them At another time the said Gibb came in & found her Hamilton sitting & greeting and asked the reason, suspected them Guilty & knew of her Hamiltons taking drugs & also spoke to her Hamiltons Another concerning it that agreed that late hand & John Andrews late servant to James Bryan saw them together in the field yard behaving indecently and the said servants often knew them alone and at last suspected them Guilty

About Martinmas last Bryan told Samuel Lee that she Hamilton was a breeding lass - That Bryan about the race had sent her to Kilmarnock to a woman a Mrs Taylor in the Strand who was to accompany her to the Salt water and from whom Bryan had got drugs to cause her Hamiltons part with child The said Mrs Taylor could not go but sent Mary

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here

Mary Taylor along with her to
 Bristol where the Bryan came
 to see her and also spoke to
 John Bryan his B^r in Apr
 to take a Room there for her
 to stay a while at the Salt
 water

The Sep. 10th order two of them
 Sumner Vir. John Sellar and
 W. Foster to speak to Bryan
 on the subject for report

25 June Sep. 10th The Elders report that
 they had spoke to Jas. Bryan
 who still persists in his denial

The officer is ordered to sum.
 Isbell Hamiltons witnesses to
 attend 6 July

Compared Robert Burns and
 Acknowledges himself the father
 of Jean Armour's children
 Signed Robt Burns

1706

g by profane Worldly Conversation
And the Members of the
Session and other heads of fa-
milies are desired to take
notice of and inform Against
such profaners of the Sabbath
that they be spoken to privately
or censured as the Session
or Presbytery shall judge
proper

Intimation of the above is to be
made from the pulpit next
 Lords day

April 30

J. Brown

Jess Corbridge Comyn and John
Brown the Quakers he desired
to be put to his witnesses having
been considered by the Session
the same was found trifling and
irrelevant whereupon he withdrew
his proof
Compared Marg: Portland acknowledges herself
with child & declares that Alex: Dore sent to J: Dore is
his father he is ordered to be hum to attend Act. Thirs
day first

1786

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But in Charity being persuaded that he
has sworn the truth do therefore Absolve
him from the scandal of the said Accusa-
tion and at the same time exhort him to
avoid in time coming all appearances
of Guilt

Aug: 6
persons ab-
solved

Robert Burns John Smith Mary Lindsay
Jean Armour & Agnes Auld appeared before
the congregation professing their repentance
for the sin of fornication and they having
each appeared two several Sabbaths formerly
were this day rebuked and absolved from
the scandal

7 The Session being met for prayers before the
Sacrament & going over the Examin roll
prayers were made by the Min: & W: Minister

15 Sep: Con: The Sacrament of our Lords Supper
having been dispensed in this place upon
Sabbath last the 13th Curr: there was collected

fast Day	- - - - -	1-4-2
Saturday	- - - - -	1-9-6
Sac: Sabbath	- - - - -	4-5-3
Monday	- - - - -	1-17-8

15 The said Peter Daimen 7-2½
for repairs to the Church yard gates
to be repaid so soon as any sum is uplifted from
the Treasurers

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1787

that the accuser had perjured & contradicted her-
self. This the Session refused to grant in regard
that her perjurication & self contradiction in
judiciously denying her being with child
is already evident from the Minutes

Sept^r: 2

Compared John Wallace Acknowledges
himself the father of Ann Blains child

Compared John Brown & being in-
terrogate as to guilt with Annapis Woodrow
& Joan Mitchell. He Acknowledges guilt
but denies guilt with Mary Barber
The being present is desired to give in
her presumptions in writing
Gavin Hamilton, having been summoned
for the second time; and called, compared
not. He is ordered to be sum^d for the third
time, to attend upon Sabbath first

Information was made from the pulpit for
persons under scandal to apply to the Sep:
to get their scandals removed According to
The Rules of the Church

9 Gavin Hamilton, having been sum^d for the
third time, and called, compared not. A
letter was produced, which the Session re-
solve to take under consideration. They ap-
point their next meeting upon Thursday
first

1787

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first 12 o'clock, and order said letter to be engrossed in their Minutes: the tenor whereof follows

"Machlin 8 Sept: 1787

"I wrote you upon the 18 ult: informing of my
"having got a Subd before your Session, & desired to
"know in writing your Accusation agt me -
"since have received your second & third Summons.
"The former I would have Ans: before last Sunday,
"but was from home, the latter given me this day,
"to appear tomorrow, before the Mr. Sessions as being
"alleged guilty art & part with Robert Brayen
"of the sin of Sabbath breaking by digging or bringing
"a Spade to cause dig, potatoes upon the Lord's
"Day being the last Sabbath of July

"Upon the day mentioned I was walking with
"my children in the forenoon in the garden
"when some of them petitioned, for a few new
"potatoes, having got none that season, I
"considered this request as so very reasonable
"particularly from those who made it, that
"I did not scruple to listen to their demands,
"nor had I an Idea that raising a few potatoes
"in a private garden would have given offence
"to any person more than pulling any other
"garden stuff - I called Rob: Brayen who
"was residing in my house in the absence
"of my servant to raise a few shaws of potatoes
"I gave him a Spade, He did so, without the
"least seeming reluctance or objections, I suppose
"this explanation of the Affair will give the
"Satisfaction necessary I am Your Obedt Servt
"The Members of the Church of Machlin (Signed) Gavin Darnall

1707

Compared Mary! Portland of her own accord & offers to prove by Robert Miller in Haugh that he carried a letter from her to Alex^r Dove desiring to see him that evening she being withheld & accordingly Dove and W^m Hunter came to Haugh and called her out, when he Dove insisted that she Portland should give her child to another else he would leave the place And further offers to prove by Allan Robb who frequently saw Mrs Dove stay long in the kitchen at nights and disturb her until she was obliged to take another Bed

The Officer is ordered to Swear W^m Hunter & Allan Robb as witnesses in this affair to attend upon the 11 Inst.

Sept. 11

See the Depositions of the above witnesses in the Breach Minutes

The Session taking under consideration the Letter signed James Hamilton, find that he Acknowledges the fact, that on the day alledged, he gave a Spade to Rob^t Drayen with orders to digg potatoes, But makes no Acknowledgement, of any thing sinful or wrong, in so doing on the Sabbath day, and

1788

Aug. 3

The Sess being informed that Maryⁿ Selland and Agnesⁿ Mier are with child order their officer to sumⁿ them to attend upon Sabbath next

Sessⁿ for compared Maryⁿ Selland Acknowledges herself with child & declares that William Hunter Merch^t in Mächten is the father

James Fisher Sara Diller Helen Boswell Hol^d Hay & Maryⁿ Brown appeared before the Congregation for the third time were rebuked and absolved from the scandal

5 Compared Robert Burns with Jean Armour his Alleged Spouse They both Acknowledge their irregular Marriage and their Sorrow for that irregularity And Desiring that the Session will take such Steps as may seem to them proper in order to the solemn confirmation of the said Marriage

The Session taking this affair under their Consideration Agree that they both be rebuked for this Acknowledged irregularity and that they be taken solemnly engaged

1788

to adhere faithfully to One another as husband & wife all the days of their life

In regard the Session have a little in Law to some fine for behoof of the poor They Agree to refer to Mr Burns his own generosity The above sentence was accordingly executed and the Session absolved the said parties from any scandal on this acc.

Signed William Dutton & Robt Burns
Jean Armour

Mr Burns gave a Guinea note for behoof of the poor

Aug. 12th Vesp. for the Sac. of Our Lords Supper was dispensed in this place upon Sabbath the 10th Curr. There was collected as follows

fast day	— — — — —	£ 1-3-3
Saturday	— — — — —	1-9-3
Sabbath	— — — — —	4-14-10
Monday	— — — — —	1-15-9
		£ 9-3-1

240

Communicants about fourteen hundred