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## ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



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## **The McPhees: New Zealand's First Clay Pipemakers**

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It has long been argued that any clay tobacco pipes found in New Zealand were either the result of imports from Europe, or quite small scale production of pipes in Australia. Recent research, prompted by a chance find in the New Zealand newspaper archives, however, now seems to suggest that pipes were being manufactured in New Zealand from the early 1880s through to at least 1908, using locally sourced materials.

The preliminary results of this research were presented at the conference of the Society for Clay Pipe Research in Carlisle, UK, in September 2015 with an update at the conference of the Académie Internationale de la Pipe, in Ypres, Belgium, in October 2015. This article pulls together a full account of the latest research into this topic. The New Zealand newspaper articles referred to have all been accessed via the new Past Papers website, and can be found online at <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/>.

Europeans first became aware of New Zealand in 1642 when the Dutch explorer Abel Tasman sighted the islands, and in October 1769 Captain James Cook was the first European to circumnavigate and map the islands. From 1769 the country was visited regularly by explorers, missionaries, traders and adventurers, while whaling ships from Britain, France and America frequently used the waters around New Zealand. It was not until 1840 that the Islands came into the British Empire with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, which marked the start of an explosion in the European population from 1,000 in 1831 to a staggering 500,000 by 1881.

In 1845 the Otago Association was founded by adherents to the Free Church of Scotland with the purpose of establishing a colony of like-minded Scots in Otago, chiefly at Dunedin (Figure 1). This was seen as an attractive proposition, not just on religious grounds, but also as an escape from the Highland clearances and crop failures. Within 10 years of the Otago Association being founded, 12,000 immigrants had arrived in Dunedin. The gold rush in Otago during the 1860s only added to this influx.

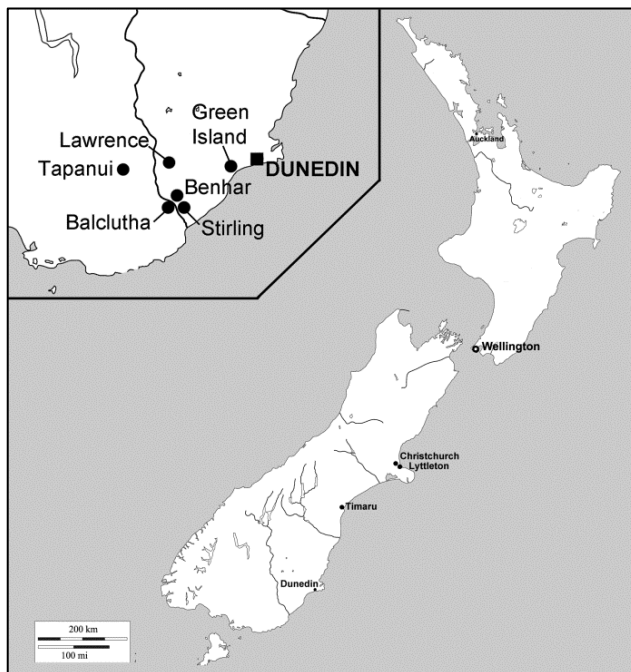


Figure 1. Map showing the location of places referred to in the text.

With this very strong Scottish link it is perhaps no surprise that large numbers of clay tobacco pipes from Scotland turn up in parts of New Zealand. From as early as 1843 shipping lists published in the local press include details about the importation of clay tobacco pipes. The *Daily Southern Cross* for 17 September 1850, for example, notes imports of ‘32 boxes of tobacco pipes’ on board the *Oliver Cromwell* from Glasgow.

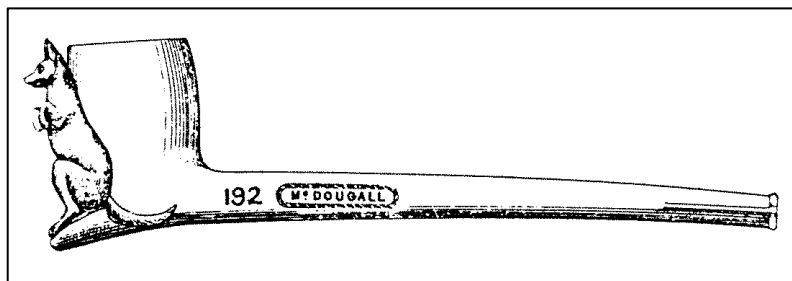
By the late 1850s pipes were being imported or sold in increasingly large numbers and in some instances the style and origin of the pipes was also specified, for example:

- 15 Dec 1858 – 20 boxes TD pipes (ex *Oliver Lang*)
- 10 Nov 1863 – 20 boxes TD (ex *Claud Hamilton* and *Novelty*)
- 23 Jun 1866 – 27 boxes TD pipes from London (ex *Black Swan*)
- 21 Sep 1868 – 75 boxes McDougals [sic] TD pipes

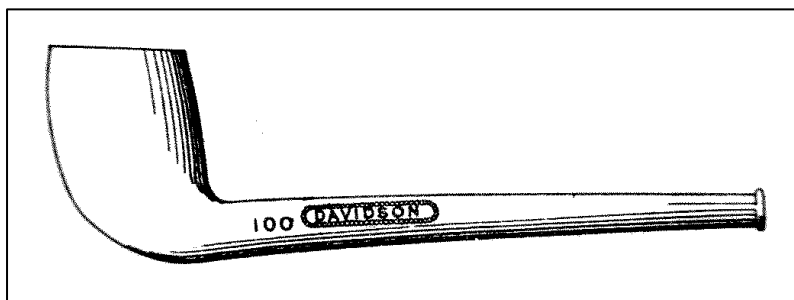
### *White – McPhee Pipemakers*

As well as these quite large quantities of individual patterns, even larger cargoes of mixed pipes were also being imported. In 1859, for example, 130 boxes of pipes arrived in two vessels; the *Alfred the Great*, which departed London on 7 December 1858, and the *Acasta*, which departed Gravesend on the 18 December 1858. Both ships arrived in Wellington within a week of each other in April 1859.

Pipes from various production centres in the United Kingdom and Europe were also arriving in Australia in vast quantities. Some of these manufacturers were clearly producing pipes specifically for the Australasian market. For example, McDougall and Waldie, two Scottish firms, were producing a pattern called ‘Kangaroo’ (Figure 2). White of Glasgow had pipes called ‘Long Australian’ and ‘Short Australian’ as well as ‘Sydney Crop’ and ‘Melbourne Crop,’ while Davidson, also of Glasgow, even produced a pipe whose pattern name was ‘Otago’ (Figure 3).



*Figure 2. Kangaroo pipe, pattern number 192, from McDougall’s catalogue of c1880.*



*Figure 3. Pattern number 100, ‘Otago,’ from Davidson’s catalogue of c1880.*

Not only were these European manufacturers producing pipes with an Australasian theme but some were producing pipes that were specifically marked for agents or wholesalers in New Zealand. Charles Crop of London, for example, produced pipes that were marked for Heywood of Lyttleton, near Christchurch (Figure 4). In the *Lyttleton Times* for 31 July 1861, there was an advertisement of pipes for sale that were described as ‘meerschaum washed (Heywood’s).’ Customised pipes were also produced for two businesses in Christchurch itself; Trent Brothers (Figure 5), who were coffee, flax and chicory merchants, and Twentyman & Cousin (Figure 6), who were first established in the late 1860s importing and selling a wide range of goods (Garland 2015). Although it is not clear who was producing the pipes for the Trent Brothers or Twentyman & Cousin, the assumption has always been that they were being imported from Europe.

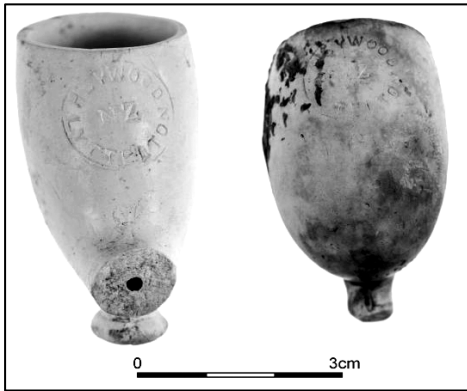


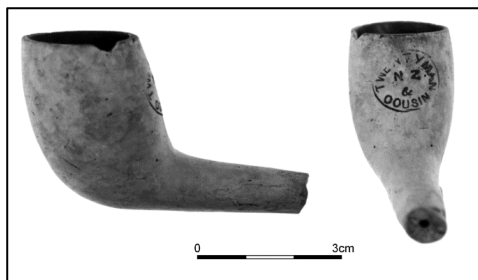
Figure 4. Pipes made by Charles Crop of London and marked Heywood Lyttleton NZ (Garland 2015).



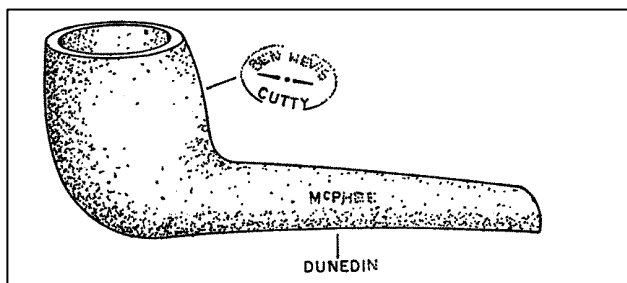
Figure 5. Pipes made for Trent Bros. Christchurch (Garland 2015).

Amongst the British, European and even Australian pipes that have been recovered from sites in New Zealand, are a small number marked ‘McPhee / Dunedin’ (Figures 7 & 8). The logical assumption of the excavators was that these pipes were similar to the Twentyman and Heywood pipes seen earlier, in that they were commissioned in Europe for export to New Zealand; but the new research shows that this no longer appears to be the case.

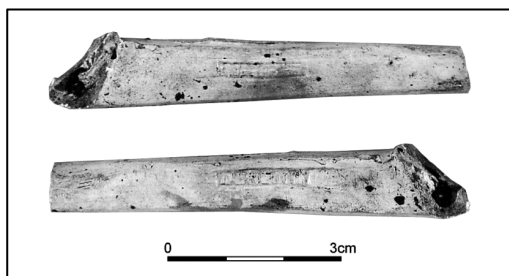
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*Figure 6. Pipes made for Twentyman & Cousin (Garland 2015).*



*Figure 7. Ben Nevis Cutty marked McPhee / Dunedin, recovered from hut 3 in the Arrowtown Chinese camp in Central Otago (Ritchie 1986).*



*Figure 8. Pipe stem fragment with very poorly moulded lettering reading McPhee / Dunedin, recovered from Carlaw Park, Auckland (courtesy of Archaeology Solutions Ltd.).*

Whilst carrying out some online research the author came across an intriguing newspaper article, published in the *Otago Daily Times* on 5 November 1880, that set out the plans of George McPhee and his son to set up a pipemaking business in New Zealand:

Mr George McPhee, who, with his son recently arrived in the Colony, and has been experimenting on clays found near Stirling and Tapanui for the purpose of ascertaining their suitability for the manufacture of tobacco pipes, has shown us some excellent samples of short pipes of

various patterns which he has been able to produce. Although not sufficiently burned, these samples are quite sufficient to establish the fact that good pipes can be made from the Stirling clay. Pure white can be produced, and the pipes can be made of such a temper as will be at once appreciated by smokers. Imported pipes, being necessarily burned hard for the purposes of carriage, do not absorb the tobacco oil as will pipes specially made on the spot by experienced makers. Mr McPhee has brought out from Edinburgh moulds and plant to enable him to produce a great variety of patterns—about 150 in all,— and his son being a mouldmaker, any pattern that is desired can be produced. He also brings out two men and a boy to assist him in starting his industry, and he will establish himself at once in Dunedin, bringing the clay up by rail from Stirling, and eventually employing, as he hopes, 20 or 30 hands. We heartily wish Mr McPhee success, and would suggest his sending some samples of his pipes to the Melbourne Exhibition if not too late. We shall be happy to show to anyone calling at our advertising office the excellent samples which have been left with us. We may mention that Mr McPhee, sen., is an old soldier, and lost his arm in the attack on the quarries before Sebastopol on the 7th June, 1855.

This article contains a lot of important detail and a number of key points stand out. First is the fact that McPhee was starting his industry and experimenting on clays found near Stirling and Tapanui. This is not the Stirling in Scotland, but the Stirling that lies about 50 miles south-west of Dunedin in New Zealand (Figure 1). The article then goes on to say that they had brought out from Edinburgh about 150 moulds and that the unnamed son was a mouldmaker with the skills to make other patterns as required. This proposed venture was clearly not intended to be a small scale operation because it also says that McPhee brought out two men and a boy and hoped to eventually employ 20 or 30 hands. Even allowing for some exaggeration on the part of the paper (a similar article in the *North Otago Times* for 8 November 1880 said that he had about 100 different patterns and would probably employ seven or eight hands) it is clear that McPhee intended to establish a significant pipemaking manufactory.

So who was this George McPhee and his son? The first record of George that has been traced is from the 1841 census of Glasgow, Scotland, when George, aged 7, was living with (presumably) his mother Janet McPhee (aged 30) and siblings William (aged 15), Isabella (also aged 7), Jean (aged 3) and Robert (aged 1), at Burnside West, Lanark (FindmyPast). This would give a birth year of around 1834 for George. By the time of the next census, in 1851, he was given as 15 years of age (born c1836) and working as a hawker while

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living with a journeyman tailor called William Millar and his wife Helen in 83 High Street, Glasgow (Ancestry). Also in the house was Jane McPhie [sic] aged 59, Isabella (aged 16) and Jane (age 13). The names and ages of these other McPhees are slightly different to those given in the 1841 census. Census entries, however, often vary from record to record and, in any case, this information is taken from a transcription that may in itself contain errors. Despite these problems, the names and dates are similar enough to be reasonably confident that this is the same family that had been in Lanark in 1841.

On the 17 November 1852 George enlisted in the army with the 71st Regiment of Foot and details of his enlistment confirm his age as being 17 8/12 (i.e., born about March 1835), that he was 6 ft 5 ½ ins tall ‘with a fresh complexion, grey eyes and light brown hair’ (FindmyPast). His British Army service record goes on to show that on the 10 August 1854 he volunteered for the 57th Regiment, serving at Balaclava, Inkerman and Sebastopol, and that he took part in the ‘Assault of the Quarries’ on the 7 June 1855 when he was severely wounded. His medical report survives and states that ‘Pte George McPhee 57th Rgt arm amputated on the right side ... above the middle of the bone in consequence of a wound from a round shot on the 7th June 1855 in the trenches before Sebastopol’ (FindmyPast). He was awarded the Crimean War Medal inscribed with his name, which is still in existence, since it appeared for sale in 2011 on an internet auction site. All of this corresponds with what was published in the 1880 newspaper account, which referred to him as an old soldier who lost his arm in the attack on the quarries before Sebastopol.

Having returned from the war he married Margaret Alexander at High Church, Paisley, Renfrewshire, on 9 August 1858 (Ancestry). By 1861 George, now aged 26, his wife Margaret (aged 20) and their one year old son, John, were living at 30 Gauze Street, Glasgow, where he was working as a tobacco pipe maker. His wife’s occupation was given as a tobacco pipe trimmer. George was named as the head of the household and living with them were a number of other pipemaking individuals or families:

Andrew Smith, 24 (born c1837, Glasgow), Tobacco Pipe Maker  
Margaret Smith, 21 (born c1840, Ireland), Tobacco Pipe Trimmer  
Andrew Smith, 1 (born c1860, Glasgow)  
Michael Smith, 21 (born c1840, Glasgow), Tobacco Pipe Maker  
Mary Smith, 23 (born c1838, Whitshill, Renfrewshire), Nurse  
Richard Burton, 19 (born c1842, Ardrie), Tobacco Pipe Maker  
Peter Gemmel, 19 (born c1842, Glasgow), Tobacco Pipe Maker



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George Ward, 18 (born c1842, Glasgow), Tobacco Pipe Maker

Margaret McCormick, 17 (born c1844, Glasgow), Tobacco Pipe Trimmer

It is difficult to understand how George, who had only one arm, could work effectively as a pipe maker himself but, given the number of pipe makers living with him, the most obvious explanation would be that he was running his own business. The address of 30 Gauze Street is interesting in itself as it was the home of a number of other pipe makers during the nineteenth century. For example, *Watson's Directory* for 1882-1883 lists a John Campbell, tobacco pipe manufacturer, at 30 Gauze Street. The *Paisley Directory* for 1886-1887 lists an Alexander Davies at 30 Gauze Street. Davies was still there in the 1888-1889 directory and appears again in the *Paisley Directory and General Advertiser* for 1909-1910, being listed in Paisley as late as 1915 (but no address given; Anon 1987, 340). This suggests that there was a kiln and workshop at 30 Gauze Street and that it was used by a series of different makers from at least 1861-1915.

George's wife had died by the time of the 1871 census, when he was living as a widowed Chelsea pensioner at 36a Blair Street, Edinburgh, aged 36. His son John, who would only have been about 11 at the time, was not living with him but the Glasgow census for that year lists a John McPhee, aged 11, living as a boarder with Thomas and Marion Dollan – it is possible this could be him. This brings the story back to the 1880 *Otago Daily Times* article ten years later, which records that George and his son, who had clearly been reunited, had recently arrived in New Zealand. Passenger records show that they left Gravesend on board *The Crusader*, which arrived in Lyttleton, New Zealand, after a 95 day voyage on 7 October 1880 - they were listed in steerage.

The move to New Zealand must have been well planned in advance, and with knowledge of the local conditions, since not only had they brought tools, moulds and workers with them, but they had already produced some pipes made of New Zealand clay within four weeks of arrival (*Otago Daily Times* 5 November 1880). The *Otago Daily Times* gives the clay as having been obtained in Stirling and Tapanui, but a few days later the similar account in the *North Otago Times* (8 November 1880: 2) stated that 'the clay used in the manufacture is found in the neighbourhood of Balclutha, and as it can be obtained in large quantities from the Timaru district, there is little chance of the supply giving out.' In fact, pipe clays appear to have been well known from the region, with James Spence of the Lawrence Coalpit offering pipe clay to customers free, or 12lbs for 1s to non-customers (*Tuapeka Times* 17 April 1880).

After outlining the plans for his pipe making enterprise for the *Otago Daily Times* entry he wasted no time in advertising his ‘new industry’ in the same paper (Figure 9). This same advertisement was placed in the *Otago Daily Times* for a total of 35 days between 15 December 1880 and the 16 February 1881, with the advertisements giving his address as Moray Place West, right in the centre of Dunedin. While there is no doubt that George McPhee made good use of press coverage and advertising, it is not clear how effective this was in establishing his new business. It has not been possible to find any other references to him after February 1881 whereas, within a few months, references start appearing to George Munro as a pipemaker.

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**CLAY TOBACCO-PIPE MANUFACTORY.**

**M'PHEE & SON, Tobacco-pipe Makers, have on hand a choice assortment of Clay Pipes, which they can with confidence recommend to be superior to any imported—both as to quality and prices.**

**MORAY PLACE WEST, DUNEDIN      15d**

Figure 9. Advertisement for McPhee & Son Tobacco-pipe Makers (*Otago Daily Times* 20 January 1881: 3).

Perhaps significantly, George Munro was listed at the corner of King Street and Moray Place, in the same area of Dunedin that George McPhee had been listed. In the *Otago Daily Times* for 17 June 1881 there is an account of the Dunedin Industrial Exhibition in which George Munro advertised a large assortment of tobacco pipes made exclusively from Otago clay:

#### CLAY PIPES.

A new line in native manufacture is exhibited by Mr G. Munro, of Moray place, in the shape of a large assortment of tobacco pipes made exclusively from Otago clay. It is, we learn, only very recently that Mr Munro has turned his attention to this branch of industry, but the article produced is stated to be even superior in many points to those which have been hitherto imported. The clay is soft, and is susceptible to colour as in the case of meerschaum, and there can be no doubt that the price at which these can be supplied will eventually check the continuance of the import trade now existing. Mr Munro is also

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progressing most satisfactorily in his monumental masonry department, and the Kakanui stone supplied by him is coming extensively into use throughout the Colonies. Mr Munro is also exhibiting a bust, in marble, of the Rev. Dr Stuart, the execution of which is very creditable.

This reference makes similar claims to a new industry as had been made by McPhee and is a little ambiguous in that Munro could perhaps have been exhibiting the pipes for McPhee. An article about the same exhibition in the *Evening Star* (16 June 1881), however, seems more specific when it states, ‘the clay pipes turned out at the works of Mr G. Munro, of Dunedin, are noticeable as constituting a novel local industry, all being made here, and the material used being Otago clay.’

Several newspapers reporting the Industrial Exhibition in June 1881 contain the same text extolling the range of local production of different goods and saying that residents can now take ‘a whiff from a church-warden of Otago clay.’ Whether this is an accurate reflection of the fact that long-stemmed pipes were actually being produced, or merely a flowery generic description is not clear – more specific descriptions of what the McPhees were making only ever mention short-stemmed pipes and Munro is not likely to have produced a larger range than they did.

Very little else is known about Munro, who appears to have been a successful dealer in stone and clay, winning prizes for his marble cutting. Did George McPhee end up working for him and using Munro’s geological expertise to locate sources of raw materials to work with? Or did Munro see an opportunity for this new industry that the McPhees were introducing from the ‘Old Country’ and set up in competition to them?

To date no further articles relating to pipes made by either Munro or George McPhee have been found, and this is clearly an area where more research would be useful. Until then, it is not clear what happened to the pipemaking enterprise started by George McPhee, and later newspaper reports from 1892 onwards only mention his son, John. It is possible that George had returned to Scotland during the 1880s although he has not been located in the 1891 census there. By December 1900, however, he was certainly back in Scotland since he was living in Jeffery Street, Edinburgh, when he applied for his war pension to be paid to him whilst living outside of the hospital. He stated that he had no family members whom he could live. By the time of the 1901 census he was living in Queensbury House, Edinburgh, where he was listed as a 67 year old Chelsea Pensioner. He died in Scotland on 10 February 1903.

Following the rash of references to pipemaking in Dunedin during 1880 and 1881 it is then 11 years until the next record of pipemaking has been found, and this time it relates to Geroge's son, John McPhee. On 3 December 1892 the *Otago Daily Times* published an article reporting pipemaking experiments that John had been carrying on at Pelichet Bay (now Logan Park) in Dunedin using pipeclay from the Clutha district (an area around Balclutha to the south of Dunedin, Figure 1):

It is always satisfactory to be able to record the establishment of new industries to utilise the natural products of the country. There has lately been established at Pelichet Bay a clay pipe manufactory, which, though small and unpretentious, may grow into something big if adequately supported. For over eight months Mr John McPhee, a practical pipe maker, has been carrying out experiments with pipeclay from the Clutha district, and he is now in a position to place goods on the market which will compare favourably in every respect with the imported article. He has submitted to us several samples of various patterns, which are highly creditable. He is in a position to turn out, if necessary, 40 different patterns of standard clay pipes, equal in finish and appearance to any imported. Mr McPhee, who asks for no protective duties, has already received much encouragement from a few firms who import clay pipes, and the representative of one firm informed him that so long as he was able to supply pipes of such quality at the price quoted his firm would import no more.

The article refers to this as a 'new industry' at a 'lately established' clay pipe manufactory. From this reference it would appear that the attempt to start a pipe manufactory in the 1880s failed and that John is now having a second attempt at getting one established. This suggestion is borne out by a later deposition to the Tariff Commission (see below) in which John states that he had been pipemaking for six years (i.e., since about 1889) and that he was not kept fully employed because of the slackness of the trade for locally produced pipes. The two dates given are at odds, most likely because John wanted to promote the 'newness' of his workshop in the newspaper, while wanting to stress the established nature of his business to the Tariff Commission. The truth of the matter is likely to be somewhere between the two, in that the initial enterprise having failed, John probably started small scale experimentation again around 1890, with a concerted effort to re-launch the business in 1892. Further details about this re-launch are provided by a second article on the business, which was published three days later in the *Evening Star* for 6 December 1892:

PIPE-MAKING IN DUNEDIN

Mr John McPhee, a pipemaker by trade, and the son of a Scotch pipemaker, is now making a strenuous effort to push his wares in the local market and throughout New Zealand, and there is no reason why he should not succeed. He is at present confining his attention to the manufacture of the 'cutty' – the short clay pipe that seasoned smokers rely on for an enjoyable whiff, and which, next to the 'church-warden,' is perhaps the best pipe that a man can use, if he will take the trouble to keep it clean by putting a filtering stopper in the bowl and renewing it at frequent intervals. The cutty pipes used in New Zealand come mostly from Glasgow, where four large exporting firms do an immense business. There is a 15 per cent, duty on these pipes, and this is quite sufficient to give Mr McPhee a 'look in,' so far as price is concerned; indeed he can undertake to compete on these terms and to supply at a trifle less than the invoice price with duty added. This is something, and not a little, to start with. Mr McPhee knows the Home cost to a fraction; he has found out by experience what his own expenses are per gross; and he can show his samples without being forced to make an appeal to probable buyers to spring a point for the sake of encouraging a local industry. Mr McPhee is thus in a strong position from the cold 'nothing-for-nothing-and-precious-little-for-a-half-a-crown' point of view. Trade must come to him if he can compete for quality. On this point also there need be no misgivings. The clay of which they are made is very similar to what is used in the Old Country – a trifle more gritty in its natural state, but that makes no difference, since it is all dissolved and passed through gauze sieves before being passed to the moulding bench. The test of whether the clay is suitable is whether the pipes are hard and white, and the stuff from Benhar, and of which there is an inexhaustible supply in sight, fully comes up the requirements. Moreover, Mr McPhee has all the necessary appliances at hand. To be ready for all emergencies, he learned the special trade of mould-finishing before he left Scotland, and has now on hand over forty different patterns, comprising all the standard makes. He also makes his own 'seggars,' as they are termed – the fireclay for this purposed comes from Green Island. At first he had great trouble with these things, owing to the material being unsuitable, but this difficulty is now overcome, and the pipes are brought to the required degree of hardness without losing their colour. The burning, too, is done by Mr McPhee himself, he having been taught this by experienced hands in the Home Country. It is interesting to watch him at work in these several, and exceedingly satisfactory to be able to give an honest assurance, and this we do without hesitation,

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on our own observation and also on the authority of those who have put the pipes to the practical test, that they are in all respects equal to the best ‘Ben Nevis’ or other brands of Glasgow and Aberdeen. What Mr McPhee now wants is more custom. He can produce as many pipes as will supply the whole colony, and wishes for nothing but a fair show. If smokers feel so disposed they can do him a good turn, and help a local industry without making any sacrifice, simply by asking for McPhee’s brand, which is legibly stamped on every pipe. His factory is in Union Street, fronting the water.

This article shows that he had moved from central Dunedin and that his factory was now on the outskirts of town in Union Street, fronting the water. The article also says that he was making cutty (i.e., short-stemmed) pipes and that the current supply of cutties come ‘mostly from Glasgow.’ But it gets more interesting because he then gives more specific details about the production process, starting with the clay, which he obtains from Benhar; ‘the clay of which they are made is very similar to what is used in the Old Country – a trifle more gritty.’ He goes on to say that he deals with this by passing it ‘through gauze sieves.’ The article also says that McPhee ‘learned the special trade of mould-finisher before he left Scotland’ and that ‘he makes his own ‘seggars’ (saggers, to hold the pipes for firing) from clay that comes from Green Island, also south of Dunedin. McPhee says that he fires the pipes himself because he had been ‘taught this by experienced hands in the Home Country.’ The article concludes by saying that what McPhee now wants is more custom and states that he ‘can produce as many pipes as will supply the whole colony’ and that ‘smokers ... can do him a good turn, and help a local industry without making any sacrifice, simply by asking for McPhee’s brand, which is legibly stamped on every pipe.’ This last statement is significant, since it shows that pipes the produced during the early 1890s were being marked with his name.

John is mentioned in the newspapers again on 20 January 1893, when an article on the Benhar Brick and Pipe Works and Colliery in the *Clutha Leader* says that ‘only recently a quantity of clay was sent to Mr McPhee’s pipe (smoking) factory in Dunedin and found to answer the purpose very well.’ Once again, this shows that pipe clays were readily available in the area from the various clay pits and collieries and that the McPhees utilised pipe clay from a number of different sources over the years.

Perhaps one of the most fascinating and illuminating documents relating to the McPhee pipemaking business comes from the 1895 report of the Tariff Commission, which provides a full transcript of an interview with John

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McPhee (*Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives* 1895 Session I, H02).

JOHN MCPHEE examined.

555. *The Chairman. You are a pipe-manufacturer in Dunedin?* – Yes.

556. *Have you been long in the business?* – Six years.

557. *Do you employ any labour in your establishment?* – I have employed one man: it is piecework, and a first-class man could earn from £2 to £2 5s. a week.

558. *What pipes do you make?* – Clay pipes. I produce samples of my own manufacture, and also samples of the imported.

560. *Is this local clay?* – Yes; from Benbur, near Stirling.

561. *Are you able to compete with the imported pipes as regards price?* – Yes. My price ranges from 2s. 9d. to 3s. 6. Per gross.

562. *Is this as cheap as they can be imported?* – Yes. I have it on the authority of Mr. Hogg, of Hogg, Howison, and Nicol, that he could not land stuff at the price.

563. *Why do you not command the market?* – I have a memorandum here, and also a letter I had written for the House of Representatives, expecting that it would take up this question last year. I will read both :-

*Memorandum re Tobacco-pipes.*

A duty of 50 per cent is a very moderate one, for the following reasons: First-class common clay pipes are invoiced at 2s. per gross, or less. This is equal to 1d. per dozen duty. I find that importers will not encourage colonial-made goods, but keep on importing and selling to retailers, knowing that the goods can be obtained from colonial manufacturers. The reply to customers is that they do not keep them, as they cannot sell them, thus leading grocers and tobacconists to think that the pipes are unsaleable, and only order when forced to do so. For example, I could name a firm who have only ordered five cases of colonial goods during two years, but last September, being asked by a Dunedin grocer for twenty-five cases of colonial make, received the usual reply that they did not keep them, but was told that they could be got elsewhere, and then ordered fifty cases, having induced another wholesale house to relieve them of a portion of the remaining twenty-five cases. Other wholesale merchants will only order a case or two at a time when insisted on by their customers. An increase of duty will not raise the price, but keep down the importing, and utilise the material and labour of the colony.

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Sir, Eden Street, Dunedin, 11<sup>th</sup> June, 1894.  
I hereby, as a manufacturer, beg leave to call the attention of the Government and the Legislature to the desirability of making an alteration as regards the tariff in the importation of tobacco clay pipes into the colony of New Zealand. The manufacturers find that the competition is too great, not in respect of price paid for the article, but in respect of the amount of trade, which is very little, on account of the quantity imported. The importers having hold of the market makes it very difficult for manufacturers to compete. What is desired is a duty of 50 per cent. so that we may have a better chance of getting constant work, instead of, as at present and years past, going idle more than half of our time. We get the clay, and all that is necessary for the manufacture of tobacco clay pipes in the colony. Such a duty will not interfere with the present prices as we will not raise them in the event of the tariff being conceded, our main object being to secure the labour in manufacturing, instead of remaining involuntarily unemployed.

With reference to the proposed increase in the duty of tobacco clay pipes, it will be evident that the cost to consumers will not be increased, for the following reasons: namely, that they will not sell for more than 1d. each, the price now charged, and from the price-list attached it will be seen that there is ample margin for traders' profits. I am prepared to supply at list rate all sorts I am now making, as per show-card, also mounted, and varnished, and coloured if required, to the demand of the trade.

Have much pleasure in forwarding samples of manufactures from New Zealand clay Trusting that the Government will take this into consideration and grant the concession on the revision of the tariff.

I have &c., D. Pinkerton, Esq., M.H.R., Dunedin.

*John McPhee*

*564. Mr. McGowan. Do you know a pipe termed the 'T.D.' pipe? – Yes.*

*565. Do you make it? – No.*

*566. What is the principal pipe you make? – I make three varieties of Ben Nevis; and I will turn out any pipe required. The most popular pipe in Dunedin is the Ben Nevis pipe.*

*567. Could you turn out the T.D. at the price at which you can buy it here? – No; 3d. per gross more. There is no sale here for it. There is a small sale in Auckland. Mendelssohn and Levinsohn, importers of*



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pipes, wanted to know if I could make the T.D., and I replied yes, if they gave me an order for a hundred gross. I never got the order; so it shows there is no demand for the T.D.

*568. I think your price is not as cheap as the price of the imported? – My prices are cheaper; and I can get invoices to show that 4s. to 4s. 6d per gross was charged at the time I started business here.*

*Mr. McGowan: I know for a fact that they are bought cheaper than that.*

*Witness: It is only since I began to put the goods into the market; and a man told me he has made nothing by selling the goods at the price mentioned.*

*569. The Chairman. What is the value of your annual output? – You could go upon the amount of goods imported. I have seen fifteen hundred gross landed in Dunedin at once. [Have looked up last six months of 1894, and find five hundred and fifty gross disposed of in that time.]*

*Mr. Tanner: Two thousand gross, equal to three hundred and forty-five pounds' worth, were imported into the colony in 1893.*

*570. The Chairman.] How many gross do you turn out in a year? – I can do by myself fifteen hundred gross. I had a man, but he left on account of the slackness of trade.*

*571. Are you yourself not kept fully going? – No.*

*572. Mr. McGowan. You say that a man working piecework could earn from £2 to £2 5s, a week: what was the time he worked? – Eight hours a day.*

*573. The Chairman. Do you wish your name published? – No.*

The 1895 document is quite lengthy but highlights a number of crucial points about the organisation and management of the pipe wholesale business at this time. First, John claims that the importers are the problem with the local pipe trade. They clearly made their money by importing pipes and he accused them of actively sabotaging the local pipe trade by claiming that there was no market for these pipes. He says that the importers were telling customers that they do not keep locally produced pipes in stock because they could not sell them, forcing customers to buy imported pipes. He wrote to the government to try and encourage them to increase the import duty to 50% by way of encouraging the home market.

The second important point about this document is that it highlights the extent of the import trade. Table 1 shows the actual quantity of imported pipes to the colony in 1894 and the value of the pipes, which is compared with what John was claiming. When asked what he could produce in a year,

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John said that ‘by myself,’ he could produce 1,500 gross of pipes, which would equate to about 640 pipes per day, based on a six and a half day working week. He would, therefore, have been able to produce almost as many pipes as the whole colony needed on his own. The price he quoted for his pipes was between 2s 9d and 3s 6d per gross.

*Table 1. The number of pipes imported to the colony in 1893 compared to the number of pipes John McPhee claimed he could produce by himself.*

	Gross	Total Pipes	Value	Value per gross (approx)
Actual imports in 1893	2,000	288,000	£345 0s 0d	3s 51/2d
John McPhee’s claimed production capability	1,500	216,000	£234 7s 6d	3s 11/2d

He was also questioned about TD pipes, which he says he did not produce, he mainly produced three types of Ben Nevis pipes. He went on to say that if his customers wanted TD pipes he could produce a mould to make them, but he would need to have guaranteed sales of 14,400 pipes (100 gross) in order to cover the cost of producing the mould.

The next reference that has been found to John relates to him moving his pipe works. The article, published in the *Evening Star* on 11 January 1895, states that the Harbour Board had granted permission for ‘Mr John McPhee to remove shed and pipe kiln from Section 10, Block 65, as he does not intend to renew his lease.’ The new site that he moved to does not appear to have been connected with a proper road, since on 9 February 1901 the ‘Municipal news’ in the *Evening Star* says that, ‘The Works Committee were appointed with power to act re the application of Mr J. McPhee for a road to his pipe factory.’ His new factory gets a further mention in the *Otago Daily Times* for 14 September 1908 when there ‘was a false alarm of fire at St. Kilda shortly after midnight on Saturday, the flames issuing from a chimney ... McPhee’s pipe factory being responsible for the mistake.’ This is the last reference that has been found to either John McPhee or his pipe factory. John would have been about 48 in 1908.

In summary, the current evidence shows that there was a well organised attempt to introduce pipemaking to New Zealand in 1880, when George McPhee brought moulds, equipment and skilled workers to Dunedin. He operated as McPhee & Son, producing pipes from local clays for a brief

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period, but the enterprise does not appear to have flourished and was probably taken over by George Munro within a year. George McPhee returned to Scotland but his son, who was also a mould maker, remained in Dunedin and had a second attempt at establishing the industry in about 1890. He operated from at least two different manufacturing sites and used local clay for the pipes, local fireclays to make the saggars and, presumably, local coal to fire the kiln. He appears to have made a limited range of short pipes, mainly of the Ben Nevis pattern, which were marked with his name. Examples of these have been found archaeologically and can now be dated to c1890-1910. It is not known when his workshop finally closed but it is now possible to show that clay tobacco pipe making took place in New Zealand over a period spanning at least 28 years from 1880 to 1908 and that it took place on at least three different sites, as follows: -

- **Factory 1:** Moray Place, Dunedin (c1880-1881)  
McPhee & Son - Moray Place West, Dunedin from October 1880 until at least February 1881.  
George Munro – Moray Place, Dunedin, by June 1881.  
(George McPhee returns to Scotland during the 1880s or 1890s).
- **Factory 2:** Union Street, Dunedin (c1889-1895)  
John McPhee – In 1895 he stated that he had been making pipes for about six years, i.e., from c1889.  
John McPhee – Recorded at Union Street, Dunedin, by 1892 and there until 1895.
- **Factory 3:** St. Kilda, Dunedin (c1895-1908)  
John McPhee – Probably moved to St. Kilda, Dunedin, in 1895 and worked there until at least 1908.

From the chance find of one small newspaper article it has been possible to trace a period at least 28 years of clay pipe production in New Zealand using locally sourced raw materials. Although McPhee pipes have previously been recovered from the excavation of sites in New Zealand the assumption had been that they were being produced in Scotland and were then imported. This new research shows that this was clearly not the case.

The McPhees were at the front line of a brand new industry for New Zealand. They were claiming that they could supply the whole colony – indeed if the import duty had protected the home trade, then John's figures to the Tariff Commission suggest that this would have been perfectly possible. However, it appears that they were never able to capture the significant share of the local market that they had hoped for and their pipes remain thin on the ground as archaeological finds. This latest research has, nevertheless,

provided a wealth of evidence regarding what appears to be the first New Zealand clay pipe makers, and a framework for understanding future finds of their products.

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