



JOHN BEATON

ARCHIBALD KENNEDY

DONALD MacMILLAN

MALCOM MacMILLAN

PETER MacDONALD

JAMES BLACK

Plundering a wreck

There was a violent storm on the night of 7th March 1834 and the brig Confidence of Dundee was driven onto the shore of Tyree (Tyree in the documents) at or near Hough. The cargo was printed cotton cloth and other articles of general merchandise. Over the next two or three days a number of people descended on the beach and did "wickedly and feloniously take, plunder, pillage and theftuously carry away various goods and articles".

On the 9th March John Beaton used his fists and a knife to assault Archibald McNeill, a farm servant who was lawfully protecting the cargo. The master of the ship, John Wesley, who had struggled ashore to find help, indignantly spoke of "the outrageous proceedings of many of the inhabitants of Tyree". There was some justification for his comment. Not content with taking goods off the beach, an armada of small boats went to the wreck itself to seize the cargo. Wesley was so confused by all the activity that he was unable to positively identify anyone.

Despite the problems the authorities were finally able to bring charges against six men by using witnesses who were probably just as guilty

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The six men were bailed, but when they had to present themselves at Inveraray for trial there were only five. John Beaton had gone! Lord MacKenzie declared him an outlaw and fugitive. All his moveable goods were confiscated and his bail was forfeited. What his wife thought of all this is not recorded, but she had six children to look after so it is not hard to imagine.

The five men who faced the court on 12 September 1834 were sentenced to nine months imprisonment. Beaton was eventually located. He declared that he had gone to the Low Country at Lammas, as was his habit, and returned to Tyree at Halloween. He had been "entirely ignorant of [the Circuit Court] being held". When he was eventually tried, in the spring of 1835, the jury found the charges of Plundering and Assault not proven.