

38 43 47 49 / 28

highland family history society



ISSN 0262-6659

comunn sloinntearachd na Gaidhealtachd

Published by
The Highland Family History Society
Comunn Sloinntearachd na Gaidhealtachd

JOURNAL

Vol. 13 No. 1 November 1994

CONTENTS

Editorial 1
 Early Maps and Family History in the Highlands 2
 A Dingwall Tragedy 8
 1881 Census Project 9
 Education of Fisherchildren in Nairn 1861-1900 10
 Highland People in South Australia 16
 Members' Research Interests 17
 Questions - 20
 and Sometimes Answers 21
 Queries (621-635) 22
 6th Annual SAFHS Conference 24

(c) 1994 : Highland F.H.S. & Contributors

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- CHAIRMAN: Neil Murray
 SECRETARY: Loraine Maclean of Dochgarroch
 TREASURER: John Durham
 JOURNAL EDITOR: Jonathan McColl
 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: John Durham
 SYLLABUS SECRETARY: John McMillan
 RESEARCH ENQUIRIES: Mrs Barbara Tulloch
 PUBLICATIONS SALES: Hamish MacLennan
 MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS: Alexander Gillies
 LIBRARIAN: William Fraser
 STRAYS COORDINATOR: Mary Murray

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

Highland F.H.S., c/o Reference Room,
 Public Library, Farraline Park, Inverness, IV1 1NH

Please mark each item of business for the appropriate official.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES for year 01/09/94 - 31/08/95

Membership Category	United Kingdom	Overseas
Ordinary	£6.00	£9.00
Family	£8.00	£11.00
Pensioner	£4.00	£7.00
Institutional	£10.00	£13.00

EDITORIAL

This is our thirteenth year, and will be just as lucky or unlucky for our searching as all of the preceding dozen!

I was visited by a distant McColl cousin in her 70's from Canada with whom I have been carrying on a desultory correspondence for some years. Her husband was visiting Britain to see relatives in England and Joan came with the promise of being rewarded with a 36-hour visit to me in Dingwall, 700 miles north of Bristol, but they hadn't known the size of these tiny little islands on the far side of the Atlantic before they arrived. John and Joan came here thinking that they could wave their pension books about and get away with sleeping all day, but you cannot leave the Highlands of Scotland without seeing Scenery. It's against the rules. So I hauled a meekly protesting Joan up and down some local mountains while John was writing letters that he suddenly remembered needing desperately to write and he could only do them in the hotel bedroom so off you two go and enjoy yourselves and don't worry about me. Joan kept up a good pace for the first three mountains, but then said something about needing to make a phone call just when I was pointing out a jolly interesting piece of geology on a ridge only a mile or two over there, so we reluctantly came back, just in time for tea. That was a good idea, so we dragged John out of the hotel and off down town. "It's not far," we cried gaily as we ran to the 'Tudor Tea Shoppe' on Dingwall's High Street where we had some genuine old Scottish food invented by a Highlander named MacAroni.

Then just as they were about to doze off we woke them with shouts of "Dinner!" and stuffed them full of haggis washed down with an excellent apple and blackberry wine (1991 vintage) from my garden and cellar. Admittedly they did cough dramatically when the first tentative and subtle taste hit the backs of their throats, but they swallowed manfully and told me how much they enjoyed the next bottle or two. They seemed to drink it very fast, but for some reason only when I left the room and the dog was starting to walk with a very drunken wobble. Life is full of little mysteries and coincidences, don't you agree? Here's another. John is not related to me, but the father of his best friend was the commanding officer who signed my grandfather's 'mentioned in dispatches' on the Western Front 1917.

Naturally they were really keen to find out details of my computer and its software, genealogical and otherwise, so we spent lots of happy hours in my study looking at the intricacies of the Apple Mac and how many megabytes each program and file took up and so on, and just when Joan went and said that as it was nearly 3am and they had to be on the train in six hours time they'd just have to tear themselves reluctantly away to get a few hours sleep and gosh, but they were sorry to miss out on the electronics this time!

The organising and managerial abilities of John may well evidence themselves when they get back with all the homework I've given Joan, in that her children will probably get landed with the tasks of finding out what happened to the various ancestors who moved about and died at inconvenient times and places, mostly long ago and far away, but ancestors are like that, and that's what cousins are for. I've got more life stories to fit somewhere into the 'magnum opus', and that's what I'm for!

...OOO...

Jean Brindley, also from NSW, who supplied the Genealogist's Disease in an earlier Journal reminds us that old folks are worth a lot: silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys, lead in their feet and gas in their stomachs!

EARLY MAPS and FAMILY HISTORY in the HIGHLANDS

By Norman Newton

(Talk given to the Society on 26th October 1983)

There are some very nasty pitfalls in using maps in any kind of research. The first thing about a map is that you mustn't believe what it says. If the map says it was published in 1654, don't you believe it, you have to get behind the map and the map maker. You have to find out who the map maker was, why he made the map and which side of the political argument he was on. Once you have sorted all that out, you are then in a position to start asking questions as to whether the map is appropriate for your uses. There is also confusion between the date of the map as a piece of paper published in a book or atlas and the date of the information on a map, a different thing altogether.

The second point I want to get across is that regarding access. All the maps that I will show you tonight, you have access to them. You can use them. You can come to the library and touch them, feel them, peer at them, with a magnifying glass in some cases, and you can have reproductions of most of them. Some reproductions will cost you fifteen pence, the ones you get from the library or they might cost you up to forty pounds, the ones you get from the British Library in London and there is quite a range of them.

So to start at the beginning. Exhibit A is a wee map which probably you won't be able to see very well from where you are sitting but it is a map of the British Isles and somehow or other Scotland has got turned at right angles. This is because the person that was making the map missed a few pages of information here around Berwick, Newcastle on Tyne. Not wanting to admit that he had made a mistake and leave lots of empty space, he thought: "I'll soon fix that: just turn it on its side!" It is a real D.I.Y. job.

You will see that some of the basic features of Scotland are indeed present in this rather simple map. Here is Scotland almost cut in two by two estuaries, the Forth and Clyde. Here is a long peninsula coming down, Kintyre. Here is the angle of the Moray Firth, which is a right angle but never mind they didn't know and in here is even the Beauty firth, quite well depicted. Off the top is a large archipelago of islands, the Orkneys and right up here on the north coast quite a large bay. Which is sort of where Wick might be if you were a Caithness nationalist.

So you might think what does a thing like this have to do with family history? Well, this map was published in Germany in 1513 in printed form but the information contained on the map was collected by a Greek living in Egypt about 120 AD called Claudius Ptolemy. Now where did he get his information from about what Scotland was like? Well, probably from the fleets of the Roman General Agricola, who was trying quite hard to invade Scotland in 85 AD. So the information contained on this map goes back to the first century AD, although the map wasn't published in printed form until the sixteenth century in Germany.

The family history influence comes in down here in Kintyre, it is labelled Epididou Promontorium (promontory of the Epididii) and underneath there is the name Epididii, which was a tribal name. The Epididii are the Horse People from a very old celtic word *epos*. If you know your Ps and Qs and celtic languages, Ps change to Qs and you get *eqos*, the latin for horse. So *epos* is horse in celtic.

The Gaelic word for horse is not *epos* but *each* which is cognate with *epos*. It is a kind of modernised ancient celtic into Gaelic and one of the leading families of Kintyre are people who in Gaelic are the sons of the Lords of the Horse People and when you Anglicise it comes as MacEachern. So the MacEacherns could legitimately claim their lineage back at least to the

first century. So I don't know if we have any MacEacherns present or people with MacEachern connections but that is one way a very early map can be used to validate a Scottish family surname, right back effectively to the Iron Age, prehistoric times. Certainly before Gaelic was widely spoken in Argyll as a language, which didn't happen until a couple of hundred years after. Now somebody with knowledge of surnames in the north of Scotland might like to play around with some of those names. My colleague in the Reference Library, Alastair MacLeod is the person to talk to you about surnames. That shows you that even though these maps may look grotty and ancient there is still some interesting information to be derived from them.

A number of people had various attempts at making maps of Scotland over the centuries but they had to await the invention of printing in the fifteenth century before maps could be disseminated to a wide audience. Before that they existed in manuscript form only and had a very limited circulation. Then people started producing printed maps, mainly from Holland in the sixteenth century with the expansion of the Dutch Empire and they were very innovative when it came to the cartographic techniques of measuring and map making. A chap called Abraham Ortelius had the bright idea to take all these separate maps which were now printed on presses and print them on bits of paper that were all the same size and put some text on the back of it. You could bind all these together in one book and flip it all off to customers instead of trying to sell them one at a time. This way you could make more money and it was more cost effective and the result was what we call an atlas. Although in the very beginning they didn't call it an atlas. They called it a *theatrum*, "Theatre of the World" or sometimes of the universe.

So this man Ortelius eventually produced a map of Scotland. This is a reduced photocopy, half size, but you should be able to make out that Scotland is on its side rather than the more familiar position where north is to the top. When you think about it there is no particular reason why north has to be at the top of a map. Not at all. Ortelius was keen to fit it into a rectangular page, so he thought we will just put it on its side. He knew to have a compass point or some indication somewhere so in this case he has the words north, south, east and west on the edges of this map which was published in 1573.

Now to the problems of maps perhaps being political in content and here is a good example. The impression that this map conveys is that the central belt of Scotland and the east, Strathmore, the north east, Aberdeen-shire, the Moray Firth, Caithness and Orkney were just teeming with people. A hobbed of civilisation and population, whereas as soon as you get over these nasty mountains in the middle, you are into wild empty spaces. Rather badly drawn islands and not very much in the way of settlements. Does this mean that in the sixteenth century Scotland east of the Highlands was densely populated and the west was empty? No, what it means is that this chap is trying to give the impression that civilisation is something that exists in the south and east of Scotland and around the Moray Firth, of course. In the west of Scotland and the Highlands and Islands it isn't civilised at all but occupied by nasty barbarians speaking a strange language. So there is some politics involved in that. Partly of course it is an information gap. The chap who made the map did not have access to people from the west.

Something else to notice about the map is, in the area of that map around the Pentland Firth, you may notice that there are lots of names, including names of some of the tidal races and currents in that area and you might be excused for wondering how they come to be there. The answer is that an informant for this map was a native of Caithness by the name of John Elder, who was living in England and in Italy in the 1530s and 1540s. In 1543 he was asked by Henry VIII to run up a map of Scotland, which he did but that map has not survived. However we are nearly sure that the only possible source of information on Ortelius' map, as it relates to the north of Scotland, Caithness, the Moray Firth and Orkney, would have been this John Elder. He is described in some of the books about maps as a rather shadowy figure. This is a polite

way of saying that he was an English spy. I must admit every time somebody from the Family History Society comes in and furtively feels under my desk for their mail in this drop that we have in the reference room, the Cold War and spying drops into my mind. John Elder the spy working for Henry VIII.

He wrote a letter to Henry and he said that "This plot" by which he means the map not his spying activities "I have not made by the work of others. But in so much that I was born in Caithness, which is the north part of the said plot. I was educated and brought up in not only in the West Isles, namely the Skye and Lewes where I have been often times with my friends also being a scholar and student in the south parts of it: St. Andrews, Aberdeen and Glasgow for the space of twelve years. Where I travelled by sea as by land diverse times by reason whereof knowing all the notable places everywhere with their lord and masters' names and from thence unto the country where I was born. I beg pardon and to offer the said cloth unto your Majesty". Cringe, cringe. Caithnessians are not like that today at all, much more assertive. So that is quite an interesting map from the point of view of the north of Scotland because it owes something to somebody who comes from this part of the world.

The seventeenth century was a period of great explosion in map publishing, most of it based in Holland and then spreading to other parts of Europe. In 1654 a magnificent atlas of the world was published by a Dutch firm of map makers by the name of Blaeu and he produced this map of Scotland. I put a map of Scotland as it really is up here. Actually you can keep reminding yourself of some basic facts about the geography of Scotland. Like (for example) the Great Glen is actually a straight line and this map as you can see has got a dog leg in it. How could anybody possibly make such a mistake? Anyone who has visited the Great Glen can see that it is as straight as a die from one end to the other. Of course the answer is that the person who drew this map hadn't stood at either end of the Great Glen, hadn't been within hundreds of miles of it and was relying on published information. In other words he was caught out by copying other people and therefore exposing the fact that he hadn't done any original research.

Also in this Blaeu Atlas there are county sheets and island sheets for all the counties in Scotland and a lot of the islands and these are very beautiful maps. This is the Island of Islay, looking a wee bit unusual to any of you who know the place. He has certainly got the idea that there are two lochs that almost cut Islay in half but he has got them in the wrong place. This also is a map with a bit of politics in it because this was a fairly remote part of the world to a Dutch cartographer and in this part of the map of what we know as the south east of Islay there are all these named islands and skerries. Lots and lots of islands all of a sudden getting named and being drawn as actual things.

Why would that be? The answer is that this was the headquarters of the Lord of the Isles, who only came to their sticky end just before 1500, about one hundred and fifty years before this map was printed in 1654 in a Dutch Atlas. Down here in the bottom left hand corner are the words "Timothy Pont". Strangely enough another man with Caithness connections. Not a native of Caithness, but his dad was something big in the Church of Scotland and travelled around a lot and when he died it was fixed that young Timothy would be given a job as a minister and the parish he got was Dunnet in Caithness. So he lived and worked in Caithness for a while. So on this map itself it is clear that the person responsible for it is Timothy Pont, even though the thing was published in 1654.

Here is the peninsula of Kintyre. Not a bad effort, very nice detail. Before I came to Inverness I had been living in Kintyre or adjacent parts of Argyll for about fifteen years, so I got to know this particular map very well and was always quite impressed with the accuracy of the detail of it. I am hoping very much the same will apply to the various maps of the Highlands and

Inverness-shire and it will prove to be a fruitful exercise to look at these names rather carefully. Here is a rather nice one of Breadalbane. There is Loch Linnhe and the Isle of Mull at the bottom and looking up the Great Glen with a wiggle to the Moray Firth and part part of the central Highlands and the Moray Firth coast. Here is a black and white map of Lochgilphead, Loch Fyne, Inveraray, the northern part of Kintyre, Tarbet and Knapdale, Crinan, Loch Sween, all that kind of area. Jura on the margin. Here is one of Aberdeen-shire. Rather spectacular. The names for these peculiar elaborations where the title is, is called a cartouche and people who are interested in the history of art could perhaps see a baroque resemblance to some baroque architecture.

Coming a bit nearer home we have a map called Moravia, which is Moray and this is a very interesting and detailed area to the east of Inverness and I hope will be of great interest to you who know this part of the country well. On this map, here in the title it gives credit to a survey by Timothy Pont. This one here that I am holding up is the actual manuscript survey drawn by Timothy Pont about 1585 and this other map that I am holding up is the final printed version, as published in Amsterdam in 1654 and the person that engraved this copper plate in Amsterdam in 1654 had this rather scrawly manuscript to consult but he managed it. I hope that you will be able to see where the points of similarity are and you should be able to make out the name. Now the original of the manuscript maps are in the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh and they have been published in book form in this book, which is in the library, called 'The Pont Manuscript Map of Scotland' by Jeffrey Stone of the University of Aberdeen, who is the leading expert in the country on Blaeu and Pont maps.

Timothy Pont was the minister in Dunnet in Caithness from about 1605 until his death, sometime before 1615 when he disappears from the records. What seems to have happened is that when he died all personal papers were looked together and dumped into a wooden chest and were handed over to his nearest heirs, which were his sisters. These sisters lived for a few years beyond, dying in the 1620s and for a long time these maps sat in a kist somewhere. Then in the 1640s, an Aberdeen-shire geographer and map maker, called Robert Gordon, a good Aberdeen name, heard that the Timothy Pont manuscripts had survived and were still in existence.

He got hold of all these Pont manuscripts and he started to work on them, sometimes amending them, sometimes not. Sometimes he re-drew the maps, sometimes he didn't. On a Robert Gordon manuscript the writing is much neater, much easier to read and we do have some of Robert Gordon manuscripts available for the Moray Firth and the North of Scotland. So a combination of things happened then. Some of Ponts' manuscripts were engraved directly from the manuscripts, others were amended and edited by Gordon. There were gaps in the records where no maps existed at all. The map makers in Amsterdam had to concoct things as best they could from other sources, which they then sent back to Scotland for checking.

While all this was going on in the late 1640s, England and Holland were at war, which made it a bit embarrassing to get permission from the king to have these maps made and published outside the kingdom. Once peace was declared, everything was back to normal and in 1654 the atlas was eventually published. The important thing to bear in mind that the date of the information on the beautiful published atlas is really somewhere in the ten year period from 1585 to 1595. It is interesting to look at the detail of place names in the Highlands and see how those names have continued as settlements right up to the eighteenth century when the mapping becomes more secure.

So it is quite possible to trace a settlement name back to before sixteen hundred and I think that is very relevant to you in your family history research. Maybe not so much from a point of

view of identifying who lived in a place but believe me, when talking to some visiting Americans, Australians or Canadians and being able to show them a map drawn in 1585 that has their farm marked on it, they are absolutely over the moon.

Now the county maps are joined by another Dutchman called Herman Moll. When I lived in Kintyre there was a hotel keeper called Mr Moll, but whether he was any relation or not I don't know. One of these two maps from Herman Moll's Atlas of Scotland is called the "East Part of the Shire of Inverness, Badenoch etc. by H. Moll, Geographer" and it contains the Beauty Firth, Inverness, Loch Ness right down to Fort William and it shows a new thing on maps of the Highlands: roads and it shows them travelling through the mountains to Ruthven in Badenoch, which is on the map here. The other map is of the Shires of Moray and Nairn. The date is 1725. This is from a County Atlas of Scotland. Again if any of you are interested in other counties or other parts of the Highlands, then you can look at the relevant maps in the Reference Library.

Now on the maps that I just handed round, I mentioned that there were roads. Of course the reason there were roads was that in 1715 there was a little local difficulty in this part of the world and the government decided they needed roads and most of the roads that appear on those sheets are the beginning of General Wade's extensive system. In 1745 we were at it again and you may remember that, after the Battle of Culloden in April 1746, the government forces had a bit of trouble trying to track down the remnants of the Jacobite Armies and in particular they could not lay their hands on Charles Edward Stuart despite the price on his head.

Part of the problem was that the Government Army did not really have very adequate maps to find their way around in the very strange and complicated topography of the Highlands, especially the Western Highlands. So in 1747 a very high-level political decision was taken in London to construct what was called a Military Survey of Scotland and the gentleman appointed to do it was an army engineer by the name of William Roy, who was a Scot himself, from Lanarkshire and somebody with a real talent for survey and map making.

Between 1747 and 1755, William Roy organised six or eight teams of Royal Engineers to travel round the whole of the mainland of Scotland, not the islands, only the mainland, and to construct a map of which this is an example. This particular bit here is Mumlachy Bay and is on the Black Isle. The task was completed by 1755 but of course this is a manuscript map drawn in pen and ink and water colour. Never published at all, ever. When it was made it was a very top secret and military document, which the government made sure they kept under strict lock and key in London. It was kept as part of the military archives throughout the eighteenth century and people didn't really start to know about it until early in the nineteenth century and it still has never been published in any printed form. It does exist in several forms, quite apart from the several drafts of it and it is all deposited in the British Library in London.

They are very beautiful. They actually employed water colour artists to do the work, not just ordinary army people, including a very famous English water colour artist, sometimes called the Father of Water Art, called Paul Sandby. He is one of the people who worked on this drawing and these artists travelled round with the survey teams so they were able to give some indication of the topography and the relief and the shading of the hills.

In this slide of the Black Isle, in the centre it is largely empty and in the eighteenth century the whole of the interior of the Black Isle was wilderness, and it is very interesting to trace the development of that area as the agricultural improvements took place in the eighteenth century. Something very important to bear in mind about Roy's military survey of Scotland is that it provides a snapshot of the Scottish landscape before the agricultural improvements of the 1770s and 1780s. These maps were made as I said between 1747 and 1755. From 1770 to

1800 there was a tremendous disruption in the Scottish countryside in the Highlands and the lowlands as farms were amalgamated. People were moved from one place to another. The dislocation to the population which took place at that generation makes the Highland Clearances look like a picnic. It was a very serious event in Scottish history which is just beginning to be studied by academics. One of the sources they use, of course, is this map.

Now here a wee bit further up the Black Isle, you see Chanonry, Fortrose as we know it today. Fort George over there, the ramparts very nicely drawn. I believe Roy was very interested in ramparts, he was always drawing forts. Chanonry, Rosemarkie and the coast line almost drawn as a picture with the cliffs shown here and this line here is a road and you might see on the background around here the suppling effect. This is actually arable ground, so it is possible to work out the acreage of arable ground that was cultivated anywhere in Scotland in 1750 or so. I think you can work out the importance of historical study to know where the cultivated land was. Obviously if there was no cultivated land there was no settlement.

Here is a bit of the Beauty Firth, the inner Beauty Firth and here coming over towards Kiltarity and Inverness. Here is Bunchrew. This landscape is just at the very beginning of the fashion of laying out of estates and plantations and shelter belts and planting trees in rows and all that sort of thing. Again you see a road running along there. He was fastidious about recording settlements, down here look there is the arable land, in the sort of brown colour. The red rectangles are houses, townships. If you look at a place and count six houses, you should not assume that was the total. They did stylise to some extent but nevertheless you can see where all the settlements are.

This is Inverness, there is the Burgh of Inverness. You can even see the street layout. Across the river, just the one bridge of course, across here is Muirtown, Kinnylies, Old Fort, the Cromwellian Fort of course, which was a hundred years old or so when this map was drawn and here are the grounds of Culloden House. Remote country villages Drakies and Inches. Places well away from the town of Inverness. There is the main road coming down the east side of the river and the loch. There is no road down the west side, of course.

Here is Culloden Moor, no mention of anything happening there just a few years earlier. Here is the road from Inverness to Nairn with Dalcross Castle, Castle Stuart and lots of arable land shown. These are boggy bits, of course, I think there might be an airport there now. Going down the Great Glen, down Loch Ness. There is the main road going down the loch, Loch Dunlichraig. This is a very useful source for place name studies if you are trying to find out what a place name means, what the gaelic might have been. This is a very good source.

It also shows forest and woodland. People are using this map just now in Inverness Library as part of our Scottish Natural Heritage project trying to work out where the native woodland was in Scotland in the eighteenth century. They are trying to identify whether areas which are wooded today were also wooded in the eighteenth century.

Well, of course after William Roy's efforts the next people to carry out a survey of that scale were the Ordnance Survey who were operating in this part of the Britain in the 1860s.

This is a rather amusing one to finish up on. This is Duncansby Head up in Caithness and it's only just in because they got to the end of this sheet of paper and hadn't quite enough room so they tacked on a wee bit more here and they actually drew the Stacks of Duncansby. Not just little dots on the map like the Ordnance Survey does but they actually drew these wee stacks. So I suppose if you take that as a realistic drawing you could actually go and look at it today and work out how much they have changed since the eighteenth century.

