

Notes for researchers

Our strategies for searching for Donald's parents and grandparents

Version 2 – September 2017
www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com

This is one of a series of 38 articles which should be read in conjunction with each other. Look at '[Setting the Scene](#)', in Small Print on the left of the homepage, for a list of all these drafts and explanations of some concepts being used. Also see '[Overview of Donald's life](#)' for summaries of each of the other notes.

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Donald McLean leased the Duisy estate, near Blaich in the western highlands. His wife was Christina McPhee and they had 11 children. In 1837, when he was quite elderly, the family migrated to the new colony of South Australia. They were near Adelaide for a few years and they finally settled in Strathalbyn.

The family history was published in 1995 – this was a big red book which we refer to as the BRB. All the details in the BRB have been placed on the website www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com (with details of living people kept hidden).

The BRB focuses on the times after the family migrated. It provides details of the descendants in Australia but there is virtually nothing about Donald's family of origin in Scotland. His father's name is mentioned – Allan McLean of Blaich. Allan is our starting point and we can't go back further until we have more details about him.

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STRATEGIES

At present, because we have very little to go on, we have to use indirect methods. We are gathering a lot of different kinds of information, in the hope that we can eventually piece things together. This is a major undertaking.

1. Original records: We have OPR evidence that confirm that Donald was born on 26th Sept 1779 in Blaich to parents Allan McLean and Rachel Rankin. We have found nothing about his siblings. There are some possibilities of Alan's parents and Rachel's parents, but no confirmation.
2. Family memories: We have only two snippets of the family's life in Scotland – a sentence about Donald's farming activities in Duisy, and a story about his oldest son, Alan won a race round the town. We do not expect to hear any family stories which can shed light anything about Donald's parents, siblings and other close relatives.
3. Memorabilia: There is a family bible, but it does not include any details of the family back in Scotland.
4. Other genealogists: We have been in contact with five people who have been researching Donald's parents and the grandparents. This has pointed to Donald's grandfather (Allan's father) as either Hugh or Donald but this has not been confirmed.
5. Other family histories: We have found some other family histories which of non-Mclean families in the vicinity of Blaich, but we have not found any common names.

6. Traditional naming conventions: This has not yielded anything to assist us in our research.
7. Formal clan structure: It appears that Donald was not directly connected to the lairds of Baich or Ardgour. We have to go back 4 generations to find a possible connection with the John Crubach MacLean, the 8th Laird of Ardgour or perhaps Allan, the 7th Laird. These lairds were in the 1600s. We have not been able to find specific xxx
8. Land: We have not been able to find direct proof that Donald leased the Duiskey Estate however we have confirmation that he built a dwelling house there.
9. Local population: There were probably only about 200 people living near Duiskey and Blaich in the early 1800s. From various sources, we have been able to name many of these people, but none directly connected with Donald.
10. Locality: What was life like for Donald's family in Blaich and Duiskey around in the 1700 and early 1800s? We have gathered a great deal of information but nothing to directly identify him in all this.
11. Corroboration: We are bringing all these strategies together because each piece of information needs to be placed in context so that we can understand and rely on it.

Let's look at each of these strategies.

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1. Original records – especially OPRs

What this includes

Old parish records and other documentation are the most direct sources for births, marriages and deaths before the mid 1800s. We are also searching for censuses, wills, grave stones, contemporary newspapers and publications of the time.

How this will help

This is the evidence we can best rely upon. It is the 'smoking gun'. However, unless we can easily find what we are looking for, we need to look to the following indirect cues which point us in the right direction and also help to corroborate what is eventually found on OPRs and other documentation from the late 1600s & 1700s.

Our starting point

We start searching with 4 criteria for Donald and his father:-

For Donald:-

- Name: It is only Donald, not Don or interchangeables like Hugh=Ewen.
- Birth year: Between 1762 & 1782 (ten years either side of 1872 claimed in the BRB) .
- Birth place: Anywhere in the Western Highlands but preferably within the parish of Kilmallie – ideally near Fort William, Blaich or Duiskey
- Father: Allan

For Allan:-

- Name: Allan or Alan. And McLean or MacLean.
- Birth year: Between 1707 & 1759.
- Birth place: Anywhere in the Western Highlands. The BRB states that Allan was 'of Blaich' (BRB p7) and the family bible has 'of Fort William' (BRB p6). It is not clear whether this might be referring to where he was living rather than where he was born.
- Father: We must explore all possibilities.

The rationale for these criteria is explained below.

Progress so far

We have not found anything with the census, wills, graves stones or contemporary newspapers. OPRs have been the main original records we have been exploring.

Will: Unfortunately, Donald's will and testament does not give us any clues. There was nothing bequeathed to anyone back in Scotland. This might have been because he had cut all his ties with his family back in the old country, or it might mean that he had no close relatives. His parents would have died of course, but Donald does not mention any brothers or sisters – maybe he had no siblings. On the other hand, siblings are not often mentioned in wills.

From OPRs, the most likely possibility is that Donald was born in Blaich on 29th Sept 1779 to Allan McLean and Rachel Rankine. The rationale for this possibility is expounded in our article on 'Searching original records'. For Allan, we are still questioning whether his father was Donald or Hugh. At this stage, we have no ideas about Rachel's origins.

Other articles

The following documents in our series are relevant to this subject. They can be seen in 'Stories' on our website:-

01. Setting the Scene – background concepts
17. Donald McLean's parents & grandparents – searching original records

Further research

Our other notes 'Parents & grandparents of Donald McLean – searching original records' has the details of what we have found so far, and this is the basis for further search.

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2. Family memories

What this includes

Oral histories are the stories which parents might have told their children. It could be what the children have observed themselves which they could pass on to the next generation. These are often recorded in contemporary letters, diaries or photos.

How this will help

Such stories might not be direct evidence, or might not be accurate, but at least they point the direction for further research. And they help corroborate the bits and pieces and build up a credible picture.

Our starting point

We just have two snippets from the BRB. One piece of information is about Donald's farming activities in Duiskey (see xxxx below). The other anecdote is that his oldest child Allan (1811-1890), told his nephew Edwin (1871-1950) "*when he was a boy, that once 'at Lochaber' Allan had won the annual race round the town after a fortnight of bread and cheese*" (BRB p 36).

It is frustrating that so little of Donald's background is recorded in the BRB. It is surprising that more oral family history did not find a place in the written history because it was compiled by the great-grandchildren who might have personally known the older descendants who would have been able to tell them what is now so difficult to discover. Just a word or two about Donald's father, mother and grandparents would set us on the track.

- Children: The eldest child was 26 years old when the family migrated from Scotland in 1837. The last of Christina and Donald's children died in 1921 although most of them had died by the end of the 1800s. What did they remember about their own lives in Scotland and what did Donald tell his children about his early years? They would have known the names of their grandparents (ie Allan's wife and Christina's parents), and some would have spent time with them.

Possibly they even knew the names of their great grandparents – particularly who Allan’s father was. In the years after arriving from Scotland, we could expect that family stories and a strong sense of lineage (parents, siblings and grandparents) would have been prominent in household conversations. Traditions within the Scottish highland communities were still strong (but declining) in the early 1800s.

- Grandchildren: The last of the grandchildren died in 1962 although most had died well before this. The family was spreading out, but most were still living in Strathalbyn in 1855 and 1869 when Donald and Christina died. What did the grandparents tell their grandchildren? What did these grandchildren learn from their own parents? We do not know.
- Great-grandchildren: Alf McLean, who spearheaded the BRB project in 1995, was born in 1920. The earliest of this generation were born in the 1870s and some, who were born much later might still be alive today. But of course, the later born are less likely to have personally known the grandchildren.

Progress so far

We have not been able to add to the two snippets which we started with. We are unlikely to be able to discover any other family memories and certainly no stories about the earlier generations in Scotland.

Other articles

The following documents in our series are relevant to this subject. They can be seen in ‘Stories’ on our website:-

01. Setting the Scene – background concepts

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3. Memorabilia

What this includes

Memorabilia are physical objects directly connected with the lives of our ancestors. This can include photographs, heirlooms, mementos and keepsakes.

How this will help

Wouldn’t it be wonderful to discover a photo of Donald with his parents and siblings. This is most unlikely because the very first photo in the world was just 11 years before the Donald’s family left the Scotland. Photography did not become widespread for many years later. Portrait painting were commissioned by families who had the means, but we have no indications that such a portrait was arranged. For other mementos, see the next heading.

Our starting point

The Strathalbyn Museum has several items which Donald’s family brought out with them on the ‘Navarino’ in 1837. There is a flag, some cups and a wooden puzzle – these are no help in our search for Donald’s forbears. Of greater interest, is the family bible being held by the museum. In conformity with common practices of the time, some family details are recorded in this bible. This would have been a great opportunity to write the names of Donald’s parents or siblings – unfortunately there are no such notations.

Further research

We need to have a forensic examination of what is written in the family bible to explore any other clues. For example, it is written on the inside of the front cover “*Donald McLean bought and purchased 1835*” (BRB p6), however the BRB also states that the bible was printed in 1847 (BRB p6) – in which case, it could not have been brought out with them when they migrated in 1837.

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4. Other genealogists

What this includes

There are well over 20 separate genealogical enthusiasts who have been compiling family trees which include 'our' Donald. This includes ancestry.com, MyHeritage and many other internet genealogical programs, but also includes family trees provided directly to us by Pat Long, Edwin MacLean and Allan Lachlan 'Willowburn' MacLean.

How this will help

Often these family trees do not quote sources and they cannot be relied upon by themselves. But:-

- They point to possibilities we can explore ourselves
- We can contact the manager of the family tree and suggest we collaborate. We have formed several mutually beneficial relationships where we have shared what we have each found out – this give an opportunity for us to jointly explore our common genealogical interests.
- When sources are quoted, this helps a great deal.

What we have found so far

Only two names have been proposed for Allan's father – Hugh or Donald. Both, by different paths, have indirect connections with the Lairds of Ardgour. However, there were of course many people by the name Hugh, Donald and Allan in that region and in that era – so how do we know whether we have identified the right ones?

- Hugh:-
 - Kaye McArdle, nee Alderson: Kaye is a descendant of Ann McLean, daughter of Christina and Donald. She lives in Victoria. She has placed some significant details of Donald's father and grandfather on WikiTree. Kaye's evidence includes transcripts of OPRs collated in 'Scotland Births & Baptisms from 1564 to 1950'.
 - Heather Kerley, nee Aslat: Heather is not a direct descendant of Donald and Christina – she is indirectly connected via Allan and Catherine Dawson. She lives near Adelaide. Heather has created a family tree on MyHeritage which includes information about Donald's father and grandfather and has quoted the same sources as Kaye McArdle. Heather has offered to provide copies of what she has found.
 - Willowburn: Allan Lachlan MacLean goes by the name 'Willowburn'. He lives in New Zealand and is a descendant of an Alexander MacLean who is a cousin of our Donald and who was living in Blaich at the time that Donald was living there. We have asked Willowburn for his sources.
 - Pat Long, nee Loder: Pat is a descendant of Hugh 'the younger' and lives near Perth. She has given some details to us. We will ask Pat how she concluded that Hugh was Allan's father.
 - One indirect indicator that his grandfather was Hugh and not Donald, was that our Donald chose to name his first son after his father, Allan, and perhaps he chose to name two sons (the second and fifth) after his grandfather, Hugh. Surprisingly, his own name, Donald, does not appear as the name of any of his sons.
- Donald:-
 - Edwin MacLean: Edwin is the archivist for Clan MacLean Association in NSW. He is not a direct descendant from Donald and Christina. He has provided an impressive family tree which links the lairds to many people who were living around Blaich in the 1700s. No specific sources have been cited, but Edwin explained that it *"was the work of many around the world and as such is still subject to further research. It is correct as far as one knows at this moment but there are bound to be errors found as work goes on"* (email 24th May 2016). He advised that it *"came from GROS, various censuses, and online sources such as ancestry.com"* (email 17th Mar 2017). More specifically, he emailed that *"I would agree the possible ancestor chart of Donald b. 1779 could be either or neither of those you have shown."* (email 16th May 2017).
 - Thus, it appears that Edwin does not hold firmly to the Donald theory, but we are yet to learn whether Willowburn has any evidence to support the Hugh theory.

Edwin MacLean's proposal	Alternative lineage
Donald, born 1779	Donald, born 1779
Allan, born c1745 & Rachel Rankin	Allan, born c1745 & Rachel Rankin
<u>DONALD</u> , c1708	<u>HUGH</u> , born 1710
Lachlan of Loch Eil, possible Laird of Blaich, born c1679,	Allan, born 1680
Allan of Blaich, Laird of Blaich, born c. 1645, died Nov 1709	Allan, born 1640, died-1709 & Janet Unknown
Lachlan Mor, Laird of Blaich, born c1614 died after 1703	John 'Crubach', 8 th Laird of Ardgour, born 1603 & Anne Campbell
Allan, 7th Laird of Ardgour, born 1582, died before 1681 & Catherine Cameron	Allan, 7th Laird of Ardgour, born 1582, died before 1681 & Catherine Cameron

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5. Other family histories

As well as BRB there of course are many other narratives – in print and on the internet - which may have some overlaps with our research.

We have found several McPhee biographies which are relevant to Christina's heritage. We will continue to be on the watch out, but so far, we have not found any family histories which specifically include Donald.

So far:-

- The Manning Lockaber – Cameron family
- The McPhees – by Jan Harper
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6. Traditional naming conventions

What this includes

Scottish families named their children after their parents and grandparents in a particular pattern. The first boy might have been given the name of his grandfather, the second boy, his mother's father and the third boy named after his father. And the girls were named in a similar way. There were exceptions of course.

How this could help

Caution is required here. The pattern gives some clues, it can generate some clues we can follow, but cannot stand alone without supporting evidence. At its most useful, it can help corroborate something we find, if it seems to conform to a pattern. It can add strength to a possibility we are considering.

It was not rigid. Any system such that it was, varied to suit the proclivities of the time. Sometimes a name might be 'male-ised' from Mary to Marlon.

Various naming practices were widespread in traditional highland communities, and other patterns, such as using the mother's maiden surname as a middle name, is more recent. Indeed, middle names were not used to any extent by highland families.

If there were two or three generations of Johns (or whatever) they were baptised 'John' but called by a nickname, title, hyphenated, shortened, lengthened for daily use. For example, in Donald and Christina's family, there were two Hugh's – 'the elder' and 'the younger'.

It is often noted that Scots and other nationalities changed to 'no method' on arrival in Australia, perhaps because of severed contact with their forebears in the 'home country'.

Also in the year of royalty or some infamous event (battle hero-heroine) the pattern was interrupted to name the child born in that year after the king, queen, hero or heroine etc. In our family tree we have a child who was born after the ship on which she migrated.

Our starting point

The BRB book concluded that, "If the old system of naming was used, her [Christina's] parents would have been Ewen and Mary McPhee, and Donald's mother, Ann. This has not been confirmed." (BRB p7). In fact, we know that Donald's mother was Rachel Rankin.

Our progress so far

Donald and Christina, nee McPhee, had at least 11 children:-

1. Allan – born 1811 in Blaich
2. Mary (the first) – born 22nd Jan 1813 in Kilmallie
3. Ewen (Hugh the elder) – born 20th Feb 1814 in Kilmallie
4. John – born 6th Feb 1818 in Argyllshire
5. Mary (the second) – born 2nd April 1818 in Kilmallie
6. Archibald – born 4th March 1821 in Kilmallie
7. Ann – born 6th April 1823 in Kilmallie
8. Rachel – born 13th February 1825 in Kilmallie
9. Margaret – born 1827 in Argyllshire
10. Jane - born 16th Aug 1830 in Kilmallie
11. Ewen (Hugh the younger) – born 26th May 1836 in Kilmallie

There are many versions of these patterns - we have tabulated seven in appendix C. These patterns are of little use to us because there are substantial disparities between the different versions and Donald and Christina do not appear to have followed any of them.

The parents of the parents is the only aspect where there is broad agreement across the different versions. This is good news because we are presently searching for Donald's grandparents. But, in effect, this is bad news because it does not match up with the possibilities we have found on OPRs. None-the-less, to complete this exercise, we can itemize what the patterns suggest:-

- Donald's predecessors:-
 - Mother: Three patterns suggest Rachel and this corresponds with our search of OPRs. One pattern suggests Ann which corresponds with BRB (p7), but this not supported by OPRs
 - Father: Three patterns suggest John and one suggests Hugh/Ewen. Neither is correct because in fact Donald's father was Allan.
 - Paternal grandparents: Five patterns suggestion Allan's parents were Allan McLean and Ann. A few patterns suggest Hugh/Ewen and Mary. None of this corresponds with any OPRs we have found so far.
 - Maternal grandparents: There are five patterns which suggest Rachel's parents are Hugh/Ewen Rankine and Mary. A few suggest Allan McPhee and Ann. We are still exploring these possibilities.
- Christina's predecessors:-
 - Mother: was probably xxxxx
 -

We note that the BRB (p7) comes up with suggestions which differ from the above. This difference could have been because of different interpretations of the traditional patterns and maybe because the compilers of the BRB were not aware of the birth of the first Mary (b 1813).

Naming children after the father's forebearers:-

- the It is significant that Donald and Christina chose to name their first son after Donald's father (Allan) and their second and fifth sons possibly after his grandfather (Hugh) whereas they did not use their own names for any of their children. For the girls, they named they named their third (or fourth if we allow for the first Mary) daughter after Donald's mother, Rachel.And, and his spouse Christina, does not appear as the name of any of their children.

Naming children after the mother's forbearers:

- xxxxxx

Other articles

The following documents in our series are relevant to this subject. They can be seen in 'Stories' on our website:-

01. Setting the Scene – background concepts

Further research required

- Are we interpreting the traditional naming system correctly? I am sure that I have got this mixed up, partly because I have got confused with taking things from the child's point of view.
- Are we sure of the names of the children? Did we miss any? Since the first Mary died as an infant, maybe Christina and Donald did not take her name into account when they were naming their other daughters. Also John and the second Mary could not have both been born in the same year, 1818.
- How closely did Donald and Christina follow this pattern? What was their own understanding of these patterns? Were they following another pattern?
- This pattern goes back three generations but at this point, only Donald's father, Allan, concurs with the naming pattern. We have nothing to cross-check with his other forebears.
- And is this pattern being followed with Donald's and Christina's grandchildren? Is there any pattern in the names of subsequent generations?
- So, it needs to be worked out by someone else who understands these systems. Someone to ignore what I have attempted and start all over again.

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7. Formal clan structure – especially the lairds

What this includes

We have gathered together many details of the 28 Duart chiefs, 18 lairds of Ardgour and 10 lairds of Blaich. Also, we have explored Clan McLean participation in the Jacobite risings. All this is in the context of many battles, intrigues and alliances which characterized the conflicts between clans on the western side of Scotland and between Scotland and England. These were traumatic times over many centuries in the painful transition from war lords taking over territories, towards democracy, rule of law, effective governance and nationhood.

How this can help

A description of the formal clan structure is a framework for articulating our broad MacLean history. It is a way of laying out the key players, events and, to some extent, their life experiences. The lists of lairds provide pigeon holes where we can slot in any new details we come across – and later we can consider what details are most relevant and most useful.

Through all this, it is hoped that we can identify where our family might connect – either directly or indirectly. In all this, we are looking for any people called Allan MacLean who were born between 1707 and 1759.

Starting point

The BRB provides some background on the history of Clan MacLean – the Duart line of Chiefs, and the lairds of Ardgour and Blaich, and the Jacobite risings (ref: BRB pp2-5) – see appendices to our articles.

The BRB states that *“Donald was of the Blaich branch of the Ardgour McLeans. ... Tradition was that only a kinsman of the Laird might lease any of the estate so it follows in having 12,000 acres of Duiskey by Loch Eil, Donald belonged”* (BRB p8).

Progress so far - the impact on our McLean family

There is a great deal of information about the Duart and Ardgour lines which are still continuing. However, the Blaich line, which has discontinued, has patchy records. We have identified gaps and questions regarding each of these lines.

There are no indications that Donald’s family was part of the official line of lairds. Donald’s father and grandfather were not lairds nor were they sons of any laird, but maybe there were some indirect connections. Maybe, among the earlier generations, there was a younger brother of a laird - or a nephew or a cousin. The most likely links are (see ‘Other Genealogists’ above):-

- John Crubach, the 8th Laird might be Donald’s 3Xgrandfather (if our Donald’s grandfather was Hugh), or
- Allan, the 7th Laird might be Donald’s 4Xgrandfather (if Donald’s grandfather was Donald).

Lairds and estates during Donald’s time, up to his migration - 1772 to 1837:-

- There were no lairds in Blaich – the line did not continue much past 1758 and it seems that the lairds of Ardgour resumed control of the area around Blaich.
- The Ardgour laird was Alexander 13th for the whole of Donald’s life. (Alexander was about 10 years old when Donald was born, and they died just a month apart in 1855.) In the early 1800s, at the beginning of Donald’s working life, Alexander became more directly involved in improving the way crofts were operating (McLean papers, bundle 21, NAS). As the tacksman, he would have been an agent for the changes Alexander was introducing.
- Donald was in the midst of changing farming practices, decline of Scottish highland traditions and great excitement/fears about people leaving the highlands to go to more populous centres or emigration. It is difficult for people right in the middle of major changes to fully comprehend the nature of these upheavals. But, in the end, Donald decided that emigration was the better option for his family.

Lairds and estates during Allan possible lifespan – 1707 to 1859:-

- What was happening with the Duart chiefs between 1707 and 1859?
 - 20th Chief John was chief until 1716. By the late 1600s the clan had lost Duart and most of their other properties
 - 21st Chief Hector was chief from 1716 to 1750. He was living in France, then imprisoned in the Tower of London during the rising events in 1745 and 1746 (Glenfinnan and Culloden)
 - 22nd Chief Allan was chief from 1751 to 1783. He was grandson of 10th Laird of Ardgour
- What was happening with the Ardgour lairds between 1707 and 1859?
 - 10th Laird Allan was liard – until 1731
 - 11th Laird John – from 1731 to 1739
 - 12th Laird Hugh – from 1739 to 1768: Allan was a child or youth during the time of Hugh. In the first part of this period the management of the Ardgour estate was at a low ebb, then there were the Jacobite events at Glenfinnan and Culloden, but later the estate became much stronger and Ardgour House was built in 1765. Allan was probably old enough to be aware of the Jacobite rising and the building of Ardgour House. We do not know of Allan’s personal involvement.
 - 13th Laird Alexander – from 1768 to 1855 – There is no doubt that Allan was in the prime of his life at some stage during the long 87 years of extensive long period of Alexander’s lairdship. Alexander was absent on military service for the first half of his lairdship but later became directly involved in the management of the Ardgour estate and other land under his control, including Blaich, Duiskey and local fishing. In particular, he initiated major improvements in the crofting system. This might have had a direct (but unknown) impact on Allan’s life.
- What was happening with the Blaich lairds between 1707 and 1859?

- Lachlan, the 10th Laird of Ardgour, was laird for part of this period, but there are some doubts about this. It seems that the lairdship of Blaich was at a low ebb and the control of the area was resumed by the laird of Ardgour.

The Jacobite Risings:-

- Donald: In 1845/6, the raising of the Jacobite flag at Glenfinnan and the other major events culminating at Culloden, and the awful aftermath, occurred more than three decades before Donald was born but would have still spurred impassioned talk within the household.
- Allan: We do not know how old Allan was during these turbulent times – it might have been before his birth, or he might have been in his thirties. If he was an adult, he might have joined the Jacobites, or he might have been unsympathetic because there were deep divisions across Highland communities. Either way, he would have been intensely aware that clansmen were gathering at Glenfinnan just 7 miles from Duiskey (not that we know whether Allan was living in Duiskey or Blaich at that time). And, immediately after the gathering, he might have been with his fellows on the southern shores of Loch Eil as they watched in awe at sight of the Bonnie Princes' men marching along the other side of the narrow loch as they gathered support amongst the Camerons and onto other clan territories. (ref: xxx)

Other articles

The following documents in our series are relevant to this subject. They can be seen in 'Stories' on our website:-

01. Setting the Scene – background concepts
02. Duart Chiefs
05. Lairds of Ardgour
06. Lairds of Blaich
07. Macleans in the Jacobite Uprisings

Further research

We will keep trying to identify all the sons of the various lairds - and their descendants.

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8. Land

What this includes

Here, we are exploring the records of who controlled the land in Ardgour, especially around Blaich. Also, we look at how this land was acquired, how extensive it was, how it was used, and who worked the land as crofters or tacksmen.

How this could help

We are looking for McLean names, especially Donald, Allan and Hugh, where they appear as either the owners, tacksmen or crofters within the vicinity of Blaich and Duiskey.

Our starting point

The BRB stated that Donald "*grew up to lease the Duiskey Estate. From owning 100, 000 acres the family now leased 12,000 acres*" (ref: BRB p4) and later, "*12,000 acres of Duiskey by Loch Eil, Donald belonged*" (BRB p8), and then "*he leased 20 square miles of country known as Douskie Estate, Ardgore*" (ref: BRB p9). 20 square miles = 12,800 acres and 12,000 acres = 18.75 square miles

Progress so far

At present, the only way we have been able to connect Donald with Duiskey is that he built a substantial dwelling house there. It would be handy to have a document associated with Donald's tack of Duiskey. Unfortunately, none has been sighted and we are not even sure that he was leasing the estate.

Our notes 'Places of our McLeans in Scotland' had a great deal of information about Duiskey as well as Blaich and Ardour.

Further research

We will continue to develop a list of tacksman and crofters for Duiskey and nearby properties. The Maclean papers (NAS) might help here.

Hopefully somewhere in all of this we will find the name of Allan, Donald's father, or perhaps his siblings or cousins.

Later, when we are ready, we could make a direct request to the current laird (Robin & his wife Fiona) who would probably be the best source or could direct us to the other sources.

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9. Who was living around Blaich?

What this includes

We are gathering the names of anyone living in the area around Duiskey and Blaich. There were only a couple of hundred people living in this area at the time and so it is possible to name many of them.

Why this can help

These will be the relatives and associates of Donald's family. In such a small community, they must have been part of each other's lives. This exercise might help us identify people who might be Donald's siblings or cousins. They might be relatives or associates who Donald or Allan grew up with. But we have yet to find a specific connection.

Progress so far

We have created two more family trees on www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com:-

- One tree for names we come across - but we don't know how they are related to other people.
- The other tree is for people we can place in a family tree - but for whom we lack evidence to be able to place them on our 'authorized' family tree for Christina and Donald. We called it 'Lairds, tacksman @ residents of Blaich & Duiskey'. This tree is being developed in collaboration with Allan Lachlan McLean of Willowburn and Edwin MacLean who is the archivist with Clan McLean of Australia.

Although the McLean name might have been the most numerous around Blaich in the generations before our Donald, they gradually became less common as names such as MacMillan, Boyd and McVeigh?? came into prominence.

Other articles

The following documents in our series are relevant to this subject. They can be seen in 'Stories' on our website:-

01. Setting the Scene – background concepts

Further research

We will continue to develop a list of everyone who was living in the area – and how they are related to each other.

Good sources are the censuses of 1841 and 1851 which, although soon after Donald and his family had left the area, the censuses indicate who was living in the area around that time – and hopefully includes his parents, siblings or cousins who remained living there.

McVeigh & McVean – a careful reading of John Gibson's 'Back of the Hill - Highland Yesterdays' (ch 8 - p 182 & 186 and other pages)

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10. Locality

What this includes

We are gathering any information about the area. This includes maps, terrain, events, changes, population, occupations, residence patterns, economy, social life, trends and issues etc

How it will help

We are trying to re-create what life was probably like for Donald and his predecessors even though we might not be able to directly identify him in all this. Maybe in amongst all these details there is a 'smoking gun' – some gem of information that links Donald and/or Allan with that locality. Even if we cannot identify Donald's relatives directly, at least we are already a long way towards creating a comprehensive understanding of what life was like for them – who they associated with, what they were doing, and the environment/events/circumstances which affected them in those times and places.

Progress so far

We have gathered together a great deal of information about Blaich and Duiskey around in the 1700 and early 1800s. It is a huge amount of detail – too much really - so we will need to sift through it all and retain what is most relevant. We have compiled this into a separate document – 'Donald's McLean's life in Scotland'

Other articles

The following documents in our series are relevant to this subject. They can be seen in 'Stories' on our website:-

01. Setting the Scene – background concepts
- 19-23. Donald's McLean's life in Scotland
- Places of our McLeans in Scotland
- Tour of Fort William, Ardgour, Blaich & Duiskey

Further research

Keep gathering whatever information we can about Duiskey and Blaich at various times.

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11. Corroboration

What this includes

A single 'fact' does not stand on its own. The finding of an OPR with the birth date of someone we are interested in cannot be considered in isolation.

We need to find details which support each other - consistency, compatibility, complementarity, and triangulation. Piecing it all together like a jigsaw. Joining the dots. Painting the picture

Basic human biology

- People can't die before they are born
- A father and mother must be born at least 15 years before their children.
- A father cannot be born more than 65 years before his child
- A mother cannot be born more than 45 years before her child

- Siblings with the same mother cannot be born in the same year (unless they are twins)
- People will die less than 110 years after they were born
- If a woman has one child (ie is fertile) she is likely to have had more than one child.

Social patterns in different eras and different regions

- There were more children in the family
- There were more deaths of younger children
- Mass migrations
- Cultural, economic and political changes affecting family

Basic geography

- Siblings are born in proximity – unless we have information about family mobility.

How it can help

Any piece of information needs to be placed in context – to test whether it makes sense.

Progress so far

Throughout this whole document, with our 11 strategies, we are trying to see how each detail can connect with others.

Further research

..ooOOoo..

References

See '01. [Setting the scene](#)'

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Appendix C: Traditional naming patterns in Scotland

	Christina & Donald's children - assuming that the second Mary replaced the first Mary who died in infancy	Gerald Hamilton-Edwards, 'In Search of Scottish Ancestry' (ref. Iain Kerr of Compuserve Genealogy Forum)	Unknown source	Mary & Don Saban - myweb.wyoming.com/~msaban/SCTname.htm	Variation on Mary & Don Saban - myweb.wyoming.com/~msaban/SCTname.htm	Family Search website	John Barrett Robb, "The Scottish Onomastic Child-naming Pattern" - from Family Search website	Donald J. Steel, 'Sources for Scottish Genealogy and Family History, page 47, (Chichester, Sussex: Phillimore & CO. Ltd., 1970, in National Index of Parish Registers Vol. 12) - from Family Search website
First daughter	Mary	Mother's mother	Mother's mother	Mother's mother	Father's mother	Mother's mother	Mother's mother	
Second daughter	Ann	Father's mother	Father's mother	Father's mother	Mother's mother	Father's mother	Father's mother	Mother
Third daughter	Rachel	Mother	Mother's father's mother	Mother		Mother	Mother's father's mother	
Fourth daughter	Margaret	Mother's eldest sister	Father's father's mother	Mother's eldest sister	Mother's mother's mother		Father's father's mother	
Fifth daughter	Jane		Father's mother's mother	Father's eldest sister	Father's mother's mother		Mother's mother's mother	
First son	Allan	Father's father	Father's father	Father's father	Mother's father	Father's father	Father's father	Mother's father
Second son	Hugh/Ewen	Mother's father	Mother's father	Mother's father	Father's father	Mother's father	Mother's father	Father or father's father
Third son	John	Father	Father's father's father	Father		Father	Father's father's father	
Fourth son	Alexander	Father's eldest brother	Mother's mother's father	Father's eldest brother	Father's father's father		Mother's mother's father	
Fifth son	Hugh/Ewen		Father's mother's father	Mother's eldest brother			Father's mother's father	

There is substantial disparity between these patterns, but they are suggestive.

	5 patterns	4 patterns	3 patterns	2 patterns	1 pattern
Mother			Rachel		Ann
Mother's mother	Mary				Ann
Mother's father	Hugh/Ewen			Allan	
Mother's mother's mother					Margaret or Jane
Mother's mother's father				Alexander	
Mother's father's mother				Rachel	
Mother's eldest sister				Margaret	
Mother's eldest brother					Hugh/Ewen
Father			John		Hugh/Ewen
Father's mother	Ann				Mary
Father's father	Allan			Hugh/Ewen	
Father's mother's mother				Jane	
Father's mother's father				Hugh/Ewen	
Father's father's mother				Margaret	
Father's father's father				John	Alexander
Father's eldest sister					Jane
Father's eldest brother				Alexander	