

# MOUNTAIN ECHO ONLINE

*McQuiston, McQuiston,  
McQuesten, McQuestion,  
McCuiston, McCuiston,  
and other related names*



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## Scottish-Irish

*The Scots who moved into Northern Ireland, over many generations, are the principal group that make up what has been referred to as the Scotch-Irish, or Scots-Irish, or Ulster Scots. Since they are, with no doubt what-so-ever, Scots who moved to Ireland, I have played it safe in calling them the Scottish-Irish. I have many books on the subject and have studied it for a long time. This is my best take on our race.*

From the 13th to 17th century, Irish and Scots Highland chieftains hired elite bands of mercenaries, skilled in the use of heavy, hand-held weapons, to supplement their regular forces. These mercenaries, known as *gallogladh* in Gaelic, were Anglised as Gallowglass. The word,

in Gaelic, is usually said to mean "foreign warriors". These imposing mercenaries wore distinctive long coats of padded cotton or chain mail and conical shaped helmets, which set them apart from ordinary Irish warriors. Many of them settled in Ireland and became the forefront

of the Irish war machine with their Claymore, a two-handed sword, and their Sparth, or battle axe.

The Gallowglass originated in the Hebrides (a group of island just off the west coast of the Scottish Highlands) and were of mixed Celtic and Viking origin. Clan Donald was one of the principal providers and leaders of Gallowglass Warriors, not only in Ireland, but also for King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden during his "Thirty Year Wars".

I always like to note how nothing happens in a vacuum. Gustavus was known as the "Father of Modern Warfare" and it is likely that some of his tactics were learned from the very Gallowglass Warriors that he employed to help fight his battles. It is also very likely that the Gallowglass learned some of their tactics from the Knights Templar.

Knights Templar are thought to have taken refuge in Scotland, landing on the Isle of Mull in 1313. This would have been well within the kingdom of the Rulers of the Isles, the "Sons of Somerled" - namely, our family.

The following year, a few Templars are thought to have been led by Angus Og McDonald, great, great grandfather of Hugh of Sleat, at the Battle of Bannock Burn, when Robert Bruce freed Scotland.

Angus was married to Agnes O'Cahan, of Dungiven, the Irish community from where our family eventually immigrated to America.

Words with “gall” in them usually denote some type of Viking background. The Hebrides were often called Innes Gall, or “islands of the foreigners”.

Thus “foreign warrior” really meant Viking warrior. Galway Bay in Ireland and Galloway in Scotland are also named after their Viking backgrounds. The Galloway area of Scotland includes Wigton, where many of our family moved to, escaping violence and persecution in Ireland, in the mid to late 1600s.

When the Siege of Londonderry took place, in 1689, in which Daniel McCuistion is listed as a “brave defender”, his leader was Gustavus Hamilton, named specifically for Gustavus Adolphus. Daniel’s son, John McCuistion, was also to served under Gustavus Hamilton. One of his daughters, Margery, married a Hamilton, and in the American side of our family, the name Gustavus was used in the early days, no doubt as a carry-over from Gustavus Hamilton.

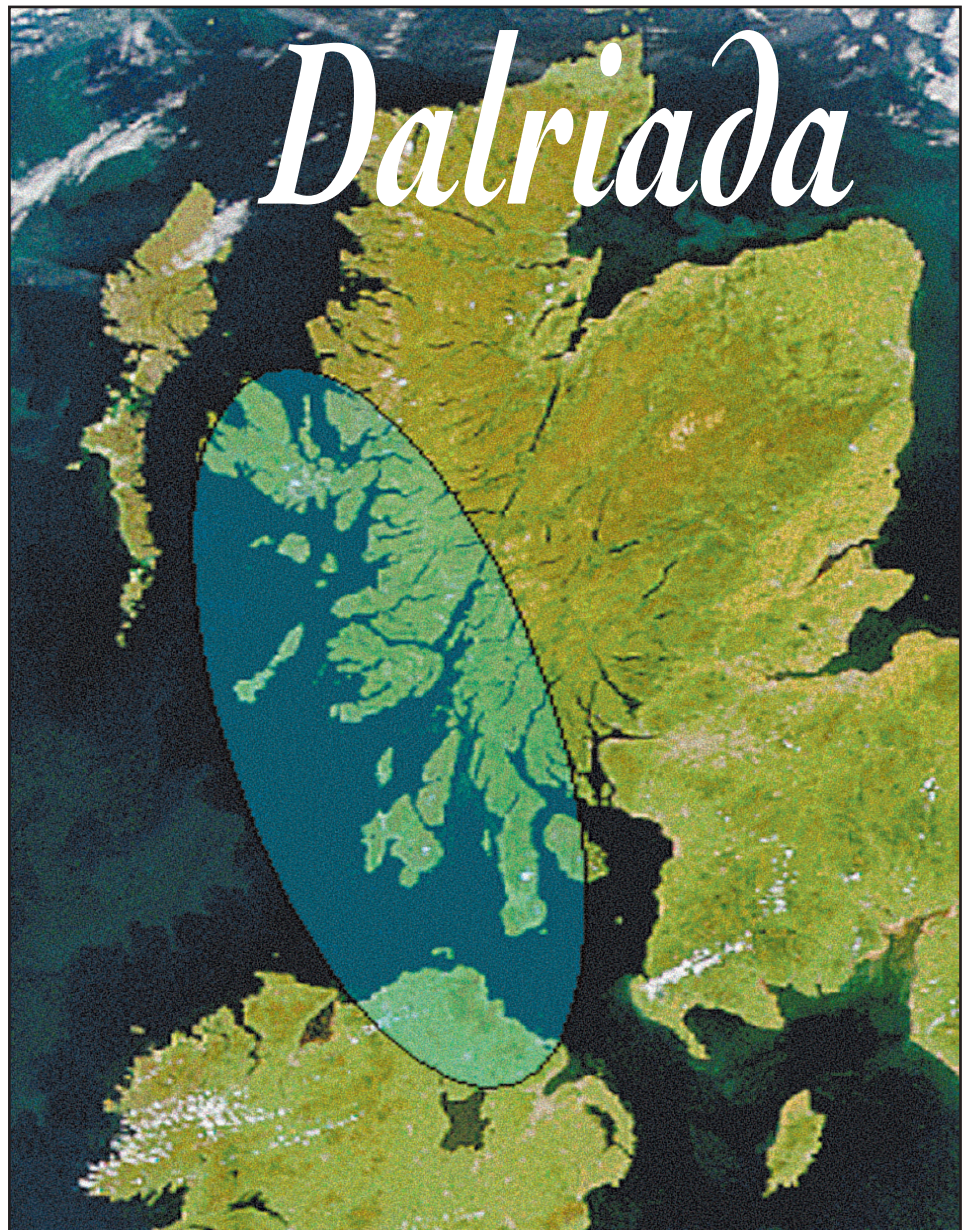
The connections just go on and on, between each era of Scottish, Irish, and Colonial American history.

That Knights Templar were in Scotland is proven in many ways. Over 500 pieces of property were recorded as belonging to Templars. Templar graves dot the landscape from the Isle of Skye to Paisley Abbey, two more places where our family had a dramatic presence.

Hugh of Sleat most likely died at Paisley Abbey and he ruled from the Isle of Skye.

Also, on a small island, just off the coast from Caisteal Uisdean are the graves of two Crusaders knights. It was the Crusaders who originally made up the Knights Templar.

It is most likely that Gallowglass Warriors fought with tactics learned from Vikings, Celts, and Templars



*The area in the oval represents what was once the kingdom of Dalriada. Our family, as far back a Colla Uais, and Fergus MacErc, brought Irish Celts to Scotland. They were called “scotti” and gave their name to all of Scotland. Both the Isle of Skye and Antrim, N.I. were part of this realm, and later they became the seats of Clan Donald North and Clan Donald South. Our DNA matches within 5 of Colla Uais, proving our descent from him!*

and were, therefore, the very best, toughest fighting men around, at the time. No wonder they were invited to Ireland!

The fighting typically only took place in the summertime, when fields were dry. During the winter, Irish families were required to house Gallowglass, and in many cases these Scots, from the Hebrides, married Irish women.

The marriage of Angus Og and Agnes O’Cahan or O’Cathan, was of particular importance in bringing the races of Scots and Irish Celts back together. Both had originated from Celts who were escaping persecution in Europe. Both groups of Celts were attacked by, and intermarried with Vikings. They were and are essentially the same people.

Scotland got its name from Irish Celts called scotti, meaning “invaders”. Their scotti-land became Scotland.

The Wild Scots of the Hebrides and Highlands were most often referred to as the “Irish”, and their language was often called “Irish”.

So the Scotch-Irish, in their earliest form, were the same people just moving back and forth in an area that had anciently been called Dalriada.

In the case of Angus and Agnes, her dowry to him was that 140 Irish were to marry 140 Scots to help bring peace to the two regions of the old Dalriada. This means there were at least 141 recorded marriages between the Celt/Vikings of Northern Ireland and the Celt/Vikings of Scotland. Of course there were many more, including those of Gallowglass Warriors to local Irish women.

One of the most important marriages was that of Angus’ grandson, Jon Mor, to the Bissett heiress of Antrim. This enabled Clan Donald to create what became known as Clan Donald South, led by the McDonnell family that eventually produced Sorley Boy McDonnell as their leader.

Angus’ own son, John, married Margaret, great granddaughter of King Robert the Bruce, and this is how we descend from him. Bruce’s daughter, also named Margaret, married the High Steward of Scotland, and their son became Robert II, the first Stewart king. He was born at Paisley Abbey, and is buried there. In his grave is also buried John, brother to Hugh of Sleat. John was the last official Lord of the Isles.

Our family is so very tightly associated with the power of Scotland and of Northern Ireland,

through Bruce; through Robert II and his daughter, Margaret, who married Good King John of Islay; through the Lordship of the Isles; and through the Antrim kingdom of the McDonnells.

King John had another son that was the progenitor of the McDonalds of Keppoch. Andrew Jackson’s ancestor, Richard Jackson, was a caretaker of horses for the Keppoch McDonalds, when he met Mary McRandall. One of the main sources for the McRandall name was from the Keppoch McDonalds.

Richard and Mary moved to Coleraine, Northern Ireland, in the middle of the Bann River Valley, where our family was so entrenched.

The Bann Valley is a small 25 mile or so radius of communities, some in Antrim County and some in Derry County, that surround the Bann River. One of the bigger towns is Coleraine and it was here that the Jackson family dominated local politics. In the early 1700’s they were forced to raise rents on their tenants because of pressure from creditors in England. This was a major catalyst, if not THE main event, that began the immigration from Ulster to America.

The first local immigrant to America was a reverend from Macosquin, which is just below Coleraine. He eventually brought the settlers to Londonderry, NH, most likely including William McQuesten.

There are still family members living in both Coleraine and Macosquin, today. Nearby is NewtonLimvady, which was the hometown of Ann Moody.

In addition to Jon Mor, who founded Clan Donald South, and another son who was the Keppoch progenitor, Good King John of Islay

also had a son named Donald who followed him as Lord of the Isles and led Clan Donald North from various Hebrides islands.

Donald had a son, Alexander, Lord of the Isles, Earl of Ross, Sheriff or Justiciar of the Highlands, and father of Hugh of Sleat, from whom we descend, and for whom we are named.

Hugh of Sleat’s son, Donald Gallach, married into the “Irish” branch of the family, being wed to Sorely Boy’s aunt. Donald had a son, Alexander, who took our direct line and family name to Ireland, in 1565, to help Sorley fight against the English. Sorley fought them until he was 80 years old and it appears Alexander helped him until he was about 86, dying while leading 100 Gallowglass Warriors.

The great McDonnell/McDonald family, along with many other smaller clans from the Scottish/Irish mix, made up the first Scots in Ireland, the first to be called “Scotch-Irish”.

Back on April 14, 1573, Queen Elizabeth of England issued a manifesto containing the oldest known reference to the words “Scotch-Irish”. She wrote, “. . . Sorely Boy, and others, who be of the Scotch-Irish race . . .” - those “others” included Hugh of Sleat’s grandson and a few great grandsons.

I feel Scotch-Irish is likely just a contraction of Scottish-Irish and now I have some potential proof.

In a *Lord of the Isle* book I purchased in Scotland, the author cites an English diplomat, Ralph Sadler, who, in about 1558, when speaking of Mary Queen of Scots and her attempted alliance with Sorley’s brother, James McDonnell, called James and his people the “Scottish Irishie”.

This was fifteen years before Elizabeth used "Scotch-Irish".

Since there was tremendous activity between the English, the Scottish government, and this rogue faction of Scottish Irish - the McDonnells of Antrim - my guess is that a term, somewhere between Scottish-Irish and Scotch-Irish was used over and over again when speaking of these people. It just wasn't recorded a lot - but it was recorded twice!

This is one more proof that it was the McDonald Clan who was first officially known as Scotch-Irish. Our family was absolutely part of this bunch of Wild Scots.

Some people like to say "Scotch-Irish" is an Americanism. Some like to say it should be Scots-Irish, instead. Some like to say the Scotch-Irish were principally lowlanders.

NOT!!

The Scotch-Irish, for centuries, were Highland Scots blending into and remolding the character of the average Northern Irishman, principally through Clan Donald. This is why probably half of the Scotch-Irish people carry Mc names like McCormick or McQuiston, etc. a prefix originating in the Highlands and Islands, not in the lowlands. This is why the Scotch-Irish were principally Presbyterian, the religion of Scotland, not Ireland. This is why both Queen Elizabeth and Ralph Sadler, two contemporaries of James and Sorley Boy McDonnell, called them, and their family, Scottish Irishie or Scotch-Irish.

Again, there is no evidence to the contrary. Most detractors of this theory don't start counting Scotch-Irish history until the early 1600s, hundreds of years after this unique race actually began, and many years after the term Scotch-Irish was first known to be used.

The "Gall Gael" race, that gave birth to Somerled, was half Viking - half Celt and permeated both Ireland and Scotland. Which came first, the chicken or the egg?

The Scotch-Irish of course!!

I found a Scottish book from 1729, six years before our family members landed at New Castle, Delaware. The book uses the term "Scotch-Irish" in a translation of a Latin book from 1521, where the term "Scotos Hibernicos" is translated as "Scotch-Irish" - people who are said by the 1521 author to have already been long established in Ireland at least back in the 800's, if not earlier.

This means that as early as 1521 there was a distinct race known (as translated from Latin) as Scotch-Irish. This was 52 years before Queen Elizabeth's usage. So it would certainly seem that the term Scotch-Irish was used with familiarity as early as the 1500s, and the race is said to have been formed or have originated long before that date.

At the very least, the term was being used in Scotland before our family even came to America. There is no early usage of the word or term Scots-Irish to be found, and the Scotch-Irish Society of America is so against changing history by using Scots-Irish, they won't even allow an article in their journal that uses the term Scots-Irish.

Scotch is so obviously a contraction of the word Scottish, or perhaps an early alternate spelling. It had nothing to do with alcohol in its original usage, anymore than "Irish" did, just because of Irish Whiskey. Like I said before, taking the ch off Scotch, to make Scot, would be like taking the h of Irish to make Iris.

I'm reminded of the newer definition for "gay". We wouldn't want to change the words of the song

"When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" to read anything but "all the world seems bright and gay" just because the word has an alternative meaning, today. Would we?

So why change the age-old word Scotch to Scots, just because Scotch also refers to a drink, now?

Scotch-Irish, as a term for a race, is as old as the hills. It is our very race, led by Clan Donald and defended by our family's blood for century upon century. It is the very race that became the stereotypical American, and led, and won, the War of Independence.

The Scotch-Irish made up the majority of those who stayed with Washington at Valley Forge and he is quoted as saying, "If defeated elsewhere, I'll make my last stand with the Scotch-Irish . . ."

At Guilford Courthouse it was the Scotch-Irish who decimated 1/4 of the most crack British troops leading directly to Cornwallis' surrender a few months later. It was also the Scotch-Irish who fought the first real battle of the Revolution at nearby Alamance in 1771. McCuistions were at both battles.

It was only about a week or two quick sail from one end of Clan Donald lands to the other, from Caithness to Dungiven. This race was simply the "Sons of Somerled", the "Children of Conn" (of the Hundred Fights) - the greatest, most romantic, freedom-loving race to ever set foot on Mother Earth.

And we can plainly see and prove that our family rode right down the middle of this history from Gaelic Scotland to Guilford Courthouse - from Dunscaith to Dungiven, from Antrim to America, from Skye to the Susquehanna - from Clan Uisdean, of 1469, to Clan Uisdean, USA, Inc., of 2000-2008.

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