

# MOUNTAIN ECHO ONLINE

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



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All that remains of Dingwall is a single tower. The castle tower is currently located in the heart of a housing development. Hugh of Sleat's father, Alexander, died and is buried here.

Hugh's brother, John, last Lord of the Isles, took shelter here when being pressured to give up the Earl of Ross title, after signing a treaty with England in which he would end up with the whole upper part of Scotland, if he submitted to the English king. Hugh of Sleat was one of those who came to the castle to encourage him to give himself up.

There have been many castles in Scotland and Ireland associated with our family. The photo shown above is of Dunscraith Castle (or Dunskey), located on the Isle of Skye, where our name essentially began. I have already dedicated an entire *Mountain Echo* to Dunscraith so I'll just remind the reader that this is where Hugh of Sleat (Uisdean McDonald) ruled from, and where he lived when the sons of Uisdean, (the first McUisdeans) were born.

Hugh, himself, was born at Dingwall Castle, located near Loch Ness. His father, Alexander, Lord of the Isles and Sheriff of the Highlands had just recently been named Earl of Ross and took over Dingwall, long the seat of the Ross earldom. Another character from history who was born here was Macbeth, of whom Shakespeare wrote.



Another castle in the Loch Ness area that was under control of the McDonalds for about 150 years is the famous Urquhart Castle seen in documentaries and photos concerning the Loch Ness monster.

Since “quh” was most typically pronounced as a “W”, the original pronunciation was most likely something like “Your Heart”. Today it is pronounced as it is spelled.

Though extensively ruined, it was, in its day, one of the largest strongholds of medieval Scotland, splendidly situated on a headland overlooking Loch Ness. It is also near the place where the majority of Nessie (Loch Ness Monster) sightings occur.

Another Lowland castle that played a major role in our family history is Edinburgh Castle, the seat of the kings and queens of Scotland.

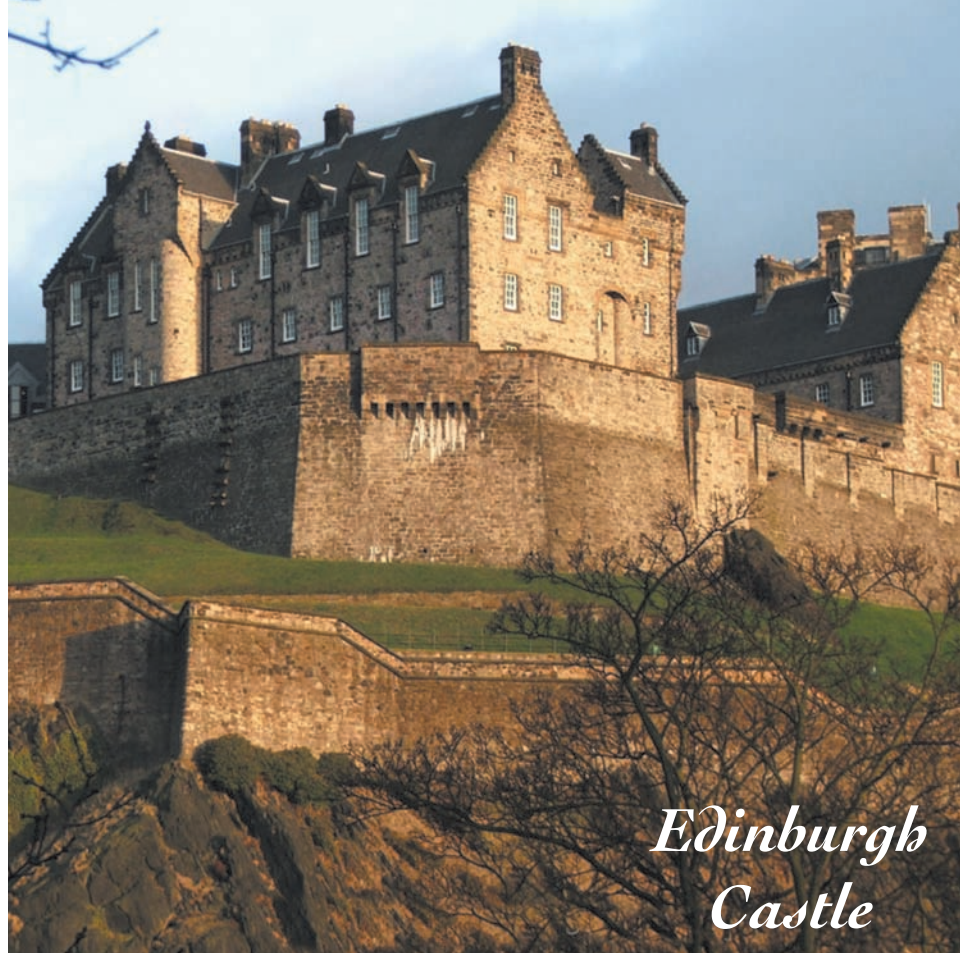
Hugh’s father, Alexander, was wrongly captured by King James, along with several other nobles. Many were killed but Alexander was spared and eventually set free. He couldn’t forget the injustice, though, and so he ravaged Inverness and other places that bordered the Highlands and Lowlands.

He was captured again and this time he was forced to submit to King James in his underwear, holding a sword to his own throat with the handle facing the king. He was imprisoned for awhile, but was finally set free.

It was in Edinburgh that Alexander made a boast to the Earl of the Orkneys that he had a son (Hugh) who was a match for the earl. Later, as Hugh was leaving a meeting at Edinburgh Castle, he heard that the Earl of Orkney had made a disparaging remark about him. Hugh gathered up other



*Urquhart  
Castle*



*Edinburgh  
Castle*

“gentlemen of the Isles” and raided the Orkneys, some say killing the earl in the process.

Hugh then went to Caithness most likely to ask forgiveness from the Coroner of Caithness, George Gunn. In those days, if you killed a man you could be given clemency essentially by paying the coroner a certain amount of money.

Hugh fell in love with George’s daughter. She is given as Mary by the Gunns and as Elizabeth or Bessie by the McDonalds. Perhaps she was Mary Elizabeth Gunn. She gave birth to Donald Gallach McUisdean whom we appear to descend from.

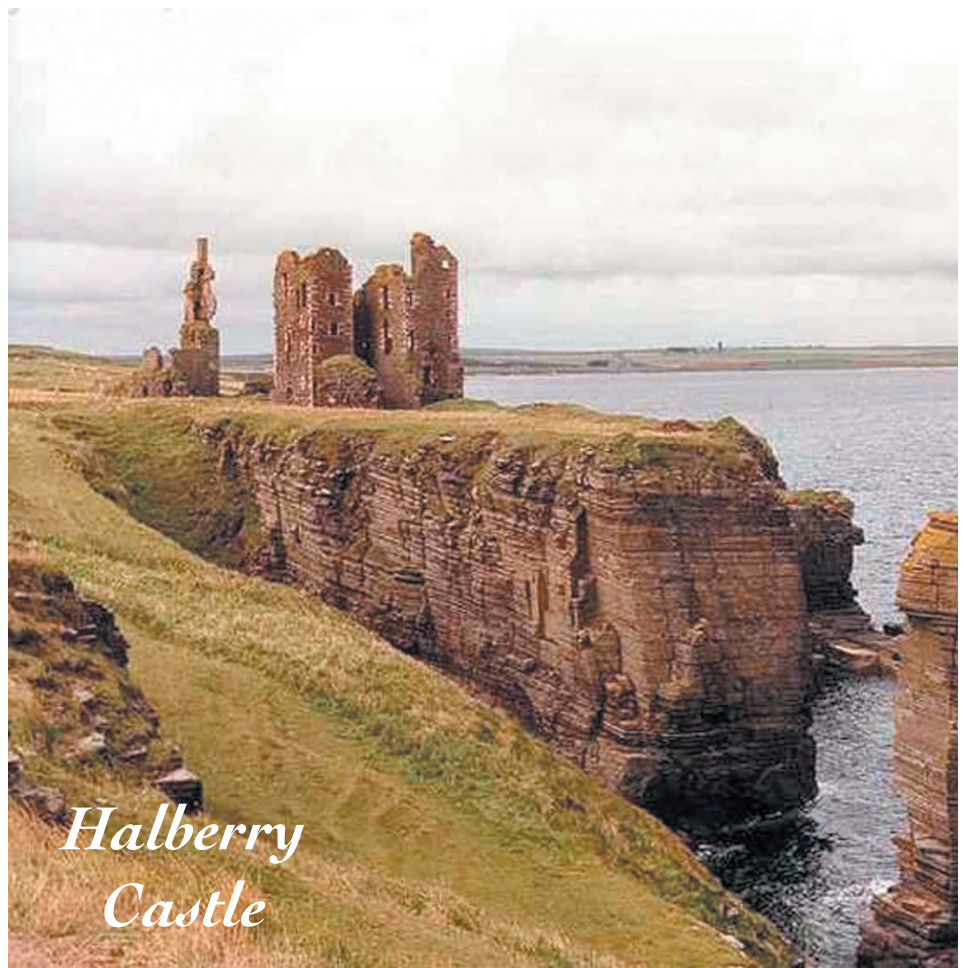
She lived with her father, George at Halberry Castle, whose ruins are shown at the right.

Another mainland castle that was instrumental in the life of Hugh of Sleat is Dundonald Castle. It is located on the western coast of lowland Scotland in the shire of Ayr. Dundonald Castle is situated on a hill overlooking the village of Dundonald, between Kilmarnock and Troon in South Ayrshire, Scotland. It is a fortified tower house built for Robert II on his accession to the throne of Scotland in 1371 and it was used as a royal residence by the early Stewart kings for the next 150 years. Robert II was the great, great grandfather of Hugh of Sleat.

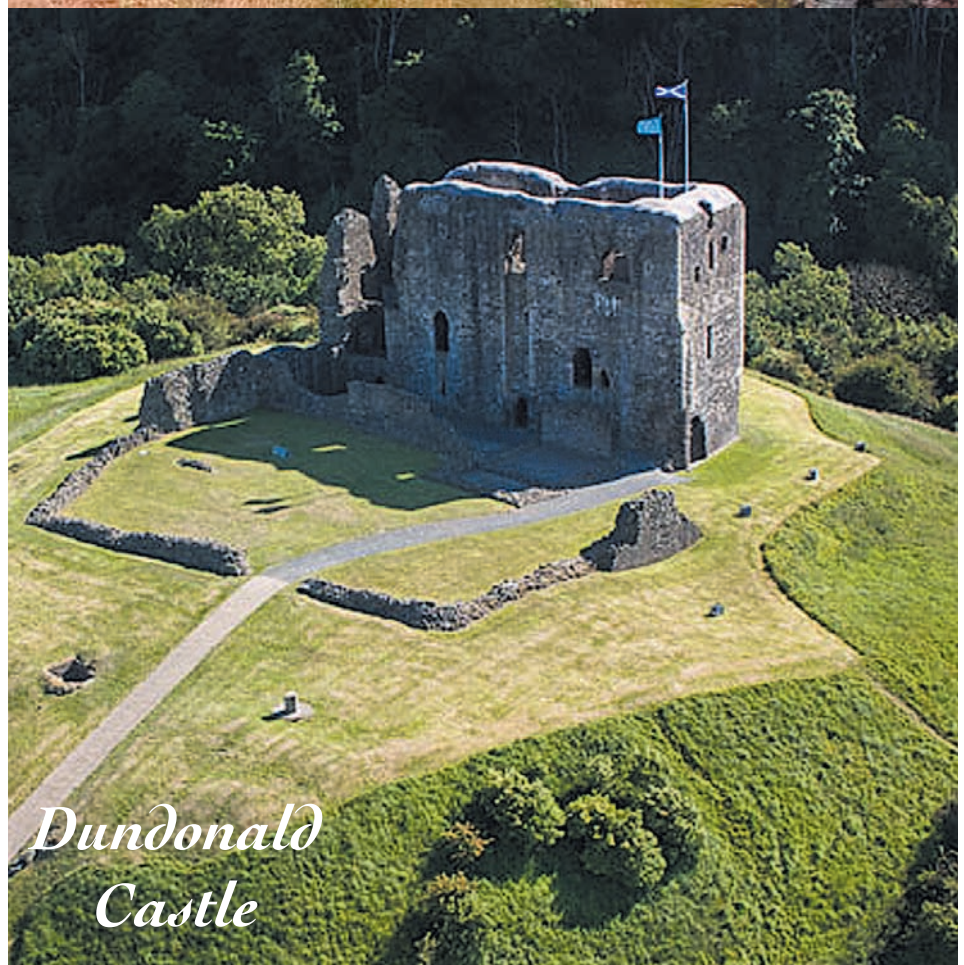
A man named Jim McQuiston is a major figure in the preservation of Dundonald Castle. We met him, in 2006, when Mark, Lynn, Beth, Betty and I visited Scotland.

Also, nearby, is Troon, where the first “golf open” in history was held. One of the memorial cups there is the “McQuiston Cup”.

Many from our family lived in Ayrshire, and in nearby Wigton, in the mid to late 1600s. Robert McCuiston was said to have been born in nearby Renfrewshire.



*Halberry  
Castle*



*Dundonald  
Castle*

Just before the bridge crossing over to the Isle of Skye stands Eileandonan Castle. It has been restored to its former state, although it was never destroyed as extensively as other coastal castle by Scottish gunboats. These castle were built to withstand arrows and spears not cannons from ships sent by King James of Scotland to subdue the Isles.

Hugh of Sleat's descendant, Donald Gorm Mor, attacked this castle in 1639. He was wounded in the leg by an arrow, while crossing the bridge, and in an act of impatience he pulled the arrow out causing massive bleeding, which led to his death.

With Donald, that fateful day, was Alexander Gallach McUisdean, son of Donald Gallach, and grandson of Hugh of Sleat. It is from these men that we most likely descend.

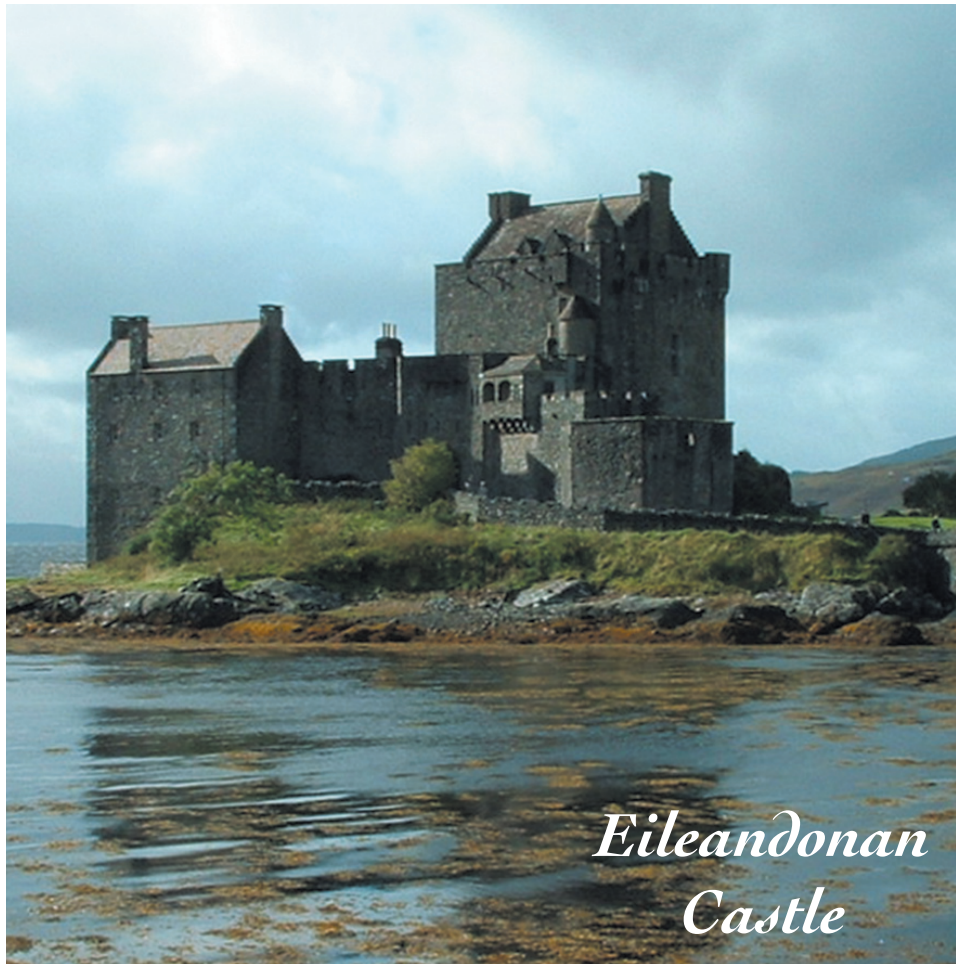
Alexander was later offered remission for his part in the attack and from there he went on to Ireland to aid his first cousin, Sorley Boy McDonnell, taking his sons and our name with him.

On the Isle of Skye, and on the opposite side of the Sleat Peninsula from Dunscaith Castle lies Armadale Castle, shown at right. This is the current seat of Clan Donald and on its grounds are the Museum of the Isles and Clan Donald Center.

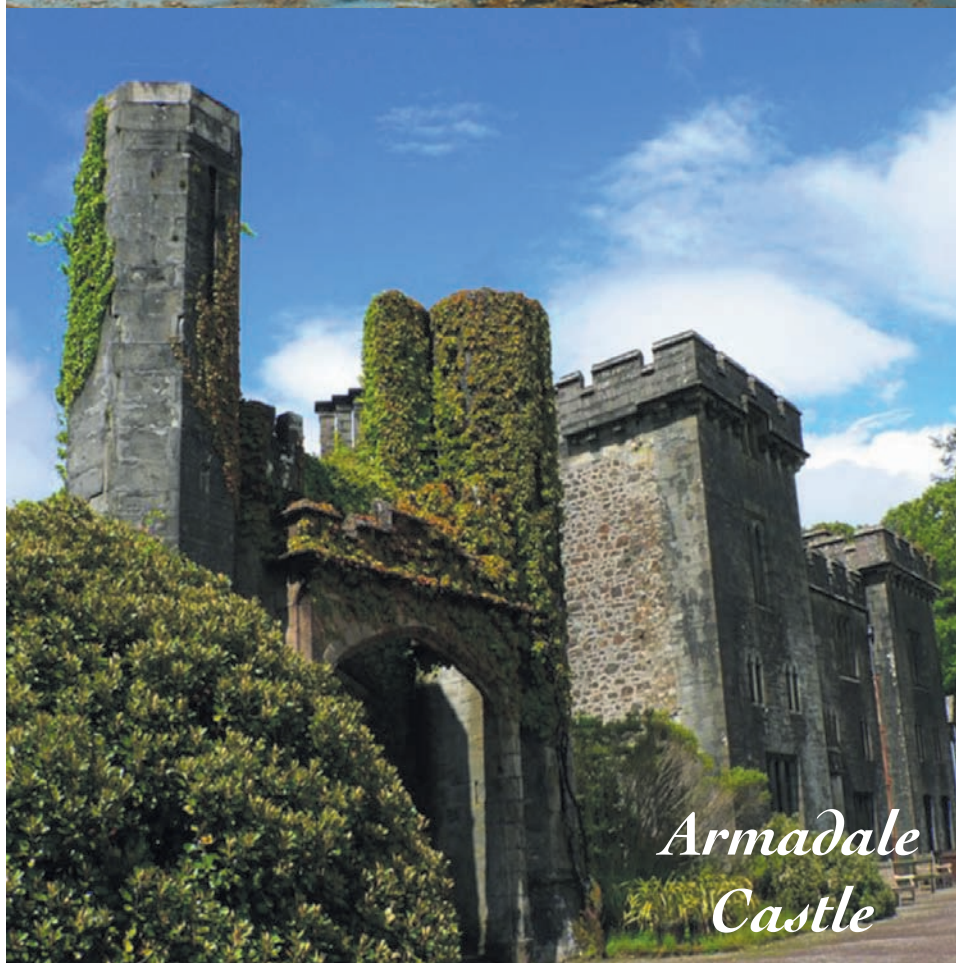
This is where I studied our family history both in 1999 and 2000, with the help of Maggie Macdonald, the clan archivist, and Johnny Ivy (Macdonald), the clan historian.

Hugh of Sleat's descendants lived here as chiefs of Clan Donald and Clan Uisdean.

A much later Hugh McDonald ruled from here and was step-father to the famous Flora McDonald. She was a member of Clan Uisdean by birth, and lived at Armadale.



*Eileandonan  
Castle*



*Armadale  
Castle*

The Hugh who ruled from Armadale, and Hugh of Sleat, are not to be confused with the Hugh who built Caisteal Uisdean, the last castle ever built on the Isle of Skye.

This particular Hugh was the son of Archibald the Clerk and a contender for the chieftainship of Clan Uisdean against his cousin, Donald. Some say this Uisdean was more popular with the clan. He at least felt he should have been chief. He planned an ambush on Donald shortly after his castle was finished.

This Hugh or Uisdean sent an invitation to Donald to visit his new castle. He also sent a letter to the Martin family whose descendants still own the farm above the castle.

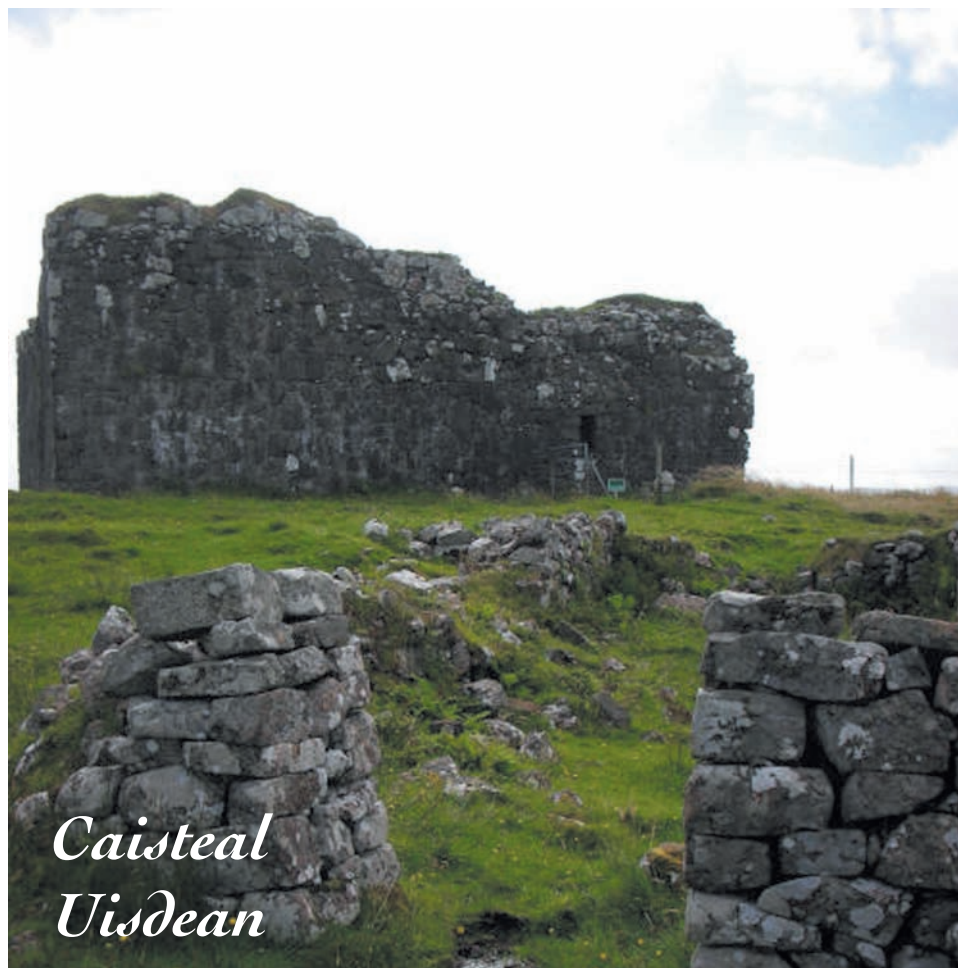
The letters got crossed and Donald, realizing Hugh's treachery, sent a party out to capture him. He was found on the island of North Uist and returned to Skye.

Donald imprisoned Hugh at his castle of Duntulm on the upper part of the Trotternish Peninsula of Skye. Dunscaith Castle had been destroyed by enemies, by this point, and the seat of Clan Uisdean was moved to Duntulm Castle.

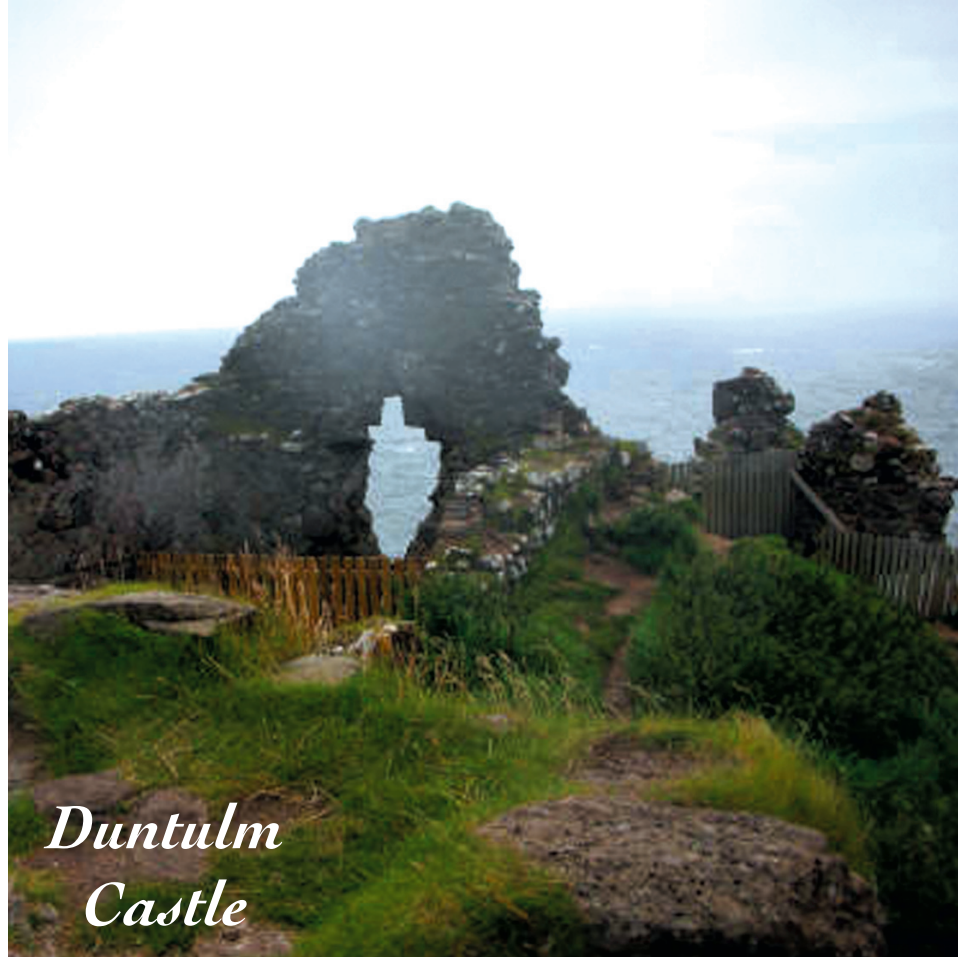
Located between Hugh's Caisteal Uisdean and Duntulm Castle is the little town of MhicCuithean, which appears to have been named for our family.

Donald imprisoned Hugh the Castle Builder in the dungeon of Duntulm with a plate of salty beef and an empty water jug. Hugh died an anguishing death and his decaying body was displayed for many, many years until it finally received a decent burial.

The small foundation shown in front of Caisteal Uisdean was Hugh's home. Later it was inhabited by friends of Flora McDonald. She was visiting them one night when she died suddenly in this building.



*Caisteal  
Uisdean*



*Duntulm  
Castle*

Our history, in Ireland, started long before Alexander, grandson of Hugh of Sleat, went to Ireland to help out Sorley Boy McDonnell, nephew of his own mother.

Angus O'g McDonald, who helped our ancestor, Robert the Bruce, hide from the English on Rathlin Island, and also led 5,000 to 10,000 troops at Bannockburn, was married to Agnes O'Cahan, daughter of Guy O'Cahan, who ruled Dungiven, way back about 1299 A.D. Part of her dowry was that 140 Irish would marry 140 Scots to bring these anciently-related people back together again.

Later, Antrim McDonnells were descended from John McDonald, the brother to Hugh of Sleat's grandfather, Donald. This Donald took over as Lord of the Isles on the death of his father, Good King John of Islay. His brother, John, married the Bisset heiress to lands in Antrim County, Ireland. Donald was chief of *Clan Donald North*. The Antrim McDonnells were known as *Clan Donald South* and were later led by Sorley Boy who lived at Dunluce Castle. When Alexander, grandson of Hugh of Sleat, went to Ireland he would have been at Dunluce Castle many times.

By the 1600s our family was living at Dungiven and most likely took refuge in Dungiven Castle, built by the O'Cahan family during the reign of James I.

John McCuistion was born in Dungiven and his apparent father, Daniel, fought at the nearby Siege of Londonderry in 1689. John's wife was born in Boveva, located about 3 miles from Dungiven. Almost every pre-Revolutionary War immigrant of our family left from the area between Dungiven and Aghadowey through the port of Coleraine, except for the South Carolina branch.



*Dunseverick  
Castle*



*Dunluce  
Castle*



*Dungiven  
Castle*