

The descendants of Alexander and William who settled in Richmond County on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia all have the same story passed down orally from generation to generation concerning the courtship and marriage of Robert Ross and Isabel MacKay which goes as follows:

"Robert Ross was a Scotch lad from the Isle of Skye who was a piper in the Scotch army during the Battle of Waterloo. (arrived in Pictou around 1800). Lord MacKay being very fond of music invited the Piper to play for him and while there Robert fell in love with Isabelle Mackay (The Lord's daughter) and she fell in love with him. When the fact was disclosed, the good Lord Mackay was very angry and ordered the young piper never to return. However love for each other remained and so they were married."

Descendants of John who remained in Pictou with Robert and inherited the homestead, denied this report and maintained that Robert was married to Margret Curry Stowe. When this information was passed along to the other families they were reluctant to accept it.

When this research was undertaken both stories were taken into account along with the idea that many researching their family tree hope to find Royalty or Nobility in their background. Both stories had numerous errors. A record of Robert's marriage was found: "February 11, 1794. Robert Ross son to Donald Ross of Cuthel was married this day at Rogart to Isabel Mackay from Ardaly."

This was found in Parish of Dornoch records. A search of old gazetteers did not reveal a Cuthel or Ardaly in Sutherlandshire. There is a Cuthill on the map, close to the town of Dornoch. (is this pronounced Cut-hill or Cuth-ill?). An Ardallie was found in Aberdeenshire, and the following was found in a Microfische at the Mormon Family History Center- "Mackays of Aberdeenshire":

June 8, 1769 - Isobel Mackay daughter of George MacKay was baptized at Peterhead.

Also found, either in this film or the Church of Scotland records for Aberdeenshire, the baptism records of their six children - the same as was found in Parish of Dornoch records. (These sources need to be rechecked for accuracy).

September 1996 the following information was obtained from The Dornoch Heritage Society with reference to a recently obtained map: "The Commonty of Lonemore" dated 1784 on which Achlach, Ardally, and, not Cuthill, but Kettle are shown, all within a radius of a few hundred yards of each other.

1. What is the present name of Robert's home referred to as Cuthel?
2. What is the present name of map location "Ardally"?
3. Was there an Isobel Mackay born in Ardally, Parish of Dornoch at an appropriate date to be Robert's wife? (in 1794)
4. Which Isobel did Robert marry?

The legend of Robert Ross and Isabel Mackay.....2

5. Did Robert(the Piper) Ross marry the Lord's daughter?
6. Does the Lord Mackay mentioned in the legend, refer to Lord Reay?...or could there also be a Lord Mackay?

LORD REAY

Relevant notes from a history of the Clan Mackay:

George-Third Lord Reay born 1678 died 1748...secured the estate of Scourie, and before he died he saw one of his sons as proprietor of Bighouse, and another as proprietor of Skibo.secured the lands of Eddrachillis and Scourie as dowry

Donald-Fourth Lord Reay 1748-1781....Rob Donn (1714-1784 was their favorite poet. A girl named Isabel Mackay is said to have inspired some of his songs.....the estate was mānāgēd B̄y h̄is Lordship's half brother, Mackay of Bighouse.

George-Fifth Lord Reay 1761 - 1768....surplus (of the produce of his estate)was marketed at Bonar Bridge.....he died at the age of 34 leaving no male issue. He was succeeded in the title by his brother Hugh (son of the fourth Lord Reay).

Hugh Sixth Lord Reay- 1766 - 1797....He was of course, a son of the fourth Lord Reay, and younger brother of the fifth Lord. ...had an accident to his headunable to manage his own affairs....was succeeded by his cousin Eric, son of the Hon. George Mackay of Skibo.

Eric Seventh Lord Reay 1797 -1849

Another book on the peerage records - George, fifth Baron Reay married first Jan. 1759 Marion...married second-Oct. 1760 Elizabeth and had issue three daughters.

7. If the father of Isabel from Ardallie was George the Fifth Lord Reay she was born(1769) after his death and what would Lord Reay be doing in Aberdeen if his estate was in Sutherland?
8. If Robert married an Isobel Mackay from Ardally, Parish of Dornoch what was her birth date and parents names?
9. One of the sons of the third Lord Reay was proprietor of Bighouse. Where?
10. Another son of the third Lord was proprietor of Skibo. Eric, son of the Hon. George Mackay of Skibo was the seventh Lord Reay
11. Did one of their Lordships live in Skibo Castle, very close to Ardally in the Parish of Dornoch? Did he invite Robert over to play the pipes? Did Robert fall in love with the beautiful Isobel? Did they overcome The Lord's objections? Did they marry and live happily ever after?

Family History Research on:

ROBERT (THE PIPER) ROSS

1. Robert Ross, son of Donald Ross of Cuthel County of Sutherland was born in 1769, and died in Bayview, Pictou County, Nova Scotia on November 22, 1843 and is buried in Seaview Cemetery, Pictou.
2. Robert was married first to Isobel (Isabella, Isbell, Bell) McKay: February 11, 1794. Robert Ross, son to Donald Ross of Cuthel was married this day at Rogart to Isabel McKay from Ardaly.
3. Isabel and Robert had five sons and one daughter all born in Scotland.

<u>Detail of Baptism Records</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Place</u>
Alexander - March 15, 1800	- Robert Ross & Isabella McKay	Ardaly
Christian - April 30, 1802	- " " & Isobel McKay	Achlachan
William - July 25, 1804	- " " & Isbell McKay	Auchlock

Register of Baptisms - Parish of Dornoch- County of Sutherland
 1804, July 25 William lawful son to Robt. Ross & Isbell McKay
 Auchlach was baptized.

Angus - Sept. 12, 1806	Robert Ross & Bell McKay	Ardelach
Donald - June 30, 1809	" " & Isobel McKay	Achlach
John - Sept. 22, 1811	" " & Isobel McKay	Lonemore

4. March 15, 1809 (Could also be deciphered as 1802 or 1808)
 Discharge paper from His Majesty's 75th Highland Regiment of Foot
 "Robert Ross, private soldier....home in the Parish of Dornoch in
 or near the market town of Dornoch....has served honestly and faith
 fully...for the space of six months. But having provided two
 substitutes to serve in his Room...is hereby discharged."
 (Source: family records - copy of document)
5. 1817 Census for Pictou, Nova Scotia lists Robert Ross:

Men over 50	Men 16-50	Boys	Women	Girls	Total
0	1	3	0	0	4

 Assuming this is Robert (the piper) there was no wife or daughter
 and only three of five sons.
6. ca 1823 Robert married his second wife Catherine Graham in Pictou.
 They had five daughters and one son.
7. 1838 Census of Pictou, Nova Scotia reveals the household of Robert
 Ross - "Occupation Piper".
8. 1843 Robert died. The copy of his Will is headed "Robert Ross Piper".
 In it he lists all of his twelve children by name with the exception
 of Christian. To those born in Scotland, he bequeathed:
 Alexander - all my tools for pipemaking
 William - my mounted horn box
 Angus - his mother's chest
 Donald - one shilling
 John - one shilling and the homestead.
 The girls from the second marriage got one shilling each, and the son
 received a house and land.
9. Sources: Archives of Nova Scotia, Mormon History Center, Pictou Records
 Church of Scotland Records from 1730. Parish of Dornoch. Rosses of Dornoch

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

ROBERT ROSS. . PIPER

PARISH OF DORNOCH, SUTHERLAND

Reference numbers refer to paragraphs in I attached.

A Confirm birthdate of Robert - 1769. Date on gravestone. Believed to be confirmed through research of Church records of Dornoch. New Registry House was unable to locate when Birth Certificate was requested. Will have to recheck source. (1)

Name of Robert's mother. Father's name - Donald showed in records of Robert's birth and marriage. Mother's name not mentioned. (1, 2)

Names of Isobel McKay's mother and father.

Isobel's Birth date

Date of Isobel McKay Ross's death and place of burial if she died in Scotland.

- a. In 1811 at childbirth (3)
- b. Between 1811 and Robert's emigration (exact date unknown).
No women in household at 1817 census (5)
OR
- c. She did not emigrate with him and died in Scotland sometime before Robert's second marriage ca 1823 (6).
- d. Or, if she did emigrate she died on the passage or in Nova Scotia before 1817 Census.

Date of death of Christian Ross, b. 1802. She does not appear in any Nova Scotia records found to date. She was the only child not mentioned in Robert's Will 1843 (8)

Date of death of Angus and/or Donald b. 1806 and 1809. Both are mentioned in Robert's Will 1843 (Angus- an item of furniture. Donald- a token shilling) so were alive at that date or he believed them to be (8)

B Names and birth dates of Robert's brothers and sisters.

Any information on Robert's skill as a Piper or Pipemaker.
History of the Pipers of Dornoch in Dornoch Library?

Occupation of Robert, Robert's father, Isobel's father if available.

Other reference to Army service (4)

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