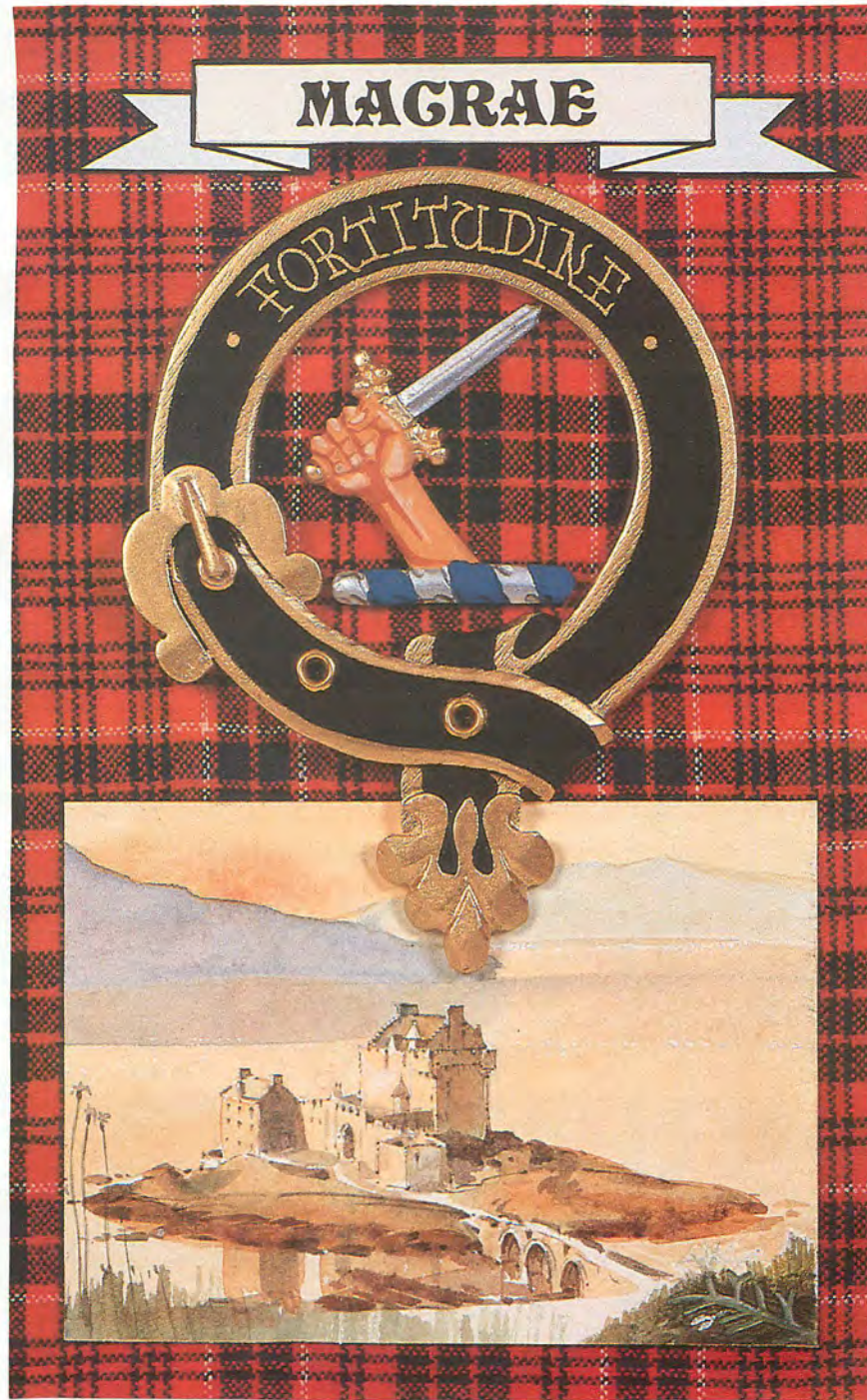


GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DUNCAN McRAE OF HOPETOWN  
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Ken Annett



THE LIFE AND TIMES OF  
DUNCAN McRAE OF HOPETOWN

FOREWORD

Inquiry from American descendants of the Duncan McRae family of Hopetown has prompted recall of the life and times of this veteran Scottish soldier of the Seven Years War and pioneer settler at Hopetown on Bay Chaleur. Sources of information have included search of the early Registers of St.Andrew's Anglican Church dating from the 1820's and the invaluable reminiscences of the late Judge Joseph L.Duguay, a McRae descendant, as recorded in his article, "PIONNIERS DE HOPETOWN", published by the "REVUE D'HISTOIRE DE LA GASPESIE".

DATES

Despite a serious and puzzling discrepancy of date of birth for Duncan in the above-mentioned sources it would appear from known dates of his military career, such as his part in the capture of the French fortress of Louisbourg in 1758 that the birth date of 1740, given by Judge Duguay is correct. The records of St.Andrew's Church, entered by the Rev.Richard Knagg, give Duncan's date of burial as 1822.

SCOTTISH

FAMILY

BACKGROUND

The father of Duncan McRae was a fisherman of the Scottish seaport of Dundee. Located on the North shore of the Firth of Tay, some twelve miles from the sea, Dundee had a long history going back to Pictish settlement and Roman occupation. In the mid-eighteenth century , when Duncan McRae was a young lad, the war between England and France had severely curtailed the fishery and caused a serious recession that made life hard for the McRae and other fisher-folk. It was this situation of poverty that led Duncan to leave home at age seventeen with his parent's blessing and little else except a change of clothing in a bundle on his back. Tradition holds that he was a very tall youth of some seven feet in height and body frame to match. Having said farewell to his family he set out on the road to Edinburgh some fifty miles away.

RECRUIT

As Duncan walked on toward Scotland's Capital he came to a military camp where the men of a Highland Regiment were at drill. He stopped to watch and fell into conversation with the Regiment's recruiting officer who was always on the look-out for tall, robust young men such as Duncan. The officer's offer of food, lodging, uniform and a life of adventure appealed to Duncan who enlisted forthwith. Family tradition holds that it was during the time of his training at this military camp that in his free time he met his wife-to-be, Mary McIntosh.

INTO THE  
FRAY

Duncan McRae's training as a Highland Regiment soldier coincided with that phase of the Seven Years War (1756-1763) when Britain resolved to conquer New France. In 1758 Duncan's Regiment crossed the Atlantic and fought with distinction in the capture of the great French fortress of Louisbourg that had been erected at great cost to guard the entrance to the St. Lawrence. The capture of Louisbourg brought to the attention of the British Government the abilities of a young Army officer, James Wolfe, with the result that he was given command of the 1759 expedition to take Quebec and New France. But in the interim, after the fall of Louisbourg, Wolfe led an expedition to Gaspé Bay to lay waste French fishing stations and supply bases at the entrance to the River St. Lawrence.

[Ref. GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY. No. 005. "THE GASPEE EXPEDITION".]

It is not improbable that Duncan McRae got his first glimpse of Gaspesia as a member of that expedition. However that may be it is certain that he was with his Regiment as part of General James Wolfe's Army that besieged and finally captured fortress Quebec in the following summer of 1759. In that climactic battle of the Plains of Abraham Duncan McRae received a severe wound in the hip. Through the long, anxious winter of 1759-60 he was lodged and well cared for in the home of a M. Papineau. With Spring, and the opening of the river to shipping, he returned to his native Scotland and to marriage with Mary McIntosh.

MARGARET AGNES  
McINTOSH McRAE

Recalling McRae family traditions as to the marriage of Duncan and Margaret upon Duncan's return to Scotland from Quebec, Judge Duguay could only wonder as to how this improbable union had come to be. For whereas Duncan came from a family background of relatively humble fisherfolk the family of Margaret moved in high society circles of the time in Scotland. Where Duncan had limited schooling before undertaking his rude military training Margaret had received a superior education and was a gifted singer. The McIntosh family were so adamantly opposed to the marriage of their daughter to Duncan that the couple eloped and were married privately before boarding ship for Canada. Years would pass before Margaret got in touch with her Scottish family. But like her husband, Duncan, Margaret exhibited the strength of character and the patience of the true pioneer. Her children and grandchildren recalled her as a wise, strong and loving matriarch.

NEW WORLD  
NEW LIFE

Duncan and his bride landed at Quebec after their ocean crossing. There, Duncan met up with two of his veteran soldier friends, Donald Ross, a native of Hopetown, Scotland and Angus McDonald, a native of the northern Scottish Highlands. They had fought with Duncan in the Battle of the Plains in the autumn of 1759. As the employment prospects were not good in Quebec it was decided that they would all go to Gaspé in the hope that the fishery would provide a good living. However their experience as fishermen was a disillusionment because of strife between French and English fishermen. Aware that land grants were available to veteran soldiers they loaded their belongings into two of their fishing boats and set out for the Bay Chaleur coast in search of homesteading lands. Duncan McRae and Donald Ross found land that suited them at the place they called Hopetown after the name of the birthplace of Donald Ross while Angus McDonald chose the mountain slope of Port Daniel to make his home.

GASPE Duncan McRae shared the frustration of many of his fellow  
ROOTS Gaspesian pioneer settlers at long delay in obtaining clear  
 and legal title to his Hopetown lands. But in time that  
 matter was resolved and Duncan was appointed by the Government as a  
 Justice of the Peace in an age when such an official exercised real  
 authority and leadership in the community. Judge Duguay refers to  
 Duncan's "tempérament tellement violent" which must have boded ill  
 for those who broke the Law in the rough and ready society of his  
 time.

FAMILY Four known sons of Duncan and Margaret MacIntosh McRae  
 were DUNCAN II; JOHN; PETER and FARQUHAR.

The youngest son, FARQUHAR (1774-1843) served as a Justice  
 of the Peace and as Grand Voyer (Roads Superintendant) of the  
 District of Gaspé. He and his wife, Margaret Smith had sons Duncan,  
 John, Farquhar II and William and a daughter, Mary.  
 When the Widow Margaret McIntosh McRae died in December, 1842 and  
 was buried by the Rev. George Milne, her son, Farquhar and grandson,  
 Farquhar II were present.



CLAN MACRAE

ARMS: Argent a fess azure  
between three mullets  
in chief and a lion  
rampant in base gules.

CREST: A cubit arm grasping  
a sword proper.

MOTTO: "By Fortitude."

The Macraes are said to have settled in Kintail early in the fourteenth century. Before that time they are supposed to have lived at Clunes, on the Lordship of Lovat, near the southern shore of the Beaully Firth. Like the Macleennans, the Macraes were staunch followers of the Mackenzies of Kintail (afterwards Earls of Seaforth). The Macleennans were standard-bearers to the Lords of Kintail; while the Macraes would appear to have formed the bodyguard of the Chief of Clan Mackenzie (for they were known "as Mackenzie's Shirt of Mail !")

The Macraes were chamberlains of Kintail for many generations and frequently Vicars of the parish and, from 1520 onwards, Constables of Eilean-Donan Castle. The late Constable of Eilean-Donan Castle, Lieutenant-Colonel John Macrae-Gilstrap of Balliemore, recently restored the ancient stronghold, one of the most picturesque in the Highlands. Rev. Farquhar Macrae (1508-1662) was Vicar of Kintail for 44 years. One of his sons, Rev. John Macrae (1614-1673) was progenitor of the Macraes of Conchra, a family that has been honourably represented in the British Army for several generations.

Macrae of Inverinate claimed the chiefship of the Clan and Sir Colin Macrae, representative of that House, petitioned Lyon in 1909 but the claim was opposed by a descendant of Conchra who alleged there was no Chief of the Clan Macrae. The chiefship of this Clan has not yet been settled (as of 1952) but that there is NO "representer" of the first Macrae is an untenable proposition.

In 1778 the Earl of Seaforth raised "the 78th Regiment" or "Seaforth's Highlanders" (afterwards the 72nd Regiment). So strong did the Macraes muster in its ranks that during a rising

of the regiment the same year (caused by the apprehension of the soldiers that the Government did not mean to treat them fairly) the emeute was styled "The Affair of the Wild Macraes !"

The Macraes of Clunes would seem to have stood in high favour with the Frasers of Lovat. Mary, daughter of the late Lord Bisset, who carried the estates of Lovat to the Frasers, was fostered with the Macraes of Clunes for whom she naturally entertained the highest respect, in which feeling her husband cordially participated, and a firm alliance continued long afterwards to subsist between their descendents. It is said that a stone was erected at the door of Lord Lovat's Castle intimating that no Macrae should lodge without while a Fraser resided within.

From; THE CLANS, SEPTS AND REGIMENTS  
OF THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS.

Frank Adam. 4th Edition, 1952





CLAN MACINTOSH

ARMS: Quarterly -

1. Or, a lion rampant gules.
2. Argent, a dexter hand couped fesswise, grasping a man's heart proper.
3. Azure, a boar's head couped or.
4. Or, a lymphad azure, oars erect in saltire gules.

CREST: A cat salient proper.

MOTTO: "Touch not the cat without a glove."

The Macintoshes are supposed to derive their name from the Gaelic word TOISACH and from the Thaneage of Pelly in Moray... They were later on held to have inherited the chiefship of Clan Chattan and both designations thereafter descended with the estates by entail and tanistry. [Ref. GASPE OF YESTERDAY #214 "THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DANIEL McPHERSON"]

According to Nisbet (who states that he got the narrative from the Laird of Macintosh) the 1st Chief of Macintosh was Shaw, second son to Duncan, the second of that name, Earl of Fife, who accompanied King Malcolm IV in his expedition in suppressing the rebels in Moray in 1160; and was rewarded with many lands in the north, and was made Constable of the Castle of Inverness. He was commonly called "MAC-AN-TOSSICH-MHIC DUEBH", which is to say, Thane MacDuff's son, from which the name Macintosh became a surname to posterity.

In the 17th Century the chiefship of Clan Chattan was a disputed point between the Macintoshes and Macphersons... However it was decided by Lyon in 1672 that Macintosh was Chief of the Name of Macintosh and Chief of Clan Chattan.

During the Revolution of 1688 which drove the Stuarts from the throne the Macintoshes were on the side of the new Government. In 1715 however, Lachlan, 20th Chief Macintosh was active on the side of the Jacobites. On the outbreak of the "Rising of the '45", Angus, 22nd Chief Macintosh was in command of one of the companies of the Black Watch and did not raise his Clan for Prince Charles. His wife, the Lady Macintosh, however took a prominent part on the Jacobite side

and raised Clan Chattan for the Young Chevalier... The famous episode of the "Rout of Moy", when Lord Louden's force was routed by a handfull of Lady Macintosh's retainers, was due to the boldness and stratagem of that brave lady.

The ancient seat of the Chief of Macintosh was on an island in Loch Moy and subsequently at Moy Hall near Inverness.

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