

NOTES
of the
FAMILY HISTORY & CONNECTIONS
of
MR. JOHN MACDONALD
of
LITTLE BERNERA,
ISLAND OF LEWIS, SCOTLAND
by
Dr. R. Ross
June 1896
Mauritius

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Port Louis,
Mauritius, April, 1902.

I wrote to my brother-in-Law, Dr. Ross, Barvas, Lewis, in the year 1896, asking him to kindly send me notes of the Family History of both my late dear Father and Mother as far as could be traced, and the following notes were sent to me which I am sure will be most interesting to dear Friends and relatives of our Family.

MURDO STEWART MACDONALD,
Surveyor to Lloyd's Register,
Mauritius.

JOHN McDONALD^x, Tacksman, Bernera, Island of Lewis, Scotland. Born at little Bernera House May 1804, died at Bernera Sound House Sept. 1880.

John was the eldest son of Donald McDonald, Tacksman, who was born at Drovernish, in the year 1765, and died at little Bernera, where John was born, in his 66th year, in 1831.

John's grandfather was Neil McDonald, who came from Lochs, settled at Drovernish, and married Catherine (Catriona), daughter of Donald McAulay, and sister of George McAulay, Tacksman, Linshader, whose grandfather was Angus McAulay, one of the sons of Domhul Cam MacDhoughail of Uig. In this connection John was the *seventh* in descent from the famous Donald Cam.

Note that this Donald Cam is the first McAulay who figures in the ancient history of Lewis; and that primarily in connection with his capture along with Domhul Dubh in 1597, and his daring and marvellous escape from his captors. Domhul Cam was also one of the invincible band who held out so bravely along with Neil McLeod in the island of Berrisay, and surrendered only when their wives and children were exposed on a sunk rock at ebb tide in their presence by their enemies. For many other

x Related to descendants of Iain mac Skomhairle Bhàin of Meavaig (GN VIII. 152).

interesting traditions concerning Donald Cam and his grandfather John Roy, see Vol. XIV. pp. 363-431, Scottish Society of Antiquaries.

Note further that the illustrious Lord McAulay was another of the descendants of this Donald Cam. Thus one of Donald's sons was the Rev. Aulay Mc Aulay, minister, first of Tiree and Coll, and afterwards of Harris, about the beginning of the 18th century. This Aulay's eldest son, John, born in 1720, was the Rev. John McAulay, the oft translated minister first of Barra, next of S. Uist, then of Lismore, afterwards of Inveraray, and lastly of Cardross. One of John's sons was Zachary McAulay (Gaelic, Sgàire), Governor of Sierra Leone, and one of Wilberforce's doughtiest co-workers in securing the emancipation of slaves and the suppression of slavery. Zachary's eldest son was the great Thomas Basington (Gaelic: Bàaby) McAulay, born at Rothley Temple, England, 25th Oct. 1800; and so we see that this son, who became Lord McAulay, and whose writings immortalize him, was the fifth in descent from Donald Cam of Uig in poor old Lewis.

Note also that Mr. McDonald's grandmother was sister of George McAulay, Farmer, Linshader, whose son Donald was father of Dr. McAulay—an *Doctor Ruadh*—seventh in descent from Donald Cam, of Lillias, wife of the Rev. Robert Failyson, once of Lochs, and afterwards of Helmsdale; and of Captain McAulay, of Stornoway, father of William and Kenneth, once of India; and of Mr William Ross and Kenneth Smith^x of Stornoway—thus showing the relationship between Mr. McDonald and these old Stornoway families. in/

Note further, in connection with the blood

^x Recte, "the wives of Mr William Ross and Kenneth Smith."

relationship between ourselves, that Mr. McDonald's great grandmother was the wife of Allan Ross (*Ruadh*) of Crobeg,^x Lochs—my great grandfather; so that your father (Mr. McD.) and I were third cousins, and you and my children are fourth cousins, besides being in the relationship of uncle and nephew and niece.

The relationship between our families and that of the MacIvers of Gress, represented now by Evander McIver of Scourie and a few others, is as follows:—The forementioned Mrs. Allan Ross of Crobeg was sister of Evander McIver, father of Lewis McIver of Gress, father of Evander McIver of Scourie, and grandfather of Lewis McIver, Esquire, M.P. for West Edinburgh, who is my *third* and your *fourth* cousin, and who was recently knighted and is now known as Sir Lewis McIver, M.P., Torquay, England, married to a wealthy heiress of Jewish extraction, one of the Montefiore family.

Mr. McDonald's father was married twice. His first wife was his own first cousin, Isabella McAulay, sister of Donald McAulay of Linshader; by whom he had only two daughters, Ann and Barbara. Ann married a man of the name of Omond, a Norwegian, with whom she lived first at Gravesend, and latterly at St. Margaret's Hope, Orkney. Barbara married her first cousin, Alistair McKenzie *Mac Iain Mhic Ailein Ruaidh* (the Allan Ross of Crobeg above mentioned), by whom she had nine or ten of a family. The family emigrated to Picton, Canada; and their descendants are still there, and in comfortable circumstances.

His second wife was Ann, daughter of Donald McLennan, Tacksman, Reef, son of Duncan Mc

^x Recte, Allan MacKenzie of Crossbost, whose daughter Jean married Roderick Ross, tacksman of Crobeg, Dr. Ross's grandfather.

Lennan, Tacksman, Reef, son of Murdo McLennan of little Bernera. By this wife he had five sons and five daughters. The sons were John, Neil, Donald, George and Duncan; and the daughters Margaret, Kate, Isabella, Annabella and Mary. The two youngest sons, George and Duncan, left home when they were young men, and there have been no accounts of them for a long time. You will be able yourself to fill up a short biographical sketch of the rest of your uncles and aunts by the father's side.

Reverting to the history of the McLennans, who came to be united with the family by marriage as above, we find that Murdo McLennan of Little Bernera was one of three brothers among whom little Bernera and Croy were divided. They were the sons of John McLennan, *Mac Rhuaividh Mhic a Chléivich*, who lived at Kintail, and who, on account of his great sagacity and wisdom, was held in high esteem by the then Proprietrix of Kintail who lived in Brahan Csstle. This led to a feeling of jealousy on the Proprietor's part; and the result was that finally he got McLennan banished to Kirkabost in Bernera, Lewis, allowing him Tolsta for summer grazing; and giving Little Bernera and Croir to his three sons. The two at Bernera did not get on well together; and the one at Croir was prevailed upon by his wife to migrate to Ness, her native place. On his way there with a boat load of Barley he was driven off the coast in a storm, and supposed to be lost. But long afterwards he was met at Gottenberg by a Stornoway ship's captain, by whom he sent a stockingful of gold coins to his brother Murdo at Little Bernera. Of this Murdo, Mr McDonald's great grandfather, all that need be said further is that his sister was great grandmother of Roderick Nicolson, ship-owner, Stornoway, whose son founded

and partially endowed the Nicolson institution at Stornoway—an Institution which promises to confer excellent educational benefits on the young of the Lewis.

The following anecdotes are related of the Kintail Proprietrix and her sagacious councillor John McLennan.—One of her ladyship's fancies was to have a fresh cow's tongue for her dinner each day. McLennan thought this extravagant; and, by way of precenting her with an object lesson demonstrating the enormity of her extravagance, he led a drove of three hundred and sixty-five cows from Kintail on one of his visits and posted them on the lawn to the front of the castle. On her ladyship expressing her surprise at seeing such a large herd of cattle in one place, McLennan pointed out to her that that was the exact number which was slaughtered yearly to supply her table with its daily fresh tongue! It is not related what effect this reproof had on her ladyship's taste. On another occasion John was led into one of her apartments in which there was a fire kept going with cinnamon bark. In response to her ladyship's praises of the sweet perfume from the fire, John replied that so penetrating was it that it reached them all the way to cro-nan loagh in Kintail—meaning of course that her extravagance was paid for by her poor distant tenants!

Mrs John McDonald (Catherine Stewart) was daughter of Kenneth Stewart, Tacksman, Hacklete, Bernera, who emigrated from Skye, along with his relative, the Rev. Hugh McLeod, minister of Uig. Mrs McDonald's brothers, were John, Murdo, Roderick and Donald; and her sisters Janet, Ann, Barabella and Peggy. All the brothers emigrated to

5/ America, except John who went to Auckland, New Zealand. Ann and Barabella also went to America -- to Poosilir in Canada West. All were well and in comfortable circumstances when heard from last, some years ago.

w/ Mrs McDonald's mother was Mary, daughter of Farquhar Smith, Tacksman/ Earshader, son of Duncan Smith, son of Farquhar Smith who came from Lochs, and who was married to Barabelle daughter of the John McLennan from Kintail referred to above. Thus Mr and Mrs McDonald were distinctly related to one another through the McLennan grafting. Besides, Farquhar Smith, who came from Lochs, was nearly related to my mother's family, the Valtos McLeods; and accordingly I was this way distantly related to Mrs McDonald.!

Barabelle McLennan had been married before she married Farquhar, and had one daughter by that marriage. This daughter was the grandmother of Murdo McAulay, game-keeper, Fin-Castle, Harris.

Murdo McLeod, *Mac Iain Mhic Mhurchaidh*, Merchant, Stornoway, who built and occupied Number 33, Kenneth Street, Stornoway—the house I once owned and occupied and in which Annabella was born—and who owned much other property in the place, was Mrs McDonald's maternal great grand uncle. He had two sons, Norman and Donald, and one daughter—all of whom married and subsequently left the place.

R. Ross.

