

"We all descended from a king and a hanged man." - Jean de La Bruyère

If the first name of the ancestor of the Restigouche McIntyre had come through oral tradition among some descendants, he remained unknown to generations of genealogists. Oral tradition - which was also unknown to me before the publication of this study - does not constitute proof.

Who was this patriarch? The period sources are contradictory. Parish records sometimes call him Edward, Eleanor or Haleonor - a rather peculiar name for a man, even then. The name of his wife is also unclear. Is it Margaret McKenzie, or Brigitte? In fact, only the mention of Marguerite McKenzie proved to be accurate.

Arrival at Restigouche

The McIntyre family moved in about 1798 to Charlo (formerly named Rivière-à-l'Anguille- eel river), onto land bordered by the River Charlo.

In the described marriages of children of this patriarch, the parents' names vary, confusing any researcher whose aim was to attack the subject. Even the death of the patriarch in Charlo, October 15, 1815, describes him as being still named Eleanor McKenter (sic). In family trees published on the internet, he is more often called Leonard and Edward McIntyre, as documented in the wedding records of his eldest son Jean-Baptiste in 1797 in Carleton, on the north shore of the bay.

After several years of research, I finally traced the origins of this prolific family of the Restigouche, under a genealogical survey published in the winter issue of Memories [1].

In fact, the patriarch is called Neil MacIntyre (or Mac an Nial does Saoir, in Gaelic).

From Barra

(photograph description:) The Kisimul Castle, seat of the chiefs of the MacNeil clan at Castlebay, Isle of Barra, Scotland, August 15, 2012. The Barra MacNeils and McIntyres also swarmed the center of Cape Breton in the early 19th century. - Acadie Nouvelle: Denis Savard

Neil and his young family left the island of Barra, at the southern tip of the Hebrides in Scotland, with his brothers John, and Roderick Angus MacIntyre, in the spring of 1772. Scotland had become Protestant for several decades, especially since the Jacobites' defeat at Culloden in 1746. But the island of Barra remains sturdily Catholic, as is the leader of the clan master of the island, Roderick MacNeil and his ally John MacDonald Glenaladale.

The latter sold its possessions in Scotland to found a Catholic colony on Île Saint-Jean (now Prince Edward Island.). His brother Donald MacDonald leads the first group of settlers there in 1772, recruiting, in passing the MacIntyre brothers and other "Barra People" before taking off on the ship Alexander headed for St. John Island.

Laird (or lord) MacDonald wanted a feudal colony modeled after the old country, where farmers are enslaved to their Lord. But discontent rapidly rose among the settlers, who were unhappy to be subject to a feudal lease while the other settlers of the time normally obtained their own concessions.

In the fall, after a disappointing first season, a group of "Barra People", among them Neil MacIntyre, ask to terminate their lease. In order to achieve this, the group is subject to a heavy fine of 100 pounds (£) or £ 50 per family. Sources suggest that this debt was never paid, but also that it seems to have been erased by the creditor.

Either way, these families leave the island before the winter, and first travel to Montmagny in Quebec to join the Scots already integrated into the French-Canadian population.

Hebridean Scots still speak Gaelic, except for those exposed to some education. These families thus seem to transition from the Gaelic to French, after their establishment in the Saint Lawrence Valley.

Anyway, Neil and his family soon moved to St. Francis of Rivière-du-Sud, where they will go on to have several other children. They manage an inn, which is probably rented, until 1792. Thereafter, they are found in the Scott (geographical) area, in Sainte-Marie-de-Beauce, where they build a new hostel.

Back in the Maritimes

The eldest son Iain - or Jean-Baptiste – becomes involved in his uncle Angus McIntyre's fishery enterprises in the Gaspésie. This is probably why he appears in Carleton in the Baie-des-Chaleurs before 1797. In January 1797, he married a local girl, Reine d'Amboise 'named' Bergeron. It was at this wedding that Jean-Baptiste McIntyre incorrectly called his father "Edward" McIntyre. Until then, the father had always used his first name Neil, that priests translated into 'Noël'. The proceedings therefore call upon Noël, but the documents are signed Neil Mac Intyre every time. It is he who suddenly abandons his name as of 1797, coinciding with the arrival of Jean-Baptiste in the Baie des Chaleurs area.

The debt left 25 years earlier in Prince Edward Island seems to persistently haunt the patriarch, and everything suggests that this is why Neil suddenly tried to hide his identity in Acadia.

However, other evidence, in contrast, suggests that the debt had been cleared. Faced with general discontent before the arrival of the lord on the island in 1773, Glenaladale had canceled several of the leases initiated by his brother the previous year. He also helped many of the settlers elsewhere, at his expense. How can punishing some, and then paradoxically helping others in the same situation, be justified?

After Jean-Baptiste's marriage, almost all his family will join him, and settle in Rivière-à-l'Anguille (eel river) in 1798. Only his sister Catherine (Beauport) and his brother Honoré McIntyre (St. Hyacinthe) will remain in Quebec.

His signature betrays

Neil Mac Intyre's signature, in September 1772, Isle Saint-Jean. - Courtesy Archives of Prince Edward Island.

It is mainly thanks to the neat signature "Neil Mac Intyre" that we can say today without hesitation that Edward / Haléonore McIntyre is the same person as Neil said Noel McIntyre, arrived in 1772.

He signed two proxies at his home in Charlo in 1801 and 1802 - in the National Archives of Quebec - to sell land grants in Granby and Milton in Quebec.

He had obtained the concessions for serving the "English" militia during Quebec's siege in 1775-1776, from American revolutionaries. Now these signatures of 1801 and 1802 are identical to those that are found earlier in parish registers and contracts awarded in Quebec, and those on the termination of the lease in September 1772, on Prince Edward Island.

A debt repaid

Phill McIntyre (see below) participated in the DNA component of this study, and wanted to visit the Glenaladale Scotchfort in Prince Edward Island; the visit occurred recently. Informed of this likely forgotten ancestor's debt, he was keen to make a major donation to the Society of Scottish immigrants in the area, for their proposed acquisition of the former colony domain, which they hope to reclaim. Their project is still far from achieving its funding target, however, and is actively soliciting donations for this project.

Notable McIntyre

Among the descendants of the Acadian Neil MacIntyre from Barra and Charlo, we can count Senator Paul McIntyre, the singer-songwriter Kevin McIntyre and the director of the cultural center Celtic Skye Theatre Performing Arts Center in Carthage, in the state of Maine, Phil McIntyre.

For further information on this study, also visit my website for the MacIntyre family.

[1] De Barra Island in the Bay of Chaleur, finally unveiled the mystery of MacIntyre, *Memoirs of the French-Canadian Genealogical Society*, vol. 65, No. 4 (specifications No. 282), Winter 2014, pp 303-322.