

THE CLAN MACFARLANE

THE DIVISION OF THE CLAN.
ANCESTRY OF DAVID D. McNAIR

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE

This little sketch — or series of sketches — has been prepared largely for the children and grandchildren of David D. McNair. The history of the Clan MacFarlane is drawn in great measure from the accounts by William Buchanan of Auchmar (Edinburgh, 1775) and William F. Skene (London, 1837). The story of the division of the clan is taken from the "Celtic monthly; a magazine for Highlanders," published in Glasgow. For much of the information in regard to the later MacNair (McNair) ancestry I am indebted to Theodore M. McNair's "Genealogical record of the descendants of John McNair and Christiana Walker" (Dansville, N. Y., 1880). All the works cited in the Bibliography with the exception of this last named volume, are in the Library of Congress, Washington.

Mary W. MacNair,
Washington, 1914.

THE CLAN MAC FARLANE

Concerning the origin of the earls of Lennox there is much uncertainty. William Skene, in his "Highlanders of Scotland," tells us that during the lifetime of David I the earldom formed a part of the principality of Cumbria, and claims that the family of Lennox, before they acquired the earldom, were hereditary seneschals of Stratherne and bailies of the abthainrie (or abbacy) of Dull in Atholl.

We have the account of Peter Walsh, in his "Animadversions on the history of Ireland," who derives their descent from Mainus, son of the Irish king of Leinster, and Mungenia, daughter of Fincormachus, king of Scotland. William Buchanan of Auchmar considers this account "too fabulous to deserve any credit," and continues, "Our own antiquaries with far greater probability, which is also confirmed by a constant and inviolable tradition, derive the origin of this ancient family from Aluin, or Alcuin, a younger son of Kenneth III, king of Scotland, who died in the year 994."

However this may be, we find that all historians agree in believing that a certain earl of Lennox, also named Aluin, had two sons, Malduin, or Maldowen, heir to the earldom, and Gilchrist, ancestor of the MacFarlanes. About the year 1200 Gilchrist obtained from his elder brother a grant of certain lands of Arrochar. The charter from Maldowen, earl of Lennox, to his brother Gilchrist, is still preserved, and the lands at all times the principal seat of the MacFarlane clan, continued in their possession for six hundred years.

Arrochar is a beautiful district at the head of Loch Lomond, situated not many miles distant from the city of

Glasgow. Buchanan, writing in 1775, says "The laird of MacFarlane had a very good old castle in an island of Lochlomond, called Island-Rowglas, which was burnt by the English during Cromwell's usurpation, and never since repaired. He had also another pretty good house and gardens in an island of the same loch, called Island-Vow. But his principal residence is at Inverioch or New Tarbet, which is a handsome house beautified with pleasant gardens, situated in the paroch of Arrochar and shire of Dumbarton near the head of that large loch or arm of the sea called Loch-Long, where there is excellent fishing for herring, and all other sorts of sea-fish."

Gilchrist left issue a son Duncan, called in old charters "Duncan filius Gilchrist," or "Mac Gilchrist," and to this Duncan was given a charter by Malcolm, then earl of Lennox, confirming the grant of the lands of Arrochar. Duncan married his cousin Matilda, daughter to the earl of Lennox and their son was named Malduin or Maldonich.

Malduin's son and successor was named Partholan, or Parlan (Gaelic for Bartholomew), from whose name the family assumed the patronymical surname of MacPharlan. The three generations before this had been known as Mac Gilchrist, from Gilchrist, brother of Malduin.

To Partholan succeeded his son Malcolm, who was in turn succeeded by his son Duncan, sixth laird of MacFarlane. Soon after the death of Duncan the ancient line of the earls of Lennox became extinct at the death in 1460 of Isabella, countess of Lennox, whose aged father had been beheaded by James I, king of Scotland.

Three families thereupon laid claim to the honors and titles of the earldom of Lennox, the MacFarlanes claiming them as heirs male, and offering powerful resistance to the claims of the Stewarts of Darnley, who were descended from a female branch of the Lennox family. The stout resistance of the MacFarlanes was all to no purpose, how-

ever, and appears to have resulted in the almost total destruction of the clan, the chief and his family falling in defense of the cause, and many being scattered abroad for refuge to distant parts of the kingdom. At this juncture the ruin of the clan was happily prevented by the support given by one of its houses to the Darnley family, whereupon its head, Andrew MacFarlane, married the daughter of John Stewart, lord of Darnley and earl of Lennox, and was put in possession of most of their former property.

Hereafter the MacFarlanes appear to have been loyal supporters of the lowland earls of Lennox. Little is known of the clan for several generations and they seem to have enjoyed a period of prosperity, protected in the possession of their ancient property by the powerful earls whose standard they followed. In the sixteenth century Duncan MacFarlane of that ilk is frequently mentioned as an adherent of Mathew, earl of Lennox. He was present with the earls of Lennox and Glencairn and three hundred of his followers at the disastrous battle of Glasgow Muir in the year 1544, and shared in the ruin and forfeiture which followed. Owing to the intercession of friends, however, he was restored and granted a remission under the privy seal. The earl of Lennox set off for England, and having married a niece of Henry VIII, soon after returned reinforced with some English troops. Duncan dared not join him in person, but sent a relative, Walter MacFarlane of Tarbet, with a force of four hundred men. Holinshed says, "In these exploytes the erle had with him Walter Macfarlane, of Tarbet, and seven score of men of the head of Lennox, that spake the Irishe and the English Scottish tongues, light footmen, well armed in shirtes of mayle, with bows and two-handed swords."

Duncan was one of the first of much consequence to make open profession of the Christian religion in the kingdom. He is reported to have been slain, with many of his

clan, at the battle of Pinkey in September 1547. Duncan's son, Andrew, took an active part in the civil wars of the time, and ranged himself on the side of the regent, James, earl of Murray, half-brother to Mary, Queen of Scots. In this respect his conduct differed from that of almost all the highland chiefs, who warmly espoused the cause of Queen Mary. At the battle of Langside, in May, 1568, he behaved so valiantly with five hundred of his own name and dependents, that they were acknowledged by all to be the chief cause of the victory. The clan took in this battle three of Queen Mary's standards, which were long preserved in the family. The regent bestowed upon the MacFarlanes, among other rewards, their honorable crest and motto, viz., a demi-savage proper, holding in his dexter hand a sheaf of arrows, and pointing with his sinister to an imperial crown, or. Motto, This I'll defend.

"In 1587 Andrew MacFarlane of Arrochar appears in the roll of landlords, who were made by Parliament responsible for their clans. In 1594 the MacFarlanes were denounced as robbers and oppressors, and in 1604 the old standing feud between them and the Colquhouns culminated in the slaughter of the Laird of Luss, Sir Humphrey Colquhoun, by the chief of the clan MacFarlane. In 1608 they were declared rebels by law. This did not prevent their following Montrose in 1644-5, and their wild pibroch, 'Hoggil-nam-Bo,' was heard in many of his battles. At Bothwell Bridge, in 1679, they were among the foremost in charging the gateway through which the guards charged. In 1745 they fought gallantly for 'Prince Charlie.'"

"In the time of the last chief of the clan MacFarlane who was laird of Arrochar . . . war broke out between America and Great Britain. MacFarlane was heavily taxed and was also deeply in debt. His family had been reared in luxury. Gambling with cards was then considered respectable. He entertained with a princely hospitality that the

revenues of the estate could not support. He sold an estate that he owned in Jamaica for £8000, but could not avert the threatened ruin, and in 1784 . . . the barony of Arrochar, which for six hundred years had been in the possession of the MacFarlanes, passed into the hands of strangers."

"The illustrations of Robert Ronald McLan give the coat of arms of this family . . . and above the device, the name as MacPharlan. In the next paragraph he writes the name MacFarlane. Browne, in his 'History of the Highlands,' uses the name MacPharlan and Macfarlane. Sir Walter Scott spells the name MacFarlane, in 'Waverly,' and in the introduction to 'Rob Roy.' In 'Cadyow Castle' he speaks of the 'wild Macfarlane's plaided clan.'"

(The three extracts given above are from the History of the Clan MacFarlane by Mrs. C. M. Little).

The armorial bearings of the MacFarlanes are, argent, a saltier engrailed, cantoned with four roses, gules, this being the arms of the old family of Lennox. The supporters (marks of nobility, allowed by the courtesy of Scotland to all chiefs of clans) are two Highlanders dressed in belted plaids of appropriate tartan, with drawn swords and bows proper. Crest, a demi-savage holding a sheaf of arrows in his dexter hand, and pointing with his sinister to an imperial crown, or. Motto, "This I'll defend," and on a compartment "Loch Sloidh."

"The suaicheantas, or badge, is muilleag, cranberry bush . . . The cath-ghairm, war cry, or battle shout, is 'Loch Sloidh' pronounced sloy, the lake of the host, the plain along its bank being the place of rendezvous for the clan previous to an expedition."

(From The Clans of the Scottish Highlands, by James Logan).

The brilliant MacFarlane tartan is red, green, black, and white, red greatly predominating. Clothed in such a garb, we may well believe that when "MacFarlane stepped forth in the bloom of his vigor, his sons marched behind like a bright ridge of flame."

THE MAC FARLANES GATHERING

Author unknown.

Send the fiery cross swift o'er the dark glens and fountains,
Kindle the beacon on dreary Ross-Dhu;
Let hundreds blaze high on the Arrochar mountains,
The flowers of Macfarlane will soon be in view.

Bid the pibroch sound bravely through gloomy Glenfruin,
Though Macgregor be backed by the proud "Sider Roy";
He marches to battle, he marches to ruin;
We'll welcome him there with the shout of "Loch Sloy."

When the clan is insulted — for honor's their darling —
They will die on the heath if they cannot prevail;
For never a clan like the clan of Macfarlane
Trod the glen of the Saxon, or hill of the Gael.

When round by the side of Benlomond they're wending,
Their proud, stately march fills the bosom with joy;
While the pibroch its wild stormy measure is blending,
With "This I'll defend," and the shout of "Loch Sloy."

Macfarlane steps forth in the bloom of his vigor;
His sons march behind like a bright ridge of flame;
Now welcome to battle, ye sons of Clan Gregor,
Macfarlane descends to the field of his fame.

Bid the war-pipe resound through the wilds of Glenfruin;
Let the claymore in strength sweep round and destroy;
Macfarlane will fall, or Macgregor meet ruin; —
On, on to the battle, my heroes, "Loch Sloy!"

THE DIVISION OF THE CLAN AND ORIGIN OF THE NAME MAC NAIR

Turning now from the general history of the Clan MacFarlane to the history of one of its branches, it is interesting to note that the name MacNair (Macnayr) is said to have appeared in documentary papers as early as 1390, more than 500 years ago. Since the MacFarlane clan did not receive their patronymical surname until the time of Parlan, great-grandson of Gilchrist who flourished early in the 13th century, we may see at what an early date in the clan history the MacNair sept began its separate existence.

Alexander MacBain, in his "Etymological dictionary of the Gaelic language" (Stirling, 1911) is responsible for the following statement: "Mac-nair, Gaelic *M'An-uidhir*; for *MacIain uidhir*, son of dun (*odhar*) John [son of John the Swarthy] . . . Such is the source of the Gairloch branch of the name. The Perthshire sept appears in documents as *M'Inayr* (1468), *Macnayr* (1390), which is explained as *M'an oighre*, son of the heir, *M'Nuirs* in Cowal (1685), John *Maknewer* (1596 in Dunoon), Tho. *M'Nuyer* (1681, Inverness). Prof. Mackinnon suggested *M'An-fhuibhur*, son of the smith or *faber*; nor should *M'Anfhuidhir*, the stranger's son, be overlooked as a possible etymology."

The "Celtic monthly, a magazine for Highlanders" has, in its issue for May 1904 an article on Major J. F. A. McNair, which begins with these words: "A most interesting volume could be written on clan sept names and the stories associated with their origin. Many of these curious

departures from the parent name were occasioned by an historic or personal incident, which gave rise to some pet name, often crystallising in course of time into a surname more potent than the original from which it sprung. As the subject of our sketch this month is a distinguished representative of an influential sept of a powerful clan, we may be excused for referring briefly to the origin of the name. In our March issue . . . 'Fionn' in his sketch of the historical clan MacFarlane, related the circumstances in the history of that clan which gave birth to the well-known name of M'Nair — *Clann an Oighre*, whose name is condensed into In-uir, children of the heir. Various authorities favor other derivations, but the above, which has the approval of Dr. MacBain, a learned authority in Gaelic matters, is generally accepted as being the most authentic, because of its traditional origin. Arrochar, a beautiful district at the head of Loch Lomond, being the ancient territory of the MacFarlanes and situated not many miles distant from Glasgow, it is not surprising that the M'Nairs, a leading sept of the MacFarlanes, should be found occupying prominent positions in the business enterprises of that city for more than two centuries past."

The story referred to, related by "Fionn" in the March issue of the Celtic monthly, is as follows: "About the close of the 15th century the Clan MacFarlane was divided into two sections, and in the clan country old people still refer to the distinction. The tradition is given as follows in a ms. by the late Rev. James Dewar, Arrochar. In the reign of James III of Scotland the Laird of MacFarlane was slain at the battle of Sauchieburn, near Stirling, in the year 1488*, leaving a widow, who was an Englishwoman, the mother of one son. He also left a son by his first wife, who was the heir, but this son and heir had the misfortune

* If MacBain's statement is correct that the name "Macnair" appears in documents as early as 1590 we must place at least one hundred years before the battle of Sauchieburn the story of the wicked step-mother and the loyal children of the heir.

to be proud, vain, silly and a little weak-minded. His half-brother was possessed of a beautiful piebald horse, which had been given to him by some of his mother's relatives. The elder brother was about to set out for Stirling, and was very desirous of riding this horse, wishing, as the young chief, to make a very grand appearance. The step-mother refused the loan of the animal, alleging, as her reason for so doing, her fear that it would not be safely brought back. Her denial only made the young man the more persistent. Finally a written agreement was drawn up, and signed by the heir, in which he promises to forfeit to his half-brother his lands of Arrochar, in case the horse was not safely returned. The step-mother bribed the groom in attendance to poison the horse on the second day from home, and the estate accordingly went to the younger brother. The clan refused to receive the latter as their chief, but combined to acknowledge the elder brother as such, though not possessed of the lands of Arrochar. Some years later, by special act of Parliament, these lands were restored to the rightful heir. The dependents who supported the rightful heir were known as '*Clann an oighre*'—children of the heir, hence the Mac Nuirs and MacNairs, some of whom are now Weirs, are regarded as septs of the Clan Farlane. On the other hand those who supported the half-brother were called '*Sliochd an eich bhallaich*'—the followers of the piebald horse."

THE ANCESTRY OF DAVID D. MCNAIR

About the year 1690 a Scotchman by name of MacNair is said to have left his home on the banks of the River Dee in Scotland, and sought a new home in the north of Ireland. In the same year his son, John McNair (1690-1762), was born in Ireland, county of Donegal, in the parish of Taboyne. He married Christiana Walker (1700-1782), who was also born in the same county, in the parish of Raphoe, about eleven miles distant. Their children were William (1727-1823), Margaret, Robert, Andrew, John (1738-1818), and Ann, the four elder of whom were born in Ireland.

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In 1738 John McNair, with his family, left Ireland and set sail for America. His blind mother, and two of his children, Robert and Andrew, died on shipboard and were buried at sea. The others landed in Philadelphia, and went to Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and later to Northampton County, Pennsylvania, where the family lived many years, and where John and Christiana died and were buried.

In 1798 the eldest son, William, now an old man, sought an uncrowded home for himself and his children in the wilderness of western New York, and coming to the Genesee Valley, settled in Sonyea, near Mt. Morris. In the year 1804 John followed his brother to the Genesee Valley, and settled with his family in what is now West Sparta, near Dansville.

The wife of William was Margaret Wilson (1734-1783), and their family consisted of seven children, of whom a daughter, Margaret (1778-1831), was the youngest. (William married as a second wife Sarah Horner, and had four children).

John's wife was Margaret Denny (1741-1812), and they had eleven children of whom David (1772-1817) was the fifth child and fourth son. In the year 1805 David McNair and Margaret McNair were married. Their children were William (died in infancy), John L. (1808-1877), Margaret Wilson (1810-1833), David Denny (1814-1892), Phebe Torbert (1817-1904).

David D. McNair was born in the year 1814 in the homestead three miles north of the village of Dansville, his father dying when the boy was only three years of age. Early in life he engaged in the mercantile business in Dansville with his brother, John L. McNair, and continued in this business for several years. He afterwards moved to Scottsburg, but returned to Dansville in 1866 and became one of the incorporators of the Woodruff Paper Company, which he served for many years in the capacity of secretary and treasurer and business manager.

He was three times married, his first wife, Mary Bradner, dying in the year 1846, at the early age of twenty-six years. She left two daughters, Fanny Bradner and Julia Faulkner. He later married Susan Hatmaker, of Penn Yan, who lived but a few years, leaving one son, Clarence Irving. In 1867 he married Sarah A. Pierson, who survived him many years, dying in July 1910, in Forest Glen, Maryland, near Washington. Her children were Caroline Jessup and Mary Wilson.

D. D. McNair died January 8, 1892, in the little village of Dansville where most of his long life had been passed. The following words were written of him by one of his fellow-townsmen. "Nearly all his life Mr. McNair was a member of the Presbyterian church, and for a quarter of a century he served as one of the ruling elders. He was a regular representative of the church at meetings of Presbytery and the General Assembly when delegates were sent, his abilities always being recognized by his being placed on

important committees: his seat in the church on stated occasions of worship was never vacant unless absence from town or severe illness prevented his attendance, and in the prayer meetings he was an able assistant to the pastor. His intelligence and ability were of a high order and his piety none doubted. Of him his pastor has said: 'Mr. McNair filled a large place in the thought and affections of the people of our church and of the community at large. He was a man of rare excellence, a true friend, a wise counselor, a generous and warm-hearted brother. In his death the Presbyterian church loses a member, than whom none was more loyal and devoted.' "

LINEAGE OF DAVID D. MCNAIR

John McNair 1690-1762	<i>William</i> (1727-1823)
Christiana Walker 1700-1782	Margaret Robert Andrew <i>John</i> (1738-1818) Ann
William McNair 1727-1823	John Hugh Charles Christiana Sarah William <i>Margaret</i> (1778-1831)
Margaret Wilson 1734-1783	William Christiana John William Denny <i>David</i> (1772-1817) Samuel Margaret James Andrew Robert Sarah
John McNair 1738-1818	William John L. Margaret Wilson <i>David Denny</i> (1814-1892) Phebe Torbert (Kelsey)
Margaret Denny 1741-1812	
David McNair 1772-1817	
Margaret McNair 1778-1831	

DESCENDANTS OF DAVID D. MCNAIR†

CHILDREN

Fanny Bradner McNair (Pratt) †
Julia Mary Faulkner McNair (Henry)
Clarence Irving McNair
Caroline Jessup McNair (Bouton)
Mary Wilson MacNair

GRANDCHILDREN

Fanny Bradner Pratt
Caroline Drury Pratt
Guy Vernor Henry, Jr.
Fanny McNair Henry † (died in childhood)
William Seton Henry
Helen Manning McNair
Clarence Irving McNair, Jr.
Anne Fitzhugh McNair † (died in infancy)
Isabelle Julia McNair
William Manning McNair
Margaret McNair Bouton

GREAT-GRANDCHILD

Mary Ingraham Henry

† Deceased.

DESCENDANTS OF JOHN L. MCNAIR†

CHILDREN

Edward Augustus McNair †
Sophia McNair
William Pierpont McNair †
Eugene McNair †

GRANDCHILDREN

Eugenia McNair (Ross)
Edward Lindsay McNair
William Kelsey McNair

GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN

Marshall Tracey Ross
Norman Ross
Fannie Ross
Clarence William McNair
George Edward McNair
Morgan McNair
John Joy McNair
William Pierpont McNair

† Deceased.

DESCENDANTS OF PHEBE TORBERT
MCNAIR (KELSEY)†

CHILDREN

William Frank Sherd † (died in infancy)
* Julia Elizabeth Kelsey (Howe)

GRANDCHILDREN

Ruth Bouton Howe
Margaret McNair Howe (Chapin)
Mary Kelsey Howe

GREAT-GRANDCHILD

Henry Kelsey Chapin

† Deceased.

* Called Lillie.

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