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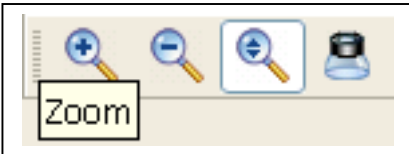
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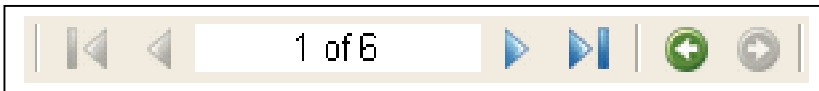
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History of the Munros of Fowlis

With the Genealogies of the Principal Families of the Same

To which are appended those of Lexington and New England

Alexander Mackenzie

Searchable Text Edition



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infant." This engagement will be found fully described later on in its proper place and under its correct date.

The first feudal titles obtained by the family of Fowlis were acquired about the middle of the fourteenth century from the Earl of Ross as their feudal superior. The reddendo of one of these charters, granting the lands of Pitlundie, declares that Munro holds them "blench of the Earl of Ross for payment of a pair of white gloves, or three pennies Scots, if required, alternately." In another charter by the same Earl granting the lands of Easter Fowlis, it is expressly declared "that these lands had belonged to his predecessors since the time of Donald, the first of the family." Ever since the date of this charter the Munros appear to have remained possessors of their original territory without making any additions to them or suffering diminution from them. They continued to hold a high position throughout among the other Highland clans, as will fully appear in the course of this work.

Dr Skene concludes his notice of the family in these terms—"When the civil wars of the seventeenth century broke out, and the Highlanders took such an active part on the side of the Royal cause, the Munros were one of the few clans of Gaelic origin who embraced the other side; and from this period they made a constant and determined opposition to the efforts made in favour of the Stuarts. The cause of this determination is probably to be found in the circumstances of the Chief of the Munros having been for several generations engaged in the continental wars, into which they had been drawn to serve by embarrassments at home, and the hope of increasing the fortunes of the family. The circumstance, as it had the same effect with the Mackays, seems always to have induced the Scotch, on their return from the German wars, to adopt the line of politics opposed to those of the Highlanders generally, and, in this respect, the Munros had rendered themselves well known for the active support which they invariably afforded to the established Government, and in 1745 they proved their attachment to the

Hanoverian King by joining his forces, under their Chief, Sir Robert, who was killed at the battle of Falkirk fighting against Prince Charles at the head of the majority of the other Highland clans."*

Discussing Skene's views of the origin of this family Smibert, in his *Clans of Scotland*, p. 224, says that "the Munros do seem to belong, in all likelihood, to the proper Scottish Gael; but that conclusion is not based on the half imaginary name of O'Cain, or its presumed connection with the term Chattan. Indeed, it is rather an unfair proceeding to take the former word from the supporters of an Irish origin and employ it by a somewhat forced change against themselves, overlooking all the while the remaining arguments founded by them on the name of Munro. Our own belief," continues Smibert, "that this clan pertains to the true Scottish Gael rests mainly on the weakness and inconsistency of the evidence referring them to Ireland. They came from that country at the date of 357 A.D., says one party; they did not arrive till many centuries later, according to another authority. In such circumstances, having nothing but wavering tradition against us, we incline to believe the Munros to be of the indigenous Gaelic race." This writer then discusses the meaning of the name in even a more fanciful way than those with whom he differs, suggesting that it originally meant the "Mount of Roses," from "Monadh" a hill, and "ros" a rose, and "a still more plausible supposition," he says, "is that the designation was connected with the district of Ross, and that the Munros were so entitled as being merely the hill men or mountaineers of Ross." With these few remarks from the learned who have gone before, the reader must be left to judge for himself and to adopt whatever theory of the clan and the name that suits his or her fancy best.

The account of the first six heads of the House of Fowlis after-given may be more or less mythical, but all the subsequent Barons are verified by authentic historical records.

* *The Highlanders of Scotland*, vol. ii., pp. 214-218.

the lands of Logie-Wester and Findon, County of Ross, of which the Earls of Ross were at that time the superiors.

He died about 1126, and was succeeded by his son,

II. ROBERT MUNRO,

Second Baron of Fowlis, a loyal subject of David I. and Malcolm IV. of Scotland. According to the family tradition, this Robert married Agnes, daughter of Angus Mor Macdonald, IV. of the Isles, by a daughter of Sir Colin Campbell of Glenurchy. This, however, cannot possibly be true, from the simple but conclusive fact that Angus Mor, who lived between 1255 and 1300, was not born in Robert's time, or for a century after, his death having occurred in the last-named year.

Robert died in 1164, and was interred in the Chanonry of Ross, which continued thereafter to be the family burying place for more than four hundred years.

He married, with issue, among others a son,

III. DONALD MUNRO,

Third Baron, who is said to have built the old Tower of Fowlis as early as 1154, during the life of his father. There is no doubt that the inhabitants of Ross in Donald's time gave the Government much trouble, for in 1179 William the Lion came into the county with an army "to compose some disorders in that distant quarter," and while there he caused two castles or forts to be built with a view to the repression of the oft-recurring rebellions and disorders—one at Etherdover—"between two waters"—now Redcastle, and the other at Nigg, which the "Chronicle of Melrose" names Duncath—"the castle of dread"—now known as Dunskaith.

It is said that Donald Munro joined the King while in Ross on this occasion, and rendered him material assistance in repressing the rebellion and lawlessness which so extensively prevailed. He married, with issue—

1. Robert, his heir and successor.
2. David, from whom it is alleged the family of Mackays,

DONALD MUNRO.

The founder of the ancient House of Fowlis, according to the Coul manuscript, was Donald, the son of O'Cathan, an Irish Chief, and Prince of Fermanagh. He is supposed to have flourished towards the latter end of the reign of Malcolm II. King of Scots, to whom he rendered material aid in his contests with the Danish invaders of the country. For the services thus rendered Donald received from the hands of his grateful sovereign the lands between Dingwall and the river Aneron, or Alness water. The lands received the name of "Fearann-Domhnuill," anglicised Ferindonald, that is, "Donald's land." A portion of them was subsequently erected into a barony called the Barony of Fowlis.

Donald is supposed to have died about 1053, and to have been succeeded by his son,

GEORGE MUNRO,

Or Georgius de Munro, said to have assisted Malcolm III., "Ceann Mor," in his contentions with Macbeth for the crown of Scotland, between 1054 and 1057. He, according to tradition, lived to an advanced age and died about 1101, leaving a son,

I. HUGH MUNRO.

He is the first who in the account of the family is designated "Baron of Fowlis." That barony has ever since formed the title and been the chief residence of the head of the House, which, for nearly eight hundred years, has existed in uninterrupted descent in the male line, a fact said to be unexampled in the annals of Scotland or England, and only paralleled in the succession of the Lords Kingsale, Premier Barons of Ireland. Hugh is said to have increased the family estates by the acquisition of

or "Mac Dhaibhidhs," at one time in Tarradale, were descended.

3. Allan, progenitor of the Mac Allans of Ferindonald. Donald died in 1192 at his Tower of Fowlis, and was, like his father, buried in the Cathedral Church of Chanonry, where the Bishops of Ross had their Episcopal seat from prior to 1130 until the Reformation. He was succeeded by his eldest son,

IV. ROBERT MUNRO,

The fourth Baron who, between 1194 and 1214, married a daughter of Hugh Freskyn de Moravia "with whom he marshalled" his men at the King's request "to apprehend Harold, second Earl of Caithness, who had in 1222 murdered Adam, third Bishop of that see. Harold was "a very wicked and turbulent man who committed vast cruelties," and for the murder of Bishop Adam and other crimes his estates and honours were forfeited to the Crown. Though resting only on tradition this alliance of Baron Robert's is highly probable, as will presently be seen from the terms of a charter by William second Earl of Sutherland to Robert's son, George. Baron Robert died in 1239, and was buried at the Chanonry of Ross, leaving, among others, a son George, who succeeded him.*

Robert is said to have married a daughter of the Earl of Sutherland with issue,

V. GEORGE MUNRO,

Fifth Baron, who is the first of the family of whom there exists any authentic historical record. He witnesses a

* The six generations given above are deduced from a MS. history of the family as quoted by Sir Robert Douglas in his *Baronage of Scotland*, pages 79 and 80, where it is stated that these are acknowledged in Dr George Mackenzie's *History of the Mackenzies* (from family writs); Martin's "Collections," vol. i., page 84, etc.; and also in Nisbet's "System of Heraldry," vol. i., pages 350-1, Edin. ed. 1722. "What follows," says Sir Robert, "is all instructed by indisputable documents; of which there is no reasonable doubt." Thus far then, the descent of the family of Fowlis, being only based on tradition and not on the evidence of charters or on any strict historical evidence, cannot now be proved.

charter by William Earl of Sutherland to the Archdeacon of Moray, dated 1232-7, wherein he is described as *clarissimo et fidelissimo consanguineo Georgis Munro de Fowles*.* This description of him confirms the tradition already mentioned—that Hugh Freskyn, who was the grandfather of Earl William, bore the same relation to George Munro of Fowlis. George had all his Ross-shire lands confirmed to him by a charter from Alexander II. before 1249. He died about 1269, and was succeeded by his son,

VI. ROBERT MUNRO,

Sixth Baron, who succeeded in minority and was placed under the guardianship of the Earls of Ross and Sutherland. He attained his majority in 1282. After the death of the Maid of Norway in 1290, Robert joined the party of Bruce, when the Lord of Annandale put forward his claim to the Scottish throne; and he is said to have suffered much from the Comyns for doing so. But he continued steadfast in his support throughout all the varying fortunes of that family, and finally, though advanced in years, he raised his clan and accompanied the Earls of Ross and Sutherland to Bannockburn. In that memorable battle his eldest and apparently only son, George, was slain, along with many more of Robert's followers. He personally escaped unhurt, and returned home in safety, though much bereaved by the loss of his son and other near relatives. There is a charter of the reign of Robert Bruce—after 1309—which seems to refer to this Baron, preserved in Robertson's "Index of Missing Charters" between the years 1309 and 1413 (No. 55, page 2).

Robert lived for nine years after his return home, and died in 1323. His only son George, who fell at Bannockburn, had married a year before his death a daughter of the Earl of Sutherland, with issue—

1. George, who succeeded his grandfather.

* *Nisbet's Heraldry*, vol. i., p. 343.