

Canadian Marquises

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Many of the children of Murdoch Brodie [McVurich] came to Ontario in the 1830s to early 1850s but I am unaware of any family association with the Marquis Clan. Feel free to give him my email if you think that there is any reasonable prospect of a mutually beneficial dialogue.

I will give you a sense of how I determined to look for McVurich [sic], leading me to Glenorchy. After a couple of months of futile search, I thought I had done enough to convince myself of one family legend. Namely, my maternal 3rd great grandfather Murdoch Brodie and 4 others from Silvercraigs [near Lochgilphead] named Brodie that married in Glassary Parish between 1789 and 1803 had been born with unknown surnames. Searching Scotland's People, I found only 4 men baptized as Murdoch in a relevant period and the only one that could have married Sarah More Turner in 1793 was Murdoch McVurich. There are supporting facts for fixing on the McVurich surname. Malcolm Brodie of Silvercraigs married Sarah McArthur in 1803 but the wrinkle was his father Kenneth married in 1760 under the name McCurrie. Kenneth changed his surname to Brodie in 1761 on baptism of his eldest child. Another of the Brodie spouses from Silvercraigs, Catherine, married John Fletcher in Glassary in 1794. There was a marriage proclamation in the groom's home parish a few days later that named her differently, Catherine McMurrich. Currie and McMurchy were two new Anglicized surnames that were being adopted by many named McVurich and the evidence was on pages 6-8 (2014 edition) of Angus Martin's book, *Kintyre The Hidden Past*. Two other Irish Kintyre families of long standing, O'Brolachan [sic] and McBride, generally were changing surnames to Brodie in the late 1700's but Angus Martin had not commented on any similar selection by the McVurick family. I wonder if the Brodie name seemed uncontroversial, not Jacobite, not Irish, not associated with the rivalry between the MacDonalds and the present owners of Kintyre, the Campbells. I cannot yet tell if any of the Brodies

at Silvercraigs were closer than first cousins to each other and note that the family was quite mobile. To that end, I hypothesize that Duncan McVurrick of Islay was the father of my Malcolm McVurick, in turn the father of Murdoch Brodie.

I found Angus Martin's book a marvel. A 4th cousin from Minnesota USA met him over 10 years ago in the company of Murdo MacDonald, former archivist of the Argyll and Bute Municipal Archives. Murdoch Brodie then was our collective "brick wall". I would like to get Angus Martin's thoughts by email or in person during another research trip to Argyll planned for this May, plus of course ordering his self-published book concerning Kintyre families. Thank you very much for providing his email address, which I will not abuse. As an aside, I was also astonished to find that so many Scots who emigrated to four townships in south-western Ontario where I was raised were from Argyll.

Now to the point that might help your research colleagues to avoid some of the confusion that plagued me. I found that my Murdoch was baptized in Glenorchy and Inishail parish on 5 Mar 1773, the last of 5 children born to Malcolm McVurich and his wife Christian Downie [# 1] between 1766 and 1773 [Janet, John, Ann, Mary, Murdoch]. I never have found the marriage registration for Malcolm McVurich and Christian [or Criostag or Christag] Downie but FamilySearch.org led me to an 1785 marriage of Malcolm MacVarquish and a different Christian Downie [# 2], likely the one born 14 Apr 1765 to Duncan Downie. Given the creative spellings of the era, the nearly identical spousal names, identical parish in those years, and similar occupations, maybe some of the reason for my confusion is evident. Still, I should have checked your trees more closely and pursued further research. I apologize for any premature message that caused you some work, but I found your response very illuminating.

Malcolm MacVarquish and Christian Downie [#2] baptized 13 children in Glenorchy and Inishail:

1. Malcolm 28 Mar 1785
2. Effie 23 Mar 1786

3. Giles 3 Oct 1790
4. Isabel 28 Dec 1791
5. Malcolm 18 Jun 1793
6. Mary 23 Jan 1796
7. Patrick 11 Dec 1797
8. Archibald 22 Jan 1799
9. Isabel 2 Jul 1801
10. Margaret 7 Aug 1802
11. Nicol 11 Feb 1805
12. Isobel 9 Jul 1806
13. Malcolm 7 Apr 1810

The mother was named in only the last 4 baptismal records, Christian Downie, so I think it safe to assume that she was mother to all 13 children from her marriage date forward.

I wonder if Finlay MacVarquis (ca. 1730-1804) in your Dalmally family tree might be an uncle to Malcolm MacVarquish. As further speculation, I wonder if my Malcolm McVurich and your Malcolm MacVarquish could have been friends as they were located in the same parish for many years.

I recently was in touch with Siusaidh, Library Assistant of the MacDonald's Armadale Castle on Skye. She offered a couple of book titles that might address my questions and generally seemed interested in the McVurick bardic story. Maybe she could be helpful to you. Siusaidh's email address is: museum@armadalecastle.com .

I see that you already have published your family story. I am intrigued to read the historical parts of your book and will order a copy through Amazon where I already have an account. I think our family histories parallel one another.

A maternal 3rd great grandfather Murdoch Brodie seemingly was baptized in Glenorchy and Inishail Parish on 5 Mar 1773 to Malcolm McVurich and Christian [sometimes Chriostag] Downie, the youngest of 5 children [Janet, John, Ann, Mary, Murdoch]. Murdoch changed his name to Brodie sometime before marriage in 1793 in Glassary to Sarah Turner. I went looking for the marriage of Malcolm and Christian without finding any but did see a marriage in 1785 in Glenorchy and Inishail between "Mal MacVarquish [sic] and Chris Downie", which I thought must be an error. I wondered about the repeat of the parent names 12 years apart. I now see that your Dalmally Marquis Family Tree shows that it was Finlay MacVarquish that married Christian MacVarig. I would love it if you had some proof of this couple. My Malcolm McVurich seeming was born on Islay in 1741. There are eerie similarities between the families and I wonder if they both might descend from Muireadhach Albanach, the progenitor of the MacVurich Bardic Family as suggested by Angus Martin. I do not know how to contact him to buy his privately distributed book Kintyre Families.

Reply Steve Marquis Hi Greg,

There are a lot of questions in your email, I think I can answer most of them. Confusion between MacVurich and MacVarquis is understandable, they were both names of two distinct Gaelic bardic families and both having the patronage of different MacDonald septs (sub-clans). Both families also had connections with Scotland and Ulster. There are also problems with definitions of the terms 'poets' (Gaelic, filida) and 'bards'. The filida were the elite poets of MacDonald Clan chiefs' courts. Whereas the bards were generally of a lesser status and a sort of minstrel and lyricist. Though these definitions were imprecise and changed over time.

The MacVarich (Gaelic, Mhic Mhuirich) were the most prestigious of the two bardic families, definitely filidh. The Mhic Mhuirich were original

based in the court of the first MacDonald family, the Lords of the Isles, and later the MacDonalds of Clanranald. It is also thought a real possibility that the Mhic Mhuirich family were descendants of Muireadhach Albanach O'Dalaigh from the 13th century Ulster poet family the O'Dalaighs. He is believed to have acquired the nickname Albanach (the Scot) after being exiled to the Western Isles after committing a murder back home.

The status of the Mhic Mharcuis bards is more difficult to define, the Ulster branch of the family was clearly filidh as explained in my book. The Scottish family were probably more bards than court poets. However, the family did claim descent from Marcus MacDonald of the first family, the Lord of the Isles – he was killed in Ulster in 1397 – which if true would have meant that they were filidh at least in the beginning. Mhic Mharcuis is Gaelic for son of Mark. By the end of the 15th century, they were significant landholders around Kilkeran (Campbeltown, 1700), land given by King James V for providing bardic services, and closely tied to the nearby MacDonalds of Largie, which lasted for another three centuries. A history of clan warfare, Jacobite Rebellions, and whisky smuggling is fully explained in my book.

The MacVarquis spelling of the name is usually used to describe the branch of the family that lived in the Glenorchy and Dalmally area of Argyll. Christian, while usually a male name, was widely given to baby girls in that area. There was a Christian MacVarquis executed for adultery and poisoning her husband in 1720. And the girls in the Dalmally Marquis family were often given that name. Idiosyncratic spelling of names before 1700 does makes it difficult to be precise in these matters.

John McVean, whose mother was a Dalmally Marquis, put together a very detailed history, which as you have seen is on the website. You should be able to find your relatives there if they were MacVarquis rather than MacVurich. If your ancestors' name was actually MacVurich, then they would almost certainly be descendants of the Mhic Mhuirich poet family.

Janet Kendall

Hello, I am very interested in your research on Cara. I have been trying for years to find information about the McMarcus family on Cara, specifically Alexander who was married to Flora MacDonald's cousin. I am directly descended from Penelope MacDonald born about 1774, daughter of a "MacDonald of Cara". She married Captain Alexander Drummond in Cara October 14, 1800 and their daughter Isabella was born there in August 1801. Afterwards, Penelope left Cara for London, where her husband was from, and was widowed in 1803. She later married John Nicholson and moved to Gairloch, having more children. Eventually the entire family moved to Quebec, Canada (1839/40) where my family still resides. My great grandmother always maintained that our MacDonald ancestors were part of the same family as Flora. We have very little information about Cara and the family there, however I have done enough research to know that one of Flora's grandfathers had married into the Largie family, who are owners of Cara even to this day. I have a basic understanding of how the tenant farming system was set up in those days, that tacksmen were often related to the landowners. This is borne out with your McMarcus being married to a cousin of Flora's, possibly one of the Largie family. I suppose I am wondering if my Penelope could have been a MacDonald of Largie and a cousin of Flora as well. I have very little to go on and so anything you can do to help me advance my research would be tremendously helpful.