

CLAN CURRIE SCOTLAND

Some Notes on the history of the name Currie or Curry (Kintyre) - as provided by Ian MacDonald

This surname is derived from the old Gaelic name which was found in the parishes of Kilcalmonell and Killean in North Kintyre. This peninsula was annexed by the Norsemen in 1098 when King Magnus Barefoot made a treaty with the Scots, it being agreed he would be sovereign over all the land he could sail around.

The wily King therefore had his long ship dragged over the narrow isthmus at Tarbert by a number of his men while he himself stood holding the helm. Thus Kintyre became a part of his empire and to this day many of its people are of tall stature, fair headed and excellent seamen.

At this period the north of Kintyre was a part of the Lordship of Knapdale and this continued for several centuries until the lords of the Isles (Clan Donald) gave up some of their early possession in the 15th Century. The Clan were dispossessed by the King of Scotland in 1493 because of their many barbarous acts.

It took almost two hundred years to subdue the warlike Clan Donald. The final revolt occurred in 1647 when some 300 were massacred at the siege of Dunaverty Castle in Southend Parish after their water supply had been cut off by the army of General David Leslie. Earlier, the rebels had been scattered at the Battle of Rhunahaorine Moss in May 1647.

Most of the Clan Donald survived by escaping from Rhunahaorine Moss to the islands of Gigha, Islay and Jura while others sailed to Ireland.

The early form of Currie was McVhurie/McMhurrich, McVuirrie/McMhuirrie but these forms fell onto disuse as the Gaelic language declined and English was substituted in its place. Change was very slow, especially in the Highland parishes in the West of Scotland.

After the revolt of 1647 the Marquis of Argyll, a staunch Presbyterian, got rid of many of his Highland tenants and brought farmers and artisans from the Lowlands of Scotland to Kintyre. He then fell out with King Charles I and was executed in 1661 by order of the King who was Catholic minded. Many Scottish Noblemen and commoners fled to Holland where they were free of religious persecution and out of reach of King Charles.

In 1685 the Earl of Argyll sailed from Holland with a strong force and declared war on King Charles II at Campbeltown, Argyll. The Earl issued a call to all his vassals to join him and the list ("List of the Rebels") was found in Inveraray Sheriff court Records and published in book form in 1935 by Mr Duncan McTavish, County Clerk of Argyll.

The actions of the Earl of Argyll proved ill-fated as he was captured and executed by the King's order in Edinburgh later that year. The rebellion collapsed and King Charles II then was deposed and King William and Queen Mary (1689) from Holland installed as Presbyterian monarchs.

As relations with France became strained the rebels of 1685 were pardoned and all young men able to fight between the ages of 16-60 years (capable of bearing sword or gun) were mobilised. They are shown in a "List of Fencible Men-1692" which includes four named McVhurie/McVuirrie.

In 1694 the Scottish parliament levied a tax on all houses containing a fireplace so the Hearth tax list was issued which contains a number of Curries on the relevant Tax Roll.

Following the Jacobite Rebellions of 1715 and 1745 great changes took place. In 1739 a large number of local people including five gentlemen and some 90 families left on the ship "Thistle" of Saltcoats, Ayrshire bound for Wilmington, Cape Fear, North Carolina. This was the first Highland migration to the Carolinas. Some 350 in all left about 6th September 1739.

By 1748 the settlers were petitioning the Synod of Argyll for a Minister to preach to them. Many others from the local area followed up to 1775 before the Revolutionary War.

In 1797, following a threat of invasion from France, all young men between the ages of 18-24 were required to register for Military Service. This Service was stood down in 1803 following the Treaty of Amiens. The Militia List includes some men named Curry.