

Chapter 4 - The Ancient Kingdom of Dal Riada

Travel to the Ancient Kingdom of Dal Riada

I had always intended to travel to Ireland and Scotland to see the sites and places where my ancestors once roamed. What has always delayed those trips was my urgency to know as much as I could about their lives and times before I went. I had first fulfilled such an urgency on most of my father's Irish ancestors, who for the most part came from County Wexford, Ireland. So in 2010, I took a trip to Dublin and County Wexford to do research and explore the lands of those ancestors. More about that later.

I had remained stuck in my research as to the origins of my father's Great Grandfather James P. McLane (McLean). All I could learn from my research was that he came from Ireland, but the records I found did not indicate a more precise location. So I always intended to return to Ireland at a time when I knew where he came from. However, I always intended to someday visit the islands of Scotland where my mother's McLean ancestors came from as well.

In late 2018, I got some DNA matches that were clues as to the location where James P. McLane came from. One DNA match came from County Antrim in Ulster. Further, with additional records and family trees available on line, I was able to take a closer look at my mother's ancestors from the Island of Tiree and I found some links (though they may be questionable) to the Ancient Scottish Pedigree on the Family Tree section of Familysearch.org. I will discuss this pedigree in a future chapter.

The Ancient Scottish Pedigree includes the lineage of Scotland's significant nobility and royals. I soon found lineage pathways from my ancestors on Tiree to Clan McLean, Clan McDonald, and other characters of Scottish history. When I went back far enough, I even ran into places in Ireland, particular County Antrim. I also discovered that some ancestral lines even intersected with my known "Viking" ancestors from the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree. I will discuss this also in future chapter.

Long story short, what began to coalesce in my mind was the possibility of a trip to both Northern Ireland and the Western Isles of Scotland. Then as I researched the history of the ancestors I had found for this region, I began to learn about the Ancient Kingdom of Dal Riada. It was the place where the Irish (the Goidels) had crossed the Irish sea to the Islands and coast of County Argyll where they established a Celtic settlement that would eventually evolve into the Scots of the Highlands.

So I commenced planning for a trip that included the highlights of Northern Ireland and the Western Isles of Scotland. There were no standard package tours that included both places, so I had to plan the itinerary on my own. I decided that since both my father and my mother have the surname "McLean" that visiting Duart Castle was a must. Duart Castle is the ancestral home of Clan McLean. I also wished to maybe visit the Islands of Tiree and Colonsay. However, after exploring ferry schedules, I discovered that this could possibly add up to six days to the trip. (the

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ferry only stops at those islands every other day!) So I set a focus on the Town of Oban as our Scotland staging area.

Planning for the visit to Northern Ireland was much easier as we could stage in Belfast and there were standard tours available to see the Antrim Coast that passed closely by where the DNA match to James P. McLane was possibly from.

So we set out on flights that would terminate in Glasgow, Scotland. One significant thing about Glasgow was that my mother's Iclander grandparents and family departed from the Port of Glasgow on the ship *Siberian* headed for Canada on November 8, 1889. They had departed from Seyðisfjörður, Iceland on October 20, 1889. After a one day lay over in Glasgow, we boarded the Scot-Rail train for Oban. This was the only way to go in order to enjoy the scenery. As we gained some elevation leaving the suburbs, we could see the harbor below on the Firth of Clyde where my Iceland ancestors set out for North America. To the south of us we could see the rolling hills of the lowlands.

Soon our trip began to approach the mountains that were divided by deep valleys and lochs. Some of these lochs were estuary bays off of the Firth of Clyde and others were large fresh water lakes. The mountains rose so abruptly out of the valleys that it was easy for me to figure out where the term "highlands" came from. This line of mountains just north of Glasgow was literally the border between the highlands and the lowlands. It was not only a geographic divide, it was a cultural divide as well.

Soon the rail line was high on a mountain as Loch Lomond came into view. We were now passing through Loch Lomond National Park. We quickly noticed that most of the train stops were merely trailheads. Backpackers would exit the train and set out on their treks.

We were now crossing through the lands that had been held by Clan Campbell in ancient times. The Campbells are among my ancestors and were at one time the Dukes of Argyll. The first stop in Campbell territory was Glenorchy. This was the site of one of the Campbell castles. The next stop was Loch Awe. This was a large fresh water lake stretching for several miles to the south. Along its shore was Loch Awe castle which was the ancestral home of Clan Campbell.

Oban was a terminal destination for the train as from here, many travelers transfer to the ferries that have regular schedule departures for the Western Isles. Oban is called the "gateway to the Isles." Before heading for our hotel, we picked up some tickets for the ferry to Mull and admission to Duart Castle for the following day. Oban sits on the edge of a bay that leads out to the Sound of Mull. The main thoroughfare of the town sits along the waterfront of the bay. There was a steady rain falling so we went straight to our hotel. It wasn't quite check-in time so we sat in the lounge and had lunch looking out onto the bay.

We rested for the afternoon and decided we would attend mass at a very old cathedral that was right next to the hotel. Raining still, it was a short walk. The cathedral had stone floors and old rickety chairs with fold down kneelers. It was an experience of going back into time! Raining still, we decided not to try to walk into town for dinner.

We went to the hotel dining room to request sitting for dinner. We were informed that due to the arrival of two tour buses, all the dining space was taken. So they offered to serve us off of the same menu in the lounge. That was fine by us because the lounge had a great view of the bay and the full dining room looked out on the rear parking lot! We were the only persons being

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served by the bar tender, so we had personal service as well.

The next morning we walked to the ferry terminal, boarded, and departed for Craignure on the Island of Mull. We got used to the sort of misty rain that the day started with. The ferry passed closely by a large buoy that my wife took a picture of. Little did we know until we got to Duart Castle that this was at “Lady’s Rock” where the 11th Clan Chief Lachlan Cattanach MacLean (our 15th great grandfather from the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) had placed his second wife Lady Catherine Campbell in hopes of her drowning. More about that in a future chapter.

Arriving at Craignure, we were picked up by the Duart Castle shuttle and taken to the castle. Still misty rain, but now it was wind driven. The castle sits on a bluff above the Sound of Mull. When we walked through the portal of the castle, the wind was moving through like a vortex. Once we entered, things calmed down. The tour was self guided and we climbed to the rooms at the very top. There are numerous display panels that explain the history of Clan MacLean. In one room, a large map displayed the ancestral land holdings of Clan MacLean in the Western Isles. We then had morning tea at the Tea House/Gift store. I couldn’t resist buying a small souvenir bottle of scotch whiskey that had a MacLean label on it. For anyone who goes by the surname “McLean” this is a must see place!

The shuttle took us back to Craignure and we boarded a “municipal” bus to go visit the town of Tobermory. Tobermory was the place in historic times that would have been the closest place of commerce to the Isle of Tiree. My ancestors probably made periodic trips to this location. Arriving at the town parking lot, we noticed that the lot was only half full of cars. So we thought we would be able to easily find a place to enjoy lunch. However, every café in the town was full of people. We did enjoy some of the shops and a small museum, but we had to settle for ice cream cones for lunch. We finally realized what was happening when we walked around the harbor area. From there we could see a cruise ship moored off shore and they had been bringing cruise passengers ashore for several hours. Who knew!

After riding the bus back to Craignure and then the ferry back to Oban, we decided to just go to one of the several seafood restaurants at the Oban Harbor. It was a good choice and we had a great meal.

We had a leisurely morning as our train to Glasgow was not scheduled until late that afternoon. We ordered the traditional Scottish breakfast complete with haggis. I got my wife to at least taste it, but I had to finish her portion. I then took a short walk north from the hotel to Lorn. Lorn is the site of Dunlollie Castle, the ancient seat of Clan MacDougall. My ancestry includes three MacDougall clan chiefs. Further, Clan MacDougall was closely allied with Clan MacLean. While I did not tour the castle, I walked around the grounds as it was a bright blue sunny day. I walked along the old carriage road leading to the castle looking out on the bay where the Island of Lismore and the Island of Mull were clearly seen. Way off in the distance could be seen Duart Castle in its prominent place on the Sound of Mull.

The following day after arriving in Belfast, we took a bus tour of the Antrim Coast. The first stop was Carrickfergus Castle. Carrickfergus was the power base of the Anglo-Norman Earldom of Ulster. It was built by John de Courcy in about 1177. The Anglo-Normans were a threat to the O’Neills (our ancestors from the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) who had controlled much of the Antrim coast from the time of the Kingdom of Dal Riada. But we also descend from

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such Anglo-Norman families as the de Burghs who would later control lands on the Antrim Coast.

The tour took us past the nine “Glens of Antrim.” These are lush valleys that were part of the Kingdom of Dal Riada. It was one of these glens near Ballycastle that the DNA match to James P. McLane came from.

The tour also included such sights as the Giant’s Causeway. Legend has it that there once was a stone causeway that went from this Northern Ireland coastline all the way to Fingal’s cave



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on the Island of Staffa off the Island of Mull in Scotland. There were supposedly two giants named Finn MacColl in Ireland and Benandonner in Scotland, who lived at each end of the Causeway, respectively. Fingal was another name for Finn MacColl. This is a legend that illustrates how the folk lore of Northern Ireland has a direct connection to Argyll, Scotland. We found Giants Causeway to be way too crowded with tourists to be fully enjoyed.

The tour passed by Dunluce Castle where the bus driver only stopped in a pull-out so we could take pictures from a distance. Although we did pick-up a brochure for Dunluce at Bushmills. I would have rather spent the 2 ½ hours allowed at Giants Causeway for a chance to tour the ruins of Dunluce Castle. Dunluce Castle was built by Richard de Burgh, 2nd Earl of Ulster (our 22nd great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) in the 13th century. The story of Dunluce involves two families. First is the MacQuillans, a local Irish family, founded around the 1490s. Dunluce formed the heart of their lordship, a territory centered on the north Antrim coastline, known as “the Route.” Second were the MacDonnells who were descendants of the powerful Scottish Clan MacDonald, medieval Lords of the Isles. The Lords of the Isles are among our ancestors and will be detailed in this chapter. During the 1540s they were employed by the MacQuillans as their Scottish redshank mercenaries. However, the MacDonnells were ambitious enough to carve out their own territory and went on to take Dunluce in the 1550s and usurp the MacQuillans from “the Route.”

The Route was a medieval territory in County Antrim, Northern Ireland, consisting of the baronies of Dunluce Upper, Dunluce Lower, Toome Lower, and the North East Liberties of Coleraine (in County Londonderry). It also formed part of the more ancient kingdom of Dal Riada, as well as part of the Earldom of Ulster.

The tour also stopped at the Bushmills distillery. The Village of Bushmills dates from Norman times (1150-1520). The first license for the Bushmills Distillery was granted by King James I of England (James VI of Scotland) in 1608. It was here at the visitor center that my choice to plan my trip centered around the Ancient Kingdom of Dal Riada was confirmed. There on the wall was a large map of the Kingdom of Dal Riada showing the north coast of County Antrim and the Western Isles of Scotland as one Country.

After taking this ancestral journey and returning home, I later would have my Y-DNA tested and the DNA matches there would be coupled with some additional autosomal DNA matches and that allowed me to refine the possible location of James P. McLean’s origin as centering on the County of Sligo. So I would hope and anticipate to return to Ireland someday to explore this location.

Foundation of the Kingdom

From the Roman authors we derive the earliest information in regards to the tribes of the North Britain. During the first two centuries of the millennium under Roman occupation, the area that would become Scotland was inhabited by two peoples – the Caledonii, and the Maeatae. The Caledonii alone inhabited the Highlands which was all of modern Scotland north of the Firths of Forth and Clyde. After the 3rd century, the names of Caledonii and Maeatae disappear, and we find the Romans naming their northern opponents the Picts and Attacotti. Historians have

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equated the term Picts with the earlier term Caledonii. They were a Celtic tribe that until the 6th century, continued to be the sole peoples north of the firths – being divided into two great branches – the Dicaledones inhabiting the more mountainous and rugged districts north and west of the Grampian Range, and the Vecturiones inhabiting the lower lands between the Grampians and the sea. Thus the division between the Highlanders and the Lowlanders.

A new people would be added to the inhabitants of Scotland, north of the firths. The Irish Scots or the Dal Riada effected a settlement in the western districts of the highlands. Dal Riada was a Gaelic kingdom and political entity that encompassed the western seaboard of Scotland and the north-eastern corner of Ireland, stretching across each side of the North Channel. At its height in the 6th and 7th centuries, it encompassed a large territory of what is now Argyll (Coast of the Gaels) in Scotland and part of County Antrim in Northern Ireland and Southern Pictland. After a period of expansion, the kingdom eventually became associated with the Gaelic Kingdom of Alba.

The hillfort of Dunadd is believed to have been its capital. Other royal forts included Dunollie, Dunaverty and Dunseverick. Within Dal Riada was the important monastery of Iona, which played a key role in the spread of Celtic Christianity throughout northern Britain, and in the development of insular art. Iona was a center of learning and produced many important manuscripts. Dal Riada had a strong seafaring culture. Archaeologist Dr Ewan Campbell suggests that Argyll and Antrim formed a "maritime province", united by the sea and isolated from the rest of Scotland by the mountainous ridge called the Druim Alban. This allowed a shared language to be maintained through the centuries; Argyll remained Gaelic-speaking while the rest of Scotland was either Pictish or Brittonic-speaking. It is believed by many that the Highlanders descend from the Dal Riada people. It is further believed that in the Western Isles or Hebrides, the Picts were displaced or overrun by the Dal Riada.

Origins of the Kingdom

The origins of the Kingdom of Dal Riada are sketchy at best. The Roman sources seem to indicate its possible existence in the first two centuries of the millennium. It gained its first foothold in Ulster of Northern Ireland. There is little documentation of the kingdom's early occupations in Ireland other than they were known to possess the Northern coast of today's County Antrim. The Dal Riada tribe of the Goidels of Ulster occupied the northeast of County Antrim, roughly corresponding to the baronies of Cary and Glenarm. This included the rich "Glens of Antrim."

the Irish kings of Dal Riada began to look for new conquests, and the lands visible across the sea were the natural target. The first landing seems to have been in the first half of the 3rd century. Conaire II, who was king of Munster but appears in the list of High Kings of Ireland from 212 to 220, had a son Cairbre Riada, who, on a famine breaking out in Munster, set off with his men to settle in the north of Ireland, in Ulster. Some of the Dal Riada remained there in County Antrim. Another body crossed the sea and settled in Argyll. That according to tradition, is the origin of the double kingdom of Dal Riada. The Dal Riada founded three colonies – in the Islands of Islay and Mull and on the Kintyre peninsula. They called their possessions *Ar-gael* -

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hence Argyll.

In about 380, the infamous Irish King Njall of the Nine Hostages, made a foreign expedition to Alba, to subdue the Picts. The Dal Riada colony had gradually been growing in numbers, strength, and prestige – until they excited the jealousy and enmity of the Picts, who tried to crush them. Njall fitted out a large fleet and sailed to the assistance of his people. Joining with the Gaels in Alba, he marched against the Picts, overcame them, took hostages from them and had Argyll and Kintyre settled upon by the Dal Riada Gaels.

The traditional early history of the Scots maintains that in about 470 Fergus MacEirc, King of the Ulster Dal Riada and a descendant of Cairbre Riada, crossed into Scotland with his brothers. It was doubtless an attempt to reunite the two halves of the tribe. This is the original date of the foundation of the kingdom of the Scots and its royal line. The attempt succeeded, and a double kingdom was thus founded, the Isle of Man being attached to it.

Fergus MacEirc came to rule in Argyll over a colony of Gaels from Ireland. There is overwhelming evidence that Gaelic was the language of the people of Argyll at this time, meaning that the people of Ireland and those of Dal Riada had a common language, but were surrounded on the Scottish mainland by British and Welsh speakers. But the Gaelic language would stubbornly remain the predominant language in Argyll all the way into the era just before the migration of our ancestors to Canada.

The Duan Albanach (Song of the Scots) tells that the three sons of Eirc—Fergus Mor, Loarn and Óengus—conquered Alba (Scotland) in around 500. Ancient historian Saint Bede offers a different, and probably older, account wherein Dal Riada was conquered by Irish Gaels led by a certain Reuda. Old Gaelic Dal means "portion" or "share", and is usually followed by the name of an eponymous founder. Bede's tale may come from the same root as the Irish tales of Carpri Riada and his brothers, the Síl Conairi (sons/descendants of Conaire Mór / Conaire Cóem). The story of Dal Riada moves from foundation myth to something nearer to history with the reports of the death of Comgall mac Domangairt around 540 and of his brother Gabrán around 560.

Dal Riada is said to have been founded by the legendary king Fergus Mór (Fergus the Great) in the 5th century. By the mid-6th century, the Dal Riada in Scotland came under serious threat from Bridei I, king of the Picts, whilst the Irish portion faced hostility from the Dal nAraidi of Ulaid, resulting in them seeking the aid of the Irish Northern Uí Néill.

The Picts briefly regained Argyll in the 6th century. Shortly afterwards, the Dal Riada got a new king, Áedán mac Gabráin (574-608). Áedán set out to reestablish the colonies in Argyll. If this wasn't enough to upset the Picts, he made matters worse by attacking their possessions on Orkney and on the Isle of Man. He also annoyed the Uí Neill High King of Ireland by these unauthorized adventures.

From the Kingdom of Dal Riada developed one of the great and long-lasting European states, the Kingdom of Scotland. There were three chief peoples in the Kingdom of Dal Riada in the 7th century: the Cenel Loairn in Lorn, the Cenel nGabrain in Kintyre and Cowal, and the Cenel nOengusa in Islay. Assuming that Jura was the island then known as Hinba, it belonged to the Cenel nGabrain. The ownership of Colonsay is less sure. If it can be identified as the insula Sainen where Adomnan, a 7th century abbot of Iona, sheltered on a voyage from Ireland, then it

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evidently was occupied by the Cenel Loairn.

The Cenel nOengusa claimed to be descended from Oengus, a brother of Fergus Mac Eric. It was the least powerful of the three main kindreds and contributed no over-kings to rule over the whole of Dal Riada. Perhaps it is significant that the three brothers Lugaid, Conall and Canan who are said to have divided Islay among themselves had a Pictish mother. This genealogical information is derived from the *Senchus Fer nAlban* (History of the Men of Scotland), originally composed in the 7th century, and the main source of information on early Dal Riada.

The *Senchus* lists the houses of the Cenel nOengusa in eight districts on Islay. The remains of several forts related to the early history period of Dal Riada are found like Dunadd, in the Mid Argyll, Dun Eibhinn on Colonsay and Dun Guaire and Dun Nosebridge on Islay.

Early Irish law-texts, which have a lot of relevance for Scottish Dal Riada, describe a society in which cattle were of the utmost importance, and stock raising is known to have been widely practiced on Islay and the neighboring islands. The early sources also make clear that this society was warlike, and one of the main functions of the *Senchus Fer nAlban* was to detail the military resources of the Kingdom of Dal Riada in Scotland.

Christianity Arrives

Saint Patrick was a 5th century Romano-British Christian missionary and bishop in Ireland. Much has been said and written about St. Patrick, some myth, some legend, and some history. What is most true is that he did lead the life of a Christian missionary in Ireland. It is claimed that Patrick founded a church in Armagh in Ulster and proclaimed it to be the most holy church in Ireland.

Christianity had certainly reached the country before his time. The Chronicle of Prosper of Aquitaine says that in 431 Pope Celestinus I sent a certain Palladius to the Scots (Irish) who believed in God. St. Patrick is believed to have arrived in Ireland in 482 at the earliest.

One of the persons who would emerge from the Christian movement in Ireland was St. Columba. Columba (December 7, 521 – June 9, 597) was an Irish abbot and missionary evangelist credited with spreading Christianity to what is today Scotland. He would be highly regarded by both the Gaels of Dal Riada and the Picts. Columba studied under some of Ireland's most prominent church figures and founded several monasteries in the country.

In 563, Columba traveled to Scotland with twelve companions in a wicker currach covered with leather. According to legend he first landed on the Kintyre Peninsula, near Southend. However, being still in sight of his native land, he moved farther north up the west coast of Scotland. The island of Iona was made over to him by his kinsman Conall mac Comgaill, King of Dal Riada, who perhaps had invited him to come to Scotland in the first place.

Aside from the services he provided guiding the only center of literacy in the region, his reputation as a holy man led to his role as a diplomat among the tribes. He was also very energetic in his work as a missionary, and, in addition to founding several churches in the Hebrides, he worked to turn his monastery at Iona into a school for missionaries.

Columba was also a Cenél Conaill prince. In 575 at the Convention of Druimm Cete, he

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negotiated an alliance between Dal Riada and the Cenél Conaill, who were the ruling dynasty of the Northern Uí Néill. In attendance were Columba, Áedán mac Gabráin, and Áed mac Ainmuirech, king of the Northern Uí Néill and High King of Ireland. In the agreement, Áedán agreed to pay the High King military tribute while keeping his maritime revenue for himself. Áedán built up a strong navy. The Treaty of 575 kept the peace in Ireland for fifty years, but the Dal Riada never fully recovered their Irish possessions. Their center of power switched to Argyll and their territorial ambitions were directed north and east towards the lands of the Picts. Further it was agreed that the King of the Scots in Britain would be independent of the authority of the High King of Ireland, and a mixed solution was adopted for the Irish kingdom of the Dal Riada, which was to serve the High King with its land forces and the King of the Scots with its sea forces.

Columba died on Iona and was buried in 597 by his monks in the abbey he created. In 794 the Vikings descended on Iona. Columba's relics were finally removed in 849 and divided between Scotland and Ireland.

Viking Conquest

In 793 or 795, the Vikings attacked the Irish shores, they ravaged Iona in 794, in 798 they plundered the Hebrides, and again in 802 and 806. In 807 they lodged themselves in the north of Ireland. They occupied many islands and peninsulas, establishing a fortified post at Dublin in 841 and by 852 Olaf the White Ingaldsson (our 28th great grandfather in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree) firmly established himself as King of Dublin.

During the reign (872 - 930) of King of Norway, Harald Fairhair Hálfðanarson (our 27th great grandfather in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree), many Vikings left Norway to find other places to settle. His policies on land holding were not acceptable to them. Large numbers of discontented chiefs and their followers fled Norway. Reports of favorable lands to settle on had been brought back by the early Viking raiders. Due to their maritime culture, many Vikings found the Western Isles (Hebrides) to be quite suitable for settlement. This despite the fact that they were already occupied by the Dal Riada.

With a rather uncertain and fluctuating population of Vikings, the native Celtic element was never entirely absorbed by the Norwegian settlers, except in Orkney. But the Vikings founded real and lasting settlements in many parts of the western islands and their predominant influence was felt. However, the Gaelic population remained always the larger element and their language was chiefly spoken.

The Hebrides came under the leadership of few ranking Vikings and their followers sufficient to ensure the maintenance of the foreign yoke and to collect tribute. The first prominent Viking settler, whose name has been associated with the Island of Tiree in the Hebrides, is Ketil Flatnef (flat-nose) Bjarnason (our 28th great grandfather in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree). King Harald Fairhair found him to be very disagreeable and sent him to the Hebrides to take charge of the settlements there.

Ketil's wife was Yngveldur Ketilsdóttir. They brought two sons and two daughters with them to the Hebrides. Their sons were Bjorn the Eastman (our 28th great grandfather in the

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Ancient Icelandic Pedigree) and Helgi Bjola. Their daughter were Aud “Djupaudga” (the deep-minded)(our 28th great grandmother in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree) and Thorunn (our 27th great grandmother in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree). Aud was married to King Olaf the White (mentioned above) at about the period of the Viking victory at Dublin (AD 852).

Some historians say that Ketil Bjornsson could have taken control of Dal Riada with its islands and may have been known as the “King of the Sudreys.” Another source says that Ketil had ingratiated himself with the principle Islanders and declared himself King of the Isles, independent of Norway. Aud and Olaf the White’s son Thorsteinn the Red (our 27th great grandfather in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree) is identified as a “king” in Scotland in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree. So the family was a ruling entity.

Nothing is known of Ketil’s latter years, except that he died in the Sudreys before 884. His children had reportedly all adopted Christianity, supposedly under the influence of Iona. His children Aud, Thorunn, and Bjorn the Eastman all migrated to Iceland latter. We descendent from all three of them.

Establishment of a United Scotland

For a long time the Celtic Kingdom of Dal Riada had been considerable. But by the end of the 7th century it was still confined to Argyll and the adjoining isles. On the east, the Picts extended southwards to the Firth of Forth. To the south, the Britons held the west coast to beyond Dumbarton, leaving a small group of Picts cut off from the rest of Galloway. By the time of Saint Bede, the Scots had supplanted the Picts in the neighborhood of the Firth of Forth.

One effect of the Viking incursions in the west was to force the Scots of Dal Riada to look eastwards along Strathearn towards the richer lands of Pictish Fortriu, where the Picts too, were under fierce pressure from Viking attacks from the east. The power of Dal Riada was now in decline and, despite occasional hostility between Scots and Picts, there was a certain inevitability about the way in which the two kingdoms began to come together against the common Viking enemy.

The process of gradual unification culminated in the middle of the 9th century with the first joint king of the Picts of Fortriu and the Scots of Dal Riada— Kenneth MacAlpin (our 33rd great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree). He was born about 800 and is believed to have been of mixed Dalriadian and Pictish stock, with a Gaelic father and a Pictish mother.

Out of the welter of warfare which saw the royal families of both the kingdoms crushed, Kenneth MacAlpin emerged as king of Dal Riada around 840 and a few years later he became king of the Pictish Fortriu as well. How exactly that came about is not known.

Kenneth MacAlpin soon moved his base out of Dal Riada and eastward to Tayside, the heartland of Pictland itself. The island of Iona had proved to be too vulnerable to Viking raids. It was the end of Dal Riada as a historical identity. Kenneth MacAlpin, or one of his successors, established a new royal seat at Scone, near Perth, which became the capital of the new united kingdom. MacAlpin’s unification of Dal Riada and Pictland as a new political entity was a landmark in the evolution of Scotland as a single kingdom.

Around this time the name of Alba and Dal Riada faded away and the name Scotia

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emerged. First there was Scotia Major which referred to Eire (Ireland). Second there was Scotia Minor which referred to Alba. As time passed the name Scotia fell away from Ireland entirely. Scotia then began to be exclusively used to refer to Alba and the name Scotia evolved into the name Scotland.

The Kings of the Isles

The Vikings had a great impact on Pictland and in Ireland, in Dal Riada, as in Northumbria, they appear to have entirely replaced the existing kingdom with a new entity. In the case of Dal Riada, this was to be known as the kingdom of the Sudreys, traditionally founded by Ketil Flatnose Bjornsson in the middle of the 9th century. The Frankish Annales Bertiniani records the conquest of the Inner Hebrides, the seaward part of Dal Riada, by Vikings in 847.

In Scotland, the Scandinavian inroads benefitted the small kingdom of Dal Riada, which successfully opposed them. In the middle of the 9th century the kingdom of the Picts came to an end and was absorbed by that of the Dal Riada.

Ketil Bjornsson's death left a void in the rule over the western Isles. The next King of the Isles would be Gofra MacArailt, who died according to the Irish annalists in 989 and in the following year the Hebrides were conquered by Sigurdur Hlodversson (our 27th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree), Earl of Orkney who appointed as his deputy over the Hebrides an individual named Gilli. This was in conflict with King of the Isles, Ragnal MacGofra who died in 1004.

The once again insertion of Viking rule in the Isles would lead to a new King of the Isles. This king was Godred Crovan (our 25th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) who was a Norse-Gaelic ruler of the kingdoms of Dublin and the Isles. Godred Crovan was first known as a leader of the Vikings under King of Norway Harald Hardrada Sigurðsson (our 23th great grandfather in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree), at the Battle of Stamford Bridge where King Harald was killed on September 25, 1066. Godred fled to the Isles and would subjugate the Isles, the Island of Mann and Dublin.

Godred Crovan would be expelled by King of Norway Magnus Barefoot Olafsson (our 21st great grandfather in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree) and once again the Isles would be ruled by Norway. Magnus Olafsson was succeeded by his son Sigurd who consented to the Islanders request to make Godred Crovan's oldest son Lagman as King of the Isles.

The younger son of Godred Crovan, Ólafur Guðrøðarson (our 24th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree), during his youth, witnessed a vicious power struggle between his elder brothers Lagman and Harald in the aftermath of their father's death. As a result Harald abdicated the throne and the surviving son would be Ólafur Guðrøðarson. Ólafur Guðrøðarson became King of the Isles in the 12th century His reign lasted for forty years (from about 1113 to 1153). His reign was peaceful and he worked to preserve his kingdom from aggression. He would be given the nickname *Bitling* for his diminutive nature. But in Highland traditions, he was known as Olaf the Red. He was the father of Godred the Black, who succeeded him. His daughter Raginild Olafsdottir (our 25th great grandmother in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) married Somerled MacGillebride (our 25th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree),

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Prince or Lord of Argyll. From this marriage would spring the dynasty known in Scottish history as the Lords of the Isles.

Somerled MacGillebride had married into the Kings of the Isles dynasty. It was his in-laws that carried this inherited power. Somerled was the son of Gillebride MacGilleadomnan and Ellen Sigurdsdottir (our 26th great grandparents in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree). Ellen was of Viking stock and was the daughter of the 14th Earl of Orkney, Sigurdur Hlodversson. Gillebride MacGilleadomnan was believed to have been of Celtic stock and went by the title of King of the South Isles. So Somerled was the generation where the Viking and Celtic rulers came together in one person.

Somerled MacGillebride was born about 1100 at Saddell on the Kintyre Peninsula of Argyll. When Somerled was young, he was placed at the head of the men of Morvern, collected at the time to resist a band of Norse pirates, who threatened to ravage the district. On this occasion, Somerled, by his courage and skill, defeated these fierce marauders; and soon after, following up this success, recovered his paternal inheritance, and made himself master of so large a portion of Argyll, that he thenceforth assumed the title of Lord of Argyll, and became one of the most powerful chiefs in Scotland.

Olaf the Red Gudrodarson was desirous to disarm the rising of this powerful new Lord of Argyll. He arranged an alliance by offering his daughter Raginhild Olafsdottir in marriage to Somerled in 1140. After Olaf the Red Gudrodarson, Thorfinn Ottarsson proposed to Somerled that Somerled's son Dugall be made the new King of the Isles. This met some resistance, but Somerled, with a fleet of eighty galleys carried out a bloody but indecisive action. This resulted in a treaty in 1156 in which Godred the Black Olafsson ceded to the sons of Somerled the South Isles. Somerled's son, then held most of Argyll and also the islands of Mull, Lismore, Jura, Tiree, Coll and the area around Dunollie at Lorn.

In 1158, Somerled invaded the Island of Man with a fleet of fifty-three ships, and laid the whole island waste, after routing Godred the Black in battle.

The Celtic clans in the western Isles were not so quick to submit to the authority of a united Scotland. In fact, they rather showed their inclination to submit to the authority of those who would rule over the Isles specifically. This would be a thorn in the side of a united Scottish kingdom for several centuries to come. The animosity of those clans of the Isles would start with Somerled. By this time, Malcolm IV was the King of Scotland, Somerled had a disagreeable relationship with Malcolm. The conflict would come to a head when the over ambitious Somerled declared war against Malcolm and assembled a large army from Argyll, Ireland, and the Isles. He sailed up the Clyde with one hundred and sixty galleys, and landed his forces near Renfrew, threatening to make a conquest of the whole of Scotland. Somerled was slain in this attack on January 1, 1164 at Renfrew. There have been several different accounts on how Somerled died. One thing is for sure, his descendants in the form of the Lords of the Isles and their followers would have animosity for the Kings of Scotland for centuries to come.

The holdings of Somerled would be divided by his three sons. Dougal MacRory (our 26th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) would take the South Isles, Mull, Coll, Tiree, and Jura. Reginald MacSomerled (our 24th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) would take Islay and Kintyre. Angus Somerledson (our 24th great grandfather in the Ancient

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Scottish Pedigree) took Arran. From Dugal MacRory sprung the great house of Argyll and Lorn and the Clan MacDougall who would establish their headquarters at Dunlollie Castle.

Reginald MacSommerled would start the great family of Islay that descendants from his son Donald and would become Clan Donald or the MacDonalds. Reginald was born about 1148 in Morvern of Argyll. Reginald appears to have risen in power and became the leading member of Somerled's descendants. Reginald is known to have styled himself "King of the Isles, Lord of Argyll and Kintyre" and "Lord of the Isles" He married Fonia Moray (our 24th great grandmother in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) in 1175 at Edinburgh. She was a descendant of the early kings of Scotland.

Reginald disappears from record after he and his sons were defeated by his brother Angus. Reginald's death-date is unknown, although certain dates between 1191 and 1227 are all possibilities. Surviving contemporary sources reveal that Reginald was a significant patron of the Church. He is chiefly remembered in early modern Hebridean tradition as the genealogical link between Somerled and the Lords of the Isles and Clan MacDonald.

Donald Domhnill Reignaldson (our 23rd great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) was born about 1200 in the Hebrides to Reginald MacSommerled and Fonia Moray. Not much is known about his life other than he was a Hebridean noble in the late 12th and early 13th century. Donald married Beatrix Stewart (our 23rd great grandmother in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree). Beatrix descended from the Stewart dynasty and was of Anglo-Norman ancestry. Donald is the eponymous progenitor of Clan MacDonald and carried the title of Lord of the Isles. Donald died in about 1269.

Angus Mor MacDonald (our 22nd great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) was born about 1239 in Morvern of Argyll to Donald Domhnill Reignaldson and Beatrix Stewart. He married Helen Campbell (our 23rd great grandmother in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) in about 1265. They were known to have three children. He was a leading figure in the 13th century kingdoms of the Isles and Scotland. He was the 5th (counting from Somerled) Lord of the Isles.

Angus Mor MacDonald appears to have succeeded his father in the mid part of the 13th century. At the time, the Lords of the Isles were fiercely independent of the Scottish Crown, and owed nominal allegiance to the distant Norwegian Crown. Angus Mor's first certain appearance in the historical record seems to evince his involvement in aiding native Irish kindreds against the consolidation of Anglo-Irish authority in the north-west Ireland. Such cooperation could have been undertaken in the context of overseas kindreds like Clan MacDonald constructing Irish alliances to gain assistance against Scottish encroachment.

Scottish aggression against the Isles seems to have precipitated the Norwegian Crown's campaign against the Scots in 1263. Like other leading members of Clan MacDonald, Angus Mor supported the Norwegian cause against Alexander III, King of Scotland. However, the fact that Hákon Hákonarson (our 21st great grandfather in the Ancient Icelandic Pedigree), King of Norway had to force Angus Mor's submission, suggests that his support was rendered somewhat grudgingly. Nevertheless, the Norwegian campaign was ultimately a failure, and the Islesmen were compelled to submit to the Scots after a retaliatory campaign the following year. As for Angus Mor, he was forced to hand over his son, likely Alasdair Óg, as a hostage of the Scottish Crown. By 1266, the Isles were officially annexed by the Scots. Angus Mor MacDonald died in

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about 1296 in Argyll.

Angus Og MacDonald (our 21st great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) was born to Angus Mor MacDonald and Helen Campbell in about 1274 on Icolmkill (Iona) in Argyll. After his brother Alasdair's apparent death in 1299, he seems to have taken up the chiefship as Lord of the Isles. He married Agnes of Limavady O'Cathan (our 21st great grandmother in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) in about 1299 on Iona. She was a descendant of the Dal Riada Clan O'Cathan in Ulster. Clan Cathanhe were a major branch of the Uí Néill kindred, Angus Og MacDonald and Agnes O'Cathan were known to have nine children.

Pressure from Clan MacDonald and other supporters of the English Crown evidently compelled Clan MacDougall into coming onside with the English in the first years of the 14th century. However, when Robert Bruce VII, (our 21st great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) Earl of Carrick murdered the Scottish claimant John Comyn III, Lord of Badenoch in 1306, and subsequently made himself King of Scotland (as Robert I), Clan MacDonald seems to have switched their allegiance to Robert I in an effort to gain leverage against Clan MacDougall.

Following Robert I's successful consolidation of the Scottish kingship, Angus Og and other members of his kindred were rewarded with extensive grants of territories formerly held by their regional opponents. According to the late 14th century *Bruce*, Angus Og participated in the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, Robert I's greatest victory over the English.

The grants of land by Robert I are found in 17th century charter indices that note several undated royal grants. Angus Og MacDonald was granted Ardnamurchan, Morvern, Duror, Mull, Jura, Coll, Tiree and Glencoe. Undoubtedly, Clan MacDonald was also granted Islay and Kintyre as well. Angus Og MacDonald died about 1330 at Finlaggan Castle on the Isle of Islay.

The Lords of the Isles and Clan McDonald

John MacDonald (our 20th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) was born to Angus Og MacDonald and Agnes O'Cathan in about 1320 at Finlaggan Castle on the Isle of Islay. John of Islay (or John MacDonald) was the Lord of the Isles (1336–1386) and chief of Clan MacDonald. In 1336, he styled himself *Dominus Insularum*, "Lord of the Isles"; because this is the first ever recorded instance of the title in use, modern historians count John as the first of the later medieval Lords of the Isles. However, his predecessors functioned as "Lords of the Isles" back to the time of Somerled, but their title had actually been "King of the Isles." John MacDonald would be the 7th Lord of the Isles counting from Somerled

In 1336, in order to earn John MacDonald's favor, Edward Balliol confirmed the territories which the Islay lords had acquired in the days of Robert I; and additionally, Edward awarded John the lands of Kintyre, Knapdale, Gigha, Colonsay, Mull, Skye, Lewis, and Morvern, held by magnates still loyal to the Bruces. John, however, never provided Edward with real assistance. Although Balliol's deposition by the supporters of David meant that the grants made to John void, John's pre-1336 possessions were in fact confirmed by King David II in 1343. Moreover, in 1346, John inherited the great Lordship of Garmoran through his marriage to Amie mac Ruari after the death of her brother Ragnall Mac Ruaidhrí. This meant that John's dominions now included all of the Hebrides except Skye, and all of the western seaboard from

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Morvern to Loch Hourne.

John continued to build his power based by allying himself with Robert II (our 20th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) of Scotland, another west highland magnate who was the designated heir of King David. After David went into English custody in 1346, Robert acted as the de facto ruler of Scotland north of the River Forth. In 1350, John was given Robert's daughter Margaret Stewart (our 20th great grandmother in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) in marriage, and received Knapdale and Kintyre as dowry. However, Robert was the senior partner, and John had to divorce his first wife Amie; his sons Godfrey, John and Ranald by Amie were to be passed over in the succession in favor of any children by the marriage with Margaret. After the capture of the king and death of John Randolph at the Battle of Neville's Cross in 1346, John and Robert worked together taking control of the huge earldom of Moray, bringing MacDonald power into Lochaber and Stewart power into Badenoch. John MacDonald died about 1387 at Ardtornish Castle in Morvern of Argyll.

John MacDonald's seventh child with Margaret Stewart was Mary MacDonald ((our 21st great grandmother in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) who was born about 1350 on the Isle of Islay of Argyll. In about 1367 she was married to the 5th Chief of Clan MacLean, Lachlan Lubanach MacGilean MacLean, 1st Laird of Duart (our 21st great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree). This marked the first recorded mention of the MacLeans of Duart in a Papal dispensation of 1367 which allowed Lachlan Lubanach MacLean to marry the daughter of the Lord of the Isles, Mary MacDonald. As a result of this marriage, Lachlan Lubanach MacGilean received from John MacDonald, Lord of the Isles, the first known Charter of the lands of Duart dated 1390. Thus the MacLeans came to own much of Mull, the MacKinnon lands being granted to them by the MacDonalds as a dowry. Mary MacDonald died about 1399.

Sixteen generation of descendants from Lachlan Lubanach MacLean and Mary MacDonald would come down to our ancestor John MacKinnon (our 5th great grandfather) who would be a tenant farmer on the Island of Tiree in 1772.

John MacDonald's second son, John MacDonnell (our 19th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) would marry Margery Bisset (our 19th great grandmother in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) of the Seven Glens of Antrim. He would become the Earl of Antrim. He and Margery's third great grandson was Sorley Boy McDonnell. Sorley Boy McDonnell would play a part re-establishing the Lords of the Isles over the portions of the old kingdom of Dal Riada in County Antrim, Ireland. The chief remaining clans in that portion of Ireland were the O'Cathans and the MacQuillans, who held the territory of the Routes, and had their seat at Dunluce Castle. In 1211, Sorley Boy McDonnell came with his forces and took possession of the Glens of Antrim and Dunluce. The McDonnells then made themselves the masters of the country.

Another son of John MacDonald and Margaret Stewart was Reginald MacDonald (our 21st great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree), born about 1352. There would be 8 descending generations from him to Lady Janet Campbell (our 24th great grandmother in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) who would marry the 13th Chief of Clan MacLean, Eachuinn Hector Og MacLean (our 24th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree). There would be 15 descending generations from Reginald MacDonald down to Mary Lamont (our 5th great

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grandmother) who lived on the Island of Tiree in the 1700s.

Another son of John MacDonald and Margaret Stewart was Donald MacDonald (our 20th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree), born about 1364 on Islay of Argyll. He would be the 8th Lord of the Isles. Donald spent some of his first years as Lord of the Isles suppressing a revolt by his brother John Mor. John was Donald's younger brother, and resented his meager inheritance. Although he was recognized as heir-apparent, he only received patches of land in Kintyre and Islay. The rebellion started in 1387 and went on into the 1390s, and John obtained the support of the MacLean kindred. However, John and the MacLeans were eventually forced to submit to Donald, and by 1395 John Mor had been forced into Ireland. There he entered the service of King Richard II of England and as mentioned above he was named as Earl of Antrim

Most of the area to the north and east of the Lordship, that is Skye, Ross, Badenoch and Urquhart, was under the control of Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan (our 20th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree), famously known as the "Wolf of Badenoch". Because of some internal strife and conflict in the Stewart family, Donald and his brother Alexander of Lochaber were in a perfect position to benefit. In 1394, the latter entered a 17-year agreement with the Earl of Moray, taking over Alexander Stewart's role as "protector" of the wealthy commital and episcopal lands in the Moray lowlands. The MacDonalds were in possession of Urquhart Castle by the end of 1395, and had given control of the Duart Castle to Maclean of Duart.

Following the death of Alexander Leslie, Earl of Ross, Donald pressed the claims of Alexander's sister Mariota Leslie (our 20th great grandmother in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) of Ross, his wife since 1391 to the possession of Ross. Donald attempted to gain control of the earldom. Sometime after 1405 but before 1411, Donald gained control of Dingwall Castle, the chief seat of the earldom.

In the year after the death of the nominal king, Robert III (our 19th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree), Donald sent emissaries to England, to make contact with the heir of the Scottish throne, the captive James Stewart. King Henry IV of England sent his own emissaries to Donald in the following year to negotiate an alliance against Albany.

With control over the principal seat of the earldom of Ross and support of the exiled heir to the Scottish throne, in 1411 Donald felt strong enough to march against Albany's main northern ally, Alexander Stewart, Earl of Mar (our 20th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree). At the Battle of Harlaw, Donald failed to inflict a decisive victory, and withdrew back to the western highlands. In the aftermath, Albany was able to retake Dingwall and seize control of Easter Ross. Donald prepared for war and proclaimed himself "Lord of Ross". Although Albany appointed his own son John Stewart to the earldom, Donald's wife continued to regard herself as the rightful Countess. Donald MacDonald died on May 8, 1423 in Dingwall of Ross.

Alexander MacDonald (our 19th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) was born to Donald MacDonald and Mariota Leslie in about 1398 in Tulloch Castle in Dingwall of Ross. Alexander succeeded his father Donald of Islay as the 9th Lord of the Isles (1423–1449) and rose to the rank of Earl of Ross (1437–49). Alexander allied himself with King James I of Scotland against the power of the Albany Stewarts in 1425 but, once the Albany Stewarts were out of the way, Alexander quickly found himself at odds with the new king. War with King

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James would initially prove Alexander's undoing, and would see the King's power in Scotland greatly increased, but at the Battle of Inverlochy Alexander's army prevailed against the forces of the King.

At any rate, the king had certainly adopted a more hostile attitude towards Alexander. In 1428, James traveled into the north of Scotland both to assert his authority in Ross and to bring order to the north. King James requested a meeting with Alexander, and in August Alexander traveled in good faith to meet James at Inverness, where James was holding court. James however, in an act typical of his kingship, imprisoned Alexander, his mother Mariota and around fifty of his followers, including his uncle and heir-designate John Mor, in the tower of Inverness Castle.

According to Michael Brown and the 17th century *History of the MacDonalds*, James attempted to do a deal with John Mor, probably offering him the Lordship of the Isles, to which he was heir and for which he had revolted against his brother Donald decades before. John however refused to negotiate until Alexander was released. Before the end of 1428. Alexander was released on a promise of good behavior.

Alexander died in 1449, having greatly extended his family's landed wealth and power. He was buried, not in the Isles of his ancestors, but at Fortrose Cathedral in his mainland Earldom of Ross.

Here ends the story of our ancestors the Lords of the Isles and inheritors of the Ancient Kingdom of Dal Riada. As we descend from Alexander MacDonald and Mariota Leslie's daughter Florence Finula MacDonald (our 18th great grandmother in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree). Florence married Duncan MacKintosh (our 18th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree), 11th Chief of Clan MacIntosh. Their daughter Marjorie MacKintosh (our 17th great grandmother in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree) married Hector Odhar MacLean, 9th Chief of Clan MacLean (our 17th great grandfather in the Ancient Scottish Pedigree). After 15 descending generations our ancestor John McKinnon (our 5th great grandfather) would be found on the Island of Tiree in 1772.

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