

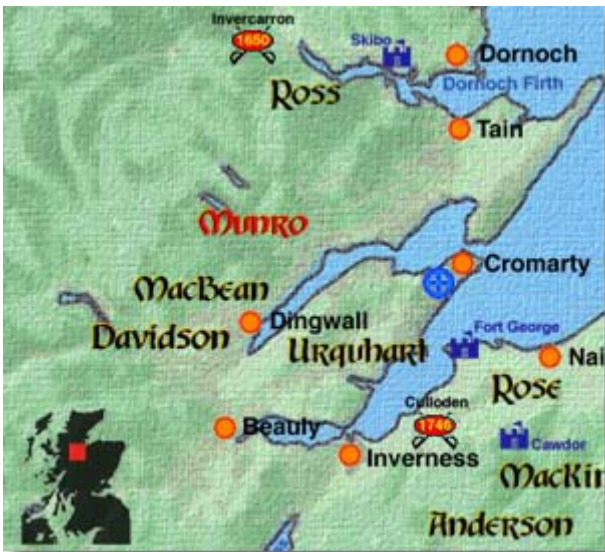
Munro Origins



Crest	An eagle perching, proper
Badge:	An eagle perching, proper
Motto:	Dread God
Gaelic Name:	Mac an Rothaich
Origin of Name:	Gaelic Rothach (man from Ro)
Plant Badge:	Common club moss
War Cry:	Caisteal Folaish'n a Theine (Castle Foulis in flames)
Pipe Music:	Bealach na Broige
Hunting Tartan:	42nd Black Watch

What follows is the short version of the Munro history, taken from the official Clan Munro website. The early history of our clan is in doubt and we show a couple of other theories at the end of the section.

The origins of Clan Munro are lost in the distant past. By tradition, C11th mercenary soldiers from Ireland, they were granted Lands in Ross by a grateful King after assisting him in defeating the Viking invaders of this part of Scotland.



From documentary evidence, they were well established by the middle of the C14th on the north shore of the Cromarty Firth in the area known as Ferindonald (Donald's land) after their legendary first chief. From this narrow base comprising the modern parishes of Kiltearn and Aness they gradually spread their sphere of influence northwards and eastwards into the

fertile plain of Easter Ross.

Initially, they held land as vassals of the powerful Earls of Ross but on the forfeiture of that earldom, directly from the Crown. In general a law abiding and peaceful clan, nevertheless when needs arose they stoutly defended their interests against more powerful neighbours.

Loyal to the Crown, early in the reformation the Chief and his followers adopted the Protestant faith, a move which greatly influenced future clan policy. Under their Chief they fought on the continent in the 30 Years War and supported the Protestant succession to the British Crown against the Catholic Stuarts during the Jacobite Risings of the C18th century.

The Munros military record continued into the present century, providing the British Government with some of its finest fighting troops through the Highland Regiments. Clansmen and women have excelled in many professions including medicine and politics. Military expeditions, adventurism and social change in the Highlands saw the name Munro spread throughout the world. The power of the old Highland Chieftains has gone but the spirit of the Clan lives on through the [Clan Munro \(Association\)](#) which enjoys a world-wide membership.

SOME OTHER OPINIONS

Our early beginnings are in doubt. As we have said, by tradition, the Munros came from Ireland in the 11th century. But there are other theories and some, such as that expressed by the Earl of Cromarty (see below) aver that our clan's origins are in Alba. The only thing that is certain is that none of the theories can prove that the Munros came from Ireland in the 11th century.

An American researcher, Mr Malcolm Hamilton, believes that they did come from Ireland but at a much later date - in the 14th century. His research also throws doubt on the authenticity of our early Munro Chiefs and in this he is in agreement with the Munro genealogist and historian, the late RW Munro (see below). Malcolm's research is not yet complete but when it is published and we will bring you more information.

Another view is expressed by the Earl of Cromartie in his book "A Highland History." In it he says that a map drawn by Ptolemy gives names to thirteen great tribes of Alba. We will not name them all here but he says that one of the tribes was the Kanteai who lived in Ross and Moray. Cromartie says "*that from them came the Siol O'Cain which branched into Clan Munro in Ross, MacMillans and according to Skene, Clans Chattan and others south of the Moray Firth.*"

The late RW Munro, the Clan Munro genealogist, in editing the Munro Tree 1734, says when discussing the original Munro Tree:-

"There are four main grounds for objection, which can be briefly stated

- *Such precise dates as are given in the MS must obviously be suspect at such an early period in the absence of any supporting documents*
- *the alleged occurrence of the surname Munro in the time of Macbeth (c. 1040) is impossible, as surnames were not used in Scotland until several centuries later, and the earliest forms were normally descriptive or patronymical*
- *the Macdonald marriage, in the form stated, is chronologically impossible, although it may have some genuine traditional basis*

- *and the appearance of the Christian name George at least 300 years before any other surviving record of its use in Scotland (or so it appears), and long before it took root even in England is clearly improbable.*

“These first ten generations, therefore, with all their names and dates and other attendant details, should not be taken too seriously, and can certainly not be regarded as established fact or even as genuine local tradition. It seems to be not at all unlikely, as has been suggested that the traditional founder, Donald, has been placed earlier than he should be in time, and that the gap between him and the recorded chiefs (which may in fact have been no more than a generation or two) has been filled in perhaps more or less at random from scraps of undated oral tradition, with appropriate details supplied by conjecture if not by deliberate invention.

“Highland memories are long, and Highland pedigrees are mostly even longer: in 1723 a native writer on Scottish surnames, William Buchanan of Auchmar, remarked on 'the fondness of people's having the origin of their most famous men screwed up to as great a pitch of antiquity as possible, yea, sometimes above measure'.

Documented history gives us a respectable antiquity without any need to embellish it - our neighbours the Rosses were not associated with Balnagown until the 14th century, nor were the Mackenzies of Kintail on record before the mid 15th century.”

“From 1369 onwards the Munro genealogy can be fully supported by contemporary evidence, as illustrated in the notes, and as much of that evidence is based on land-holding it will be well to see what is known from various sources about the Munro lands of Ferindonald and the ancient barony of Foulis.”

As we say, there are many theories as to the Munro origins. If you have a theory or would like to comment on any of the above why not tell us about it in our discussion area.