

## MACRAE

Source: The Scottish Highlands, Highland Clans and Highland Regiments, Volume II (of 2) by Sir John Scott Keltie

Macrae (MacRa or MacRath)[237] is the name of a Ross-shire clan at one time very numerous[281] on the shores of Kintail, but now widely scattered through Scotland and the colonies, more especially Canada. The oldest form of the name "M'Rath" signifies "son-of-good-luck." The clan is generally considered to be of pure Gaelic stock, although its earliest traditions point to an Irish origin. They are said to have come over with Colin Fitzgerald, the founder of the clan Mackenzie, of whose family they continued through their whole history the warm friends and adherents, so much so that they were jocularly called "Seaforth's shirt," and under his leadership they fought at the battle of Largs, in 1263. They settled first in the Aird of Lovat, but subsequently emigrated into Glenshiel, in the district of Kintail. At the battle of Auldearn, in May 1645, the Macraes fought under the "Caber-Fey," on the side of Montrose, where they lost a great number of men. The chief of the Macraes is Macrae of Inverinate, in Kintail, whose family since about the year 1520 held the honourable post of constables of Islandonan. A MS. genealogical account of the clans, written by the Rev. John Macrae, minister of Dingwall, who died in 1704, was formerly in possession of Lieut.-Col. Sir John Macrae of Ardintoul, and is now possessed by the present head of the Inverinate family, Colin Macrae, Esq., W.S., who has also a copy of a treaty of friendship between the Campbells of Craignish and the Macraes of Kintail, dated 1702. This history contains many interesting stories, descriptive of the great size, strength, and courage for which the clan was remarkable. One Duncan Mòr, a man of immense strength, contributed largely to the defeat of the Macdonalds at the battle of Park, in 1464, and it was said of him that, though engaged in many conflicts and always victorious, he never came off without a wound; and another Duncan, who lived in the beginning of the 18th century, was possessed of so great strength that he is said to have carried for some distance a stone of huge size, and laid it down on the farm of Auchnangart, where it is still to be seen. He was the author of several poetical pieces, and was killed with many of his clan at Sheriffmuir, in 1715, his two brothers falling at his side. His sword, long preserved in the Tower of London, was shown as "the great Highlander's sword."

Both males and females of the Macraes are said to have evinced a strong taste, not only for severe literary studies, but for the gentler arts of poetry and music. From the beginning of the 15th century, one of the Inverinate family always held the office of vicar of Kintail; and John, the first vicar, was much revered for his learning, which he acquired with the monks of Beaulieu. Farquhar Macrae, born 1580, who entered the church, is said to have been a great Latin scholar. It is told of this Farquhar, that on his first visit to the island of Lewes, he had to baptize the whole population under forty years of age, no minister being resident on the island.