

Mathieson

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

The name Mathieson, or Clan Mhathain, is said to come from the Gaelic Mathaineach, heroes, or rather, from Mathan, pronounced Mahan, a bear. The MacMathans were settled in Lochalsh, a district of Wester Ross, from an early period. They are derived by ancient genealogies from the same stock as the Earls of Ross and are represented by the MS. of 1450 as a branch of the Mackenzies. Kenneth MacMathan, who was constable of the castle of Ellandonan, is mentioned both in the Norse account of the expedition of the king of Norway against Scotland in 1263, and in the Chamberlain's Rolls for that year, in connection with that expedition. He is said to have married a sister of the Earl of Ross. The chief of the clan was engaged in the rebellion of Donald, Lord of the Isles, in 1411, and was one of the chiefs arrested at Inverness by James I., in 1427, when he is said to have been able to muster 2000 men. The possessions of the Mathiesons, at one time very extensive, were greatly reduced, in the course of the 16th century, by feuds with their turbulent neighbours, the Macdonalds of Glengarry.

Of this clan Mr Skene says,—“Of the history of this clan we know nothing whatever. Although they are now extinct, they must at one time have been one of the most powerful clans in the north, for among the Highland chiefs seized by James I. at the parliament held at Inverness in 1427, Bower mentions Macmaken leader of two thousand men, and this circumstance affords a most striking instance of the rise and fall of different families; for, while the Mathison appears at that early period as the leader of two thousand men, the Mackenzie has the same number only, and we now see the clan of Mackenzie extending their numberless branches over a great part of the North, and possessing an extent of territory of which few families can exhibit a parallel, while the one powerful clan of t