

SHAW

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

The origin of the Shaws, at one time a most important clan of the Chattan confederation, has been already referred to in connection with the Mackintoshes. The tradition of the Mackintoshes and Shaws is "unvaried," says the Rev. W. G. Shaw of Forfar, that at least from and after 1396, a race of Shaws existed in Rothiemurchus, whose great progenitor was the Shaw Mor who commanded the section of the clan represented by the Mackintoshes on the Inch. The tradition of the Shaws is, that he was Shaw, the son of James, the son or descendant of Farquhar; the tradition of the Macintoshes—that he was Shaw-mac-Gilchrist-mac-Ian-mac-Angus-mac-Farquhar,—Farquhar being the ancestor according to both traditions, from whom he took the name (according to Wyntoun) of Sha Farquharis Son.[196] The tradition of a James Shaw who 'had bloody contests with the Comyns,' which tradition is fortified by that of the Comyns, may very likely refer to the James, who, according to the genealogies both of the Shaws and Mackintoshes, was the son of Shaw Mor.

Mr Shaw of Forfar, who is well entitled to speak with authority on the subject, maintains "that prior to 1396, the clan now represented[214] by the Mackintoshes, had been (as was common amongst the clans) sometimes designated as the clan Shaw, after the successive chiefs of that name, especially the first, and sometimes as the clan of the Mac-an-Toisheach, i.e., of the Thane's son. Thus, from its first founder, the great clan of the Isles was originally called the clan Cuin, or race of Constantine. Afterwards, it was called the clan Colla, from his son Coll, and latterly the clan Donald, after one of his descendants of that name. So the Macleans are often called clan Gilleon after their founder and first chief; and the Macphersons, the clan Muirich, after one of the most distinguished in their line of chiefs. The Farquharsons are called clan Fhiunla, after their great ancestor, Finlay Mor. There is nothing more probable, therefore—I should say more certain—than that the race in after times known as Mackintoshes, should at first have been as frequently designated as Na Si'aich, 'The Shaws,' after the Christian name of their first chief, as Mackintoshes after his appellative description or designation. It is worthy of remark, that the race of Shaws is never spoken of in Gaelic as the 'clan Shaw,' but as 'Na Si'aich'—The Shaws, or as we would say Shawites. We never hear of Mac-Shaws—sons of Shaw, but of 'Na Si'aich—The Shaws.' Hence prior to 1396, when a Shaw so distinguished himself as to found a family, under the wing of his chief, the undivided race, so to speak, would sometimes be called 'Mackintoshes,' or followers of the Thane's sons, sometimes the clan Chattan, the generic name of the race, sometimes 'clan Dhugaill,' (Quehele) after Dougall-Dall, and sometimes 'Na Si'aich,' the Shaws or Shawites, after the numerous chiefs who bore the name of Shaw in the line of descent. Hence the claim of both Shaws and Mackintoshes to the occupancy of Rothiemurchus. After 1396, the term Na Si'aich was restricted, as all are agreed, to the clan developed out of the other, through the prowess of Shaw Mór."

Shaw "Mor" Mackintosh, who fought at Perth in 1396, was succeeded by his son James, who fell at Harlaw in 1411. Both Shaw and James had held Rothiemurchus only as tenants of the chief of Mackintosh, but James's son and successor, Alister "Ciar" (i.e., brown), obtained from Duncan, 11th of Mackintosh, in 1463–4, his right of possession and tack. In the deed by which David Stuart, Bishop of Moray, superior of the lands, confirms this disposition of Duncan, and gives Alister the feu, Alister is called "Allister Kier Mackintosh." This deed is dated 24th September 1464. All the deeds in which Alister is mentioned call him Mackintosh, not Shaw, thus showing the descent of the Shaws from the Mackintoshes, and that they did not acquire their name of Shaw until after Alister's time.

Alister's grandson, Alan, in 1539, disposed his right to Rothiemurchus to Edom Gordon, reserving only his son's liferent. Alan's grandson, of the same name was outlawed for the murder of his stepfather, some fifty years later, and compelled to leave the country. Numerous Shaws are, however, still to be found in the neighbourhood of

Rothiemurchus, or who can trace their descent from Alister Kier.

Besides the Shaws of Rothiemurchus, the Shaws of Tordarroch in Strathnairn, descended from Adam, younger brother of Alister Kier, were a considerable family; but, like their cousins, they no longer occupy their original patrimony. Tordarroch was held in wadset of the chiefs of Mackintosh, and was given up to Sir Æneas Mackintosh in the end of last century by its holder at the time, Colonel Alexander Shaw, seventh in descent from Adam.

Angus MacBean vic Robert of Tordarroch signed the Bond of 1609 already mentioned. His great-grandsons, Robert and Æneas, took part during their father's life in the rebellion of 1715; both were taken prisoners at Preston, and were confined in Newgate, the elder brother dying during his imprisonment. The younger, Æneas, succeeded his father, and in consideration of his taking no part in the '45, was made a magistrate, and received commissions for his three sons, the second of whom, Æneas, rose to the rank of major-general in the army. Margaret, daughter of Æneas of Tordarroch, was wife of Farquhar Macgillivray of Dalcrombie, one of the three officers of the Mackintosh regiment who escaped from Culloden.

Æneas was succeeded by his eldest son, Colonel Alexander Shaw, lieutenant-governor of the Isle of Man under the crown. He gave up the wadset of Tordarroch to Sir Æneas Mackintosh, and died in 1811.

From the four younger sons of Alister Kier descended respectively the Shaws of Dell (the family of the historian of Moray, the Rev. Lachlan Shaw); of Dalnivert, the representation of it devolved in the last century on a female, who married — Clark; the Farquharsons, who in time acquired more importance than the Shaws; and the Shaws of Harris, who still retain a tradition of their ancestor, Iver MacAlister Ciar.