

**“HIGHLAND MINSTREL TO TOURIST ICON: THE CHANGING ROLE OF  
THE HIGHLAND PIPER IN NOVA SCOTIA SOCIETY, 1773-1973”**

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
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at  
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## Abstract

### Highland Minstrel to Tourist Icon: The Changing role of the Highland Piper in Nova Scotia Society, 1773-1973

Barry W. Shears  
January 17, 2005

“Highland Musician to Tourist Icon: The Changing Role of the Highland Piper in Nova Scotia Society, 1773-1973” is a study of the arrival and evolution of Highland bagpiping in Nova Scotia over a two hundred year period. This thesis examines the history and exodus of Gaelic-speaking pipers from Scotland to Nova Scotia, beginning in 1773, and examines the cultural status and diminishing social role of these musicians within their evolving communities. The study describes Nova Scotia’s rich and authentic traditional Gaelic piping style which survived in the Province much longer than in Scotland. It provides historical background and analysis as to why this cultural reality endured in Nova Scotia and reviews the many social, economic and cultural developments which, along with world events, altered the status, role and perception of the community piper within Nova Scotia society.

**Illustration**

*The bagpipe and the spinning wheel are still heard discoursing sweet music within their dwellings<sup>1</sup>*



'Big' Farquhar and Margory MacKinnon, East Lake Ainslie, c. 1910.  
(Photograph courtesy of the East Lake Ainslie Historical Society)

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<sup>1</sup> A.H.Spedan, *Rambles Among the Bluenoses* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1863), p. 197.

## Acknowledgements

In 1968, at the age of twelve and at my father's urging, I began to learn to play the Highland Bagpipe. My first piping instructor was Angus MacIntyre, an elderly piper and retired coal miner then living in Glace Bay. I do not remember what first attracted me to the instrument but over the years it has become a very time-consuming hobby, first as a competitor, and later as a part-time researcher of pipers and pipe music in Nova Scotia.

How I fondly remember those Friday afternoons after school sitting in his sun porch going over my weekly lessons, the air heavy with the smell of pipe tobacco. Of particular interest to me were the stories of pipers both in Cape Breton, and in Scotland, which were occasionally inserted between explanations of grace notes and quarter notes, strathspeys and reels. In essence, the seeds for this thesis were sown in Glace Bay over thirty years ago.

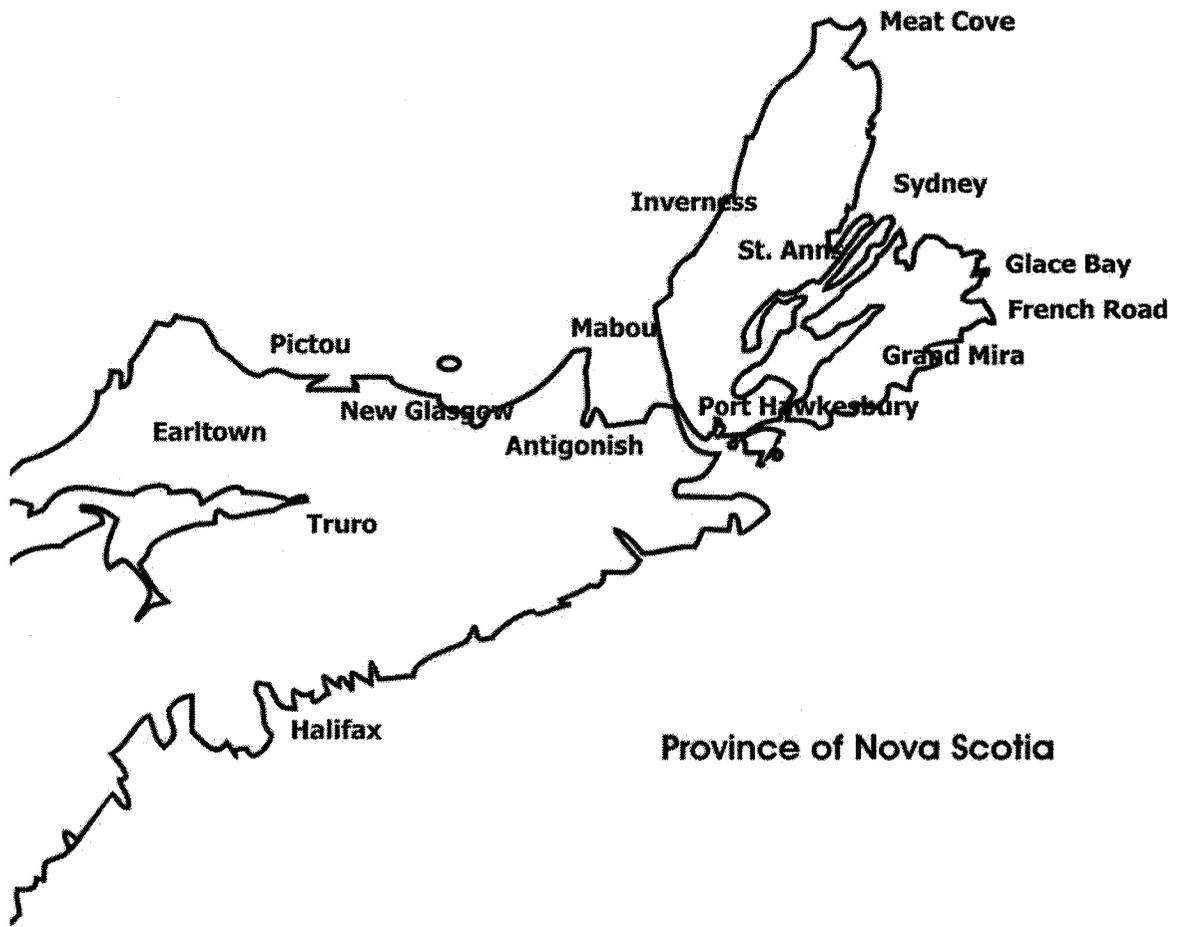
This project could never have reached fruition without the contributions and support of several people. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ron Caplan, John Gibson, and the late Paddy MacIntyre, for their advice and encouragement; the dozen or so individuals, both living and dead, who shared their memories, music, and photographs, and the staff at Saint Mary's University, in particular Professors Peter Twohig and Heather Macleod.

A special thank you to my thesis supervisor, Professor John Reid, for his interest in the topic, and his advice on what in the beginning, was an enormous amount of research. Dr. Reid helped pilot this project through the shoals of verbosity and repetition and any glaring errors or omissions are the sole responsibility of the author.

My family have always been very supportive of my endeavours and so, a special thank you to my wife and two daughters; Margaret for her suggestion to enroll in the Masters program, Alison for her artwork, and Siobhan for her typing.

I dedicate this thesis to my late father, Angus MacLean Shears, whose knowledge and passion for history continue to be an inspiration.

Map



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## Introduction

*I believe in telling children the truth about the history of the world, that it does not consist in the history of Kings, Lords and Cabinets, but consists in the history of the mass of the workers, a thing that is not taught in any school.*

*J.B. McLachlan, 1925<sup>1</sup>*

Echoing the sentiment expressed by Scottish labour leader James B. McLachlan, that history does not consist solely of “Kings, Lords and Cabinets”, academics have increasingly devoted their energies to a variety of subjects dealing with cultural history. A topic which falls under the umbrella of cultural history, and one in which music plays an important role, is the subject of leisure and entertainment. In particular, the Scottish Highland bagpipe is now attracting the interest of several academics with an interest in its evolution, music and traditions. But why is a study of pipers and pipe music performance in Nova Scotia important and who benefits from such a study?

Bagpipe music was an integral component of Highland society in both Scotland and Nova Scotia. More recently bagpiping in Nova Scotia has become a cultural icon and as a result has been the subject of significant misrepresentation. The study of this aspect of Gaelic culture has been largely overlooked by academics and subsequently many inaccurate stereotypes have emerged surrounding the role of pipers in Highland society. This is a first step in reversing the romantic ideal of the Highland piper. It is not based on deconstructionist theory but rather on a re-evaluation of certain erroneous cultural stereotypes of the Scottish Gael in Nova Scotia which were introduced in the early twentieth century and which permeated much of its second half.

This thesis should be of interest to anyone with an interest in Gaelic language, music and culture, not only in Nova Scotia, but wherever bagpipes are played. In a

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<sup>1</sup> David Frank, *J.B. McLachlan: A Biography- The Story of a Legendary Leader and the Cape Breton Coal Miners* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd, 1999), p.v.

broader context this study could be augmented by research into the musical traditions of other immigrant groups to Nova Scotia such as Natives, African Nova Scotians, Germans, Irish, and United Empire Loyalists. These ethnic groups retained and developed their musical traditions within the Province and a comprehensive evaluation of these traditions seems to be wanting.

This thesis is not a treatise on Gaelic instrumental music but rather offers an overview of the development of Highland bagpipe music and traditions in Nova Scotia over a two hundred-year period. The study covers the period from the first significant arrival of Scottish immigrants to Nova Scotia in 1773 to the bi-centenary celebrations of the landing of the ship *Hector* in 1973. This time frame is important since it covers the arrival, decline and eventual dissolution of a Gaelic-flavoured bagpiping tradition. In an effort to present a contextual interpretation on the subject of Highland bagpiping in Nova Scotia, the study begins with a detailed chapter on the development of the bagpipe and its traditions in Scotland.

Chapter Two, “The Highland Bagpipe in Scotland”, touches on several aspects of the changing role of the Highland piper in Scotland. It describes the origins of the bagpipe in Scotland, the structure and eventual collapse of the Clan system, “Hereditary” pipers, piping colleges, types of bagpipe music, musical literacy and standardization. This chapter is important in the cross-case analysis of the changes which affected pipers in Nova Scotia, especially in regards to the development of the Scottish tourist trade in the early nineteenth century. Nova Scotia’s piping traditions remained unique since many of these musical developments in Scotland occurred after widespread Highland immigration to Nova Scotia had ceased. Relative isolation for much of the nineteenth century limited external influences and provided the ideal environment for the continuity of tradition in Gaelic language, music and dance.

The extended time frame of this study dealing with the expansion of piping in Nova Scotia may seem unwieldy, but it is made more manageable by dividing the stages of development into three sections. There is, however, some overlap between these stages of musical development. For instance, cultural isolation in several rural areas of Nova Scotia allowed an essentially nineteenth-century style of piping to survive and co-exist for a time with the modern twentieth-century style. It is the existence of this older piping tradition which has attracted the recent interest of a handful of folklorists, historians, and amateur musicologists from both Canada and the United States.

The first and longest stage covers the period 1773-1895 and includes Chapters Two and Three. It examines the arrival of tens of thousands of Scottish Gaels, beginning with arrival of the ship *Hector* to Pictou in 1773, and their second and third generation descendants. The arrival of dozens of professional and semi-professional musicians (Appendix A), who accompanied this large migration, assured the presence of 'community' pipers in Nova Scotia.

Chapter Two, "Immigration, Settlement, and Industrialization" details two distinct periods of Highland immigration to Nova Scotia and explains early settlement patterns among Scottish Gaels to the Province. It describes the establishment of Highland communities in Nova Scotia and the development of a limited economic base dependant on farming, fishing and lumbering and the fate of several of the middle-class piping families who immigrated to Nova Scotia (Appendix A). The fecundity of many Highland families resulted in increased numbers of Gaelic-speaking Nova Scotians and increased demands on limited agricultural resources. Improvements in transportation and communication made it easier for large segments of the population to relocate to the United States. The industrialization of Nova Scotia in the late nineteenth century

encouraged relocation of many Scottish Gaels, as well as other ethnic groups, from rural areas to newly established urban centres.

Chapter Three, “The Piping Tradition in Nova Scotia”, touches on the role of female pipers in Nova Scotia and describes the multi-faceted role of the piper in nineteenth-century Nova Scotia. The substantial increase in the number of Gaelic-speaking Nova Scotians during the nineteenth century was accompanied by a rather dramatic increase in the number of pipers in the Province (Appendix B). Since bagpipes were expensive and difficult to obtain from Scotland, a market for homemade instruments emerged and several pipe-makers began supplying the increasing demand for locally produced bagpipes (Appendix C). Chapter Three also describes early bagpipe making in Scotland and compares it to the development of a musical instrument “cottage industry” in Nova Scotia. The role of Highland piper in Nova Scotia during much of the nineteenth century was still one of community musician. The responsibility of these community pipers, whether female or male, was to provide music for social dancing, concerts and weddings.

The second stage (1895-1930) coincides with large scale industrialization in Nova Scotia, improvements in transportation, the First World War and a general decline in the number of Gaelic-speakers in Nova Scotia. Chapter Four, “Tradition in Transition, 1895-1930”, opens by drawing parallels to the oral transmission of instrumental music, songs and storytelling. It describes the continued decline of Gaelic language use in the Province aided in part by the demographic shift which accompanied further industrial development and outward migration. The period 1895-1930 also witnessed the arrival of several Scottish-trained immigrants to Nova Scotia (Appendix E) and the increased influence of the army on piping. The modern “Scottish” pipers who came to Nova Scotia during this period included Pipe Major MacKenzie Baillie, his wife Catherine, and George Dey.

These musicians and others like them, were well-versed in contemporary-piping styles and their influence coincided with the development of the first civilian pipe bands in the Province. The changing perception of a piper's role in society, to one of a kilted pipe band musician, was reinforced by the army's involvement in recruiting and retraining pipers during the First World War.

The third stage of development covers the period 1930-1973, and is discussed in Chapter Five. "The Final Chapter, 1930-1973", outlines the factors which contributed to the elimination of traditional piping styles and function in Nova Scotia. These influences included the founding of the Gaelic College in 1938, the Second World War, the opening of the Canso Causeway in 1955, the increased use of kilted figures in tourist literature, and the bi-centenary celebrations of the landing of the ship *Hector* in 1973.

The number of traditionally trained pipers was at an all-time low by 1960s and entertainment preferences had changed to reflect modern forms of social dancing. It would appear that the descendants of the first urban Gaels opted for a tenuous attachment to their culture.<sup>2</sup> Often this manifested itself into a denial of their cultural heritage and an increasing willingness to accept the cultural stereotypes propagated after the Second World War by institutions such as the Gaelic College at St Ann's, Cape Breton, and the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism. The training of pipers by the army during the Second World War continued to reinforce modern concepts of piping and the Scottish instructors teaching at the Gaelic College in the late 1950s dismissed local piping traditions as practically worthless. By the 1970s the number of pipe bands in Nova Scotia had almost doubled and much of the colourful history of nineteenth-century Gaelic musical tradition had been largely ignored or forgotten.

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<sup>2</sup> This was particularly evident in my hometown of Glace Bay. My grandmother, Maggie (MacLean) Shears was one of many Gaelic-speakers who migrated to industrial Cape Breton and preferred not to teach their children Gaelic. She felt that Canada was an English country and two languages would only hinder social acceptance and advancement.

The purpose of Chapter Six, “Conclusion”, and the attached Appendices is to provide an interpretation of the material presented in the previous chapters and to illustrate how the playing of the bagpipe managed to survive and find a niche in twentieth century society. The development of the Scottish tourist trade in nineteenth century Scotland had distinctive similarities with the expansion of Nova Scotia’s modern Scottish identity in mid-twentieth century. In both cases Highland culture was redefined and misrepresented.

The story of the bagpipe in Scotland has been well documented by such scholarly treatments as *The Highland Bagpipe* by Francis Collinson,<sup>3</sup> *The Bagpipe and its Music* by Roderick Cannon,<sup>4</sup> *The Highland Bagpipe and Scottish Society, 1750-1950* by William Donaldson<sup>5</sup> and *A Piper in Peace and War* by C.A. Malcolm.<sup>6</sup> There is, however, a deficiency in the amount of material dealing with the tradition of bagpiping outside Scotland. This void is gradually being filled by some recent studies such as: *The Piobaireachd of Simon Fraser* by Barrie Orme,<sup>7</sup> *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 1745-1945*<sup>8</sup> and *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping*<sup>9</sup> by John G. Gibson.

For pipers and those interested in Scottish history this recent academic interest has been well-received since, as William Donaldson, a Scottish piper and social historian points out, Highland piping has become a world-wide phenomenon.

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<sup>3</sup> Francis Collinson, *The Bagpipe- A History of a Musical Instrument* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).

<sup>4</sup> Roderick Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and its Music* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1995).

<sup>5</sup> William Donaldson, *The Highland Bagpipe and Scottish Society, 1750-195* (East Lothian, Scotland: Tuckwell Press Ltd, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> C.A. Malcolm, *The Piper in Peace and War* (London: Harwick Press, First Published, 1927, John Murray, London, reprinted in 1975).

<sup>7</sup> Dr. B.J. MacLachlan Orme, *The Piobaireachd of Simon Fraser With Canntaireachd* (Published by the author, Victoria, Australia, N.p., Second edition, 1985).

<sup>8</sup> John G. Gibson, *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 1745-1945* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> John G. Gibson, *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002).

Nowadays piping is a worldwide culture with many thousands of performers, composers, teachers and learners, not only in Scotland but in Canada and the U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand and Ireland; there are devotees of the Highland pipe in continental Europe as well, particularly in Brittany. It supports on extensive manufacturing and retail base, involving bagpipe and reed makers, drum manufacturers, makers of kilts and uniforms for bands; a complex web of teaching and regulatory institutions such as the Piobaireachd Society, the Army School of Bagpipe Music, and the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association; systems of grading and certification of performers, networks of local, national and international competitions for solo players and for bands, and a specialist media including magazines, radio broadcasts and commercial recordings.<sup>10</sup>

In Nova Scotia, piping is a cultural icon and its history, development and traditions have had an economic, social and cultural impact on the Province. Organizations such as the Atlantic Canada Pipe Band Association draw on over four hundred members across the region.<sup>11</sup> The Association sanctions competitions, grades performers and judges, and organizes workshops. In addition, institutions such as the Gaelic College at St. Ann's, and the College of Piping, Summerside, Prince Edward Island, conduct classes in Scottish performing arts which attract tens of thousands of visitors each year to the region. The image of a kilted Highland piper has been displayed prominently on various tourist brochures and maps, marketing Nova Scotia's 'Scottish-ness' for the past several decades. Surprisingly, few people know much about the history of the bagpipe in Nova Scotia-- its Gaelic origins, music and traditions, or the hundreds of players who played an important role maintaining this musical heritage. Identifying the names of pipers from the historical record is perhaps the easiest form of research, but the study of musical performance in a social environment is not as well defined.

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<sup>10</sup> Donaldson, *The Highland Bagpipe and Scottish Society, 1750-1950*, p.3.

<sup>11</sup> Originally formed in 1969 as the Nova Scotia Pipers and Pipe Band Association, the organization changed its name to reflect increased membership by bands in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

There are several problems associated with the study of music and musical performance as a form of recreation. In the case of Gaelic instrumental music several samples of immigrant bagpipes and fiddles survive in Nova Scotia, but less tangible features of both musical traditions are the actual tunes or melodies associated with each instrument. This is because most pipers and fiddlers in nineteenth-century Nova Scotia were unable to read or write music, learning their tunes aurally from older musicians in the community. By the beginning of the twentieth century an increasing number of pipers were becoming musically literate and improved access to printed musical collections from Scotland no doubt displaced many of the older tunes. Written records on pipers in Nova Scotia are few. The New World Gaels were largely illiterate and those who could read had limited access to journals written in their own language.<sup>12</sup> In order to fill the void several sources were examined. Local community histories and provincial censuses offer tantalizing leads regarding pipers and piping families in Nova Scotia. These references have been cross-referenced with personal interviews with tradition-bearers conducted over the past twenty years to compile the lists of pipers and pipe-makers with a Nova Scotia connection. It soon became evident from available research that these musicians were not “random, backwoods skirlers” but rather well-trained tradition-bearers who represented a very old and unique style of bagpipe playing. Unfortunately, by the early twentieth century only a handful of pipers continued to be trained to fulfill traditional roles in Gaelic society--roles which by the mid-twentieth century were for the most part no longer required. Their playing did not conform to the army or competition style and instead of being acknowledged and

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<sup>12</sup> A notable exception to this was the newspaper *Mac-Talla* which was published in Cape Breton by Jonathon G. MacKinnon between 1892 and 1904. The newspaper was published entirely in Gaelic and was the longest running publication of its type in the world.

appreciated as exponents of a folk culture; their style of playing was considered inferior and viewed as an anomaly to be corrected.

Research indicates that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, bagpipe playing in Nova Scotia was closely aligned with the strength and vibrancy of the Gaelic language and culture. In Nova Scotia the term 'traditional piper' refers to a person who was raised in a Gaelic-speaking, or bi-lingual (Gaelic-English) environment who originally learned by 'ear' and who, for the most part, was unacquainted with written music. Judging from the following quotation from a source associated with the Nova Scotia Highland Brigade serving in Europe during the First World War, the bagpipe appears to have had a large following among the Gaels of Nova Scotia:

The pipers of the 85<sup>th</sup> (Nova Scotia) Battalion belonged to a province where pipe music was the favourite form of entertainment, "the people preferring it to all other kinds of music". So spoke an officer of the battalion.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the opinion expressed by this un-named officer, the music of the bagpipe may not have been entirely appreciated by some members of Nova Scotia society, even in areas of significant Scottish settlement. For example, on New Year's night in 1884, a new ice-rink was opened at Stellarton, Pictou County. Within a month of the official opening the by-laws had been revised, singling out a local piper who under the amended rules was prohibited from playing his bagpipe at the rink.<sup>14</sup> This may mean nothing more than the fact that in piping, as in all musical disciplines, there have always been good and bad performers.

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<sup>13</sup> Malcolm, *The Piper in Peace and War*, p. 225.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen M. Kirincich, *A Centennial History of Stellarton* (Antigonish, NS: Scotia Design Publications, 1990), p. 54.

The relative contradiction of these two sources points to the question of how widespread piping was in the areas of Gaelic settlement in Nova Scotia. Comparing census information on population growth in the Nova Scotia *Gaidhealtachd* (Gaelic-speaking area) with a list of second and third generation pipers (Appendix B) does indicate a healthy musical tradition. Appendix B also alludes to the extent of the transmission of musical skill within certain families and communities. Families like the MacIntyres, Jamiesons, and Beatons, as well as several others, preserved and passed on musical traditions within their families until well into the twentieth century. These musical traditions included regional playing techniques and repertoire. Since many of the pipers mentioned in this work were bards as well as fiddlers, some references to poems in both English and Gaelic have been included to further illustrate the cultural bond between language and instrument.

In addition, several of the musicians studied in this thesis shared a common surname and Christian name and this can, at times, be confusing. A constant problem with any research regarding people of Scottish descent in the New World is the predominance of sobriquets or 'Nicknames'.<sup>15</sup> Common nicknames in Gaelic or English might denote a particular physical characteristic of an individual, i.e. 'Little' Hughie, Donald *Mòr* or Big Donald, Donald *Ban* or Fair-haired Donald. The trade or particular skill associated with an individual family or family member can also be used. Piper and pipe maker Duncan Gillis of Grand Mira was not known as such but was referred to as Duncan 'Tailor', most likely a reference to his father's profession. Equally confusing is a family of MacNeils from Pipers Cove, descendants of the Laird of Barra's piper, Rory MacNeil. They were known as the 'The Pipers' even though very few of them actually

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<sup>15</sup> William Davey and Richard MacKinnon, "Nicknaming Patterns and Traditions Among Cape Breton Coal Miners", *Acadiensis*, XXX (Spring 2001), pp. 71-83.

played the bagpipe. For others a place name or area would be sufficient to distinguish a particular family, as was the case with the 'Ridge' MacDonalds of Mabou Ridge, Inverness County, who later settled at South Lower South River, Antigonish County.

Geo-politics also presents a difficulty in a work of this nature. Cape Breton had been a separate colony from 1784 until 1820 when it was re-joined to the Nova Scotia mainland,<sup>16</sup> and the province of New Brunswick was considered part of Nova Scotia until 1784.<sup>17</sup> For the purpose of simplicity, this thesis deals with Nova Scotia as it is defined by its current geographical boundaries and includes a map of the province.

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<sup>16</sup> D. Campbell and R. A. MacLean, *Beyond the Atlantic Roar: A Study of the Nova Scotia Scots* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd, 1974), p. 285.

<sup>17</sup> W. S. MacNutt, *The Atlantic Provinces* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd, 1965, reprint, 1975), p.95.

## Chapter One

### ***The Highland Bagpipe in Scotland***

The music of the bagpipes, like every other kind of music, cannot be understood or appreciated unless it is heard in its proper and natural setting. It is not the music of the music hall, although it has been played there, and when you confine it within walls and a ceiling it is like chaining a lion to a tree or caging an eagle. The pibroch is the music of the glens and lakes, of the woods and the mountains, of the campfire and the dark night, of marching men and the battlefield. It is heroic music. It can also be bright or sad, the music of the stirring dance and the dirge for the fallen hero. It is a soulful music for a soulful people.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most recognizable icons of Scottish culture is the Great Highland Bagpipe. It consists of a very limited, almost primitive, musical scale when compared with modern musical instruments. Nevertheless, for those who play the instrument or enjoy its music, it is capable of evoking a wide range of emotions. From the introduction of the instrument to Scotland, sometime in the fifteenth century, to its current international appeal, bagpipes and pipers have been called upon to fill a variety of roles in Scottish society. The bagpipe provided courtly music and martial airs during the halcyon days of the now defunct Highland clan system of the Gaels. In Scotland, the piper found a use not only on the battlefield, where the sheer volume of the instrument rendered it a perfect form of open-air communication clearly heard above the clatter of sixteenth-to-eighteenth century warfare, but also as a purveyor of dance music. In addition, rowers and harvesters were often accompanied by the music of the bagpipe.<sup>2</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century pipers were well established in the Highland regiments of the British army. The combination of pipers and drummers in the British

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<sup>1</sup> Neil MacNeil, *The Highland Heart in Nova Scotia* (Reprint. Toronto: Saunders, 1969), p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> See Hugh Cheape, 'The Piper to the Laird of Grant' *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 125 (1995), pp.4-10, for a more detailed description of the role of piper in eighteenth century Scotland.

army led to the first formally recognized pipe bands around 1854.<sup>3</sup> The chief (and usually more experienced) player in the band was appointed Pipe Major. This basic organization has been the template, with only minor changes, for every military and civilian pipe band in existence today. From the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, the music of the bagpipe made a transition from a largely oral tradition to a written one. This change was accompanied by changing roles for the piper in Scottish society.

Despite the importance of the bagpipe to the culture and social relationships of the Scottish Gaels it has received little critical analysis in Scotland. Even less attention has been paid to the areas settled by dispossessed Scottish emigrant pipers. Much of the available literature devoted to the bagpipe has been restricted to a handful of books published in and around the first and last decades of the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup>

While the three-droned or Great Highland Bagpipe is mostly associated with Scotland many authorities agree the bagpipe started its life as a simple reed pipe in ancient Egypt about 2500 B.C.<sup>5</sup> Later a bag (air reservoir) and blowpipe were added to allow the pipe to produce a constant sound. This early form of the bagpipe was used in Roman society in the first century A.D. and there are some claims that the Roman Emperor, Nero, played a form of bagpipe.<sup>6</sup> Successive alterations to the instrument over the next sixteen hundred years included the addition of one or more drones, offering a

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<sup>3</sup> There is no official date for the combination of pipers and drummers in a pipe band format.

<sup>4</sup> These include: W.L. Manson, *The Highland Bagpipe its History, Literature and Music* (Paisley, Scotland: 1901); Wm. Gratton Flood, *The Story of the Bagpipe* (London: N.p., 1911); Roderick D. Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and its Music* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1995); John G. Gibson, *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 1745-1945* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998, and *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); William Donaldson, *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society* (East Lothian, Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Hugh Cheape, *The Book of the Bagpipe* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 2000), p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony Baines, *Bagpipes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 63.

rudimentary harmony for the melody pipe or chanter, and in some areas the addition of a bellows to replace the mouth-blown method of bag inflation.

A lack of historical records makes it impossible to ascertain with any accuracy when the bagpipe reached Scotland. Some historians claim the bagpipe was introduced to Scotland by the Roman legions, while others maintain it came from Ireland. Whatever the origins, the bagpipe appears to have been further developed in Europe after the twelfth century, reaching England about 1200 A.D. <sup>7</sup> By the fifteenth century it was adopted by the Gaelic-speaking peoples of Scotland and Ireland. In both countries it was used as an incitement to battle and for lamenting the dead. <sup>8</sup>

There are several forms of bagpipes played throughout Europe today whose origins can be traced to the twelfth century. As Hugh Cheape explains in his book on the origins of the bagpipe:

The 12<sup>th</sup> century has been characterized as a period of “renaissance” in European history when the arts, science and literature flourished in a way in which they had clearly not in the preceding centuries. Identifiable phenomena such as the growth of towns, the Crusading movement and the collision and exchange with Islam provided fertile ground for the spread of music and song. The years from 1099 to about 1291 experienced a complex of social, economic and cultural interaction between Muslims and Crusaders, and new instruments of science and music were imported into Europe from the richer cultures of the Middle East. In this period the bagpipe seems to have traveled fast and far and to have developed into the universal musical instrument of medieval Europe. Its presence in a vigorous folk tradition in Eastern Europe is as likely to be attributed to the same renaissance as breathed life into it in Western Europe. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria and Macedonia all have remarkable bagpipes with their own histories. <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and Its Music*, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. “The Highlanders employed pipers at the battle of Pinkie in 1549 and in 1544, pipers accompanied Irish soldiers marching in London. ...with it they accompany their dead to the grave, making such sorrowful sounds as to invite, nay compel, the bystanders to weep.”

<sup>9</sup> Cheape, *The Book of the Bagpipe*, p.35.

However, it is the Scottish form of bagpipe which can be found in many parts of the world. This is due, in large part, to the numerous emigrants who left Scotland for one reason or another and eventually colonized parts of North America, Australia and New Zealand and to the various Highland regiments (all of which retained numerous pipers and pipe bands) recruited and dispatched around the globe to help secure and protect Britain's military and economic interests. Today, as a result, the Highland Bagpipe is played in many countries around the world.

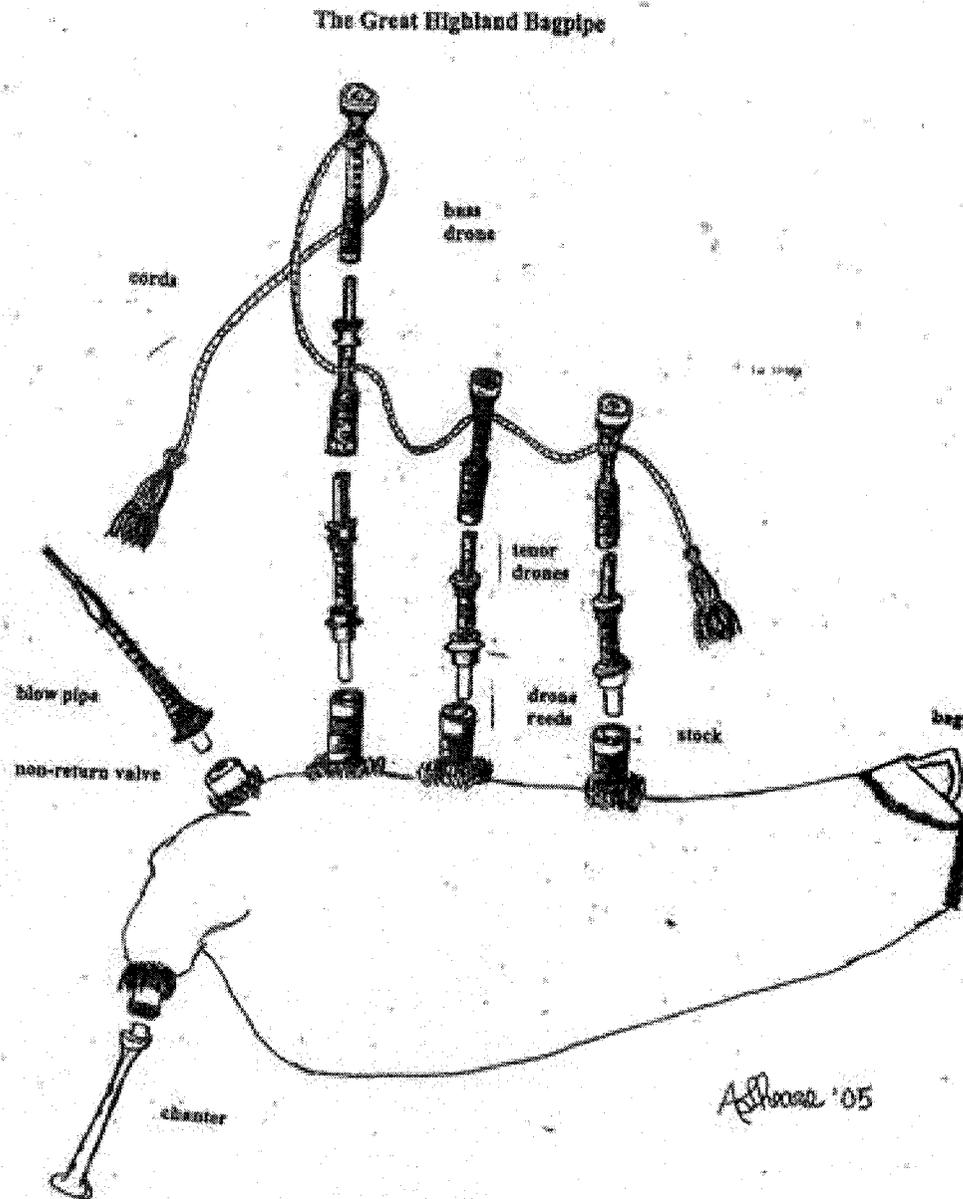
### **Bagpipe Construction**

The Great Highland Bagpipe consists of fifteen separate sections and can be accurately described as a collection of wooden tubes. Each section is mounted at its weaker points with any one of a variety of materials, from horn and animal bone, silver and ivory and currently plastic, depending on the cost of the instrument. The pieces are assembled together and attached to a bag (air reservoir) to form three drones (one bass and two tenor) which sound a continuous note, one octave apart, producing rudimentary harmony; a chanter (melody pipe) capable of sounding nine notes, and a blowpipe and mouthpiece with a one-way valve to allow air to enter the bag. The air reservoir, which is made from animal hide, allows the performer to take a breath without interrupting the continuous sound of the bagpipe. The instrument plays four reeds simultaneously in three octaves. Single reeds are used for the drones and double reeds, consisting of two pieces of cane lashed to a copper tube, are used for the pipe chanter.<sup>10</sup> Since the chanter only produces nine melody notes the types of music which can be played on it is very limited.

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<sup>10</sup> Over the past three decades the use of synthetic materials in bagpipe manufacture has increased substantially. Some bagpipes are now made almost entirely of plastic. The pipe bag, once made of tanned animal hide, is now being produced from synthetic materials like Gortex. The drone reeds

Fig. 1 Exploded Diagram of a Scottish Highland Bagpipe



are made from Spanish or French cane known as *Arundo Donax*, but these too are now being made of molded plastics and carbon fibre.

The Great Highland Bagpipe, when played, emits a continuous sound. It cannot play a note louder or softer, and so does not possess the dynamics of other instruments such as the violin or piano. To differentiate between notes of the same pitch, and to “colour” or embellish the melody or tune, a very sophisticated system of grace noting (quick notes on the chanter played with a single finger) was developed. With the advent of printed music for the bagpipe in nineteenth century Scotland, embellishments have become standardized and today they are accepted universally by the piping community. Several of these nineteenth-century embellishments were discarded by Scottish players in the early twentieth century. By the late twentieth century remnants of these ancient fingering techniques survived only in the remote areas of the Scottish Gaelic Diaspora such as Cape Breton Island and the west coast of Newfoundland.<sup>11</sup>

## The Clan System

From medieval times there existed in the Highlands of Scotland a social system based on filial relationships. The clan system was divided into large tribal districts and flourished until the middle of the eighteenth century. At its root lay kinship and a common bond of blood relationship.<sup>12</sup> Among the smaller clans, this socio-political system was essentially self-government but in the larger clans or federation of clans, like the Lordship of the Isles, it resembled a full and formal parliament.<sup>13</sup> A highly parochial society, the clan system was abundant in regional warfare, cattle raiding, and a rich and varied tradition of folklore.

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<sup>11</sup> See Margaret Bennett, *The Last Stronghold* (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1989); Barry Shears, *The Gathering of the Clans Collection Vol. One* (Halifax: Published privately, 1991), and *Vol. Two* (Halifax: Published privately, 2001); and Gibson, *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping*.

<sup>12</sup> Frank Adam, *Clans, Septs and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands* (First Published London: Johnston & Bacon, 1908; New York: Cassell & Collier Macmillan, Reprint, 1975), p.13.

<sup>13</sup> I.F. Grant, *The Clan Donald* (Edinburgh: Johnston and Bacon Publishers, Reprint, 1979), p. 9. The Lordship of the Isles (*Dominus Insularum*) lasted from 1354 until 1493.

This system was patriarchal in structure and feudal in nature. The clan chief maintained a paternal interest in his people and their welfare. Clan society was pyramidal in shape. At its head was the clan chief, whose position was quasi-royal and who had the power to wage war on enemies of the clan, mediate disputes among his people, and in some cases decide on matters of life and death.<sup>14</sup> This position resembled a hereditary monarchy of sorts. It was founded on custom and regulated by laws and family tradition.<sup>15</sup> The power of the clan chief, however, was far from absolute. He ruled with the assistance of a clan or tribal council consisting of the heads of various prominent families within the group.<sup>16</sup>

The clan chief kept a retinue of body-guards (known as henchmen), consisting usually of close relatives; and poets and chroniclers, whose job it was to record in song and verse the history of the clan. The clan chief patronized the arts and employed several court musicians such as harpers, and later pipers and fiddlers. Many of these positions were passed on in perpetuity from father to son, and some families became famous for their musical and bardic skills.<sup>17</sup> In exchange for their piping services, the chiefs were responsible for outfitting the piper with clothes and accessories. In some cases this also extended to purchasing instruments.<sup>18</sup>

The layer of clan structure below the clan chief and his family was the tacksman class. Usually more distant relatives of the clan chief, they sub-let farms to tenants and in

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<sup>14</sup> Fitzroy MacLean, *Highlanders* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., Reprint, 1997), p. 175 According to MacLean, MacDonald of Clanranald sentenced a woman, found guilty of stealing his money; to have her long hair tied to the seaweed growing on the rocks. She was to be left there for the incoming tide to drown her.

<sup>15</sup> Adam, *Clans, Septs and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands*, p.108.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> The practice of a clan chief retaining a piper enjoyed a dramatic increase during the Victorian revision of popular Scottish culture in the mid-1800s.

<sup>18</sup> Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and its Music*, p. 52.

turn paid a portion of the profits to the head of the clan.<sup>19</sup> The tacksman occupied the position of middle class and they also acted as military lieutenants for the clan chief in times of war.

The bottom and largest part of the social order consisted of tenants and sub-tenants. The tenants controlled larger farms or a part of a larger farm. The sub-tenants were essentially “land-less labourers” who lived on small parcels of land. Under the existing rental terms they had little opportunity to collect wealth in the form of livestock or land.<sup>20</sup>

In some cases members of the clan were exempt from rent in exchange for a particular service or circumstance. The MacCrimmons of Skye, as hereditary pipers to MacLeod of Dunvegan, held their farm at Boreraig rent-free until the late eighteenth century.<sup>21</sup> In addition, every able-bodied man was required to fulfill his military obligations and, in doing so, provided the clan chief with a formidable standing army.

The social infrastructure of the clan system in Scotland received a major setback shortly after the English-speaking James VI (later James I) became monarch over both England and Scotland in 1603. The linguistic and cultural differences of the Gaels took on a political dimension. The language was perceived by Lowland Scots and the English court as the basis for everything wrong with Gaelic society, from uncivilized barbarism to cattle rieving, and a proclivity for war. In an effort to persuade the Gaels to abandon their own language and learn English language and customs, James VI signed the Statutes of

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<sup>19</sup> J.M. Bumsted, *The People's Clearance: Highland Emigration to British North America* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1982), p. 34.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>21</sup> Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and its Music*, p.54.

Iona in 1609. These laws sought to limit the power of the clan chiefs.<sup>22</sup> Among other things, it was now necessary for the clan chiefs to send their eldest sons to the Lowlands to be educated in English and to expel the bards, whose Gaelic poetic verse preserved the history and distinctiveness of each clan. The effects of the Statutes of Iona would have long-term ramifications for the Scottish Highlander. By moving the heirs to the Chieftainships out of the Highlands and educating them in English language and customs, paternal attachment to their kinsmen was significantly diminished and a wedge was driven between the Chief and his clansmen. The break with traditional values and language made the transition from Highland chief to profit-driven landlord all the easier in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century.

### **Piping in the Army**

After the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie at Culloden in 1746 and his eventual flight to France, England was left to ponder the consequences of another possible Jacobite uprising in Scotland. William Pitt proposed a scheme to recruit regiments from the Highlands of Scotland and to have them commanded by English or “Loyal” Scottish officers. This idea had first been proposed by Lord Duncan Forbes of Culloden in a letter sent to Lord Milton, the Lord Justice Clerk, in 1738.

I propose that the Government should raise four or five regiments of Highlanders, appointing an English or Scottish officer of undoubted loyalty to be Colonel of each regiment, and naming the lieutenant-colonels, majors, and captains and subalterns from this list in my hand, which comprehends all the chiefs and chieftains of the disaffected clans, who are the very persons whom France and Spain will call upon in case of war to take up arms for the Pretender. If the Government pre-engage the Highlanders in the manner I propose, they will not only serve well against

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<sup>22</sup> Nancy Dorian, *Language Death, The Life Cycle of a Scottish Gaelic Dialect* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), p. 17.

the enemy abroad, but will be hostages for the good behavior of their relatives at home, and I am persuaded it will be absolutely impossible to raise a rebellion in the Highlands.<sup>23</sup>

The immediate benefits of such a plan would be twofold. Firstly, it would provide England with additional soldiers to expand its ever increasing and diverse mercantile interests abroad, especially its ongoing wars with France for control of North America. Secondly, it would reduce the numbers of Highlanders available for any future attempt at an armed rebellion and, with the proper incentives, might persuade them to settle in the colonies. This scheme was accepted by Sir Robert Walpole, but later vetoed in cabinet. Despite widespread opposition to the plan, one pro-government regiment, the Black Watch, was successfully established in 1739 for home defense.<sup>24</sup>

The recruitment scheme was later re-visited during Britain's struggle for control of North America in the mid-eighteenth century and several additional Highland regiments were raised for military service. The Fraser Highlanders and Montgomery's Highlanders were raised in Scotland during the Seven Years War and were quickly disbanded once hostilities had subsided. When peace came many of these soldiers and their families were given land grants in North America. Several officers in these regiments consisted of sons of many prominent clan chiefs and, keeping with long established custom, they were accompanied abroad by their personal pipers.<sup>25</sup> These pipers were often close relatives of the clan chiefs and in return for pay and upkeep, they sometimes acted as attendants or servants. The financial burden of paying for the maintenance of these pipers was shouldered by the officers themselves and not from

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<sup>23</sup> Adam, *The Clans, Septs, and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands*, p. 440.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Gibson, *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping*, pp. 104-105.

government coffers.<sup>26</sup> Although plentiful, pipers did not form a part of the recognized British military establishment until the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup>

The necessity of pipe music to the well being of the Highland soldier in these regiments was well known at the time.<sup>28</sup> Whether on the field of battle as company piper or providing social dance music by the camp fires, the piper was continuously in demand. Unlike armies of today, the armies of the eighteenth and nineteenth century had numerous camp followers and, when not billeted in local communities, their encampments resembled small, transportable villages. The camp followers consisted of soldier's wives and children, cooks, butchers and laundresses. The composition of these military encampments provided ample time for social interaction and, no doubt, afforded the piper plenty of occasions to fulfill the role as a purveyor of dance music. By the beginning of the nineteenth century there were only two ways of making a living as a full-time piper in Scotland. One was as a piper to the aristocracy,<sup>29</sup> provided the estate owner or laird had sufficient interest and funds to maintain such a position; and the other was as a piper in the army.

Following the success of the three Highland regiments engaged in service in North America during the Seven Years War, the British government continued to recruit Highlanders into the army. Four Highland regiments participated in the Napoleonic Wars and several Fencible Regiments, a form of militia used for training full-time soldiers,

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<sup>26</sup> Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and its Music*, p. 119.

<sup>27</sup> Diana Henderson, *Highland Soldier, 1820-1920* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1989), pp. 246-47.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.44.

<sup>29</sup> Gibson, *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping*. Gibson has listed numerous family pipers and their employers in the first two sections of this book.

were raised in Scotland. Pipers were indispensable to these regiments and although not officially recognized by the War Office their music was often used as a recruiting tool.<sup>30</sup>

## Development of the Scottish Tourist Industry

Once the ban on wearing Highland dress, imposed by the Act of Proscription (1747) after Culloden, was rescinded in 1782, and after Prince Charles Edward Stewart had died (in 1788 and without an heir), there was a revival, albeit skewed, of all things Scottish. The Highland Scots, who had been demonized during the last Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, now represented a form of “Noble Barbarism”.<sup>31</sup> This transformation can be attributed to the writings of James MacPherson, Sir Walter Scott, and to a lesser extent, James Logan.

James MacPherson was born in 1736. As a member of the tacksman or middle class he was afforded a modest education, studying at both King’s and Marischal Colleges in Aberdeen. He was capable of reading and writing in Gaelic and collected and edited several ancient folk tales from various informants in the Highlands. In 1760 his *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* was published, followed in 1765 by *The Works of Ossian*. This later work was a collection of several epic poems dealing with the life of Fingal, the ancient Caledonian warrior and leader of a race of giants. According to tradition these poems were originally composed by Ossian, the blind son of Fingal and last representative of the race. These works were an immediate success throughout Europe and were eventually translated into several languages. Napoleon Bonaparte carried an Italian translation of the work with him during his campaigns. It became the inspiration

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<sup>30</sup> Henderson, *Highland Soldier, 1820-1920*, p.33.

<sup>31</sup> Donaldson, *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society, 1750-1950*, p.10.

for countless other poems, novels, plays and paintings and secured for MacPherson a certain degree of fame and fortune.<sup>32</sup>

Sir Walter Scott was born in 1771 in Edinburgh, Scotland. He popularized Scottish culture with such works as *Rob Roy* (1817), one of the first historical novels ever written, and *The Heart of Midlothian* (1819), a tale of two early Jacobite insurrections. These works affected how the Gaels were perceived by English and European readers. Even the music was the focus of renewed interest and some of the first printed collections of Highland pipe music were published at this time. “Many of the [musical] traditions were connected to Jacobitism, which, with its political force safely spent, had become respectable again under the influence of Sir Walter Scott.”<sup>33</sup>

There is an ironic twist to the romantic antiquarian writings of MacPherson in the late eighteenth century, and Scott in the early nineteenth century. These authors were reaching an unprecedented European market and they accrued substantial notoriety and a certain amount of financial reward. At the same time in history the Highlands and Islands of Scotland were being depopulated and in later instances people were forced from the region and replaced with sheep. Two decades after the appearance of MacPherson’s *The Works of Ossian*, thousands of Highland Scots had already immigrated to places such as North Carolina, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. Sir Walter Scott’s romantic depiction of the Scottish Gael coincided with large scale evictions throughout the Highlands and Islands, the victims of which were finding new homes in the area now known as Maritime Canada.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-19.

<sup>33</sup> Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and its Music*, p.81.

James MacPherson had succeeded in drawing European attention to the Scottish Highlands and Sir Walter Scott, through his romantic depictions of Scottish life, is credited with single-handedly creating the Scottish tourist trade.<sup>34</sup> The work of these two men would be augmented by another Scot, James Logan, whose written contributions to Scottish culture in the nineteenth century influenced a generation of writers and performers.

James Logan was born at Aberdeen in the early 1790s. The son of a merchant, he was educated at the city's Grammar School and although he was intended for a career in Law or Medicine, he achieved neither.<sup>35</sup> Logan lived for a time in London, spending long hours at the British Museum and, at some point during his career, found time to learn to play the bagpipe. In 1826 he traveled to the north of Scotland to gather material for his book on the customs and habits of the Scottish Gaels.<sup>36</sup> In 1831 James Logan's *The Scottish Gael* was published in London in two volumes. Logan's observations on playing the instrument and his historical notes on several of the 'hereditary' pipers meshed perfectly with the emerging attitudes of 'Victorian' Britain towards Scottish culture.<sup>37</sup> Both Scott and Logan helped associate a primitive and noble instrument with a primitive and noble people.

Logan also wrote the '*Historical Accounts of Hereditary Pipers*' and '*Historical and Traditional Notes on the Piobaireachds*' which was included in Angus MacKay's *Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd* (1838)<sup>38</sup> In addition, Logan wrote *The Clans of the*

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<sup>34</sup> Donaldson, *The Highland Bagpipe and Scottish Society, 1750-1950*, p. 101.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>38</sup> It is only recently that James Logan has been verified as the author of these sections of MacKay's book. MacKay's collection was the piper's "Bible" for much of the nineteenth century

*Scottish Highlands*, complete with illustrations of various tartans and figures supplied by a local artist, R.R. McLan. This was also published in London in 1845-47. To a large extent both *The Scottish Gael* and *The Clans of the Scottish Highlands* misrepresented the culture of the Gael to an expanding European market.

These works contained some wild exaggerations of fact, especially in matters of Highland dress. As William Donaldson points out, 'Logan's enthusiasm for costume was typical of his opportunistic approach to Highland culture. 'The fact that the so-called "clan" tartans often bore but slender resemblance to more traditional patterns and that they had little traceable existence before the second decade of the nineteenth century did not constitute a problem.'<sup>39</sup> With the political power of the Gaels diminished, the culture and costume (particularly the kilt) associated with the Gael was being defined more and more by Lowland and English perceptions and economic interests.

The great kilt, the versatile and common garb of the Highlander, was abolished from use under the terms of the Act of Proscription. It was essentially a large tartan blanket (approx. 6 feet in length), gathered together and secured with a belt around the waist and a brooch at the shoulder. The top portion of the kilt could be drawn over the head and shoulders in inclement weather. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century it was modified to become a small kilt, shortened in length to extend from the mid-knee to just above the waist, with the addition of permanent pleats sewn in the back. The individual plaid or setts were also distorted, growing from a handful of district

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and the information supplied by Logan was used extensively by early twentieth century writers of Scottish history.

<sup>39</sup> Donaldson, *The Highland Bagpipe and Scottish Society, 1750-1950*, pp. 153-4.

tartans, to a vast selection of family or clan tartans. These tartan offerings would eventually include not only the major clan names, but a host of other small cadet branches of the same family, subdivided even further into Hunting and Dress patterns. The development of this vast array of family tartans from a handful of traditional patterns developed towards the end of the eighteenth century and can be attributed to a large extent to the Sobieski brothers of Europe.<sup>40</sup>

John and Charles Edward Sobieski claimed to be relatives of Bonnie Prince Charlie on his mother's side (Bonnie Prince Charlie's mother's maiden name was Sobieski). They were well connected in high society and made unsubstantiated claims that every clan had one or more distinctive tartans associated with them. In 1829 they produced *Vestiarium Scoticum*. This book consisted of 55 setts (patterns) of tartans and was, apparently, more fantasy than fact.<sup>41</sup>

The Highlands became Britain's Alps, a stage for romanticism and healthy sport. When Lord Brougham introduced the fashion of tartan trousers to London, ordering bolts of every sett from Mr. MacDougall the draper at Inverness, English Society went *a`L'Ecosse* in a fanatic way that lasted until the death of Victoria seventy years later. Those picaresque confidence tricksters, John and Charles Sobieski Stuart, charmed everybody with their claims to be the grandsons of Bonnie Prince Charlie, by a legitimate son no less. They handsomely refused to press their right to the Throne, grew their black hair down to their shoulders, painted their own portraits in Highland dress, lived with musical-comedy splendour on an island given to them by Lord Lovat, and fed public credulity with their *Vestiarium Scoticum*, a treatise on the tartan based on three ancient manuscripts which they said they possessed but which nobody else ever saw.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> John Prebble. *The Highland Clearances* (Reprint. 1974. Markham: Penguin Books Canada), p.146.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

The dubious authenticity of many of these tartans did not matter and what followed was an entrepreneur's dream. As more areas of the Highlands were cleared of its inhabitants and replaced with sheep runs there was an abundance of cheap mutton and wool, especially after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. It would appear that the owners of the woolen mills, many of which were located in the Lowlands, were more than eager to participate in the manufacture of tartans supplying kilts and other articles of "Highland costume" to meet the demands of a public fascinated with Scottish/Gaelic culture.<sup>43</sup> The demand for tartan began with the kilted regiments of the British army and members of the Scottish aristocracy but it would later spread to North America and beyond. The wool produced by flocks of Cheviot sheep, which were introduced to the Highlands in the mid-eighteenth century, was in turn manufactured into, among other things, tartan cloth and sold to descendants of the very Highlanders who were evicted to make way for sheep runs in the first place.

So effective was the revisionism of Gaelic culture in the nineteenth century that, in 1822, the Hanoverian King George IV landed at Leith Walk in Edinburgh outfitted from head to foot in "traditional" Highland attire.<sup>44</sup> This visit had been organized by The Celtic Society of Scotland whose then president was Sir Walter Scott. Later Queen Victoria established the position of Sovereign's Piper, a position which required the appointed musician to divide his time between the Royal family's residences at both Balmoral Castle and London. It is important to note that two of the pipers who fulfilled the position of Sovereign's Piper in the nineteenth century, were also at the forefront of musical literacy. The appointment of a Sovereign's Piper has continued to present day,

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<sup>43</sup> Donaldson, *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society, 1750-1950*, p.153.

<sup>44</sup> Prebble, *The Highland Clearances*, p. 139.

although with Scotland moving towards greater political independence, the position might be in jeopardy.

Several members of the aristocracy mimicked the Royal household's patronage of court musicians in the early nineteenth century and, in turn, provided employment for pipers on estates throughout Britain. These opportunities, coupled with positions in the army, provided pipers with a welcomed alternative to permanent emigration from Scotland to Britain's overseas colonies. These factors helped inject a new vigor and musical direction into the playing of the bagpipe in nineteenth century Scotland. If the manufacture and wearing of tartan began to symbolize the Scottish identity to the world, then bagpipe music would certainly herald these changes in Scottish society. After a rather brief four hundred-year history in Scotland, the Highland bagpipe found a niche which would guarantee its survival through the following decades of social and economic upheaval.

### **Early Piping in Scotland**

Oral tradition suggests that the Highland bagpipe usurped the harp as the favored court instrument, largely due to the patronage of Alasdair "Crotach" MacLeod, 8th Chief of Dunvegan in the late fifteenth century.<sup>45</sup> By the eighteenth century the harp was a rarity in the Highlands of Scotland and the office of harper had almost disappeared.<sup>46</sup> Although the bagpipe was a relative newcomer to Highland society, its increasing prestige among clan chiefs did not go unnoticed by those who felt threatened by the piper's increasing importance as an exponent of Gaelic instrumental music.

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<sup>45</sup> MacLean, *Highlanders*, p.135.

<sup>46</sup> Cheape, 'The Piper to the Laird of Grant', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 125 (1995) pp. 4-10.

The rise of the Highland bagpipe to prominence did not go unchallenged. There is a considerable corpus of satirical poetry in Gaelic by the antagonists and protagonists of the Highland bagpipe. The *di-moladh* and *moladh*, ‘dispraise’ and ‘praise’, of pipes and pipers, are recurrent notes in 17<sup>th</sup>-century poetry and song. For example, the 17<sup>th</sup> century poet, Niall MacMhuirich, contemptuously denounced the music of the pipes as harsh and barbaric in a vicious satire *Seanchas na Pìob o Thus* (History of the Pipe from the Beginning of Time) and did not spare the player from his vituperation.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the condemnation of bards such as *MacMhuirich*, schools or colleges were established to perfect pipers in their chosen profession. These colleges were apparently patterned after similar piping schools in Ireland. Some traditions have the length of tuition from six months to seven or even eleven years, but to date little is known of the day-to-day functions of these piping schools.<sup>48</sup>

Some of the piping colleges were originally established and directed by a few of the more successful middle-class clan pipers. The MacCrimmons, pipers to MacLeod of Dunvegan, had a college at Boreraig, on Skye.<sup>49</sup> The MacArthurs, pipers to MacDonald of the Isles maintained a college at Hungladder, also on the Isle of Skye.<sup>50</sup> The Rankins, pipers to MacLean of Duart, had a school for piping on the Isle of Mull.<sup>51</sup> The MacRaes established a school for piping in Kintail during the late 18th century.<sup>52</sup> The MacDougalls, pipers to MacDougall of Dunollie, supervised a school for piping at Kilbride, and a family of MacGregors taught piping in Perthshire.<sup>53</sup>

The early existence of piping “Colleges” and “Hereditary” pipers was documented by both Thomas Pennant and Boswell and Johnson, after their respective

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Donaldson, *The Highland Bagpipe and Scottish Society, 1750-1950*, pp.177-178.

<sup>49</sup> Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and its Music*, p.54.

<sup>50</sup> Donaldson, *The Highland Bagpipe and Scottish Society, 1750-1950*, p.124.

<sup>51</sup> Gibson, *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping*, p. 69.

<sup>52</sup> Angus MacKay, *A Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd or Highland Pipe Music* (Wakefield, UK: EP Publishing, 1972), p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> Gibson, *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 1745-1945*, pp.161-162.

tours of the Highlands (1772 and 1773). Recent research by John Gibson in *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping* attributes the longevity of some piping families, not so much to any superior musical skill, but rather to the fact that during the seventeenth and eighteenth century most sons learned their father's trade.<sup>54</sup> Significant documentary evidence exists to prove that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries pipers were sent from all over the Highlands to further their education with recognized masters of the instrument.<sup>55</sup> The education probably consisted of learning new tunes orally, studying methods of composition and possibly peculiar grace-noting techniques.<sup>56</sup> Whether or not this education fulfils our modern concept of schools or colleges is still open for debate. Recent evidence suggests that once educated in their chosen profession, pipers were not restricted to serving one particular family. Then as now, skilled individuals moved around from place to place, taking advantage of the most rewarding positions. These colleges continued for several generations. After the collapse of the clan system in the Highlands of Scotland following the Battle of Culloden in 1746 and changing rental agreements which displaced many middle-class Gaels, they were all eventually closed.

### **The MacCrimmons of Skye**

The MacCrimmons were hereditary pipers to the MacLeods of Dunvegan on the Isle of Skye, and their place in piping lore has achieved almost supernatural status. The origins of the family are obscure and speculation range from the family having Italian roots in Cremona, Italy, to originally having coming from Ireland.

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<sup>54</sup> Gibson, *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping*, p.13-14

<sup>55</sup> Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and its Music*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>56</sup> MacKay, *Collection*, p. 6.

The family was established in Skye from the early seventeenth century. Oral tradition states that members of the family were principals of the most famous college of piping in the Highlands. At the time no piper was considered perfected until he received at least some instruction from them.<sup>57</sup>

Finlay of the White Plaid (c.1500) is believed to have been the first MacCrimmon piper to Macleod of Dunvegan.<sup>58</sup> According to nineteenth-century oral tradition, his descendants held the position in perpetuity until the 1820s. They held lands rent-free in exchange for their piping services. The MacCrimmon College was eventually disbanded in 1772 when one of these celebrated pipers immigrated to North America, eventually settling in Nova Scotia.

Donald '*Ruadh*' MacCrimmon was a member of the tacksman or middle class. The time-honored custom of letting a farm from the clan chief in exchange for piping services was abrogated as the value of land rose considerably in the mid-eighteenth century and many middle-class Gaels chose emigration as an alternative. In an effort to maintain a relatively high standard of living compared to the sub-tenants, he and his family immigrated to the Cape Fear district of North Carolina. During the American Revolution, Donald served as an officer with Tarelton's British Legion, and after Britain's defeat, his lands were confiscated.<sup>59</sup> He eventually relocated to East Jordan, Shelburne County, Nova Scotia as part of the Loyalists' migration. In 1786 he was granted permission to

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p. 1. See also Donaldson, *The Highland Bagpipe and Scottish Society, 1750-1950*, pp.401-403 for a re-appraisal of the importance of this family to piping.

<sup>58</sup> Seumas MacNeill, *Piobaireachd* (Glasgow: College of Piping, 1968), p.36.

<sup>59</sup> Gibson, *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 1745-1945*, p. 98.

operate a ferry service across the Jordan River where he had a farm on Lot No.2.<sup>60</sup> He eventually returned to Scotland but one daughter married and remained in Nova Scotia.

Several other well known and prominent piping families had Maritime connections. These included the MacKays of Gairloch, pipers to MacKenzie of Gairloch; the MacIntyres of Rannoch, pipers to Menzies of Weem; the MacNeils, piper to the Laird of Barra; Kenneth Chisholm, piper to Chisholm of Strathglas; John MacGillivray, piper and bard to MacDonald of Glenaladale; Conndullie Rankin, piper to the MacLeans of Mull; and Duncan MacIntyre, piper to MacDonald of Clanranald. These piping families were middle class and following the collapse of the clan system in Scotland, they, or their descendants, immigrated to what is now Maritime Canada in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. An assessment of the impact on the musical traditions of Highland society after the emigration of so many excellent musicians has never been undertaken. There is little doubt that this “Brain drain” of talent was one of the main causes for the eventual weakening of ‘traditional’ bagpipe music in Scotland.

## **Bagpipe Music**

One of the most obvious changes in piping in nineteenth-century Scotland was the spread of musical literacy. The transmission of the music and art of playing the bagpipe had always been passed on orally and by example in a student- teacher relationship. Over a relatively brief period in history different styles developed in various parts of Scotland and it was these regional styles which were brought to the New World with the immigrant Gaels. The impetus for a literate class of musicians came first from the

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<sup>60</sup> Marion Robertson, *The Kings Bounty: A History of Early Shelburne* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum, 1983), pp.78 and 168.

Highland Society of London, which attempted to commit to paper many of the tunes and traditions surrounding the Highland bagpipe in Scotland.

The Highland Society of London was founded in 1778 and had as one of its aims 'to take appropriate steps to preserve the poetry, music and language of the Highlands.'<sup>61</sup> The Highland Society was well connected, both politically and socially. By the early 1800s its membership boasted landlords, Dukes and The Prince of Wales, later King George IV. To achieve its mandate regarding music, the Highland Society sponsored piping competitions beginning in 1781 and, from the early nineteenth century, offered special prizes for the writing of pipe music in staff notation. One of the first recipients of the award was Donald MacDonald of Edinburgh, in 1806. MacDonald was not the first to attempt writing pipe music in staff notation, but his method proved to be one of the most popular and resilient.

The first collection of bagpipe music, *MacDonald's Vocal Airs*, was a small folio containing 186 melodies published around 1794 by Patrick MacDonald, a piper and fiddler from Durness, Sutherlandshire. This was followed in 1818 by Captain Robert Menzie's *The Bagpipe Preceptor*, Donald MacDonald's *A Collection of the Ancient Martial Music of Caledonia* (1822), and *A Collection of Quicksteps, Strathspeys, Reels and Jigs* (1828).

Donald MacDonald was an Edinburgh pipe maker who is credited with standardizing written music for the bagpipe. MacDonald was acquainted with numerous classical musicians and this no doubt influenced his revolutionary and now universal method of writing pipe music. By his own admission he found fault with the way the bagpipe was being played in the more remote regions of Scotland and with the variety of

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<sup>61</sup> Donaldson, *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society, 1750-1950*, p. 64.

styles, many of which had already been brought to North America by emigrant Gaels. MacDonald introduced several innovations in writing pipe music and he explained his decision for writing music the way he did in the preface to his 1828 collection.

The different modes of playing the bagpipe, adopted by the northern Highlanders and those inhabiting the Western Isles, must convince all that it would have been highly improper to use either, as the sphere of the Publisher's utility would thus be circumscribed. He has therefore, followed the example of Robert Burns' Ghost, and 'ta' en the gate that pleased himself'. The experience of fifty years, devoted principally to the bagpipe, and a tolerable acquaintance with other kinds of music, embolden him to recommend the following Tunes as played by himself.<sup>62</sup>

As the nineteenth century progressed in time, additional collections of music were published by Angus MacKay, Queen Victoria's piper from 1843- 1854; William MacKay (no relation); William Gunn; William Ross, Queen Victoria's piper from 1854 until his death in 1891; and David Glen.<sup>63</sup> Some of the collections were printed only once but the more popular collections were updated, expanded and reprinted many times over during the nineteenth century. As Roderick Cannon points out in his exhaustive work, *The Literature of the Bagpipe*:

By 1900 there had been a total of 25 music books published for the Highland bagpipe, most of them in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the tradition of the instrument had undergone a total and irreversible change. As late as 1850, according to one observer who was well qualified to know, few pipers could even read written music, but by 1900 the tradition inaugurated by Donald MacDonald had taken a firm hold and for the vast majority of pipers the printed page had become the principal means of dissemination of new music.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Roderick Cannon, *A Bibliography of Bagpipe Music*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1980), p. 31.

<sup>63</sup> Angus MacKay, *A Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd* (Edinburgh: published by the editor, 1838) and *The Piper's Assistant* (Edinburgh: Alexander Glen, 1843); William MacKay, *The Complete Tutor for the Great Highland Bagpipe* (Edinburgh: Alexander Glen, 1840), William Gunn, *The Caledonian Repository of Music* (Glasgow: William Gunn, 1848); William Ross, *Ross's Collection* (Inverness: Logan & Co., 1869); David Glen, *David Glen's Collection of Highland Bagpipe Music* (Edinburgh: David Glen, 1876).

<sup>64</sup> Cannon, *A Bibliography of Bagpipe Music*, p. 41.

During the late Victorian period bagpipe music was subdivided into three categories: Big Music (*Ceòl Mór*), Middling Music (*Ceòl Meadhonach*) and Little Music (*Ceòl Beag*). Prior to this, all music performed on the bagpipe was known in Gaelic as *Piobaireachd*. (*Piob* is Gaelic for bagpipe, *pìobair* is a piper, and *Piobaireachd* is what a piper does with his bagpipe).<sup>65</sup> The Gaelic terms *Ceòl Beag* and *Ceòl Mór* are believed to be nineteenth-century creations making their first appearance in printed literature dealing with bagpipe music in 1875.<sup>66</sup> These classifications of Highland bagpipe music probably owe their existence to the Victorian interpretation of ‘High’ and ‘Low’ culture rather than to any common usage by pipers at the time.

Big Music is known in Gaelic as *Ceòl Mór* or more commonly today as *Piobaireachd* (*Pibroch* in English). It is often referred to as the classical music of the bagpipe and it is held in very high esteem by most pipers. This form of music commences with a basic theme, followed by a series of variations increasing in complexity, finishing with a repeat of the theme. This melody construction has been compared to the Italian “Rondo” and has led some early researchers to assume a continental European musical influence. Many of these grand, and at times lengthy, compositions appear to have been composed between the seventeenth and nineteenth century. Their classification can be further sub-divided into Laments, Marches, and Gathering or Rallying tunes and many tunes are associated with specific clans, chiefs and battles which may indicate a close relationship between the bardic poems and songs and instrumental music. There are approximately three hundred such tunes in existence today and it is believed that there were over five hundred tunes in the repertoire during its

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<sup>65</sup> MacNeill, *Piobaireachd*, p. 18.

<sup>66</sup> Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and its Music*, p. 46.

heyday. An essential feature of the Scottish *Ceòl Mór* tradition is that it ‘was handed down by a small number of leading professional players to present day’.<sup>67</sup> Many Scottish pipers pride themselves on their ‘Piping Pedigree’. Modern pipers go to great lengths to trace their musical roots back several generations through successive pupil /teacher relationships of these past masters of the instrument in order to justify and add credence to a particular style or method of playing. Many top performers on the bagpipe today claim to be able to trace their knowledge of *Ceòl Mór* back to the famous MacCrimmon family, and during the Victorian Age the oral transmission of music from the MacCrimmons to nineteenth-century pipers achieved almost apostolic status.

Middle or Middling Music (*Ceòl Meadhonach*) encompassed Slow Airs, Gaelic Airs and assorted folk tunes but now comes under the broader heading of Little or Light Music. Little Music (*Ceòl Beag*) now includes all music which is essentially not *Ceòl Mór*. Airs, marches, strathspeys, reels, hornpipes, jigs, clogs and waltzes, all of a variety of written musical time signatures, comprise this category, and a conservative estimate of the present number of *Ceòl Beag* tunes is in the tens of thousands.

## Conclusion

The arrival of the bagpipe in Scotland around the fifteenth century displaced the music of the harp in the Highlands and Islands. The volume of the instrument and its mobility appealed to the Scottish Gaels. Over the next three hundred years the piper became an increasingly important figure in clan society, and this rise to prominence was accompanied by very sophisticated developments in music. In Scotland, the music and culture of the bagpipe has changed dramatically, especially over the last hundred and fifty

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

years. The impetus for change came from a variety of sources: competitions, patronage, musical literacy and the army. Piping competitions established a means whereby the playing ability of pipers could be assessed, usually by a panel of aristocratic judges with little or no experience in piping. The major prize winners of these competitions could find relatively secure employment on estates. By providing employment opportunities for these musicians the landlords could retain an increasingly popular but tenuous relationship to the fast disappearing culture of the Gael. Immigration to the cities, the attraction of the army, and later civilian, pipe bands allowed the instrument to move from its traditional rural roots in Gaelic Scotland to an increasingly urban-based society.

The tens of thousands of Gaels who came to the region later known as the Canadian Maritimes left Scotland before this piping evolution occurred. As a result traditional Highland bagpipe music survived in this area far longer than in Scotland. The immigrant Gaels sought to escape the effects of the collapse of the clan system and its inevitable economic and social upheavals. There were no clan chiefs in Nova Scotia and, therefore, no patronage for piping or any of the other Gaelic cultural arts. *Ceòl Mór* playing declined in Nova Scotia but dance music played on the bagpipes thrived. There was a paucity of piping competitions and associated Highland Games in Nova Scotia until the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The effects of musical literacy, which played such a prominent role in the development of bagpipe music in nineteenth-century Scotland, were mitigated by the fact that very few of the immigrant pipers to Nova Scotia could read or write music, let alone afford printed books of music. All of these factors protected the survival of a more traditional and social piping culture.

Widespread use of the kilt as a form of formal wear in the nineteenth century was absent in Nova Scotia, particularly in rural areas. The family or ‘Hereditary’ pipers and ex-military pipers who immigrated to Nova Scotia during the period 1773- 1830 may have brought such articles of clothing from Scotland with them, but a lack of primary sources precludes much more than a passing comment on the subject.<sup>68</sup> There is evidence to suggest that some articles of Highland costume, particularly tartan, were manufactured in Prince Edward Island in the mid-nineteenth century<sup>69</sup> and tin-type photographs of pipers (Fig. 2) taken in Nova Scotia in the late 1880s demonstrates at least a local interest in the Victorian portrayal of the Scottish Highlander. As for the military, it would be almost one hundred years before the army was involved in any meaningful role in the change and development of pipe music in Nova Scotia.

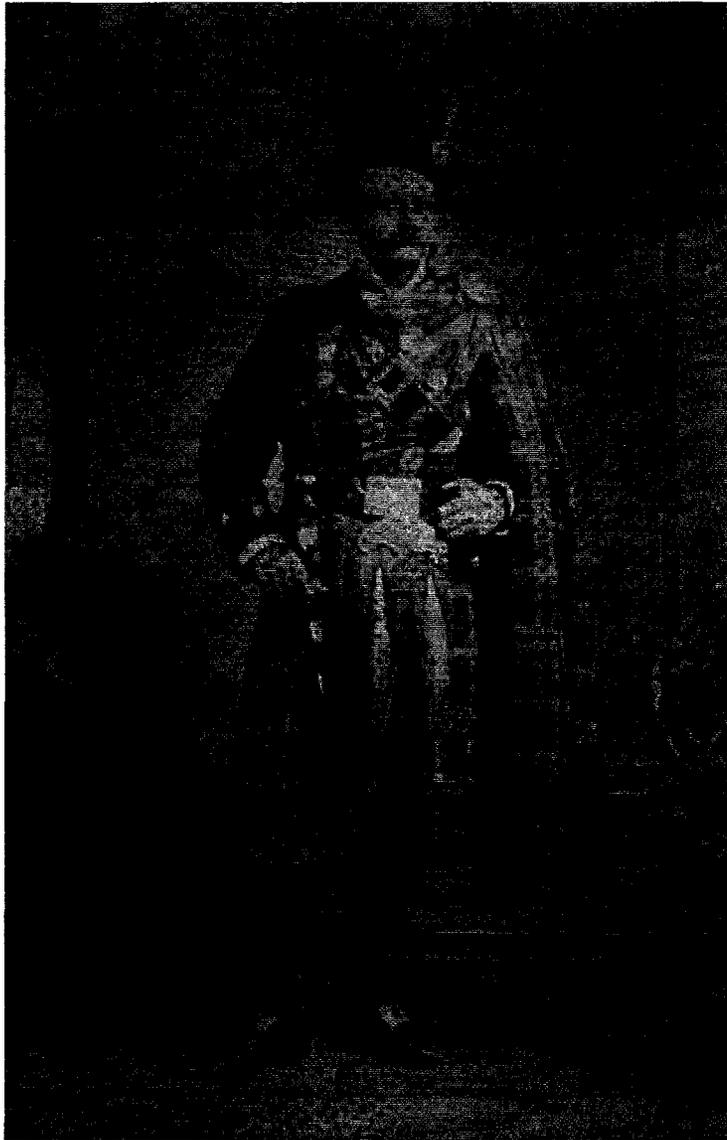
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<sup>68</sup> On June 29, 1821 the *Inverness Journal* in Scotland reported the departure of the emigrant ship *Ossian* from Cromarty on June 25 bound for Pictou. Included in the passenger manifest is a list which includes many necessities of life for the new emigrant including the number of hatchets, spades, axes, saws and nails, Bibles (Gaelic and English), barrels of pork and yards of tartan. Five families listed a mere three yards of tartan and others such as seventy-year old John Sutherland and widow Margaret MacDonald, left Scotland with thirty-six yards of tartan each. For more comprehensive breakdown of the passenger list, see L. Campey, *After the Hector* (Toronto: Natural Heritage/ Natural History Inc, 2004), p. 216.

<sup>69</sup> S. Hornby, *Celts and Ceilidhs* (N.p. N.p., Prince Edward Island), p. 39. Rule 8 of the Constitution of the Caledonian Club of Prince Edward Island, approved in 1864, stipulates that among other prizes “A prize will be awarded to the wearer of the best Highland Costume- P. E. Island manufacture Tartan to be preferred.”

Fig. 2 Two pipers from Pictou County, c. 1885:

Donald Murray (1830-1899), Rogers Hill, (courtesy of Donald D. Munro).



(b) William Ross (1826-1915), Cummings Mountain,(courtesy of James O. Ross).



## Chapter Two

### ***Immigration, Settlement, and Industrialization***

In the evening the company danced as usual. We performed, with much activity, a dance which I suppose, the emigration from Skye has occasioned. They call it America. A reel is played. Each of the couples, after common involutions and evolutions, successively whirls around in a circle, till all are in motion; and the dance seems intended to show how emigration catches, till a whole neighbourhood is set afloat.<sup>1</sup>

It has been over two hundred years since Scottish Gaels began immigrating to the area now known as the Maritime Provinces of Canada. The Gaelic name for Nova Scotia is *Alba Nuadh* and the descendants of these Scottish settlers comprise one of the largest ethnic groups in the province. Scottish heritage is also quite evident in the duplication of Scottish place names in Nova Scotia such as Bervie (near Truro), Inverness, Portree, Knoydart, Iona, Beaulieu, Boisdale, and several communities named Glencoe, to name a few. In addition, several place names associated with the Highland pipers include Pipers Cove, Cape Breton County; Pipers Glen, Inverness County; Pipers Clearing, Victoria County; and Pipers Pond, Hants County. These early immigrants brought with them not only one of the oldest languages in the world but a largely oral culture rich in poetry and song, instrumental music and dance. However, far from being members of a larger cohesive political structure in the seventeenth century, Scottish Gaels were a fragmented tribal society whose allegiance was based on kinship and regionalism. This clannish, or parochial nature, was also part of the immigrant culture of the Gael and probably contributed to the inability of New World Gaels to resist the constant pressures of assimilation into a dominant English society. The linguistic discrimination against the Gaelic language and culture had its beginnings in seventeenth century Scotland with the

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<sup>1</sup> James Boswell, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company Ltd. New Edition, 1961), pp. 242-43.

implementation of the Statutes of Iona in 1609. The Statutes of Iona were designed to break the power of the clan chiefs and extend the hegemony of the Scottish Lowlands over the Highlands and Islands. By the time the Gaels began immigrating to North America (1750-1850) the English language and its broader culture was already making serious inroads on the Scottish mainland. Efforts to detach the Gael from his culture started at the end of the fifteenth century when a Scottish education act obliged barons and freeholders to send their children to school to learn Latin, and in the seventeenth century the national government sought to replace Gaelic with English.<sup>2</sup>

The Preface to the 1609 Statutes of Iona, enacted by the Scottish Parliament under military pressure from the English, was later legitimized and ratified by the Scottish Privy Council in the Education Act of 1616. It stated that the “Inglish tongue be universaille plantit” and the Gaelic language, which was “one of the chief and princpall causis of the continewance of barbaritie and incivilitie amongis the inhabitants of the Isles and Heylandis be abolisheit and removit”.<sup>3</sup>

King James I established the Order of the Knights Baronets of Scotland in 1624-25 to encourage settlement in the colonies. Sir William Alexander, then Royal Secretary for Scotland, was an early promoter of colonization and the first attempts at Scottish settlement included Charles Fort, Port Royal, on mainland Nova Scotia, and Baleine, Cape Breton in 1629.<sup>4</sup> These settlements were short-lived. The French, who also laid claim to various parts of North America, captured Baleine and forced the inhabitants to help build the French fort at St. Ann’s, Cape Breton. Later most of the Scots were

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<sup>2</sup> Nancy Dorian, *Language Death, The Life Cycle of a Scottish Gaelic Dialect*, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Lori Vitale Cox, ‘Gaelic and the Schools in Cape Breton’, *Nova Scotia Historical Review*. Vol. 14, Part 2, 1994, pp. 21-22.

<sup>4</sup> See John G. Reid, *Sir William Alexander and North American Colonization* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1990), and *Acadia, Maine and New Scotland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp. 7, 14, 23-33. Shortly after the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), the French, seeking to reinforce their claims to North America, built the Fortress of Louisburg close to the original settlement at Baleine.

eventually returned to Scotland. In 1632, the area known as Nova Scotia was ceded by treaty to France.

Later Scottish colonization included disbanded Highland soldiers after the Seven Years War and the American Revolution; a portion of Loyalist resettlement, Gaelic middle-class immigrants (1772-1815); and lastly, tenant and sub-tenant farmers, victims of the infamous 'Highland Clearances' (1815-1848).

Land grants (totaling approximately 80,000 acres) on the north shore of St. John Island (P.E.I.) were set aside for disbanded soldiers of the Fraser Highlanders after the Peace of Paris in 1763. Veterans of the Black Watch were also granted land along areas of the St. John River in what is now the province of New Brunswick. A large group of United Empire Loyalists who were settled in Sheburne County after the American Revolution were drawn from the areas of earlier Highland settlement in North America such as North Carolina.<sup>5</sup>

There is a dearth of complete and reliable records for the actual number of Scottish immigrants to the Maritimes during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Many of the ships' passenger lists have not survived and, due to the implementation of a head tax on immigrants by the colonial government, it is widely believed that many Scottish immigrants entered the region without the knowledge of either the colonial or imperial governments. A common perception of these trans-Atlantic migrations is that all of the immigrants were poor, uneducated clansmen, betrayed by uncaring clan chiefs, and forced *en masse* to emigrate. Although there were certainly several recorded cases of extreme force and brutality in removing people from the land, especially after the end of Napoleonic War, there is every indication that many of the first

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia* (Halifax, NS: Nova Scotia Museum, 2002), p.21.

immigrant Gaels to North America were not necessarily impoverished or physically forced to leave.<sup>6</sup> For instance, John Roy MacKay, who held the middle-class position of piper and gamekeeper for Alexander MacKenzie of Gairloch, made a conscious decision to immigrate to Pictou in 1805. MacKay was able to pay the passage for his wife and ten children, and all their belongings.

There were several complex reasons for the mass emigrations from Scotland. These included political, religious and economic concerns.

The feudal clan system, which had been the foundation of Highland Gaelic society for centuries, was in accelerated decline after the final Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. The first segment of the population to feel the effects of economic restructuring was the educated middle class known as tacksmen. Historically the Gaelic middle or tacksman class occupied positions such as clerics, teachers, military officers, physicians, poets and musicians in Highland society. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the value of land rose dramatically in the highlands and islands of Scotland accompanied by a massive reorganization of the local economy.

The value of land had previously been its ability to support a large, robust community. In the new socio-economic regime, it was transformed solely into a commercial commodity designed to provide maximum profit for those at the very top of the social structure -the land holding and increasingly anglicized clan chiefs.<sup>7</sup>

The Gaelic middle class, who for generations held farms in hereditary succession (which they in turn leased to tenants), were being marginalized by their respective clan

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<sup>6</sup> Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*. Bumsted's book makes a good case for middle-class immigration but he does not mention the Strathglas clearances of almost 5000 people to Antigonish County between 1801-1803, mentioned by both Prebble, *The Highland Clearances* and Donald Fergusson, *Beyond the Hebrides* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978).

<sup>7</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p.18. See also Prebble, *The Highland Clearances*, pp. 63-65, 248-52, for a more detailed examination of the hardship endured by people as a result of the economic restructuring which occurred after the introduction of the Cheviot sheep to the Highlands and Islands.

chiefs. In the closing decades of the eighteenth century many clan chiefs lost any paternal interest in their kinsmen, resulting in the confiscation of land, raised rents and a rupture of long-established roles, customs, rights and obligations.<sup>8</sup> The chiefs simply became land proprietors. The tacksman class was faced with ever decreasing political influence and increasing financial demands. In an effort to maintain a relatively high standard of living, many members of the tacksman class who could afford to do so chose emigration. North Carolina, New York and Georgia were popular destinations, but following the American Revolution, immigrant Gaels increasingly turned their attention to British North America.<sup>9</sup>

The area now known as Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick rapidly became a collection basin for displaced Gaels. Since Scottish immigration to the Maritimes occurred over several decades it is best viewed in two stages. The first period, from 1772 to 1815, includes the continental wars between Britain and France; the second includes the Post- Napoleonic period from 1815 to 1850. Many early emigration schemes during the period 1772-1815 were conceived and coordinated by several members of an increasingly frustrated middle class; the second period was characterized by wholesale evictions, especially in the Hebrides.

One of the earliest Highland settlements in the Maritimes was at Malpeque Bay in Prince Edward Island in 1772. This settlement consisted of immigrants from South Uist and part of the adjacent Scottish mainland and the migration was largely religious in its motivation.

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<sup>8</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p.18. See also Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, pp.55-80.

<sup>9</sup> See Ian Adams and Meredith Somerville, *Cargoes of Despair and Hope: Scottish Emigration to North America, 1603-1803* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishing Ltd., 1993), for a detailed analysis of many of the causes of Scottish emigration to North America between the years 1603-1803 and the decline of immigration to the United States after the American Revolution.

[The migration] had its origin both in religious persecution of Roman Catholics and economic pressures upon the tacksman class. The religious troubles began in 1769 when Colin MacDonald of Boisdale began to try to force his Roman Catholic tenants to convert to Presbyterianism. The leaders of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland- reduced to only 13,000 adherents in the Highland region- responded to this action with a decision to relieve their people by removing them to America, a move which might simultaneously prevent the spread of the Protestant faith to other lairds by threatening a general depopulation of their estates.<sup>10</sup>

This endeavor was led by John MacDonald of Glenaladale, a Catholic member of the tacksman class. It was financially supported by the Catholic Church and it proved a highly successful settlement.<sup>11</sup>

Serious immigration from Scotland to Nova Scotia began in 1773 with the arrival of the ship *Hector* at Pictou. The town of Pictou soon became one of the most important ports of entry for many Scottish immigrants between 1773 and 1815. Between 1773 and 1805 Pictou County, Antigonish County and the western side of Cape Breton Island became common destinations for Scottish exiles. Other Highland immigrants entered the province via the port of Sydney while hundreds more, evading a government head tax on immigrants, were simply put ashore at isolated coves.<sup>12</sup>

The Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815) substantially reduced the number of people leaving Scotland and increased the dependence of the Hebridean economy on the harvesting and processing of kelp.<sup>13</sup> With the outbreak of these hostilities in Europe, England's supply of substances used in the manufacture of soap and glass (such as

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<sup>10</sup> Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, p.57. Other sources claim it was Alexander MacDonald of Boisdale and not Colin MacDonald of Boisdale.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.116. Another successfully transplanted group of 400 Protestant settlers, stewarded by Lord Selkirk, settled at Belfast, Prince Edward Island in 1803.

<sup>12</sup> Fergusson, *Beyond the Hebrides*, p. 31.

<sup>13</sup> The *New Illustrated Webster's Dictionary* describes Kelp as: 1. any large coarse seaweed (family *Laminariaceae*). 2. the ashes of seaweeds: formerly the source of soda as used in glassmaking and soapmaking, now a source chiefly of iodine. *New Illustrated Webster's Dictionary* (New York: Pamco Publishing Company, Inc., 1992), p. 535.

barilla) were greatly reduced as France had placed an embargo on Spanish barilla. Kelp proved to be a viable alternative, and the Outer Hebrides was rich in this type of seaweed. The industry was labour-intensive with men, women and children all taking part in harvesting and processing. The population of the Isle of Skye and the outer islands, including North and South Uist, Barra, Lewis and Harris increased from 19,000 in 1750 to 33,000 in 1811.<sup>14</sup> This population increase of over seventy-five percent does not factor in the substantial emigration from these areas which had already taken place to destinations such as Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island.

During the Napoleonic War kelp had become an integral part of the Hebridean economy. Edward Daniel Clarke, chemist and professor of mineralogy at Cambridge University, described the process of kelp manufacture after his 1797 tour of the Hebrides as follows:

The manufacture of kelp is conducted by the following process: the seaweed is first collected and dried. The usual mode is to cut a portion of the kelp annually from the rocks, taking it from the same place only once in three years. After the kelp has been dried it is placed in a kiln prepared for the purpose, of stones loosely piled together, and burned. After it is consumed, and the fire is extinguished, a long pole pointed with iron is plunged into it and it is stirred about; the result of the burning being, by this time, a thick glutinous liquid, which runs from the kelp in burning. As soon as this liquid cools, it hardens and the operation is at an end. The usual expense of manufacturing the kelp is about two guineas a ton for the labour; if it is sold on the shore, which is generally the case, and estimating of the kelp only at eight guineas a ton, the proprietor clears six.<sup>15</sup>

Understandably, with the demand for kelp at an all time high, the clan chiefs were worried about a loss of cheap labour if emigration remained unchecked. In addition, immigration to the colonies was curbed in an effort to keep men at home for military

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<sup>14</sup> Laurie Stanley, *The Well-Watered Garden: The Presbyterian Church in Cape Breton, 1798-1860* (Sydney, CB: University College of Cape Breton, 1983), p.9.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Campbell, *Songs Remembered in Exile*, p.59.

service on the continent. From the early eighteenth century the war-like nature of the Gael had been channeled into numerous Highland Regiments. These units had experienced significant military successes both in North America and Europe and with the threat of Napoleon still looming, the availability of new recruits was a major concern. To restrict overseas emigration the highland lairds called on government to enact legislation to 'check Emigration' (The Ships Passenger Act of 1803) and to provide subsidies for the fisheries, road and canal building and manufacturing to help lessen unemployment.<sup>16</sup> The Ships Passengers Act was ostensibly intended to improve the conditions of the emigrants on board ship but these conditions were rarely enforced, and in the years after it was enacted, the cost of emigration doubled.<sup>17</sup> These measures, and a renewed conflict with France, reduced legal emigration to the colonies to a trickle, but a perusal of land grant applications held in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia for the years 1787 -1843 indicates that numerous Gaels who left Scotland during this period of government intervention eventually ended up in Cape Breton seeking land.<sup>18</sup>

In the years following the war in Europe cheaper ingredients for soap and glass were found on the Continent. For a Highland west coast economy almost totally dependent on cattle and kelp any downward spiral in the price of kelp was devastating. The bottom fell out of the kelp market almost overnight and what followed in the Western Isles was widespread poverty and destitution. The population boom, which had accompanied the introduction of the potato in the mid-eighteenth century, and the rise of

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<sup>16</sup> Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, p.104.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Hornsby, 'Scottish Emigration and Settlement in Nineteenth Century Cape Breton', Ken Donovan, ed., *The Island: New Perspectives on Cape Breton History, 1713-1990* (Sydney, N.S.: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1990), p.54.

<sup>18</sup> Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (hereafter NSARM). Cape Breton Land Petitions and Other Material 1787-1843 <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/gene/cb.htm> . According to this website Captain Hector MacKenzie boasted in 1825 that over the last eighteen years he alone had 'brought 1500 hundred immigrants from Scotland.' Cape Breton No.: 3064, NSARM microfilm 15799.

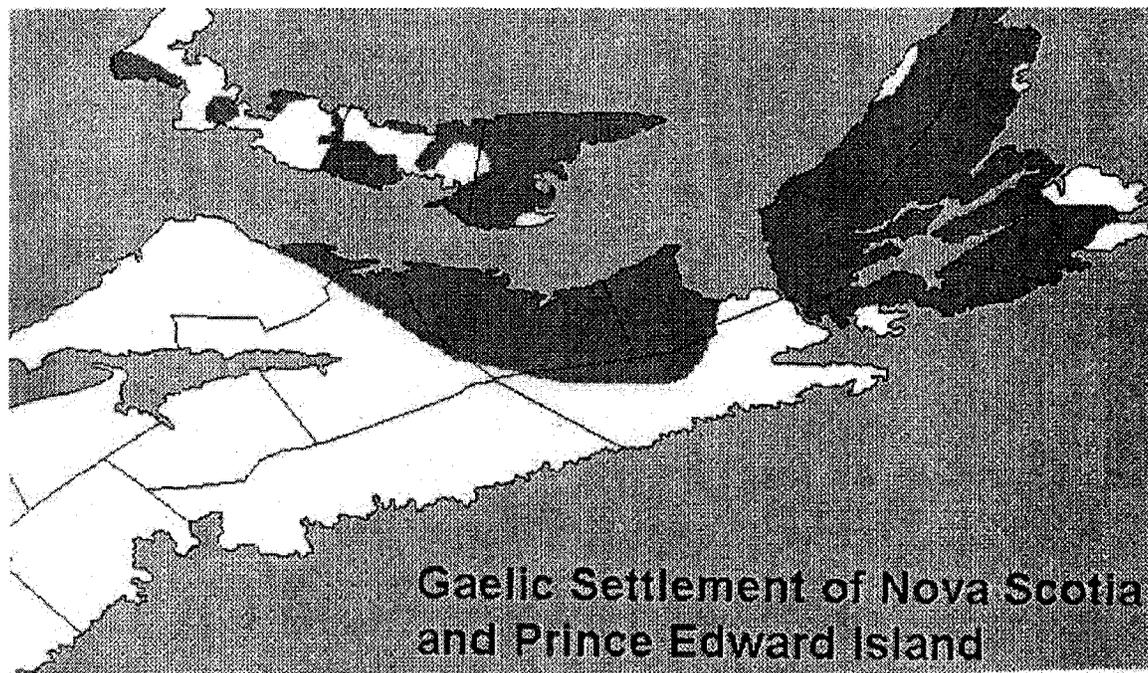
the kelp industry in the late eighteenth century, resulted in too many people chasing too few resources and compounded the downturn in the economy. This situation was further complicated by returning Highland soldiers who had fought for Britain against Napoleon. Upon their return the disbanded soldiers found that entire communities had been displaced.<sup>19</sup> Much of the population was now considered surplus and various methods of removal were implemented. The Highland landlords must have found the disbanding of trained soldiers, fresh from their victories on the Continent, more than a little distressing. The presence of veteran soldiers probably acted as a deterrent to even more violent forms of evicting tenants. In the end, rents were raised well above the ability of tenant farmers to pay and families were eventually driven from their small farms. Many more were forced to settle on the coastal areas of the west coast of Scotland where the land was not conducive to agriculture. For most Gaels, immigration, either to the colonies or to large cities in Scotland, was the only avenue of survival open to them. What followed was a trans-Atlantic exodus from the Hebrides to Canada.

Fig. 3 The following map shows the extent of Gaelic settlement in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island:<sup>20</sup> (Courtesy of the Nova Scotia Museum).

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<sup>19</sup> Prebble, *The Highland Clearances*, p. 140.

<sup>20</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p. 27.



For these early immigrants, proximity to relatives, religious denomination and dialect determined to a large extent where they would settle.<sup>21</sup> This preserved the continuity of communities from the old country to the new. These settlements became miniature replicas of the Highland areas or localities which had been left behind in Scotland. This type of immigration is referred to as “chain migration”, and many family clusters were multi-generational, consisting of parents, children and one or more grandparents.<sup>22</sup>

Pictou County was settled to a large extent by people from Sutherlandshire. Colchester County received immigrants from Sutherland and Ross, victims of the brutal Sutherland Clearances, as well as significant numbers of Ulster Scots.<sup>23</sup> Antigonish

<sup>21</sup> See Campbell and MacLean, *Beyond the Atlantic Roar*, pp. 35-75, for settlement patterns and early economic development in the counties of north eastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Dunn, *Highland Settler, A Portrait of the Scottish Gael in Nova Scotia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Reprint, 1971), p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Campey, *After the Hector*, pp.23, 134-37.

County became the new home for Gaels from areas of the Scottish mainland such as Morar, Moidart, Strathglas and Lochaber.

Cape Breton Island was the last area of substantial Scottish settlement in North America. It is estimated that over 30,000 Gaels settled in Cape Breton during the 19th century.<sup>24</sup> Cape Breton was not the first choice, but it proved to be the cheapest. People from North and South Uist, Benbecula and Morar inhabited the Mira River area; immigrants from Barra settled at Iona, Grand Narrows and Washabuck. Gaelic-speaking Highlanders from Lewis, Harris and Scalpay settled at St Ann's Bay, Little Narrows and along the North Shore of Cape Breton. Gaels from the islands of Mull, Tiree, Colonsay, Rum, Muck, Skye and mainland areas such as Lochaber, Moidart, Knoydart and Morar settled in small enclaves throughout the counties of Inverness and Cape Breton.<sup>25</sup>

Coastal and waterfront areas were those most sought after for settlement: the Northumberland Strait, the Atlantic Ocean, the Bras d' Or Lakes or any one of the numerous river valleys in Atlantic Canada provided settlers with basic means of transportation and supplies of fresh seafood. Many of the Highlanders who came to Nova Scotia were unprepared for life in the New World. Coming from small farming or crofting communities, many of the immigrants from the largely treeless Outer Hebrides were confronted with dense forests on their arrival. For many in the first year of settlement, a crude lean-to provided the only shelter from a long, cold winter. Contrary to the glowing reports of cleared farmland from the immigrant agents, the new settlers were faced with the daunting task of felling large trees, some of which grew down to the water's edge. Many of the immigrant Gaels were unaccustomed to using an axe and the methods of clearing the forest for cultivation were primitive, time consuming and

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<sup>24</sup> Fergusson, *Beyond the Hebrides*, p.30.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31-34.

dangerous.<sup>26</sup> Fatal accidents and debilitating injuries from clearing land were not uncommon during the nineteenth century, especially in areas where lumbering proved to be an important source of income. Despite these difficulties the early Scottish immigrants managed to become quite proficient at clearing the land and eventually developed a thriving timber trade with Britain.

The [timber] trade forged new shipping routes from Scotland to the timber-producing areas of the eastern Maritimes. Being the earliest major group of immigrants to arrive in eastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, emigrant (sic) Scots found the most favourable locations close to the timber collecting bays and along the rivers which flowed into them. They felled the timber and cleared the land along these coastal and river frontages, creating distinct pockets of settlement. Thus the timber trade and colonization were not separate developments but were inextricably linked.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the successful adaptation of many of these settlers to their new environment, at least two immigrant pipers, Neil MacVicar and Kenneth Chisholm, were injured while clearing land in the early nineteenth century.

Neil MacVicar (*Niall Ruadh Mòr*) was a bard, fiddler and veteran piper of the Napoleonic Wars. He came to Cape Breton around 1831 from North Uist and spent a miserable winter in Sydney at the hands of an unscrupulous landlady. The following summer he moved with his family to live with relatives and friends at Catalone. Neil MacVicar, described as 'a huge and powerful man, died around 1850 some years after having suffered a terrible injury working in the woods cutting timber.'<sup>28</sup>

Kenneth Chisholm was the last family piper to Chisholm of Strathglas before he immigrated to Antigonish County around 1801. As family piper it was quite likely

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<sup>26</sup> Rev. Allan MacMillan, *A West Wind to East Bay* (Antigonish: The Casket Printing and Publishing Company, 2001), p.622.

<sup>27</sup> Campey, *After the Hector*, p.13.

<sup>28</sup> Donald Fergusson, *From the Farthest Hebrides* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1978), p. 246.

Kenneth Chisholm who played a 'rant of triumph'<sup>29</sup> on his bagpipe after Alexander Chisholm, the twenty-third chief, refused to evict his people and replace them with sheep. Alexander Chisholm died in 1793 and was succeeded by his half-brother William, who wasted little time in clearing the people from Strathglas. Between the years 1801-1803 over five thousand Highlanders were evicted from Strathglas with most of these settling in Antigonish County. Kenneth Chisholm was reputed to be a piping student of John 'Beag' MacRae and was in all probability a product of the MacRae piping college at Kintail, Scotland in the late eighteenth century.<sup>30</sup> Kenneth Chisholm was killed by a falling tree a few years after his arrival in Nova Scotia and it is unknown if he taught any local pipers.

Most of the early settlers had been crofters in Scotland, making a living from subsistence farming, raising cattle, and fishing. Early settlement in some areas of Cape Breton quickly claimed the best agricultural and water-frontage areas of land. Successive waves of Highland immigrants were forced further inland where subsistence farming and hunting were to become their only means of survival. In these "Rear" or "Backland" areas there was very little agricultural opportunity, with much of the land described as being "wretchedly bad".<sup>31</sup> By the mid-century these areas were home to most of the island's population.<sup>32</sup> Despite the availability of waterways for transportation, poor roads and a scarcity of bridges isolated many Gaelic communities throughout Nova Scotia until the twentieth century.<sup>33</sup> Comparative isolation was good for the maintenance of culture but bad for economic development.

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<sup>29</sup> Prebble, *The Highland Clearances*, p. 131.

<sup>30</sup> MacKay, *A Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd*, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Hornsby, *The Island: New Perspectives on Cape Breton History, 1713-1990*, p.57.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> MacMillan, *A West Wind to East Bay*, p. 623.

Farming for most Highlanders in Cape Breton was a matter of trial and error. Few Highlanders possessed a practical knowledge of crop rotation, soil exhaustion and field drainage. They deliberately eschewed scientific procedures and clung to primitive ancestral practices, considering it an act of presumption and audacity, to make any improvement or alteration in the practices of their ancestors.<sup>34</sup>

As Nova Scotia's industrial base began to develop, feudal farming techniques and occasional crop failures made the prospect of steady wages in industrialized centres increasingly attractive to many hard-pressed rural residents.

By the 1890s, industrialization had affected many predominantly Gaelic-speaking areas of Nova Scotia. Coal mining, small manufacturing industries, and later, steel-making all provided economic opportunities not available in rural agricultural areas. By the late nineteenth century coal mining in Nova Scotia had already had a long history. The French, fulfilling the fuel requirements of the nearby Fortress of Louisburg, were the first to mine coal in the area in the early 1700s.<sup>35</sup> During the early to mid-nineteenth century small mines sprang up in many areas adjacent to Highland settlements. In Inverness County there were coal mines at Mabou and Inverness town,<sup>36</sup> Pictou County had substantial mine workings at Westville and Stellarton, and small coal mines dotted the coast between Sydney Mines, New Waterford, Glace Bay and Donkin.<sup>37</sup> There were small coal mines at Joggins and River Hebert, Cumberland County, a modest steel plant at Londonderry and much larger steel making facility at Sydney. Industrialization in Nova Scotia was accompanied by urbanization and both of these developments would

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<sup>34</sup> Stanley, *The Well-Watered Garden*, p.23. This was not true of all areas of Cape Breton. Some Scottish Gaels became very successful farmers. See Rusty Bitterman, 'The Hierarchy of the Soil: Land and Labour in a Nineteenth Century Cape Breton Community' *Acadiensis*, 18 (Fall 1988) pp.33-55.

<sup>35</sup> Campbell and MacLean, *Beyond the Atlantic Roar*, p. 285.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.93-100.

<sup>37</sup> Frank, *J.B. McLachlan*, pp.46-49, 201-202; see also J.S. Martell, 'Early Coal Mining in Nova Scotia', and D. Frank, 'The Cape Breton Coal Industry and the Rise and Fall of the British Empire Steel Corporation', Don MacGillivray and Brian Tennyson, eds. *Cape Breton Historical Essays*, (Sydney: College of Cape Breton Press, 1980), pp.41-53, pp.110-32.

eventually have a negative impact on the language and musical culture of the Gael. The availability of English education, first in the urban centres and later in rural areas, reinforced the ability of the language of the school to displace the language of the home.

Up until this time Gaelic permeated much of the day to day lives of Nova Scotia Gaels. During the nineteenth century Highland settlements had grown and stabilized. This growth eventually resulted in a large *Gaidhealtachd* (Gaelic-speaking) region stretching from parts of Colchester County east to Pictou and Antigonish County, and continuing on to the northern tip of Cape Breton. As the Gaels adapted to their new surroundings and established a linguistically secure environment, various cultural art forms such as piping, fiddling, dancing and poetry flourished.<sup>38</sup> During this period, knowledge of the Gaelic language was almost indispensable for everything from commercial transactions to education. In the 1850s, English residents living in Colchester County adjacent to Gaelic settlements complained that they could not “well transact business with the inhabitants of Earltown as it is generally done in the Gaelic language”.<sup>39</sup> In Cape Breton, teachers complained that instruction without Gaelic-speaking teachers was almost useless since “the children were utterly unacquainted with English”.<sup>40</sup>

There were several contributing factors in the decline of Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia. Firstly, there was a major decline in rural population starting in about the 1880s. The agricultural capacity of the land to support growing communities and sustain a swelling population simply did not exist. Secondly, the growth of larger urban centres

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<sup>38</sup> See Appendix B for a partial list of piper/fiddler/ bards among the second and third generation Gaels. Other sources such as Allister MacGillivray’s *The Cape Breton Fiddler* (Sydney: College of Cape Breton Press, 1981), and *A Cape Breton Ceilidh* (Sydney: Sea Cape Music Ltd, 1988), contain lists of traditional musicians.

<sup>39</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p.26.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

which accompanied the industrialization of Nova Scotia successfully eroded any form of cultural solidarity the rural Gaels may have had. The expansion of coal mining in Inverness, Cape Breton, Cumberland and Pictou counties and a new steel mill in Sydney provided the impetus for migration from the farms and fishing villages to the growing centres of steel and coal production. These urban areas were attracting not only rural Gaels but other linguistic and cultural groups as well. Over time these new urban centres became effective cultural “melting pots” fueled by a predominantly English-language educational system. Although the Gaels represented a majority of these twentieth century urbanites, they lacked any uniform approach to language retention or institutional support. After a few generations the Gaels, like several other urbanized immigrant groups, were absorbed into the dominant English culture.

The populations of these mining towns was not exclusively made up of these oldcomers (ie: the Scots). There was a continuing trickle of new immigrants from Great Britain and at about the turn of the century, of middle Europeans. But the old comers were the main component of the emerging workforce and controlled the character of the towns that were formed around the maelstrom that became the mining town of the twentieth century.<sup>41</sup>

Thirdly, improvements in transportation, including roads, bridges and railways, opened up new economic opportunities in the United States, and many Gaels left Nova Scotia to improve their financial situations. The “Boston States” proved to be a favourite destination<sup>42</sup> and while many of those who left the Province married and raised families in the United States, others did return home to settle. Unfortunately, numerous Gaels suffered ridicule from non-Gaelic speakers during their time in the United States. Upon

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<sup>41</sup> Del Muiise, ‘The Making of an Industrial Community, Cape Breton Coal Towns, 1867-1900’, in MacGillivray and Tennyson, eds., *Cape Breton Historical Essays*, p.83.

<sup>42</sup> Campbell and MacLean, *Beyond the Atlantic Roar*. pp.108-109; See also Alan A. Brookes, ‘Out-migration from the Maritime Provinces 1860-1900’, *The Acadiensis Reader, Volume Two*. (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1985), pp. 34-63.

their return, whether permanent or for summer visits, many Gaels continued to carry with them a prejudice against their mother tongue.

To explain the growth of this fierce contempt for the mother tongue, amateur sociologists among the Gaels point out that the young people who grew up in the pioneering communities unwittingly tended to associate the Gaelic language which they had heard at the time with the incessant toil, hardship and scarcity peculiar to primitive conditions. When they went to the city, the universal language was English, while Gaelic was unknown; the standard of living there was inconceivably superior to what they had known. Hence Gaelic came to be considered the language of poverty and ignorance and was therefore despised, while English was regarded as the language of refinement and culture and therefore cherished.<sup>43</sup>

It is impossible to ascertain how many immigrant Gaels to the Maritimes were pipers. However, by carefully examining the primary sources in Scotland and comparing them to the local histories compiled in Nova Scotia, a more accurate picture emerges.<sup>44</sup> The historical notes compiled by James Logan and published in Angus MacKay's *A Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd, or Pipe Music* emphasize the importance of these 'hereditary' piping families and their role as tradition bearers in Scotland, but all too often these published family sketches fall short with the simple phrase 'he went to America'. There appears to have been little concern or interest, from a Scottish perspective, in the fate of these musicians after they left Scotland and what if any of the tradition survived in Nova Scotia, or anywhere else in the New World. The Highland Society of London had already established branches in the Maritimes in the early nineteenth century and there was certainly communication between Gaels on both sides of the Atlantic, but no evidence has surfaced to date to indicate that the Highland Society had anything but a passing interest in what was probably considered the periphery of Gaelic culture. The preoccupation with the "Hereditary" or family pipers, which came to

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<sup>43</sup> Dunn, *Highland Settler*, p. 134.

<sup>44</sup> See Appendix A for a partial list of immigrant pipers to Nova Scotia, 1773-1848.

prominence during the Victorian Age, has eclipsed the importance of the lesser known piping families who came to Atlantic Canada. This is probably owing to the fact that, as members of the Gaelic middle class, the 'hereditary' pipers were deemed to be of greater importance in the preservation, performance and transmission of *Ceòl Mór*. Published local histories supply the bulk of the information on several immigrant pipers, both tenant and tacksman. The list of known immigrant pipers can, for the most part, be split into these two distinct classes (Appendix A).

The MacKays of Gairloch, Chisholms of Strathglas, John MacGillivray, Glenalladale, MacIntyres of Rannoch, MacNeils of Barra, and the Rankins of Mull were all middle-class musicians who left Scotland for the Maritimes in the late 1700s- early 1800s.<sup>45</sup> These families were known to have trained pipers, and one family in particular, the Rankins, is reputed to have rivaled the MacCrimmons of Skye in fame as teachers of pipe music.<sup>46</sup> Since these families dominated perceptions of Highland bagpipe culture for most of the nineteenth century in Scotland, there is considerably more information available concerning their lives and family history.

The piping dynasty of the Gairloch MacKay family began with Rory MacKay (c.1592-1689). The MacKay family of Gairloch supplied four generations of pipers to the MacKenzie Lairds. At age sixty Rory is believed to have married a daughter of Donald Doughal MacKay, which would have placed him high on the social ladder, and his son John (c.1656-1754) succeeded him in his position as family piper. John MacKay was known in Gaelic as '*Am Piobair Dall*' (the Blind Piper) or sometimes as *Iain 'Dall*' (Blind John). 'Blind' John was a gifted piper and poet. He lost his eyesight to smallpox at age

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<sup>45</sup> MacKay, *A Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.1-8.

<sup>46</sup> Roderick Cannon, *Joseph MacDonald's Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe* (N.p. The Piobaireachd Society, 1994), p.1r.

seven and this no doubt enhanced his other senses. He learned piping first from his father, and at age eighteen was sent to the MacCrimmon college at Boreraig, Skye. He studied with one of the more famous members of this piping dynasty, Patrick 'Og' MacCrimmon, for approximately seven years and was, considered by many, to be his best pupil. According to tradition, his playing abilities proved far superior to the other students attending the college and several stories of jealousy and even attempted murder form part of piping folklore.<sup>47</sup>

'Blind' John MacKay was, like his father, in his sixties when he married. He had two sons, John and Angus, both of whom were pipers. Angus (b.1725) succeeded his father as piper to MacKenzie of Gairloch. The young Laird, Sir Kenneth MacKenzie, and Angus MacKay were very good friends. They traveled a great deal together and both men died at a comparably young age. According to Angus MacKay's *'Collection'*, 'Blind' John's son, John MacKay, immigrated to North America around 1770. As the younger son he would have had little claim on the farm after his father passed away and his older brother, Angus, became established as the family piper. Keeping in mind the trends in immigration patterns at the time, there is a very good chance that this John MacKay was the piper on the immigrant ship *Hector*.

Angus's son, John Roy MacKay (b.1753) became the last hereditary piper to MacKenzie of Gairloch. John Roy, like his father, also had a favorable relationship with the clan chief, so much so that after John Roy immigrated to Pictou in 1805 on the ship

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<sup>47</sup> Osgood MacKenzie, *One Hundred Years in the Highlands* (London: Butler and Tanner, Ltd. Reprint, 1960), p.192. One tale relates how some of his fellow students became envious of MacKay's superior piping skills even though he was blind and threw him down a 24-foot precipice, only to have him land on his feet and survive unharmed. This spot became known in Gaelic as *'Leum an Doill'* or The Blind's Leap.

*Sir Sidney Smith*, Sir Hector MacKenzie said he would never care to hear pipe music again and he never kept another piper.<sup>48</sup>

One story about the family's departure from Scotland concerns a tune which John Roy MacKay is said to have been playing while being rowed out to the ship *Sir Sidney Smith*. Oral tradition states that the tune was called *The Departure of Piping from Scotland* and that it was a new composition by John Roy himself.<sup>49</sup> Whatever the origins of the tune, it has been lost. In fact much of the musical legacy of the Gairloch MacKays, including specific tunes and technique which were brought to Nova Scotia, has been forgotten. One of the few glimpses of the Gairloch MacKay's life in Nova Scotia comes from Alexander MacKenzie, the editor of the *Celtic Magazine*.

The *Celtic Magazine* was a Scottish journal dealing with Scottish history and folklore. Alexander MacKenzie made a visit to Canada in 1879 and spent some time with John Roy's youngest son, Squire John MacKay, a stipendiary judge at New Glasgow. He published an account of his visit and some excerpts shed light on the MacKay family in the New World and contain one of the few and all too brief descriptions of piping among this particular class of musician.

But more interesting to me than all my discoveries as yet on this continent, was finding a representative of the famous pipers and poets of Gairloch, in the person of John MacKay, who occupies the most honourable and prominent position in this thriving town- that of Stipendary (sic) Magistrate... His great grandfather was the celebrated Blind Piper of Gairloch... About four years ago a paragraph appeared in the *Celtic Magazine* making inquiries to whether any of this distinguished family were yet alive...The only thing known about them was that one of them, the grandson of the famous *Piobair Dall*, and the last male representative of the race in Gairloch, emigrated to some part of America in 1805, and carried with him more Ceol Mor or Piobaireachd than he left behind among all the pipers of Scotland. [Squire John's]... father continued to play

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.194.

<sup>49</sup> Bridget MacKenzie, *Piping Traditions of the North of Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1998), p.152.

the national instrument all his life, and died a very old man. His elder brother Angus, also played marches, reels and strathspeys, but piobaireachd not being appreciated in the land of his adoption, he practiced the higher form of music but little and was not, therefore, up to the family standard of excellence in that department.... he died a few years ago when nearly one hundred. John himself also learned to play, but at the age of eighteen he finally gave it up.<sup>50</sup>

It is regrettable that Alexander MacKenzie did not gather and publish more information on the piping styles and tunes associated with the Gairloch MacKays. Squire John had given up piping but must have remembered some points of his early tuition. It may be possible, too, that Squire John, having achieved a certain amount of prominence and respectability in Pictou County, may have wanted to perpetuate Scottish myths regarding the fame of the Gairloch MacKays as pipers.<sup>51</sup>

No definitive reason for John Roy MacKay's departure from Scotland to Nova Scotia has yet been uncovered,<sup>52</sup> although it is quite possible that relations with Sir Hector MacKenzie were strained after the laird started removing tenants from some of his lands in 1790.<sup>53</sup> John Roy was comparatively well educated and in addition to being "the recognized and paid piper of the Gairloch family, he was also Game-Keeper, being in charge of the woods and forests of the estate."<sup>54</sup> His position afforded him a modest lifestyle when compared to the numerous victims of the later Highland Clearances. Perhaps it was the increasing frustration felt by many of the Gaelic middle class when faced with a loss of political influence and prestige which prompted them to seek a new

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<sup>50</sup> Alexander MacKenzie, 'The Editor in Canada' *Celtic Magazine*, 5, No. 49, November 1879, p.71.

<sup>51</sup> In a letter to Captain John Grant from Dr. John Maclean, dated July 18 1770, MacLean alludes to a drop in the playing ability of the Gairloch MacKay pipers. "Arrival of Cumming the young piper: will make the best bargain for him; knows that the Gerloch (sic) pipers were good but have degenerated; thinks recipient made the right decision in sending the lad to Skye." On line, <http://195.153/dservea/cgi-bin/cidletcl.exe>

<sup>52</sup> An interesting relic carried to Nova Scotia by the Gairloch MacKays which is currently held privately in Halifax, is a pipe chanter said to have belonged to the Blind Piper and which dates to the late seventeenth century.

<sup>53</sup> MacKenzie, *Piping Traditions of the North of Scotland*, p.143.

<sup>54</sup> Squire John MacKay, J.P., *Reminiscences of Long a Life*, NSARM, MG20674 7.

life in a new land, or as John Lorne Campbell suggests in his *Songs Remembered in Exile*, “the hopes born in the “Common Man” by the success of the American [and French] Revolution with its spirit of independence and egalitarianism.”<sup>55</sup> In any case, he seems to stand in the midst of social and political change.

The Gairloch MacKays continued to teach piping after their arrival in Nova Scotia, but curiously enough not among their own descendants. The music was perpetuated by a few second and third generation pipers but eventually the Gairloch MacKay style of playing, technique and repertoire died out in Pictou County. They did pass on some of their particular style and tune repertoire to a few pipers in Pictou County, but by the beginning of the twentieth century their influence appears to have been wiped from the musical map of Nova Scotia.

Also on the *Sir Sidney Smith* in 1805 was the family of Donald MacPherson. The MacKay and MacPherson families had been friends in the old country and they continued their friendship in the New World. Squire John's older brother Angus instructed Donald MacPherson's son John to play the bagpipe and after becoming proficient he was in constant demand as a performer at all the local weddings, parties, and fairs.

John MacPherson in turn taught three of his neighbour's sons to play the bagpipe, William, Hector and Donald MacKenzie. Donald MacKenzie became so well known for his piping that he was considered by many to be the best piper in the Maritime Provinces. An article in the records of the Church of Scotland on the Gairloch MacKays seems to support this claim:

His [Donald MacPherson] services were sought after on all gala occasions, not only in this Province, but in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. His last performance was at the Orange Walk in Shubenacadie. He came home sick from over -exertion and never rallied. Many middle-aged

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<sup>55</sup> Campbell, *Songs Remembered in Exile*, p.60.

men and women will recall with delight the stirring strains of Donald MacKenzie's reels and marches. He taught his nephew, George MacKenzie, son of William, to play. After Donald MacKenzie and John MacPherson, the next best player was George MacKenzie. He died at an early age and of all the MacKenzie pipers there are now none left who can play but Alexander MacKenzie (William's son) and we believe Alexander MacKenzie, merchant of Westville.<sup>56</sup>

This quotation and the previous reference by Squire John Mackay that his brother, Angus, played mostly 'marches, reels and strathspeys' indicates that dance music was still very common in Pictou County and the surrounding area in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. While Squire John's brother Angus continued to play and teach bagpipe music among the Gaelic communities of Pictou County for the remainder of his life, other middle-class pipers such as John MacGillivray, Robert MacIntyre, Conduille Rankin and Hector Johnson chose very different ways of making a living.

John MacGillivray (1774-1862), was piper and bard to MacDonald of Glenaladale before he immigrated to Prince Edward Island, eventually settling on the Gulf shore of Antigonish County. An article written by his grandson, A. T. MacDonald, which was published in the *Antigonish Casket* April 17 1913, offers a brief glimpse of his career in Scotland.

John MacGillivray, *Iain Piobaire*, of Highfield, Maryvale, Antigonish County, was poet of more than ordinary sweetness and energy, and such of his songs that have been published are read and sung everywhere the Gaelic language is spoken. He studied music with the celebrated MacKay of Skye, whose son Angus was afterwards piper to her Majesty, the late Queen Victoria. Before coming to America he was for years musician for the family of Glenaladale. It is he who is mentioned by Alexander MacKinnon, the martial poet of the Highlands in his *Dubh-Gleannach: Dh'aith-nich mi meoir ghrinn a Bhrataich*. (I recognize the sweet fingering of MacGillivray).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Marjorie (MacKenzie) Hawkins, Hector L. MacKenzie, and John R. MacQuarrie, *Gairloch, Pictou County, Nova Scotia* (N.p.: N.p., 1977), pp.20-21.

<sup>57</sup> R.A. MacLean, ed., *A History of Antigonish* (2 vols., Antigonish: Casket Printing and Publishing Company, 1976), Vol. 2, p. 55.

In addition to farming, John MacGillivray taught school after his arrival in Nova Scotia and although he continued to compose Gaelic songs and poems, many of these new compositions were lost in a house fire a few years after his death, along with the bagpipe Glenaladale had purchased for him before he left Scotland. He taught one son, John, to play the bagpipes and his eldest son, Alexander, was the author of the first Gaelic book written and published in the British North America.<sup>58</sup>

Robert MacIntyre (1771-1833) also augmented his farming income by teaching school at Port Hood, Inverness County. Robert MacIntyre was descended from a long line of pipers to Menzies of Weem, in Rannoch. He was piper to John MacDonald of Clanranald until Clanranald's death in 1792. He spent some time as piper to MacNeil of Barra, after MacNeil's pipers had immigrated to Pictou in 1801,<sup>59</sup> and eventually immigrated to the Strait of Canso in 1813.<sup>60</sup>

Condullie Rankin (1774-1852) was also descended from a long line of pipers to MacLean of Duart, on the Isle of Mull, and later on the Isle of Coll. According to tradition, the first piper to Maclean of Duart was the seventeenth-century piper *Cu-duiligh mac Raing*<sup>61</sup> (Condullie). He had been trained to play the pipes in Ireland and upon his return to Mull he established a piping school at Kilbrennan. The college eventually closed around 1760. It is ironic that this particular piping dynasty, which spanned five generations, began and ended with a Condullie Rankin. An interesting story is preserved in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* concerning Condullie

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<sup>58</sup> 'The Youth's Companion, or The Friendly Counsellor' was printed in Pictou in 1836 under the Gaelic title *Companach an Oganach, no An Comhairliche Taitneach*. Dunn, *Highland Settler*, p.75.

<sup>59</sup> Hector and Rory MacNeil, grandsons of Rory MacNeil, the Laird of Barra's eighteenth-century piper, eventually settled at Pipers Cove, Cape Breton County, in 1805.

<sup>60</sup> For a more detailed account of Robert MacIntyre see B. Shears, 'The Fate of Clanranald Piper Robert MacIntyre.' *Piping Today*, Issue number 11, 2004, pp. 36-38.

<sup>61</sup> Gibson, *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping*, p.73.

Rankin and the diminishing importance of piping to middle-class Highland society in the late eighteenth century.

Condullie began learning to play in order to follow his father as piper to the Laird of Coll. One day he was playing his chanter in Breacachaidh Castle when the bailiff of Freaslan, the sheriff of the Coll estate, came by. The bailiff, who noticed how the piper's station was gradually being diminished, said, "Put that (i.e. the pipes) away, when others are keeping company with the nobility you will be with the dogs."<sup>62</sup>

The Condullie Rankin who eventually settled in Prince Edward Island took the bailiff's advice and soon after joined the army.<sup>63</sup> According to the *Transactions* article Condullie Rankin accompanied Lord Hobart to Grenada in 1803, won great renown in the War of 1812, returned to Scotland in 1817 and returned to Prince Edward Island with his brother, Hector, and several immigrants from Coll. In 1831 he was in London bidding unsuccessfully to become the Island's Governor.<sup>64</sup> During the nineteenth century the Rankin family continued to play a role in Prince Edward Island affairs. Condullie Rankin was president of the local Highland Society in 1846<sup>65</sup> and his son, Neil Rankin was Mayor of Charlottetown in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>66</sup> Condullie Rankin died in 1856 and is believed to have been the last piper in that family.

Another important link to the piping traditions of nineteenth century Scotland and Nova Scotia is the Isle of Coll piper, Hector Johnston. Johnston left Scotland in 1819 and settled first at River John, Nova Scotia, and later moved to the Brudenell River area of Prince Edward Island around 1840.<sup>67</sup> Hector Johnston was a literate piper (meaning he

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<sup>62</sup> Neil Rankin Morrison, 'Clann Duiligh- Pipers to the MacLeans', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, Vol. 27, 1934-1936, p.79. Gaelic translation of this article generously supplied by Effie Rankin, Mabou.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 81. Gibson states that Condullie Rankin received a commission in the New Brunswick Fencibles in 1804 but this date seems to be contradicted by Neil Rankin Morrison's account of Rankin's military involvement.

<sup>64</sup> Morrison, 'Pipers to the Clan MacLean', pp.75-76.

<sup>65</sup> Hornby, *Celts and Ceilidhs*, p.77.

<sup>66</sup> Morrison, 'Pipers to the Clan MacLean', p. 77.

<sup>67</sup> Gibson, *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 1745-1945*, p.278.

could read and write music), a skill which immediately sets him apart from other immigrant pipers of his generation. He taught school in both Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island and was a Deacon in the Baptist church.<sup>68</sup>

For many of the middle class pipers such as MacKay, Rankin and Johnston who immigrated to the Maritimes in the first half of the nineteenth century, piping played a diminishing role. While a few of these prominent pipers continued to teach music after their arrival, there were no clan chiefs on this side of the Atlantic to offer patronage to full-time musicians. There was little need to retain music which celebrated Highland lairds or clan chiefs. If these middle-class Gaels were to succeed in colonial society, they needed to occupy alternative roles, often in addition to their occupation as farmers. This usually meant relegating bagpipe playing to a “hobby” status, if it was kept up at all. The social and economic standing of many of these families enabled them to integrate into Nova Scotia society more easily than their tenant counterparts. Career successes as school teachers, army officers, lay-preachers and magistrates provided the main sources of income and social stability. By the turn of the twentieth century, and with Gaelic in decline in some areas of the region, there appeared less and less interest in maintaining and preserving the music and folklore associated with the Highland bagpipe, especially in urban areas. *Ceòl Mór* playing almost completely disappeared in Nova Scotia by the end of the nineteenth century. Dance piping on the other hand, more reflective of the regional performance styles which had been brought from Scotland, retained its strength in rural Nova Scotia, where most areas maintained their community pipers, fiddlers and bards. Outward migration beginning in the 1880s,<sup>69</sup> large-scale industrialization a decade and a

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Of the over two hundred and sixty second and third generation pipers listed in Appendix B, over twenty left Nova Scotia for places as far away as California, Boston, Montana and the western provinces of Canada.

half later, and urbanization all combined to re-align large segments of Gaelic society in Nova Scotia.

The growing number and size of urban centres in Nova Scotia did not bode well for the survival of either the Gaelic language or piping. Both the language and the musical traditions of the Gael flourished during the last half of the nineteenth century and would continue to find strength in rural areas away from the influence of towns and cities.

## Chapter Three

### The Piping Tradition in Nova Scotia

*'S ann a bha mi air banais, an Ceap Mabou nan gallan, Ann an coibhneas 's an caidreabh mo chàirdean...*

*Far'n robh mir' agus beadradh, Ceòl theud agus fheadan Agus luinneagan eireachdail bhàrdaibh...*

*Ruidhle h-ochnar 's gach oisinn; Fir a' falbh le'n cuid bhotol; 'S mnathan àlainn a' coiteach oirinn càise...*

I attended a wedding in Mabou of the handsome youths, enjoying the hospitality and the fellowship of my friends...

Where there was mirth and flirting, music of stringed instruments and bagpipe chanters, and the beautiful songs of bards...

An eight-handed reel being danced in every corner: men moving around with their bottles, and handsome women pressing us to take some cheese...<sup>1</sup>

Music and the oral tradition were critically important to the New World Gaels of Nova Scotia. The original tunes, songs and stories which these early settlers brought with them were maintained virtually unchanged for several generations. The repertoires of the local musicians and singers were enlarged with new compositions, proving that the genius of the Gael was not mute in the New World. The numbers of pipers was large in the first three or four generations of Gaelic settlement in Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, and this gave the tradition added vigor and resistance to change.<sup>2</sup> In the early 1800s, the east coast of Canada was unsurpassed in the quality of its pipers, having probably one of

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<sup>1</sup> *Òran na Bainnse* (The Wedding Song) by Donald MacLellan, Grand Mira, Cape Breton', in Helen Creighton and C.I.N. MacLeod, eds. *Gaelic Songs in Nova Scotia* (Reprint. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1979), p. 99. This song dates from the late nineteenth century.

<sup>2</sup> Gibson, *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping*, p. 197.

the largest concentrations of pipers outside Scotland at that time.<sup>3</sup> Much has been lost, but what did survive points to a vibrant musical way of life and the development of a parallel piping culture. The piping tradition in rural Nova Scotia was largely unaffected by changes among pipers in Scotland.

For much of the nineteenth century, pipers in Nova Scotia continued the role of community minstrel established in Scotland in the second half of the eighteenth century. A lesser known aspect of the piping tradition in Nova Scotia, as in Scotland, is just how involved women were in the process of learning, performing and subsequently transmitting pipe music within their families and communities. Much of the history of the bagpipe has dealt with male pipers and all-male pipe bands. A male dominated society and military establishment has reinforced these values, so much so that female pipers have been largely overlooked for their contributions to the art of piping.

In 1896 an anonymous writer to the *Antigonish Casket*, the local newspaper, informed its readers that there were “two or three young ladies in the parish [Margaree] who could play very sweetly on both the violin and bagpipes.”<sup>4</sup> Appendix B lists almost three hundred second and third generation pipers in Nova Scotia and includes the names of several female pipers and chanter players in nineteenth century Cape Breton which indicates that, in Cape Breton at least, the instrument was not necessarily gender specific. Traditional piping has always had close associations with the Gaelic language. Although these traditions weakened during Gaelic’s long and eventually near complete decline in the province, what remained of the tradition in the second half of the twentieth century

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<sup>3</sup> Appendix A lists the names of over sixty immigrant pipers (including several of the ‘Hereditary’ pipers) to present day Nova Scotia. To date there has been little research into the numbers of pipers among Highland settlers to both New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

<sup>4</sup> Gibson, *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping*, p. 218.

offers a rare glimpse into piping traditions in rural Nova Scotia and, by extension, early nineteenth century Scotland.

It was the relative isolation for long periods of time until the mid-twentieth century which enabled some areas of Highland settlement in Nova Scotia to maintain regional differences in Gaelic dialect and music, differences brought to the province by the first Scottish settlers. That is not to say that musicians did not intermingle, but the frequency was restricted by remoteness of location and methods of transportation. In many cases, contemporary or home-grown compositions found an audience only in close proximity to the composer.<sup>5</sup>

Although a few of the early Cape Breton bagpipe compositions by pipers Archie Beaton, Ranald Gillis and Malcolm Gillis were printed by Scottish music publishers in the early twentieth century. The collection of traditional bagpipe music and information on the piping traditions in Nova Scotia has lagged behind until fairly recently. Most local players who could read music concentrated their efforts on acquiring printed collections from Scotland, although a few early-twentieth-century handwritten manuscripts containing several previously unpublished tunes have recently been discovered in Cape Breton. These resources, combined with homemade tape recordings from the 1960s and 1970s and personal interviews with the last of the old style pipers shed some light on the repertoires, playing styles and roles of some of these community pipers.

In Scotland, the army is credited with keeping the piping tradition alive. It has been said the Highlanders never marched anywhere without their pipers.<sup>6</sup> As mentioned earlier, grouping pipers and drummers together produced the first military pipe bands

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.73.

<sup>6</sup> Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and its Music*, pp. 119-24.

around the mid-1850s. Under these conditions the musical requirements for pipers began to change. Eventually dance rhythms gave way to march rhythms. Some dance tunes, such as strathspeys and reels, the mainstay of many of the Highland social dances, were re-arranged as marches and, in the case of William Ross's *Collection*,<sup>7</sup> many of these melodies were also renamed. During the nineteenth century an increasing number of prestigious competitions were held whereby pipers not only vied for top honours but also for the chance of gainful employment as pipers to the aristocracy. Add to this changing role the detrimental effects of many well established piping families immigrating to North America and changes were probably inevitable.

Writers in the early part of the nineteenth century echoed sentiments expressed by Samuel Johnson after his 1773 visit to the Western Isles. Johnson had found a decline in piping probably due to migration to the cities of Scotland and immigration to the colonies.

The decline of piping standards by the early part of the nineteenth century is remarked by both James Logan in his *Scottish Gael*, 1831 and J.G. Dalyell in his *Musical Memoirs of Scotland*, 1849, present pipers, they believed, were inferior to their predecessors and getting worse.<sup>8</sup>

In Nova Scotia there was very little military influence on piping until the First World War and very little exposure to the changes taking place in Scottish piping. Rural areas were particularly unaffected. Pipers in the province served a more diverse and functional purpose than supplying marching music to soldiers or competing against one another for prizes or a chance at gainful employment on an estate. As community

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<sup>7</sup> William Ross, *Ross's Collection of Pipe Music* (Reprint. West Yorkshire, England: EP Publishing Limited, 1976), p. vi.

<sup>8</sup> George Emmerson, *Rantin' Pipe and Tremblin' String, A History of Scottish Dance Music* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972), p. 200.

musicians they were responsible for providing music for a wide variety of social gatherings such as dances, weddings, and funerals. As the number of pipers increased among the second and third generation Scottish Gaels in the nineteenth century, a small bagpipe-making cottage industry developed in Nova Scotia.<sup>9</sup> Bagpipes were expensive and difficult to acquire from Scotland. Unlike the bagpipe making industry in Scotland, which began with a handful of musical instrument makers and later experienced unprecedented growth in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,<sup>10</sup> the small market for locally- produced bagpipes in Nova Scotia peaked by about 1900 and, over the next few decades, eventually disappeared.

Information on early bagpipe manufacturing in Scotland is sparse, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Bagpipes were definitely played during this period, but who made the actual instruments remains a mystery. The increase in the numbers of Highland regiments raised during the Seven Years War and the American Revolution coupled with the numerous Fencible, or militia, battalions raised in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century created a growing market for bagpipe manufacture, and several professional musical instrument makers established businesses in major centres such as Edinburgh, Perth, Glasgow, Aberdeen and London.<sup>11</sup> Three examples of early Scottish pipe makers are Hugh Robertson, who is listed in the 1775 Edinburgh directory as a bagpipe maker; Allan MacDougall, who set up a bagpipe making business in Perth in 1792; and Adam Barclay (c.1740), of whom not much else is known.<sup>12</sup> The number of known immigrant sets of bagpipes in Nova Scotia number only over a dozen, and since

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix C for a list of known bagpipe makers in Nova Scotia.

<sup>10</sup> Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and its Music*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>11</sup> Hugh Cheape, 'The Making of Bagpipes in Scotland', Anne O'Connor and D. V. Clark, eds. *From the Stone Age to the Forty-Five*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1983), p.600.

<sup>12</sup> Jeannie Campbell, *Highland Bagpipe Makers* (Glasgow: Magnus Orr Publishing, 2001), pp.1-4.

they do not resemble any of the bagpipes attributed to the above pipe makers, one can conclude that early bagpipe-making in Scotland must have been very localized at one time.

The romance of the Scottish highlander and the inferred, kilted masculinity which blossomed under Queen Victoria's reign enhanced the recruitment of a record number of Highland regiments (and pipers), a few of which were dispatched to various countries in the British Empire.<sup>13</sup> As Diana Henderson points out,

The close links with bagpipe music, whose development in the nineteenth century was largely fostered through army pipers, the Gaelic bardic tradition of an heroic romantic culture, the works of Sir Walter Scott, the influence of the Highland Societies and the active support of a Monarch who came to associate herself with Scotland and in particular with the Highland regiments, all affected Scottish attitudes to the army and recruiting.<sup>14</sup>

An increased demand for bagpipes for the pipers in these regiments resulted in new economic opportunities for these and several additional pipe-making firms. During the nineteenth century several large bagpipe-making firms diversified their businesses by including the manufacture of other military musical instruments such as fifes and drums and various forms of Highland dress such as kilts, hose, sporrans (purses) and ornamental weaponry like dirks and the *sgian dubh* (stocking knives).<sup>15</sup> One bagpipe firm, R. G. Lawrie of Glasgow, also produced bowling green bowls or balls.<sup>16</sup> In the late nineteenth century, pipe-making firms such as David Glen, William Ross, Donald MacPhee and Peter Henderson extended their influence by publishing bagpipe tutors and music books

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<sup>13</sup> Henderson, *Highland Soldier*, p. 38. Henderson, quoting a recruiting memorandum, states that 'in 1825 upwards of 15,000 men were recruited in the districts'.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p.44.

<sup>15</sup> Cheape, 'The Making of Bagpipes in Scotland', p.605.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

and by doing so, put them at the forefront of musical literacy and standardization among pipers.

In Scotland, local woods such as fruitwood, holly, boxwood, and larburnum were originally used in bagpipe manufacture.<sup>17</sup> During the eighteenth century tropical hardwoods became more readily available and their superior tonal qualities and durability soon replaced the native hardwoods. Tropical woods such as ebony, cocus wood, lignum vitae and African blackwood all have a very close, straight grain and high oil content.<sup>18</sup> This makes these types of wood ideal for woodwind instruments, and eventually they became the materials of choice for bagpipe, clarinet, oboe and flute makers.

These instruments were mounted with a variety of materials such as pewter, cattle horn, bone and stag horn. Mountings serve a practical as well as decorative purpose. The mounts are placed at strategic locations on the bagpipe to help prevent the wood from splitting. In Nova Scotia the most common hard woods for bagpipe making were apple wood and sometimes ash and pear wood.<sup>19</sup> Occasionally, if the maker lived close to a ship building center, some exotic woods like lignum vitae were available. Many instruments were turned on a lathe, usually powered by a foot treadle.<sup>20</sup> The task of making bagpipes in Nova Scotia fell to the wood turner whose craft was already indispensable to pioneer society.<sup>21</sup> The manufacture of furniture, household items, spinning wheels and various farming implements were all part of the craft. In one area on the northern tip of Cape Breton bagpipes were carved by hand and, in some cases, the conical shape of the pipe chanter was fashioned by using an old three-sided French

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.606.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.608.

<sup>19</sup> Dunn, *Highland Settler*, p. 55.

<sup>20</sup> Cheape, 'The Making of Bagpipes in Scotland', p.605.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 608. Wood turning is a very old profession which was first developed by the Greeks after the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

bayonet as a reamer. Cattle horn, bone, brass and sometimes ivory from walrus and whale were used to adorn these homemade instruments. The overall design of the bagpipe has altered very little from the eighteenth century. The bells or terminals at the end of the drone, once almost pear-shaped, took on a smaller, slightly square profile. In Scotland the demands placed on the player and instrument in the army required a heavier bagpipe. The drones became thicker and, in some cases, longer.<sup>22</sup> This 'army' pattern, with its large ornate mounts, has continued to present day.

Attributing an instrument to a particular pipe maker is very difficult. There are several problems associated with 'pipe-maker' identification, not the least of which is a lack of suitable instruments with which to make a comparison. Pipe makers very rarely stamped their instruments, other than the pipe chanter, until the mid-nineteenth century. The pipe chanter is the most delicate part of the instrument and quite often these have been worn and broken, or replaced as more desirable refinements in tonal qualities have been achieved. The overall appearance and design of the bagpipe is still the best way to identify who the maker was since, as Hugh Cheape points out, 'the finish or shape and style of the drones, design of the mounts, is the trademark of a particular pipe maker'.<sup>23</sup> These aesthetic characteristics are especially important since Nova Scotia bagpipe makers rarely, if ever, marked their instruments.

Judging by the number of immigrant bagpipes recently discovered in the Maritimes and the variety of styles of these instruments, it becomes clear that there were more instrument makers plying their craft in Scotland than the three early manufacturers mentioned above. It would appear, from the absence of any documented evidence to the

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<sup>22</sup> This is borne out by comparisons with several immigrant and modern bagpipes held in private collections throughout Nova Scotia.

<sup>23</sup> Cheape, 'The Making of Bagpipes in Scotland', p.613.

contrary, that several of these unknown pipe makers were supplying instruments to small, local markets and were possibly only part-time manufacturers. It is also possible that individual pipers might have manufactured their own instruments, as was the case with nineteenth-century piper John ‘Ban’ MacKenzie (1796-1864) and numerous other professional pipers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who went on to establish successful pipe making enterprises.<sup>24</sup> Certainly the tradition of making a small number of instruments was carried on by several Nova Scotian Gaels during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>25</sup>

Many of the early Highland immigrants to the Maritimes were pipers, and in addition to bringing Scottish-made bagpipes to Nova Scotia, they and their descendants constructed bagpipes using local materials.<sup>26</sup> Bagpipes were an integral part of the musical culture of the immigrant Gael and omnipresent among the Scottish Gaels who settled North America. Dr. Abraham Gesner, the noted scientist and inventor, commented in 1843 that “In a Highland settlement a set of bagpipes and a player should not be forgotten. I have known many a low-spirited emigrant to be aroused from his torpor by the sound of his national music.”<sup>27</sup> The number of instruments available in these communities was disproportionate to the numbers of people who could actually play them, and in some areas of Nova Scotia one set of bagpipes would serve several family members. The early settlers and their descendants held the national instrument of Scotland in very high esteem. Many people could play a few tunes on homemade chanters but very few could afford to purchase a new set from Scotland. As the numbers

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<sup>24</sup> Campbell, *Highland Bagpipe Makers*, pp.39-42.

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix C for a comprehensive list of bagpipe makers in Nova Scotia, 1817-1940.

<sup>26</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>27</sup> R.C. MacDonald, *Sketches of Highlanders*, (St John, N.B.: N.p., 1843), Appendix, p. viii.

of pipers in the province increased, a growing market for inexpensive, locally produced instruments emerged.

The most notable features of the surviving examples of locally produced instruments are the number and size of the drones. Duncan Gillis, Grand Mira, made only two-droned sets at first, adding a bass drone when requested to do so. Two-droned sets of pipes were banned from competition by event organizers in Scotland after 1821 due to a perceived disadvantage on the part of several competitors,<sup>28</sup> and surviving examples of two-droned bagpipes are extremely rare. Many of the bagpipe-makers in Nova Scotia would undoubtedly copy the sets originally brought from Scotland. This might explain why surviving examples of Nova Scotia bagpipes are noticeably smaller and more delicate in appearance than their modern Scottish counterparts.

Reeds for the instruments were made from a variety of materials. The MacIntyre pipers of French Road, Cape Breton County and later Glace Bay, made chanter reeds from old cane fishing rods.<sup>29</sup> Other pipers used small pieces of birch bark or maple tied to a copper or brass tube or staple. Sheepskin was normally used for the pipe bag. A single piece of hide would be folded over and stitched using a heavy needle (sometimes a porcupine quill) and waxed thread and affixed to the drone stocks.<sup>30</sup> To make the bag airtight, a variety of mixtures were used to dress or season the pipe bag. These included the whites of two eggs and a little sugar which produced an odorless rudimentary adhesive, or either molasses or honey. Drone reeds were crafted from elder, known as

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<sup>28</sup> Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and Its Music*, p. 16. Two-droned bagpipes are easier to tune than three-droned instruments.

<sup>29</sup> Jim MacDonald, 'Piping in Cape Breton', *Piping Times* 21, no. 2 (November 1968), p.9.

<sup>30</sup> Personal Interview. Alex Matheson.

*drumanach* in Gaelic.<sup>31</sup> Practice chanter, a small flute-like instrument used to initially learn the instrument and practice new tunes, were made from young maple trees. Once a small maple tree was selected and cut, it was left to dry for a few days and then the soft centre core or heart was burned out with a long wire rod heated in the fire. The positions of the finger holes were marked and then burned out in similar fashion.<sup>32</sup> Practice chanter reeds were usually made from a piece of oat straw flattened at one end.

As far as is known, Robert Ross was the first person in Nova Scotia to make full sets of Highland bagpipes. Ross was born in Cuthill, Dornoch Parish, Scotland in 1769 and immigrated to Pictou around 1816.<sup>33</sup> There is a family tradition that he was a veteran piper of the Battle of Waterloo but this is unsubstantiated. Surviving documents indicate that he served a period of six months in the 75<sup>th</sup> Regiment and was discharged in 1809, six years before the Battle of Waterloo. The 75th Regiment was known as the 75th Stirlingshire Regiment which was raised as a Highland unit in 1787. It is perhaps no coincidence that 1809 is the same year in which the 75th Highlanders were re-designated as the 75th Foot and deprived of its Highland dress.<sup>34</sup> Changes to the regiment may have eliminated the position of company piper as well.

There is some evidence in Scotland to suggest Robert Ross was piper to George MacKay of Skibo (a son of Lord Reay), and that Robert's wife, Isabel MacKay was a daughter of a MacKay piper.<sup>35</sup> The local tradition in Nova Scotia maintains that Isabel MacKay was the daughter of Lord MacKay and that she eloped with Robert Ross against her father's wishes and immigrated to Pictou County. Census information in Scotland

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Personal Interview, Alex Currie.

<sup>33</sup> Personal Correspondence, Jean Ross. May 26, 2003.

<sup>34</sup> Adam, *The Clans, Septs and Regiments of the Scottish*, p. 465.

<sup>35</sup> Campbell, *Highland Bagpipe Makers*, p.16.

indicates that several of the children were born in Scotland, so this claim can be challenged.

In the Nova Scotia census of 1838, Robert Ross lists his occupation as Piper, a designation which was shared with only two other pipers in the province: John MacDonald of Egerton, Pictou County and Donald Stewart, Mira River, Cape Breton County. According to family tradition, Robert Ross applied for a land grant in Pictou County but due to a delay in processing his request, several adult members of his family decided to move to West Bay, Richmond County, to take advantage of the recent land availability in Cape Breton. An examination of the surviving parts of a bagpipe attributed to him indicates that Ross used tropical woods for his bagpipes (three-droned) and mounted them with sea ivory. Ross eventually received his land grant and continued to live in Bayview, Pictou County, until his death in 1843. His Will is registered as 'Robert Ross, Piper' and lists, among his many other possessions, 'two pares (sic) of bagpipes'. In his Will he bequeaths to his oldest son Alexander, then living in Cape Breton, 'all my tools for bagpipe making'.<sup>36</sup> Two of Robert Ross' children, Alexander (1801-1861) and William, continued to work as wood turners in Cape Breton and in all likelihood continued to make and repair bagpipes.

One of the most successful pipe makers in Nova Scotia was Duncan Gillis, Grand Mira, Cape Breton County. Usually referred to as Duncan 'Tailor', he was born at Upper Margaree around the middle of the nineteenth century but later moved to Grand Mira. His occupation is listed as 'Turner' in Lovell's *Nova Scotia Directory* of 1871 and, in addition to making spinning wheels, he made a profitable sideline of making and selling bagpipes around the province. Duncan Gillis made bagpipes from apple wood and

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<sup>36</sup> Personal Correspondence, Jean Ross, May 26, 2003.

mounted the instruments with bone, cattle horn and brass. An advertisement (Fig. 4) soliciting patronage, but with what appears to be a variation on Grand Mira, appears in the March 1886 issue of the *Pictou News* where he claims to be “the only manufacturer of bagpipes in North America”. Duncan Gillis lived at Lewis Bay on the Mira River and not Grand River, which is in Richmond County.

Fig. 4. Duncan Gillis advertisement, *Pictou News*, March, 1886. (Courtesy of the Nova Scotia Public Archives and Records Management)

<p><b>THESE</b> <b>Well</b> <b>Known</b> <b>MILLS</b> <b>WILL</b> <b>KING,</b> <b>ERS.</b> <b>AM,</b> <b>OTION.</b></p>	<p>Pictou, Nov. 12th, 1886.</p> <p><b>C. DWYER</b> PICTOU, NOVA SCOTIA, <b>CONSULAR AGENT</b> —FOR— <b>AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY,</b> <b>FRANCE, GERMANY</b></p> <p><b>Bagpipes ! Bagpipes !</b></p> <p>The subscriber most respectfully wishes to inform the public, and particularly all lovers of Highland Pipe Music, that he makes, and has now ready for sale, first class Bagpipes, not to be excelled in tone by any of the celebrated Glasgow Bagpipes.</p> <p>According to recent and very reliable testimony, there is not another manufacturer of Bagpipes in America.</p> <p>Prices vary from \$20 upwards, according to quality of mounting. Patronage solicited.</p> <p><b>DUNCAN GILLIS, Turner.</b> Grand River, G. B., Nov. 5, 1886.</p> <p><b>Sweet Apple Cider.</b></p> <p>Wholesale and retail at Henderson's Restaurant, Pictou, N. S.</p> <p><b>JOSEPH MACDONALD.</b> Nov. 5th.</p>
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Gillis was so successful at making bagpipes that he was the subject of a Gaelic song, *Song to Duncan Gillis of Mira, Maker of Bagpipes*, composed by the Margaree Bard,

Malcolm H. Gillis, in praise of his musical craftsmanship and upstanding character. Malcolm Gillis was a renowned bard and musician from South West Margaree. He could play the bagpipes, violin, piano, organ, Irish pipes, and whistle, and several of his songs were published to wide acclaim in Scotland.<sup>37</sup> The poem alludes to a long standing tradition of piping in Duncan Gillis' family and perhaps one of his ancestors also made bagpipes.

We received news a year ago  
 News which pleased and cheered me  
 News delightful to every Gael;  
 Who was brought up in this area:  
 Duncan Tailor of Upper Margaree  
 My dear handsome man  
 Is now making pipes in Mira-  
 Blessings on his bountiful hand!

Blessings on his skilful hand  
 Noted for every task,  
 And on his intellect which produced  
 Much artistic beauty:  
 There will be no defect in his work  
 It will be shapely, firm and secure,  
 Small wonder as his people were  
 Adept and talented long ago

Blessings on his skilful hand  
 Noted for every task,  
 And on his intellect which produced  
 Much artistic beauty:  
 There will be no defect in his work  
 It will be shapely, firm and secure,  
 Small wonder as his people were  
 Adept and talented long ago<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> MacGillivray, *The Cape Breton Fiddler*, p. 29.

<sup>38</sup> This song was published in Hector MacDougall's *The Songster of the Hills and Glens* in 1939, a translation of which was kindly sent to me by Effie Rankin, Mabou, NS. A complete version of the song in English can be found in Appendix D.

Duncan Gillis continued to make bagpipes until just after the First World War and in recent times samples of his musical instruments have turned up in places such as Ontario and Glasgow, Scotland.<sup>39</sup> Another pipe-maker from Grand Mira was 'Old' Allan Gillis, who also made a few sets of bagpipes in the late nineteenth century. Allan 'Turner', as he was known, was employed as a wood turner at a shipyard at Fourchu, Richmond County, and this job gave him access to tropical woods like lignum vitae, a very oily wood used in the manufacture of various items necessary on sailing ships such as pulleys, blocks and dead eyes.<sup>40</sup> A blood relationship between these two pipe-makers has yet to be established but, since they were from the same area, it is possible that Duncan apprenticed his trade with 'Old' Allan Gillis.

Another area of Cape Breton where bagpipes were made was at Meat Cove, Cape Breton, a tiny community originally settled by immigrants from the Isle of Skye. Here several pipers made their own bagpipes. For example, Johnnie Archie MacLellan did not possess a turning lathe and instead would carve the various sections of the bagpipe from a solid piece of apple wood.<sup>41</sup> In the fall, the bones of a butchered steer would be collected, dried and carved for mounts using a knife and a 'rat-tailed' file.<sup>42</sup> Also in the community were 'piping' brothers Rory, 'Red' John, Dave and Duncan MacKinnon. They were the sons of Alexander 'Sandy' MacKinnon, also a piper. Sandy's was married twice and in total his family consisted of nineteen children, most of whom could play an instrument or step-dance, so there was no shortage of pipers.

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<sup>39</sup> Jim MacDonald also refers to a set of Duncan Gillis bagpipes on display in a museum in Sydney, Australia in MacDonald's 'Piping in Cape Breton', p. 9.

<sup>40</sup> Personal Interview, Arthur Severence, Fourchu, Cape Breton.

<sup>41</sup> Personal Interview, Dave MacKinnon, Bay St. Lawrence.

<sup>42</sup> Personal Interview, Dave MacKinnon, Bay St. Lawrence.

Rory and John made bagpipes, sewed their own pipe bags, and made their own pipe chanter reeds using strips of birch bark. Later they used cane from chairs blown from the decks of passing ocean liners which sometimes washed up on the shore. The reed staple was fashioned from a twenty-two calibre shell casing.

Another turn of the century pipe maker was Peter MacNeil, commonly known as '*Peadar Dubh*' or 'Black' Peter, of Christmas Island, Cape Breton. He was born in the late 1800s and was a direct descendant of Rory MacNeil, family piper to the MacNeil's of Barra. He was described as 'a man of more than ordinary intelligence'.<sup>43</sup> He was a talented craftsman, farmer, and turner. He built several boats, houses and spinning wheels, as well as being skilled in the use of a lancet. Local sources indicate that he made three or four sets of pipes for use in the Iona-Washabuck area of Cape Breton.<sup>44</sup> The nineteenth century produced several other bagpipe makers in various communities across Nova Scotia, two of which immigrated to Boston in the late nineteenth century.

Ronald MacLean came from Stillwater, a small community close to the present town of Louisburg. Ronald was a self-taught piper. He was a skilled carver of clocks and made at least one set of pipes. He immigrated to Boston in the early 1890s where he was employed as a successful wood carver earning one hundred dollars a month<sup>45</sup>. While a resident of Boston, Ronald still managed the occasional summer visit to his old home in Cape Breton.

The second bagpipe maker who left Nova Scotia for the United States was John MacDonald of Centredale, Pictou County. John's father and grandfather were both pipers

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<sup>43</sup> Archibald A. MacKenzie, *The History of Christmas Island Parish* (Reprint. Sudbury: MacKenzie Rothe Publishing, 1984), p.116.

<sup>44</sup> Personal Interview, Archie A. MacKenzie, Halifax, NS

<sup>45</sup> *Sydney Post*, March 23, 1905.

and he may have learned the skill of pipe making from one or both of them. He immigrated to Boston in the late 1800s and made both bagpipes and violins in his shop on Tremont Street.<sup>46</sup>

There were several factors which contributed to the decline and eventual disappearance of bagpipe manufacturing in Nova Scotia. The demand for homemade instruments was never great and successful manufacturers only produced instruments as a profitable sideline. If cared for properly, a set of bagpipes could last generations. Industrialization and outward migration reduced the size of the rural population and constrained the markets for homemade instruments. The availability of factory manufactured cloth, mass produced furniture and modern farm implements reduced the need for a community-based craftsman such as a wood turner. The move to a wage-based economy supported by the province's coal mines and steel plant and small manufacturing no doubt increased the amount of disposable income available to pipers. It became preferable and prestigious to own a new set of pipes from Scotland, and the small market for locally produced bagpipes eventually disappeared. Despite competition from Scottish manufacturers, a handful of bagpipes continued to be made by wood-working hobbyists in the mid- to late-twentieth century.<sup>47</sup> Bagpipes made in Nova Scotia represent a functional device as well as a form of folk art. Fashioned from wood and decorated with fittings carved of horn, brass and bone, their creation was both aesthetic and utilitarian. Not only were they the product of a woodworker's craft, but in the right hands they provided hours of music for listening and dancing.

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<sup>46</sup> Rev. D. K. Ross, *The Pioneers and Churches* (New Glasgow: Hector Publishing Company, 1956), p. 146.

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix C. As recently as 1999, Albert MacDonald of Melfort, Inverness County was still making sets of bagpipes for musical enthusiasts patterned after a set made at River Denys Mountain around 1895. Personal Interview, Albert MacDonald.

One of the prime functions of community pipers in Nova Scotia was to supply music for dancing. The volume of the instrument made it an ideal choice for outdoor entertainment and almost every area of the province settled by Scottish Gaels appears to have included community dance pipers.<sup>48</sup> This was not unique to the Scottish Gaels because, as George Emmerson has commented, pipers had provided dance music throughout Europe for centuries.

We have noted the supreme place of the bagpiper as the purveyor of dance music at all social functions of the ordinary people from medieval times. Most of these functions had to be conducted outdoors or in a large farm building, such as a barn and that when it was empty. The fiddle held sway indoors but it is not until the eighteenth century that one sees it offer serious competition to the bagpipe in popular social dance, and then particularly in the Central Highlands, Breadalbane and Strathspey.<sup>49</sup>

When one thinks of Scottish dancing two forms of it immediately spring to mind: Scottish Country Dancing, and the various solo exhibition dances such as the Sword Dance, Sean Triubhas, Highland Fling, etc.

Scottish Country Dancing was imported from France and England and developed in the ballrooms and assembly-halls of late-18th century lowland Scotland. Its performance later incorporated some regional dance styles. The Highland dances, although now performed following set rules and regulations, are believed to have originated among ancient rural dance forms.

One Scottish dancer in particular is given credit for changing the performance style of the ancient dance known as the Sean Triubhas (The Old Trousers) in the late

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<sup>48</sup> See C. H. Farnham, 'Cape Breton Folk', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* e72, Dec 1885-May, 1886, pp. 610, 618. On line <http://cdl.library.cornell.edu> ; also Gibson. *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping*.

<sup>49</sup> Emmerson, *Rantin' Pipe and Tremblin' String*, p. 108.

nineteenth century.<sup>50</sup> Piper Willie MacLennan (1860-1898) was one of the first professional Highland dancers in Scotland to learn ballet technique and employ it in the Scottish exhibition dance idiom. It was felt that Highland dancing at the time was marked more by ‘enthusiasm than grace’ and his employment of ballet technique to enhance the impact of the Highland dances altered the whole approach to the art of exhibition dancing.<sup>51</sup> Other exhibition dances were eventually similarly affected by European ballet styles.

For people in Cape Breton who remember the more ancient dance form of the *Seann Triubhas* the changes implemented have rendered the dance unrecognizable. As Margaret Gillis, the great-granddaughter of dancing master, Alexander Gillis, observed: “The *Seann Triubhas* was a different dance than the one that they do in Highland dancing today with piping. That wasn’t The *Seann Triubhas* our early settlers had at all!”<sup>52</sup>

We are left to wonder what specific social dances the common people in the Highlands of Scotland performed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This period is too early for Scottish Country Dancing, and the Sword Dance and others cannot be termed social dances. There is no recollection of Scottish Country dancing in Nova Scotia among the Gaels, which indicates that it was unknown at the time of immigration.<sup>53</sup>

The most obvious answer, but not necessarily the only one, is a form of dancing known as step-dancing. All indications suggest this was a popular form of entertainment in Europe two centuries ago. Remnants of this type of dance can be found in Ireland’s

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<sup>50</sup> Bridget MacKenzie, *Piping Traditions of the North of Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1998), p.80.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>52</sup> MacGillivray, *A Cape Breton Ceilidh*, p. 61.

<sup>53</sup> Kate Dunlay and David Greenberg, *Traditional Celtic Violin Music of Cape Breton* (Published privately by Kate Dunlay and David Greenberg, 1996), p. 5.

*Sean Nos* dance tradition, Appalachian 'Buck' dancing in the United States, French and Acadian dances in Quebec and the Maritimes, and Scottish step-dancing in areas of Canada's Atlantic provinces, most notably Cape Breton Island. For many of the New World Gaels, dancing was an important form of recreation and socializing. As George Emmerson discovered, "Browsing through the statistical accounts for the various Scottish parishes for this period (18th century), one finds time after time that their chief amusement is dancing."<sup>54</sup>

Step-dancing involves the intricate movement of the feet in time to the music. In its more traditional form, the dancer remains almost motionless from the waist up, employing movement of the knees, ankles and feet to produce the various motion combinations and providing a percussive effect.

Among the early immigrants from Scotland were several dancing masters.

"Mary MacDonald Beaton (1795-1880) ... had been a distinguished dancer in Scotland and after immigrating to Cape Breton, set up a school near MacKinnon's Brook for the purpose of teaching that skill."<sup>55</sup> "Allan 'The dancer' MacMillan... was born in Lochaber, Scotland. Around 1817 he came to America, and he came to Rear Little Judique in 1820. He was a celebrated dancer and, after coming to this country, kept a dancing class in both the settlements of Judique and Creignish."<sup>56</sup>

Other dancing masters included John Kennedy, who immigrated from Canna in 1790; Angus 'Ban' MacDougall, piper and dancer, an 1812 immigrant from Moidart to

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<sup>54</sup> Emmerson, *Rantin' Pipe and Tremblin' String*, p. 49.

<sup>55</sup> MacGillivray, *A Cape Breton Ceilidh*, p. 24.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

Cape Breton; Malcolm MacLean, who came from Mull in 1826,<sup>57</sup> and Alexander Gillis, who immigrated from Morar to Cape Breton, also in 1826.

The dancing masters would migrate from community to community staying with friends or relations. According to an account by the late James D. Gillis, the dancing master would set up a school in a community or area. The school would involve mostly young people and the training would extend over two or three days. In the beginning, graceful and simple moves would be introduced. This was followed over the next few days with more intricate dance steps.<sup>58</sup>

There has been much discussion over the past few years on the origins of 'Cape Breton step-dancing'.<sup>59</sup> The late Alex Currie informed me, during a taped interview that according to his father, the well known step-dancer Peter Currie, Scottish step-dancing originally came from Ireland.<sup>60</sup> Alex was of the opinion that the migration of this particular form of dance occurred several hundred years ago when the Western Isles and Ireland shared a common language, religion, and culture. Such cultural exchanges during the sixteenth and seventeenth century would not be uncommon. The MacMhuirichs, bards and chroniclers to MacDonald of Clanranald, were reputed to have had at least some of their training in Ireland, as were some of the pipers who founded piping schools based on the Irish model in Scotland. There are a few examples of the close ties between pipers in both Ireland and Scotland. One such story involves Donald MacDonald of Baleshare, North Uist, who sent his half-brother, Angus MacRury, to Ireland to learn the

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<sup>57</sup> Gibson, *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping*, p. 236.

<sup>58</sup> Interview. James D. Gillis and Thomas Raddall. C.B.C, 1945. NSARM, AR 2693.

<sup>59</sup> On line [http://www.siliconglen.com/celtfaq/3\\_2.html](http://www.siliconglen.com/celtfaq/3_2.html) Sheldon MacInnes. 'Cape Breton Dance- An Irish or Scottish Tradition?' See also Margaret Bennett. 'Step-dancing: Why we must learn from past mistakes.' [http://www.siliconglen.com/scotfaq/10\\_3.html](http://www.siliconglen.com/scotfaq/10_3.html) and also Haurin and Richens. 'Irish Step Dancing: A Brief History.' <http://www.indyirishdancers.org/irhist.htm>

<sup>60</sup> Personal Interview, Alex Currie, Frenchvale.

Irish method of curing bacon. “Angus brought his pipes along and while at Kilkenny was also in contact with Irish pipers where, it was noted, they had some common tunes but with different tune names”.<sup>61</sup>

Certainly the old style (*sean-nós*) form of step-dancing in Ireland today does bear a strong resemblance to Cape Breton dancing.<sup>62</sup> Absent, however, in Irish traditional dance is the type of music known as the strathspey, or strathspey reel. This indicates that if step-dancing did migrate to Scotland from Ireland then some aspects of Scottish dance evolved outside the Irish influence.<sup>63</sup>

In medieval Europe dance music was supplied by singers, or any one of the various forms of bagpipe at that time. As musical sophistication evolved, other instruments were created to provide music for dancing and listening. The introduction of the violin with its musical range, dynamics and quieter sound when compared to bagpipe, coincided with a growing trend to move entertainment indoors. Changes came slowly to the remote Highlands and Islands of Scotland. By the mid-eighteenth century there emerged dance musicians competent on both instruments and, as George Emmerson points out: “It is apparent too, from some of David Allan's pictures, that, the piper sometimes alternated with the fiddler at weddings and the like. Sometimes the piper was also a fiddler, as was the case with Joseph and Patrick MacDonald.”<sup>64</sup>

The descendants of many Highland immigrants in Nova Scotia continued this tradition of dual musicianship and many also fulfilled the function of local bard (Appendix B). In Scotland there would be some tunes common to both instruments but

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<sup>61</sup> Donald Fergusson, ed. *The Hebridean Connection* (Halifax: Donald Fergusson, 1984) p. 514.

<sup>62</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p. 215.

<sup>63</sup> Strathspey is the name given to that musical form developed for the violin in the Strathspey region of Scotland.

<sup>64</sup> Emmerson, *Rantin' Pipe and Tremblin' String*, p. 109. In 1760 Joseph MacDonald wrote a Treatise on the Highland bagpipe which was later published by his brother in 1803.

gradually the range and popularity of the violin enabled its players to develop its own distinctly Scottish violin repertoire. This era, roughly 1740-1830, is sometimes referred to by Scottish violin music historians as “The Golden Age of Fiddling”.<sup>65</sup>

It is not known for certain when the violin penetrated the Western Isles but by the late 1700s the bagpipe was still being employed for outdoor dances often accompanying very diverse ceremonies such as religious celebrations.

Outdoor communions were often devoid of pious solemnity, burlesqued by the presence of peddler’s booths, confectioners’ tables and whiskey tents. The celebrated Roderick MacLeod, a nineteenth century Evangelical Minister in Skye, described a scene which he witnessed during his boyhood at Dunvegan: ... as soon as the services, which were conducted in the open field, were ended, three pipers struck up music, and three dancing parties were formed on the green [where the communion was served]<sup>66</sup>

This is an important description in so much as it reveals the type of music played (i.e. dance music) in the late eighteenth century, as well as the close proximity to the famous MacCrimmon piping college at Boreraig. Some piping “authorities” in the twentieth century maintained that *Ceòl Mór* (Big Music) was the only form of music performed by a majority of the eighteenth century pipers, and that many of the family pipers considered *Ceòl Beag* (Little Music) as decidedly inferior.<sup>67</sup> Existing evidence does not support this view, and it would be tempting to imagine one or more of the MacCrimmons or their pupils playing for group dances such as the Scotch Fours when not playing the classical music of the bagpipe. The concept of “Hereditary” pipers playing dance music is further evidenced by the fact one of the celebrated MacKays of

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<sup>65</sup> Dunlay and Greenberg, *Traditional Celtic Violin Music of Cape Breton*, p. 3. See also Hunter, *The Fiddle Music of Scotland*, pp. x-xiv.

<sup>66</sup> Stanley, *The Well -Watered Garden*, p. 5.

<sup>67</sup> Cannon, *The Highland Bagpipe and its Music*, p. 89.

Gairloch, John Roy, was sent by his father to Strathnaver to learn dance music.<sup>68</sup> Primary sources indicate that early immigrants and their descendants in the Maritimes were well acquainted with dancing as a form of social entertainment, as this description of Scottish Gaels landing at Prince Edward Island in the early 1800s illustrates.

Another band of settlers, who, sailing from Moidart to Prince Edward Island, also enjoyed the good fortune to be accompanied by a piper. A descendant tells that when they landed they formed themselves into sets on the shore and danced a Scotch Reel to the music provided by Ronald MacDonald the piper; and Bishop Fraser, who was present at the celebration exclaimed with delight, "That man has the best little finger on the chanter I have ever known."<sup>69</sup>

Later descriptions of social dancing to bagpipe music appear in C.H. Farnham's article entitled "*Cape Breton Folk*", written in 1886 for *Harpers New Monthly*. In 1885 Farnham and a companion walked what later became the Cabot Trail in Cape Breton, and his observations offer a first hand account of rural life on the island. Farnham mentions attending two gatherings, one a house party at Ingonish, the other, a "Gathering of the Clans" held at East Lake Ainslie in 1885:

Each of the platforms had about it a large crowd looking at the reels and jigs and piper. The dancing went on all day vigorously. The most impressive figure of all was the piper. The pipes go well with the national emblem: they are a very thistle in your ear; their weird barbaric strains are certainly inspiring and martial, but you must be a Scotchman to love them. One of the pipers a very tall, very dark, very shaggy man, sat up with a rigid neck, stiff figure, puffed out cheeks, and looked like the presiding genius of some awful heathen rite. But he was one of the gentlest of men. I afterward spent a day with him noting some of the native airs of Cape Breton.<sup>70</sup>

Whether the author of this travelogue was referring to melodies composed in Cape Breton or simply to Scottish tunes played in Cape Breton we will never know.

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<sup>68</sup> MacKenzie, *Piping Traditions of the North of Scotland*, p. 152.

<sup>69</sup> Dunn, *Highland Settler*, p. 55.

<sup>70</sup> Farnham, 'Cape Breton Folk', p. 618.

Since this encounter occurred at East Lake Ainslie, and judging by the description, the piper in question was in all probability, Farquhar (*Mór*) MacKinnon.

The MacKinnons of East Lake Ainslie were known as *Clann Fhionghuinn a' Chiùil* (MacKinnons of the Music) and the extended family included several pipers and fiddlers.<sup>71</sup> This family was descended from pioneer settlers who came to Cape Breton from the Island of Muck in 1820.

Farnham also mentions attending an all-night party at Ingonish, “where reels and jigs helped pass the night.”<sup>72</sup> It is unfortunate that Farnham didn't mention the names of the performers or what instruments, bagpipe or fiddle, supplied the music. One possibility might well be Rory MacDougall of Bay St. Lawrence.

Rory (Roderick) MacDougall (1848-1936) was a son of Donald MacDougall, who was born at Christmas Island, Cape Breton County, around 1802 and later moved to Bay St. Lawrence, on the northern tip of Cape Breton.<sup>73</sup> This family of MacDougalls had operated a grist mill at one time, for the MacNeils of Barra in the late eighteenth century. Although Rory was born at Bay St. Lawrence he spent a great deal of time at Ingonish where his son, Dan Rory (1885-1957) later had a home. Both Rory and Dan Rory were well known pipers who also played the violin and step-danced. Not much is known about Rory's piping other than that he traveled all over Cape Breton playing for dances and frolics and was employed by a visiting horse-trader occasionally to pipe up and down

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<sup>71</sup> Hugh N. MacDonald, *MacKinnon and MacDonald Families* (Second edition, Truro: N.p., 1937), pp. 18-26.

<sup>72</sup> Farnham, 'Cape Breton Folk', p. 610.

<sup>73</sup> Gibson, *Old and New World Highland Bagpiping*, p. 281.

dusty roads to attract people's attention.<sup>74</sup> He also played the bagpipe with the local militia unit, the 94<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Victoria Battalion, in the 1890s.

More is known about Rory's son, Dan Rory, and stories still survive of his musicianship and stamina. On one occasion he is reputed to have walked from Ingonish to Cape North, a distance of over thirty miles, to play for a wedding. According to local tradition, he played all night and most of the day, alternating between pipes and violin. Physically demanding as this feat may have been, the fact that he could not read or write music and was still able to entertain for hours on both instruments indicates an extremely large repertoire of music. Music in this family of MacDougalls continued into the twentieth century through Dan Rory's sons, Mike MacDougall (1928-1981), a gifted fiddler and composer, and Gabriel MacDougall (1925-1986), a performer on both the bagpipe and violin.

The traditional dances brought by the first Highland settlers from Scotland consisted mostly of the "Scotch" or Single Fours. These dance forms were performed by two couples to strathspeys and reels and little incentive was needed to have a dance. Communal efforts in cutting wood and clearing land, known locally as 'chopping frolics', were often followed by a supper and dance.<sup>75</sup> In areas such as Meat Cove, on the northern tip of Cape Breton, the piper would play for the Scotch Fours and the fiddler would play for the square sets. Sometimes the fiddler and piper would team up and play together.<sup>76</sup> By the late nineteenth century this dance form was gradually being replaced by more modern group dances such as the *Saratoga Lancers* and the *Quadrilles*. These

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288.

<sup>75</sup> Telephone Interview, Florence Bonner, Bay St. Lawrence.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

imported dances, or their variations, constitute the modern square sets or square dance in Cape Breton.

In addition to these group dances there would be performances by solo dancers. This was an opportunity to demonstrate individual skills and introduce new steps. In some areas a lighted candle would be placed on the floor close to the dancer. When the performer was finished he or she would snuff out the candle flame by clicking their heels together.<sup>77</sup> Other demonstrated their skills by dancing with a small glass of water placed in the band of their hats, the finest dancers not spilling a drop.<sup>78</sup>

A piper was often called upon to provide dance music at wedding receptions, especially in areas with few fiddlers. In some instances there would be a friendly competition between the piper and fiddler.<sup>79</sup> Sometimes one musician played both instruments and would alternate between the bagpipe and violin, or as previously mentioned, pipers and fiddlers would play together. In areas with few pipers, fiddlers would sometimes play together during dances to compensate for the lack of volume of a single violin.

Since the spring and summer were the busiest seasons for farmers, most weddings in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were conducted in the winter. The wedding reception or dance would extend from early evening to early morning the following day.<sup>80</sup> Usually there was no shortage of strong drink, be it government liquor or locally produced spirits. In some areas it was customary for the bride to present the first drink to the piper and the bagpipe before the dance began. Such was the case at a wedding in the

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<sup>77</sup> Personal Interview, Alex Currie, Frenchvale.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> MacKenzie, *History of Christmas Island Parish*, p. 185.

<sup>80</sup> Personal Correspondence, Duncan MacDougall, Sydney.

Louisburg area of Cape Breton described by Jim MacDonald, a piper, and son of one of the attendees.

Piper John MacInnis of Kennington Cove near Louisburg was the official wedding reel piper in that district. Every time he would play the reel 'More Rum for the Piper' he was given a water glass full of rum. When he thought he had enough he let the rest of the 90 over proof down the blowpipe. My late father used to tell me when the instrument got warm you'd swear there were doves flying out of the drone. In the wee hours of the morning when the pipes would stall he would walk home with two gallons of rum in an oversize bag- sheepskin with no cover on it.' <sup>81</sup>

Similar traditions survived in early twentieth century Scotland, particularly in South Uist, as the following reference indicates, but by the 1920s step-dancing in Scotland appears to have all but virtually disappeared.

There was always a dance on the 15th of August [*Latha Feille Muire*], and a few in the springtime, and there was dance at Christmastime. The music was provided by 'Giad'-Archie Campbell on the pipes, and he piped the whole night in the old school in Iochdar. We got a gallon of beer before we went and gave it to the piper. He was the oddest piper to watch, for he always piped for a dance sitting down, but he was the best of pipers to dance to. <sup>82</sup>

In Nova Scotia, dance playing was an important function for the piper in Gaelic society, but it was also incumbent upon these musicians to play for funerals. This was a time-honoured tradition which would involve playing some tune or lament while accompanying the casket to the graveside.<sup>83</sup> Funerary customs were almost universal among the Gaels of Nova Scotia. As C. H. Farnham observed:

A wake, whether among the Presbyterians or the Catholics, gathers a great crowd in the house of the deceased; during two days the family is

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<sup>81</sup> MacDonald, 'Piping in Cape Breton', p.10.

<sup>82</sup> I am indebted to Allan Gillis, Ottawa, for this historical reference taken from Bill Lawson, *Croft History: Isle of South Uist Vol.2*,(N.p.,N.p.), p.13. Unfortunately no description of the type of dance is given.

<sup>83</sup> A popular lament in Cape Breton was the tune, *The Flowers of the Forest*.

constantly at hard work, night and day, serving successive meals to those who arrive. It is considered a marked offence not to come to a wake, and, when there, not to eat and drink abundantly. Two or three funerals near together have actually ruined a family. The pious and aged in the room where the corpse lies generally occupy their time in reading and praying, while the young, in another room, solace their grief by eating, drinking and flirting. Many are more or less drunk when the procession moves on or collects about the grave, and generally it is then that the fight occurs, which seems a part of every good funeral.<sup>84</sup>

Bodies were washed and further prepared for burial by female relatives, and coffins were constructed from local timber. At the Gaelic settlement of French Road, the trees selected for making coffins were said to shine or have an eerie glow at night before they were cut down.<sup>85</sup> The coffin was usually carried on the shoulders of the pall bearers preceded by a piper. Several eye-witness accounts describe similar funeral processions such as the following by Jim MacDonald.

In the old days a funeral took place in primitive style in Cape Breton. They had to travel footpaths except for the old French Road. No horses, no sleighs, no hearses. Four men carried the bier on two poles on their shoulders to the nearest burying ground. A piper walked ahead of them playing a lamentable funeral dirge. They made their own coffins with white pine stained black with tint from burned alder wood.<sup>86</sup>

At East Lake Ainslie another funeral-related story is recorded concerning Archibald MacKinnon, a member of the above mentioned “musical” MacKinnon family. Archibald MacKinnon, known locally as the “Big Bachelor”, was a piper and fiddler who had a premonition of his death. Eighteen years before his death he made a tombstone for himself, on which he engraved the MacKinnon crest and motto, a crescent star, and a record of his birth.<sup>87</sup> Several years before his eventual demise, he purchased five gallons

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<sup>84</sup> Farnham, ‘Cape Breton Folk’, p. 618.

<sup>85</sup> Personal Interview, Paddy and Gussie MacIntyre. Grand Mira.

<sup>86</sup> MacDonald, ‘Piping in Cape Breton’, pp. 8-9.

<sup>87</sup> MacDonald, *MacKinnon and MacDonald Families*, p. 19.

of rum, which was intended for use at his funeral. Reverend Gunn, the local minister, heard of the will and the proposed availability of alcohol and, being a supporter of the Temperance Movement, tried to persuade the Big Bachelor to change his mind saying, "If you retain that clause in your Will, you will not get a man in East Lake Ainslie to bury you." Emphasizing the importance of "refreshments" at a funeral, Archie replied, "Oh Mr. Gunn, if they have five gallons of rum at my funeral there will be plenty of Big MacLean's from Broad Cove to bury me fifteen feet deep."<sup>88</sup>

Despite the objections of the local minister, the Big Bachelor's funeral went as planned. When Archibald MacKinnon died his remains were carried to their final resting-place in the old Highland fashion: on the shoulders of the pallbearers preceded by a piper. Further instructions included stopping for 'ample drams' of rum; first at the house where the wake was held, second at the gate of his niece's farm and finally at the graveside. This was reputed to have been the last funeral held at East Lake Ainslie at which liquor was served.<sup>89</sup>

During the second half of the nineteenth century piping in Nova Scotia, and activities associated with piping like impromptu dances, weddings and funerals allowed the community piper to continue in his and her traditional role. The emergence of a small cottage industry in bagpipe manufacture indicates piping in Nova Scotia was in a healthy state. By the 1890s, the industry included several makers from various parts of the Province (See Appendix C). The subsequent competition from both local makers, and later, Scottish firms curtailed the market share for bagpipes and as the need for wood

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

turners diminished in industrial society, bagpipe-making on a semi-professional scale disappeared.

The rural piper continued to provide music for social dancing in the countryside in the nineteenth century and, in some areas of Cape Breton, for a good portion of the twentieth century,<sup>90</sup> but for those pipers who had moved into Nova Scotia's towns and cities the demand for their musical talents was substantially reduced. This was caused by changes in entertainment preferences among many of the new generation of urbanites who, after being exposed to a dominant English culture and mass communication devices like the radio, came to equate Gaelic instrumental music as "Hick" music.

Funeral services today occasionally include a piper, but in some rural areas like Washabuck, Victoria County, the practice of playing the bagpipes at funerals was showing signs of waning as recently as the 1940s.<sup>91</sup> One explanation might be that out-migration had taken its toll and there were fewer pipers. Another reason might be changes in funerary customs which have occurred during the late twentieth century. People are no longer waked in family homes, and caskets are no longer homemade but mass-produced in factories.

The twentieth century would introduce to Nova Scotia's "ear-trained" community bagpiper a much different musical culture than the one which was brought with the early Highland immigrants. For those musicians who could not or would not change, their

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<sup>90</sup> Personal Interview, Archie MacDonald, Grand River. It was Archie's opinion that the period leading up to about 1930 was the 'heyday' of the dance piper in Cape Breton. Archie grew up in West Bay, Cape Breton, but spent much of his life living in Boston. He remembered several gatherings of Cape Bretoners in Boston which often included a dance piper.

<sup>91</sup> Alex D. MacLean, 'The Pioneers of Washabuckt' (Unpublished, typed MS history of Washabuckt (sic), Cape Breton, 15 September, 1940), p. 17.

eventual fate was to be marginalized by modern methods of playing and their musical styles dismissed as incorrect by non-Gaels.

## Chapter Four

### *Tradition in Transition, 1895-1930*

*A' Ghaidhlig agus ceòl na pìoba, 'S co-innann leam fhin na dha dhuibh;  
Chan eil sin' na aobhar ionghnaidh. O shìol nam pìobairean a tha mi.*

Gaelic language and the music of the pipes, The two are the same for me;  
That is no reason to wonder, Since I am descended from the seed of pipers.<sup>1</sup>

The period 1900-1930 can be described as one of profound change for most aspects of Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia. The first three decades of the twentieth century witnessed a decline in the number of Gaelic-speakers in the region and increased migration from rural areas to urban areas,<sup>2</sup> both in Nova Scotia and to the United States and other provinces of Canada. This period also heralded profound changes in Highland piping and the perceptions of Scottish culture among native Nova Scotians. In the case of Nova Scotian pipers the transition was from an ear-trained, community piper to a musically literate one and from a bagpipe soloist to a pipe band musician. These changes were directly influenced by the increased use of Highland pipers in the military during the First World War and the arrival in Nova Scotia of several Lowland Scottish pipers following the Province's industrial expansion.

As noted, there is little evidence to indicate that the role of piper in Nova Scotian Gaelic society changed very much in the nineteenth century. Although very few individuals listed their occupation as piper to immigrant officials,<sup>3</sup> in Nova Scotia, research shows that several of these immigrant Gaels were indeed pipers. Ship passenger

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<sup>1</sup> 'In Praise of Gaelic' by Malcolm MacNeil, Ironville, Cape Breton County. C. I. N. Macleod, ed., *Bardachd a Albainn Nuaidh* (Glaschu: Gairm, 1970), p. 59. English translation generously supplied by Jim Watson, Nova Scotia Highland Village.

<sup>2</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, pp. 70-76.

<sup>3</sup> Adams and Somerville, *Cargoes of Despair and Hope*, pp.122-123.

lists rarely mention piping as a profession, and any additional information must be gleaned from family lore, genealogical studies and census information compiled in Nova Scotia. Possible reasons for this would include the gradual decline of piping as a profession in Scotland and the reality that perhaps piping was not a wholly-recognized “profession” among immigration officials. Piper, fiddler and bard were all specific functions within Gaelic society; the collapse of the old order proved trying for most people involved in these cultural pursuits. Indeed, it became apparent that they could not survive on these professional skills alone and so proceeded to adopt other occupations.

Angus Campbell of Salmon River, Cape Breton County, was one such professional who was intimately aware of the changes affecting poets and musicians after their emigration from Scotland. He left Scotland in the 1840s and took up farming in the rugged backlands between East Bay and the Mira river. Campbell was born in Benbecula, a small island separated from the islands of North and South Uist by tidal fords. He was a piper, fiddler and bard and, although none of his fiddle or pipe music survived into present day, several songs which he composed in Cape Breton remained in the repertoires of a handful of local Gaelic singers until the mid-twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> Described as “one of the sweetest singers that Gaelic poetry could ever claim, he was asked once if the gift of song was brought over from Scotland to America”. He replied saying, “Certainly it exists here in America, but there is no one who appreciates a good poem in America. In Scotland the bard received a sovereign or even a guinea for an ordinary song, and then he could afford to forget even the ordinary cares of life while he was composing a much

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<sup>4</sup> Helen Creighton and Calum MacLeod, eds, *Gaelic Songs in Nova Scotia* (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, republished in 1979), pp. 76-89.

better one.”<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately for Campbell there were no patrons of the Gaelic arts in Cape Breton, and this talented individual had to resort to more physical pursuits such as farming and lumbering to earn a living.

There are very few sources from the nineteenth century to indicate just how important piping was among the Gaelic settlements of Nova Scotia. The provincial census of 1838 lists several occupations and trades of many of the immigrant Highland settlers to Nova Scotia. Included in the census are the names of only three individuals who listed their occupation as piper: one in Cape Breton County and two in Pictou County.<sup>6</sup> This shows that piping was still considered a profession by at least a few census takers and respondents. The 1838 census also reveals a more accurate picture of the occupations of many of the immigrant Gaels and their descendants. The census information for Pictou County shows a preponderance of farmers, some miners and labourers, two turners, several blacksmiths and five fiddlers.<sup>7</sup> Comparison of this information with family and community history establishes that most pipers relied on other professions to provide most of their livelihood and even well-known pipers were not recorded as such by most census takers.

The list of pipers compiled in Appendix B shows that piping tended to be passed on within families, extended families and the community as a whole. The role of the piper in Nova Scotia Gaelic society shared many similarities with other cultural forms of expression such as Gaelic singing and story-telling. There is at present very little

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<sup>5</sup> R. Gillis, *Stray Leaves From Highland History* (Sydney: Published privately, 1918), p.36.

<sup>6</sup> These include Pictou County pipers Robert Ross and John MacDonald; and Donald Stewart, Mira.

<sup>7</sup> The 1838 census for Pictou County is available on line: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~nspictou/>

published material available on the development of repertoire and the transmission of songs and stories. There is even less on the parallel relationship between language, song, and instrumental music, even though most tradition bearers interviewed claimed that the Gaelic language and music were inseparable.<sup>8</sup>

The findings of John Shaw in his two books on the subject of Gaelic songs and story-telling in Cape Breton, have direct relevance to various aspects of piping.<sup>9</sup> The conservative role of the community, the development of repertoire, and the linear descent of tradition characterize not only the Gaelic song / story telling tradition but also piping and fiddling. As English gradually replaced Gaelic, even in the rural areas, the function of instrumental music gradually changed. Shaw observed that “combined with other recent agents of cultural change, the language shift has effectively altered the social context for singing – interrupting the lines of transmission and changing the community’s internal concepts of such fundamental aspects as function, performance, occasion and composition.”<sup>10</sup> Shaw’s narrative describes the song tradition among the Gaels of Broad Cove, Inverness County, but it could apply equally to the piping traditions of rural Gaels, not just in Cape Breton, but throughout the new world *Gaidhealtachd* (Gaelic-speaking area). Similar descriptions of piping repertoire development, retention and eventual decline within Gaelic-speaking communities have been mentioned in taped interviews with the late Alex Currie, piper, and Joe Neil MacNeil, storyteller.<sup>11</sup>

It was within rural, homogenous societies in Nova Scotia that the early pipers developed many of their skills. The development of repertoire, which included

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<sup>8</sup> This is borne out by my own interviews with Alex Currie and those of several other researchers such as John Shaw and John Gibson.

<sup>9</sup> John Shaw, *Tales Until Dawn* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1987); Shaw, *Brigh an Orain* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> Shaw, *Brigh an Orain*, p.52.

<sup>11</sup> Personal interviews, Alex Currie, Frenchvale, and Joe Neil MacNeil, Sydney.

memorizing literally hundreds of melodies without any written guide, was a long and laborious task. The methods of learning song and instrumental music were almost universal among the Gaelic communities in the Maritimes. As Shaw points out in his study of the Gaelic-speaking community of Broad Cove, Cape Breton:

the daily routines in Gaelic-speaking rural communities of the early twentieth century provided a nearly ideal environment for a child to become exposed to and drawn into the singing tradition. Here the lifelong learning process known to ethnomusicologists as enculturation or cultural learning began as a part of a wider process of the child's socialization. Generally, those destined to be active singers began at an early age, "*cho luath 's a thuigeadh iad facial is ceol*" (as soon as they could understand words and music), and often with active support from women.<sup>12</sup>

Compare this observation to Alex Currie's memories of learning to play the chanter under the watchful eye, and ear, of his mother, a descendant of the MacIntyre pipers of Boisdale, Cape Breton, and the comparisons become obvious.

Here's the way I learned. My mother would jig [a word used in Cape Breton to indicate singing] the tune as it was written in the olden days, and she was a better jigger than my father. She jiggered in words- in Gaelic. She pronounced the words in Gaelic, and the note would be the same as it would be written in the book! The old people who came over from Scotland- her father and her grandfather- they took that over here with them. She couldn't play the pipes, though. But if I didn't hit a note right, she'd say "That's not right! You gotta (sic) put a little more stir to it- a little livelier." In that way I had the tunes *more* accurate than the ones that are written in the book! But she had no books; it was all in her head! She'd jig tunes night and day; she had all kinds of them.

But they play with a different style today; there's really no Scotch to it, you know. But when I play a tune, it's as it was played two hundred years ago! But when I was a young fellow starting, I could sit down three or four hours in the evenings with the lamplight and nothing else to do but play the chanter- and I was quick to catch on. My mother would help me everytime I wanted to play. Ah! Those were the good old days! After supper she'd be jiggering while she was knitting or quilting or making mats. My mother and father were proud as could be when I learned how to play.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Shaw, *Brigh an Orain*, p.36.

<sup>13</sup> MacGillivray, *A Cape Breton Ceilidh*, p.208.

For Alex Currie, the learning of a particular tune usually included Gaelic words and sometimes background information on the melodies and there was no shortage of teachers within his family. Both of Alex Currie's grandmothers could play the chanter, as well as his mother. Alex's father, Peter, was a piper, as were two of Alex's older brothers. In an age of homespun entertainment, most pipers could recount stories associated with tunes, while other pipers such as Rory 'Shim' MacIsaac of *Bein Eoin*, Cape Breton County, could supply approximate dates of composition for some tunes, another similarity with the retention of a song or story repertoire among Gaelic-speakers. Piping, fiddling, and singing remained strong in the more isolated areas of the province, but with increased outward migration and demographic changes, especially after 1920, these skills remained with only a handful of traditionally trained musicians and bards.

The same factors which contributed to the decline of Gaelic language in Nova Scotia also contributed to the decline of piping. These factors included a gradual move by the rural population to urban centres, outward migration, a changing cultural and social milieu, and the after-effects of the First and Second World Wars.

Representatives of several piping families, such as the Jamiesons, MacInnises, MacPhees, MacNeils and MacIntyres (Appendix B), relocated to the mining areas in and around Glace Bay with several members eventually continuing on to the United States of America. Regardless of the location, once the move was made from rural to urban dweller the result was always the same. The Gaelic language and other cultural art forms leveled off, declined and eventually disappeared. For example, despite the significant

numbers of pipers who moved to Glace Bay in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, piping eventually died out in these families.

The coal mines and steel works were one of the biggest attractions for rural Nova Scotians during the latter half of the nineteenth century, drawing not only rural Gaels but also European immigrants. After the formation of the Dominion Coal Company in the early twentieth century, professional miners were brought in from England, lowland Scotland, Italy and several eastern European countries. This pattern of immigration gradually diluted any influence the Gaelic majority may have once had on urban culture. The development of radio, and later television, also helped wrest the control of culture from the Gaels. Over time, the concepts of entertainment (including music, song and dance) were influenced by forces far removed from the Gaelic cultural community.

Outward migration from Nova Scotia also had a profound effect on culture. In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, large numbers of Nova Scotian Gaels were seeking their fortunes in the United States.<sup>14</sup> The drain of inhabitants from rural areas did not go unnoticed by early twentieth-century social observers such as William D. Cameron and Michel D. Currie.

William D. Cameron, who was known by the pen name Drummer on Foot, was an Antigonish school teacher who wrote a weekly article on genealogy for the local newspaper, the *Casket*. Writing in 1913, he drew attention to the after effects of depopulation. Cameron lamented the fact that parts of rural Antigonish County, such as the community of Springfield, had lost up to seventy-five percent of their population by that time, with 'a large majority of them being in the United States'.<sup>15</sup> The land was

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<sup>14</sup> Alan A. Brookes, 'Out-Migration from the Maritime Provinces, 1860-1900', pp. 34-63.

<sup>15</sup> D. MacFarlane and Ray A. MacLean, eds., *Drummer on Foot* (Np: Np, Nd), p. 52.

being rapidly reclaimed by the forest and many farms had been abandoned completely. Similar sentiments were expressed almost a decade later by a school teacher from Cape Breton. An article written in 1922 by Michael D. Currie, a well-known teacher and genealogist, highlighted the far-reaching effects of depopulation in one area of Cape Breton County. The article was republished in 1932-33 in *Teachdaire Nan Gaidheal*, and referred to the descendants of the three hundred South Uist immigrants who came to Cape Breton in 1932 on the ship *Northumberland*.

The emigrants who came here from Scotland in 1832, as I already observed, settled in rear lots or "Back Lands", as these localities were called, at East Bay, North and South, and also at French Road and elsewhere in Mira. I know several of their descendants- MacDonalds, MacPhees, Morrisons, Fergusons, MacCormicks, Curries, Campbells, MacKinnons, MacMullins, Macleods and Thomas'. But their progeny are more numerous in the United States, Western Canada, the City of Sydney and the mines of Cape Breton, than they are in the farming districts where their grand fathers and great grand fathers settled when they came to this country, and the old farms are deserted.

In the rear settlements of east Bay, North and South, the population is scarcely as large as it was in 1840. On the road from Huntington's Mountain, at Salmon River to King's Road East Bay, a distance of ten miles, there is not one inhabited house. At Gillis Lake, where there was a large population in the middle thirties of the last century, there are only three or four families.<sup>16</sup>

The observations of these two men described a problem which was widespread among Gaelic communities across Nova Scotia, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Gradual movement away from a rural cultural base would manifest itself in a declining population and a language and culture in crisis.

The First World War also had a negative impact on both the Gaelic language and traditional piping. Thousands of Nova Scotians volunteered for service overseas and, as one informant put it, the Gaels who went overseas became more 'worldly' and viewed

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<sup>16</sup> Father Allan MacMillan, *A West Wind to East Bay*, p. 632.

their language and culture in a very different light upon their return.<sup>17</sup> The high casualty rates during this conflict were keenly felt and it was often said that in the case of Cape Breton Island, there was not one house on the Bras d'Or lakes which did not lose a family member during the war. Several Nova Scotian pipers (Appendix B) who had enlisted to fight overseas during World War One were added to the list of over a thousand pipers, from Great Britain and the Empire (later the British Commonwealth) who were either killed or wounded during the four year struggle.<sup>18</sup>

Pipers who volunteered for service in the army also received instruction in modern piping techniques from several British army pipers during their period of enlistment. Those pipers who managed to survive the First World War passed on these new skills to a new, albeit small, generation of pipers in Nova Scotia.<sup>19</sup> The efforts of these home-grown pipers to modernize piping in Nova Scotia after the First World War were aided by the arrival of over a dozen immigrants from Scotland (Appendix E).

Shortly before the First World War, industrialization in Nova Scotia began attracting a very different sort of immigrant piper from Scotland. Unlike their predecessors, these immigrant pipers were non-Gaelic-speaking Scots, most of whom were musically literate, and almost all had some previous form of military or civilian pipe band experience. These Scottish musicians were scattered throughout industrial counties such as Cape Breton, Inverness, Pictou and the cities of Halifax and Dartmouth and the end product of this influx was the emergence of Nova Scotia's first civilian pipe bands.

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<sup>17</sup> Personal Interview, Archie MacKenzie, Halifax, NS.

<sup>18</sup> Donaldson, *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society, 1750-1950*, p. 319. Donaldson claims this figure only reflects Scottish piping casualties and there is currently no accurate figure for Commonwealth pipers.

<sup>19</sup> Personal Interview, Sandy MacBeth, Riverton; and Peter Morrison, Sydney. Two of the most influential 'home-grown' pipers influenced in this manner were Fraser Homes, New Glasgow, and Roddy Nicholson, Sydney. Both men went on to instruct dozens of pipers in Nova Scotia.

The development of these first pipe bands paralleled the emergence of numerous citizen's brass bands in Nova Scotia. The development of these volunteer organizations, both brass and bagpipe, was influenced by the numerous regimental bands of British army. The early civilian pipe bands, like the first citizens bands, benefited from the training of these musically literate and often professionally-trained musicians. The full impact of these musicians on the civilian band movement in Nova Scotia has yet to be studied. Professional musicians in the British army brass bands tended to teach locally during their tour of duty in Nova Scotia, but this was not restricted to brass bands.<sup>20</sup> As William O'Shea points out in his book *The Louisburg Brass Bands*:

In Nova Scotia there is a tradition, not yet fully studied, of public band entertainments provided by the various garrisons stationed here during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The military bands helped to develop a local appreciation for band music and provided a source of professional instructors to the community. By the 1870s, the band master sergeants in the British army were graduates of the Royal School of Music, established in 1857, and were replacing civilian bandmasters. Still to be studied, as well, is the influence of British bandsmen who came to Nova Scotia to work in the collieries.<sup>21</sup>

The regiments of the British army were stationed mainly in Halifax, but some had individual companies rotated throughout various parts of the province, at various times in the Province's history.<sup>22</sup>

The first civilian pipe band was formed in Nova Scotia in 1898, and it was soon followed by the organization of several other pipe bands around the province.<sup>23</sup> This first

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<sup>20</sup>Alexander MacKenzie, 'The Editor in Canada', *Celtic Magazine*. 5, no.49, November, 1879. p.110. Pipe Major Ronald MacKenzie, 79<sup>th</sup> Highlanders, is known to have instructed at least one pupil while serving with his regiment in Halifax in 1879.

<sup>21</sup>William A. O'Shea, *The Louisburg Brass Bands* (Louisburg: Louisbourg Historical Society, 1991), p.3.

<sup>22</sup>MacKay Scobie, *Pipers and Pipe Music in a Highland Regiment* (Dingwall: Ross-shire Printing and Publishing Company, 1924), pp. 20, 24; see also Thomas MacLauchlan, *A History of the Scottish Highlands*, John S. Keltie, ed. 2 vol. (Edinburgh: A Fullarton and Co, 1875), Vol.2, pp. 357-358.

pipe band was known as the MacIntyre Pipe Band (Fig. 5) and it originally consisted of four MacIntyre brothers, and several cousins.<sup>24</sup>

The tiny band was later augmented by two other pipers, John and Charlie Jamieson. The Jamieson family was from Piper's Glen, Inverness County and all the children in the family, as well as the father, could play the bagpipe.<sup>25</sup> The band was assisted in its early band training by an immigrant Scot named Alexander "Sandy" Bowes. Bowes was originally from Hamilton, Scotland but later immigrated to Cape Breton around 1898, where he was employed with the Sydney & Louisburg Railway. The band was kept busy playing for a variety of events such as picnics, parades and fairs and there is some evidence that the MacIntyre pipe band was later associated with the 94th Regiment, Victoria Battalion, a local militia unit. Several members of the MacIntyre family joined the army during World War One and during the tumultuous miner strike of 1925 members of the pipe band staged concerts featuring piping, fiddling and step-dancing to raise money for the striking miners.<sup>26</sup> The MacIntyre band lasted until about 1940 when, due to recruitment by the army during World War Two and the loss of most of the original members due to age, the band folded.

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<sup>23</sup> Other early pipe bands included the Pictou County Pipe Band, c.1906, the Inverness Pipe Band, c. 1908, and the Clan Thompson Pipe Band of Halifax, c. 1909.

<sup>24</sup> The four brothers were all sons of 'Big' Jim MacIntyre and included Dan, Joe, Archie and Michael. The Pipe Major of the band was their first cousin, 'Long' Joe MacIntyre.

<sup>25</sup> See Barry Shears, "Two of the Extraordinary Piping Families in Cape Breton: The MacIntyres and Jamiesons" *Mac-Talla*, Spring, 2003, pp. 26-27

<sup>26</sup> MacGillivray, *A Cape Breton Ceilidh*, p.210.

Fig. 5. The MacIntyre Pipe Band, Glace Bay, 1902. (author's collection)



The MacIntyre Band, left to right: "One-eyed" Dan MacIntyre, Charlie Jamieson, Joe MacIntyre, Mickey MacIntyre, John Jamieson, Peter MacIntyre, "Long" Joe MacIntyre, Archie MacIntyre

When the First World War broke out, Sandy Bowes enlisted with the army and instructed several pipers before they went overseas. After the war, Bowes moved to Louisburg where he founded a local pipe band in the 1920s.

In addition to Pipe Major Sandy Bowes, other recent Scottish immigrants were settling in Nova Scotia and soon began to teach piping. In 1907 George Dey settled at Halifax and shortly thereafter began teaching local residents to play the bagpipe and perform Highland dancing. George Dey was born at Bonniebridge, Scotland in 1878 where he learned to play bagpipes as a boy. Later he studied piping with John MacDougall Gillies, one of the premiere competitive pipers in Glasgow at that time. Dey was a successful competitive piper and Highland dancer both in Scotland<sup>27</sup> and Canada. He was musically literate and had previous pipe band experience with a Volunteer Battalion of the Highland Light Infantry. In addition to being a successful solo competitor, George Dey, also adjudicated competitions throughout Nova Scotia and taught numerous pipers and Highland dancers, both young and old, in the Halifax-Dartmouth area. His capacity as competitor, piping judge and teacher helped to successfully transplant modern Scottish musical standards in the capitol region and raised the bar for competitive piping in Nova Scotia. On mainland Nova Scotia, George Dey, with his military and musical backgrounds, proved to be a major influence on piping, especially in the Halifax area.

During most of the nineteenth century military piping had little affect on traditional piping in Nova Scotia. By the twentieth century the army played a major role in the transition of traditional Gaelic-flavored pipe music in Nova Scotia to the modern

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<sup>27</sup> Personal Correspondence, Randy Smith. George Dey placed third in the prestigious Gold Medal competition in Inverness in 1902 and placed second in 1903, shortly before he immigrated to Canada.

Scottish idiom.<sup>28</sup> A full examination of this subject would require a separate study. However the army's influence on piping in rural Gaelic-speaking communities in Nova Scotia in the early twentieth century is exemplified by a native-born Nova Scotian, Kenneth MacKenzie Baillie.

Pipe Major Kenneth MacKenzie Baillie was born in Nova Scotia but learned to play the bagpipes while living in Britain. Baillie was born in 1859 at Pictou, a month after the death of his father. He was raised in the Gaelic-speaking home of his uncle at Balmoral, Colchester County, where he learned to play the violin.<sup>29</sup> The 1870s were a period of economic decline in Nova Scotia and under these conditions Baillie and his brother went to Boston in search of employment. In 1879 MacKenzie Baillie left Boston, shipped on board a cattle boat for Britain and, at the age of nineteen, joined the Royal Marine Artillery.<sup>30</sup> The Royal Marine Artillery was a corps which lived with the navy, but fought on land, and Baillie's twenty-one year career with the Marines saw him engaged in conflicts in West Africa, the Sudan, and Egypt.

Baillie began to learn the bagpipes as a pastime while serving with the Royal Marine Artillery. He managed to get promoted and was posted as a recruiting sergeant in Glasgow in the 1880s in order to perfect his piping abilities. To further his study of music, especially *Ceòl Mór*, he transferred to Inverness where he came under the influence of a former Inverness Gold Medalist, Pipe Major Sandy MacLennan. Baillie studied piping with MacLennan for several years, and married Sandy's only daughter,

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<sup>28</sup> Personal Interview, Peter Morrison.

<sup>29</sup> James Cameron, *Pictonians in Arms, a Military History of Pictou County* (Published by the author through arrangement with the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton:1969), p. 212.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

Catherine.<sup>31</sup> In 1901, the Baillie family retired to a farm at Loganville, Pictou County and from this base, they influenced the musical development of a large section of mainland Nova Scotia.

After his retirement from the Royal Marine Artillery, Baillie joined the 78<sup>th</sup> regiment, Pictou Highlanders,<sup>32</sup> and piping became his life's work. Both he and his wife Catherine, also a piper of some repute, taught numerous pupils in the west Pictou and Colchester counties, and their fluency in Gaelic allowed them access to communities not readily accessible to non-Gaelic speakers. Pipe Major Baillie was involved in recruiting in Canada and the United States during the First World War and instructed several pipers who had enlisted for service overseas. Among his piping students were Fraser Holmes of New Glasgow and Rod Nicholson from Cape Breton. These men were very influential in training new pipers in both mainland Nova Scotia<sup>33</sup> and Cape Breton during the mid-twentieth century.<sup>34</sup>

Catherine Baillie also had a hand in instructing young pipers in Pictou County prior to her death in 1927. Her husband was away for much of the year either training with the militia, judging piping competitions throughout the Maritimes, or touring as a Scottish concert violinist in the United States.<sup>35</sup> To look after the many chores required on a farm, Catherine would often take in young boys from neighbouring communities willing to perform farm work in exchange for piping lessons.<sup>36</sup> Several of her piping students, such as the Henderson brothers of Camden and Alexander Sutherland,

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> 'Death Claims Pipe Major Who Won World Fame', *Pictou Advocate*, April 18, 1924, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> Cameron, *Pictonians in Arms*. pp. 209-211.

<sup>34</sup> Personal Interview, Peter Morrison.

<sup>35</sup> Cameron, *Pictonians in Arms*. p. 212.

<sup>36</sup> Personal Interview, Alex Sutherland.

Earlton, learned in this fashion, and in turn, went on to instruct students of their own in Truro and Dartmouth.

It is difficult to gauge the influence of the Baillie family on piping in Pictou and Colchester counties in the early decades of the twentieth century. Certainly many of their piping students, including their son Sandy Baillie, went on to teach literate, army-influenced piping to a whole new generation of musicians on mainland Nova Scotia at a time when Gaelic was in full decline in most areas. What has yet to be considered is Pipe Major Baillie's influence on the fiddle traditions of Cape Breton. Baillie was a trained musician capable not only of reading written music, but also of playing the highland bagpipes, violin and bellows-blown Irish bagpipes. The pipers who attended the two week summer camp with the militia each year were not only from mainland Nova Scotia, but also from Cape Breton, and a few of these pipers were also known as fiddlers. These included Angus 'the Ridge' MacDonald of Lower South River; Kenny Matheson, River Denys; Rory MacDougall, Ingonish, and several MacIntyres from Glace Bay. Musicians have always exchanged tunes with each other and Baillie's influence might explain the existence of late nineteenth century published Scottish pipe tunes in the repertoires of ear-learned fiddlers in twentieth century Cape Breton.<sup>37</sup>

Although both George Dey and the Baillie family heavily influenced the promotion of turn-of-the-century Scottish piping in Nova Scotia, they were essentially from two separate schools of thought in regards to performance technique and style. Dey represented a style which has been dubbed the "Cameron School" in Scotland heavily promoted by John MacDougal Gillies of Glasgow. Pipe Major Baillie and his wife,

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<sup>37</sup> Personal Interview, Billy Matheson. Billy is a fiddler from River Denys and his father, Kenny, learned several tunes on the pipes and violin from Pipe Major Baillie.

Catherine, meanwhile, reflected the “MacLennan School”, which had its origins in the north of Scotland. The performance of *Ceòl Mór* in Scotland has been always been controversial and this lack of consensus on playing styles continued among early twentieth century pipers in Nova Scotia. It would appear that there was no organized attempt at converting or training new pipers in a homogenous Scottish style in Nova Scotia. Twentieth century immigrant Scottish pipers to Nova Scotia simply passed on methods of reading and performing music, then current in Scotland, to their pupils. The problem for many Nova Scotian pipers was that the method of learning and playing the bagpipe, and its function within Scottish society, had changed substantially in Scotland since their forbears immigrated to the New World.

As the realities of population shift and urbanization began to settle in, ties with traditional Gaelic culture began to weaken among the Gaels of Nova Scotia. Outward migration had thinned the ranks of many Gaelic cultural strongholds and this decline continued after the First World War. Many rural Gaels born during the early 1920s were raised bilingually, having a good command of both English and Gaelic while their younger siblings born in the second half of the decade and in the 1930s lacked confidence in the language and tended towards increased use of English.<sup>38</sup> There are several plausible reasons for this. First, the education system in Nova Scotia had failed miserably to educate Gaels in their native language.<sup>39</sup> Secondly, the early twentieth century witnessed the deaths of many immigrant and first generation Gaels and this, coupled with the advance of English, diminished the need for bilingualism. Accompanying the

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<sup>38</sup> Telephone Interview, Hector MacNeil, Sydney.

<sup>39</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, pp. 39-91, and Lori Vitale Cox. ‘Gaelic and the Schools in Cape Breton’, pp. 21-22.

language decline in Nova Scotia was any sentimental attachment to old ways and customs.

During the 1920s there seemed to be an overwhelming interest in playing the bagpipes in the more modern Scottish style.<sup>40</sup> This conscious decision was influenced by the returning pipers from the First World War and a new generation of immigrant pipers from Scotland such as Sandy Bowes and George Dey. Increasingly newly-trained pipers were turning their backs on traditional piping in favour of a literate, competitive and military style of playing. This trend continued for most of the twentieth century.

In an increasingly 'Anglo-centric' society, piping, fiddling and singing, along with other aspects of Gaelic culture, such as story-telling and step-dancing, were considered backward and decidedly inferior. This trend was not without its detractors however, and according to local folklore, several of the older MacIntyre pipers in Glace Bay were adamant that their children avoid musical literacy for fear it would change the performance style and role of the piper in Gaelic society. Such pleas proved in vain and, in deference to Scotland, many of the old traditions were gradually pushed aside.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Personal Interview, Peter Morrison, Sydney.

<sup>41</sup> Joshua Dickson, 'The Piping Tradition of South Uist', (Ph.D Thesis: University of Edinburgh, 2001), pp.119-38 This phenomenon of tradition abandonment has also been observed among pipers in early twentieth century South Uist. Improvers were sent to the island from the Scottish mainland to bring the local musicians up to modern standards as early as 1907. Traditional Gaelic-flavoured piping continued longest in Cape Breton and the west coast of Newfoundland. The transition was so complete that by the late 1980s, there only a handful of people in Cape Breton and Newfoundland who could be classified as traditional pipers.



## Chapter Five

### ***The Final Chapter, 1930-1973***

*Wi' a hundred pipers, an a', an a', Wi' a hundred pipers, an a', an a',  
Well up an' gie' them a blaw, a blaw, Wi a hundred pipers, an a', and a'*<sup>1</sup>

The twentieth century was pivotal in the transformation of the Nova Scotian piper from folk musician to pipe band enthusiast and tourist icon. As the need for community pipers subsided so too did any significant role for a piper in Nova Scotia society. By the 1960s, pipers were rarely called on to play for dances, and opportunities to perform continued to decline. Many of these traditional pipers were trained during a time when the Highland bagpipe served specific functions within Gaelic society in Nova Scotia. As Gaelic culture retreated on mainland Nova Scotia, traditional piping eventually died out. Traditional dances such as the 'Scotch Fours' and Eight Hand reels had been displaced in the early twentieth century by foreign group dances from the United States, such the Saratoga Lancers and Quadrilles. These modern dances were introduced to rural Nova Scotia by returning Maritimers from the "Boston States". Pipers adapted their repertoires to provide music for these dances, but with the advent of electronic amplification the fiddle, with its dynamics and musical range, usurped the bagpipe as the favoured instrument for dance music among much of the Gaelic population. The sheer volume of the instrument was one reason why the bagpipe was able to displace the harp in Highland Gaelic society during the seventeenth century. Ironically it was a stringed instrument, the violin, which pushed aside the bagpipe as a social instrument in mid-twentieth century Nova Scotia.

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<sup>1</sup> On line. Traditional Scottish songs. [http://www.rampantscotland.com/songs/blsongs\\_100.htm](http://www.rampantscotland.com/songs/blsongs_100.htm) . This was a Scottish song associated with Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745.

By the 1950s there remained a few ear-trained pipers in rural areas like Grand Mira, Bay St. Lawrence, Tarbot and Mabou, but with a growing movement towards pipe band performance, and its emphasis on “correct” or twentieth century piping technique, the older musicians were increasingly marginalized. These musicians represented styles of playing which were largely unaffected by exterior forces, unlike Scotland, and reflected their respective areas of Highland settlement. In essence they played a nineteenth-century style and were, no doubt, the last exponents of these styles left in the world. Gaelic language and traditional piping influenced by the language however did not fit into modern concepts of Scottish culture. Since there were no efforts to collect information from the old pipers regarding function and linear descent of tradition, it appeared that no one was interested in preserving the old tunes and stories associated with Nova Scotia’s rich piping traditions. A musical contradiction developed. The decline in traditional piping was accompanied by a marked increase in the number of students learning to play the modern Scottish style of bagpipe music in urban areas of Nova Scotia. Similarly, Gaelic language and culture declined in importance as Nova Scotia Gaels increasingly adopted modern definitions of Scottish culture. The dream of Premier Angus L. MacDonald that one hundred pipers would march across the Canso Causeway during its official opening would be additional evidence that the “Romance of the Scottish Highlands” was alive and well in Nova Scotia.<sup>2</sup> This despite the fact that Gaelic was in decline in north eastern Nova Scotia and that it had already been virtually eliminated in places like Pictou and Colchester counties, and with it many features of Gaelic culture such as traditional piping.

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<sup>2</sup> Meaghan Beaton, ‘The Canso Causeway: Regionalism, Reconstruction, Representations, and Results’ (M.A. Thesis, Saint Mary’s University, 2001), pp.95-112.

The influence of the various Highland Societies in Nova Scotia, the establishment of Highland Games at various communities across the region, and further contact with Scottish pipers, especially during and after World War Two, all combined to displace any indigenous bagpipe tradition. Highland games were initially established to help foster traditional Gaelic arts, but by the mid-twentieth century they became vehicles of change, promoting pipe band competitions and the various forms of Scottish “display” dances. In addition, outward migration continued unabated for much of the twentieth century and this would continue to affect the overall numbers of pipers in the province. The further development of civilian pipe bands in urban areas of the province increasingly alienated what little remained of the Gaelic-flavoured piping tradition in Nova Scotia. The success of “Tartanism” as a tourist strategy in Nova Scotia during the 1940s and 50s, as outlined by Ian MacKay,<sup>3</sup> mirrored on a much smaller scale, the development of the tourist trade in Scotland in the nineteenth century.

In May, 1940, The National Geographic Magazine published an article entitled “Salty Nova Scotia” which included several photographs of kilted pipers and Highland dancers posing on wharfs and concert stages. The author comments that

In friendly New Scotland Gaelic songs still answer the skirling bagpipes.  
[And where] you will find kilted men in gay Glengarry bonnets proudly bearing tasseled bagpipes upon which they skirl their ancestral airs.<sup>4</sup>

The article, while giving the impression that both Gaelic singing and “traditional” piping were in a healthy state, presented to its readership a part of the world relatively untouched

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<sup>3</sup> Ian MacKay, ‘Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954’, *Acadiensis*, 21, 2 (Spring 1992), pp.5-47.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Brown, ‘Salty Nova Scotia’, *The National Geographic Magazine*, Vol. 77, No. 5, 1940, pp. 574-624.

by progress. Over the next few decades Nova Scotians of Scottish Gaelic descent increasingly identified with these stereotypes.

In 1971 a group of individuals met to select committees to oversee the planning of the 1973 celebrations of the landing of the ship *Hector*. Although the actual landing of the Highland settlers at Pictou in late September, 1773, it was decided to select dates for the celebrations for either July or August “because of the better weather, and the important tourist trade, to say nothing of the vacation periods.”<sup>5</sup> In 1973 the provincial government had delivered on a promised grant of fifty thousand dollars to assist in operating expenses,<sup>6</sup> a commemorative stamp had been issued by Ottawa, and an invitation had been sent to Queen Elizabeth II to participate in the celebrations.<sup>7</sup> To increase the authenticity of these celebrations it was decided to invite several clan chiefs to attend the festival and to achieve that end “the Hector Committee offered to assist financially with the visit.”<sup>8</sup> The celebrations would also include a one-hundred-man guard of honour and a full pipe band supplied by the local militia regiment, dressed in period costumes. The history of Highland immigration to Nova Scotia, its causes and affects, was conveniently over-looked in order to conform to Victorian stereotypes of Scottish culture, and to market Nova Scotia as a bastion of this culture in the North America.<sup>9</sup> The presence of royalty, clan chiefs, and pipe bands during the Hector celebrations simply reinforced these stereotypes. The language and culture of that first

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<sup>5</sup> *New Glasgow Evening News*, 4 February 1971, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> *The Chronicle Herald*, 18 April 1973.n.p.

<sup>7</sup> The Queen could not attend but instead sent her cousin, Princess Alexandra, and her husband, the Honourable Angus Olgilvy, in her place.

<sup>8</sup> *New Glasgow Evening News*, 4 January 1973. n.p.

<sup>9</sup> MacKay, ‘Tartanism Triumphant’, pp. 5-47.

significant group of immigrant Gaels to Nova Scotia had been transformed into a sea of tartan and parades of pipe bands.

In nineteenth-century Scotland change was inspired by the writings of Sir Walter Scott and James Logan, but in Nova Scotia, it was the Highland societies, the Department of Tourism and the Gaelic College, which were major factors of change. These manifestations of modern “Scottish” culture were particularly evident during the increase in the number of Highland games held throughout the province, the promotion of Nova Scotia’s Scottish history in tourist brochures and advertisements, and the increasing influence of the Gaelic College during the second half of the twentieth century.

Large scale exposure to modern piping technique and musical literacy among Nova Scotia pipers occurred during the First World War. During this conflict Nova Scotia raised several units for service overseas and a number of these battalions included pipe bands whose members received at least some training.<sup>10</sup> Many of the pipers who enlisted during the war benefited from instruction in piping overseas.<sup>11</sup> During the Second World War the Cape Breton Highlanders, North Nova Scotia Highlanders, Pictou Highlanders, and for a short period of time, the West Nova Scotia Regiment, retained pipe bands. Several members of these bands also received instruction in Scotland at the Army School of Piping,<sup>12</sup> and according to local tradition, the senior piping instructor at Edinburgh Castle, remarked that the playing of the Cape Breton pipers had improved

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<sup>10</sup> These included the Twenty-fifth Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force; the Eighty-Fifth Battalion, Nova Scotia Highlanders; and the One Hundred and Eighty-Fifth Battalion, Cape Breton Highlanders.

<sup>11</sup> MacGillivray, *Cape Breton Ceilidh* (Sydney: Sea-cape Music Ltd, 1988), p. 213.

<sup>12</sup> Personal Interview, John Willie Macleod, Dartmouth. Another Nova Scotia piper who attended the Army School of Piping during World War Two was Duncan MacIntyre. After the war Duncan taught piping in the Amherst area.

'one hundred times' since the First World War.<sup>13</sup> However, it was still the immigrant Scottish piper who proved to be the greatest force for change in Nova Scotia.

One of the most influential Scottish pipers of the post-World War Two period was Sandy Boyd, a piper from Lairg, Scotland<sup>14</sup> who was not only musically literate but could also play *Ceòl Mór*. He was an extremely talented piper in the twentieth century Scottish style and after he joined the Pictou Highlanders in Halifax in the 1940s, he was appointed Pipe Major.<sup>15</sup> After the war Sandy adopted the life of an itinerant musician. He moved around the countryside, staying with host families and performing in rural areas, towns, and villages. Boyd moved in for extended periods of time and in exchange for room and board, he would often instruct family members and local children how to play the bagpipes.<sup>16</sup> During the 1960s and 70s, several of Boyd's students were well represented at the various piping competitions around Nova Scotia both as individual players, pipe band instructors, and as piping adjudicators.

One of the first aspects of the music to suffer was the repertoires of many of these new pipers. The traditional requirements for pipers, which included those recognized community functions within Gaelic society such as playing for dances, weddings, baptisms, funerals and gatherings, was replaced by a greater reliance on pipe band performance and a uniform Scottish musical tradition. Instead of memorizing hundreds of dance tunes, as their fathers and grandfathers were required to do, the new generation of pipers were content with learning a handful of band tunes, usually marches and

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<sup>13</sup> Barry W. Shears, *The Cape Breton Collection of Bagpipe Music* (Halifax: Published privately by author, 1995), p. ii.

<sup>14</sup> Gibson, *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 1745-1945*, pp. 206-207.

<sup>15</sup> Personal Interview. Alex Sutherland, Dartmouth.

<sup>16</sup> Some of his host families included the MacDonnell family of Deepdale; the MacKenzies of St. Peters; the MacNeils of Barra Glen; and the Beatons of Antigonish.

competition-style strathspeys and reels.<sup>17</sup> Pipe bands are only as good as their weakest players and so arrangements of tunes had to be adjusted to reflect the various levels of playing within a band.

During the twentieth century, additional influences continued to erode traditional piping in Nova Scotia. The continued arrival and influence of non Gaelic-speaking, Lowland Scottish pipers (Appendix E) was reinforced with further interaction between Scottish and Canadian pipers during the Second World War. Outward migration due to poor economic conditions in the province thinned out the numbers of traditionally trained pipers and left all but the most remote areas of the Nova Scotia *Gaidhealtachd* susceptible to change.<sup>18</sup>

On mainland Nova Scotia the pipe band movement continued to expand. In Halifax, the Clanranald Pipe Band was organized during the tenure of Premier Angus L. MacDonald, whose government at the time helped maintain the band.<sup>19</sup> After a cross-Canada tour by the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) pipe band in the late 1940s and a tour, a few years later, by the Vancouver Ladies Pipe Band, several interested parents in Nova Scotia decided to form all-girl pipe bands. This resulted in the formation of the four all female pipe bands in Pictou County.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Marches rose to prominence during the late nineteenth century as pipers, who had recently been recognized by the military establishment as musicians, were required to march soldiers from place to place. As previously mentioned the original dance forms associated with tune types such as strathspeys and reels had been replaced with a handful of display dances relegated now to competitions and Highland games. Dances, such as *Seann Triubhas* and others, incorporated European ballet technique and the musical form associated with these non-traditional dances changed to accommodate these external influences.

<sup>18</sup> Immigration to Ontario, and later Alberta, began to replace the 'Boston States' as a preferred destination in the 1950s.

<sup>19</sup> Personal Interview, Frank Carey, Halifax, 1974. This information was kindly forwarded to me in 1991 by the interviewer, Ken Grant, Halifax.

<sup>20</sup> These included the Heatherbell Girls Pipe Band, Pictou; Dunvegan Girls Pipe Band, Westville; Ceilidh Girls Pipe Band, New Glasgow; and the Balmoral Girls Pipe Band, Stellarton.

Most of these organizations recruited former army musicians as their piping and drumming instructors. Mike MacDougall, a veteran piper of World War One, was the first piping instructor of a band in Glace Bay and in his honour the band was named the MacDougall Girls Pipe Band and wore the MacDougall tartan. Sandy MacBeth and Ross Stone, former pipers with the North Nova Scotia Highlanders during the Second World War, were chosen as the piping instructors for the Balmoral Girls Pipe Band of Stellarton and the Truro Girls Pipe band respectively. Fraser Holmes, another World War One veteran piper, instructed the Ceilidh Girls Pipe Band of New Glasgow after its formation. The development of these all-female bands, dressed in tartan kilts and plaids (those bits of tartan which drape over the shoulder, affixed by a brooch), silk jackets and lace cuffs and blouses were the epitome of Scottish romanticism and made the promotion of Nova Scotia's Scottish heritage all the easier. The tartan-clad pipe band, although barely one hundred years old, came to represent a substantial segment of the musical culture of the Gael in Nova Scotia.<sup>21</sup>

The changes which resulted in this transformation among pipers, and possibly the entire concept of Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia, had their origins in the various Scottish and Highland societies which were formed in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the influence of the military on piping and, in the second half of the twentieth century, the Gaelic College at St. Ann's, Cape Breton.<sup>22</sup>

From the mid-eighteenth to the early nineteenth century onward, several societies devoted to the traditions and culture of Scotland emerged, in Nova Scotia, New

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<sup>21</sup> Campbell and MacLean, *Beyond the Atlantic Roar*, p.190. Campbell and MacLean denote very little space in their study of Nova Scotia Scots to the cultural importance of the bagpipe (or the violin) among the New World Gaels. Their comments on piping are both condescending and inaccurate.

<sup>22</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p.181.

Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.<sup>23</sup> In Nova Scotia these included the North British Society of Halifax (1768), the Highland Society of Nova Scotia (1838), the Caledonian Society of Cape Breton (1848), and later, the Antigonish Highland Society (1861). These organizations tended to mimic the parent Highland Society of London, both in structural composition and goals and their support for local Highland Games.

The men who filled the offices of these societies were drawn from the upper crust of society and included successful businessmen, government officials and local politicians. Other than supporting the occasional Highland Games, St. Andrew's banquets, and much later, Robbie Burns dinners, there appears to be very little interest among these societies in preserving anything but the outward trappings of Scottish culture in the Maritimes. It is unknown how much Gaelic, if any, was included in the regular meetings of these societies. The aims of the branches of the Highland Society of London established in North America were one of Anglo-centricity, education, loyalty, and an implied deference to the parent body.

The Branches of the Highland Society of London which are established in America, have been endeavoring to promote a loyal system of education among Scotch youth. Such societies are eminently calculated to advance educational objects and to train up the tender minds of youth in feelings of veneration for the wise and time honoured institutions of England.<sup>24</sup>

Venerating the "wise and time honoured institutions of England" may seem an odd goal for a society founded to preserve the language, music and culture of the Gael, but it must be remembered that the society was based in London and its membership included members of the aristocracy and a future King. The incongruous nature of this organization in its relationship to actual Gaelic culture in Scotland did not deter the

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<sup>23</sup> Alyce Taylor Cheska, 'The Antigonish Highland Games: A Community's Involvement in the Scottish Festival of Eastern Canada', *Nova Scotia Historical Review*, Vol 13, No 1, 1983, p.55-56.

<sup>24</sup> R. C. MacDonald, *Sketches of Highlanders*, p. 43.

Highland societies of Nova Scotia from adopting the Highland Society of London's goals and aims.

The first traditional Highland Games in North America were reputed to have been held in Prince Edward Island in 1838, under the auspices of the Caledonian Club of Prince Edward Island. This was followed by similar gatherings sponsored by the Caledonian Society of Cape Breton at Sydney in 1848, the Highland Society of Antigonish in 1863<sup>25</sup> and the New Glasgow Caledonia Club in 1866.<sup>26</sup> These Highland Games shared a common program of competitions in track and field, solo piping and step-dancing, and by the mid-nineteenth century, Gaelic reading, Gaelic song and Best Highland Costume.<sup>27</sup> The number of Highland games held in Nova Scotia increased during the mid-twentieth century. In addition to the Antigonish Highland Games, the village of Pugwash initiated the Gathering of the Clans, held in conjunction with their Dominion Day celebrations; New Glasgow's Festival of the Tartans; and the week long celebrations at the Gaelic Mod at St Ann's. Several smaller, short-lived Highland games were held at Glace Bay (1967), Inverness (1972), and at various times, Sydney and Halifax. These Highland gatherings emphasized competition in solo and band piping, drumming, Highland dancing and some athletic events but by the 1970s there ceased to be any Gaelic events.

Despite pockets of literate piping throughout Nova Scotia it was not until the mid-1950s that a concerted effort was made to fully develop piping in Nova Scotia, via Cape

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>26</sup> *Eastern Chronicle*, September, 1866.

<sup>27</sup> George MacLaren, *The Pictou Book* (New Glasgow: The Hector Publishing Company, 1954), pp.261-262.

Breton, on the modern Scottish form. This would be instituted by the Gaelic College in Victoria County, one of the most Gaelicized areas in Cape Breton.

A major step to promote the Gaelic culture as a living, breathing entity was achieved with the founding, in 1939, of the Gaelic College, at St. Ann's, Cape Breton. Its original plan was to develop extension courses in the Gaelic language, its music and poetry, but within less than two decades it was barely recognizable as a Gaelic language and cultural centre and was more of a driving force for the importation of literate Scottish piping and modern 'Scottish-ness' such as tartan and Highland dancing.<sup>28</sup> This effort was spearheaded by an immigrant Scot named Reverend A.W.R. MacKenzie (1891-1967). A.W.R., as he became known, was born at Portree, Isle of Skye. He immigrated first to the United States and later to Canada. After service with Canada's Black Watch during World War One he eventually became a Presbyterian minister and in 1935 accepted a pastoral charge at Baddeck, Cape Breton.<sup>29</sup>

MacKenzie's dream was to rekindle a pride in the areas of Scottish heritage and transform Cape Breton into a miniature "Scotland in North America". MacKenzie was keenly aware of the precarious position of Gaelic culture in eastern Nova Scotia and was at times critical of the way the Gael of Nova Scotia was

Allowing his rich heritage of Gaelic to decline: bagpipe music could be heard in a few isolated glens; Highland dancing had died completely; Clan sentiment and Clanship lore were being forgotten; the whole island could boast only a single Pipe Band outside military circles.<sup>30</sup>

MacKenzie was only partially correct in these assumptions. Piping in rural areas was in decline and, during the years between the First and Second World Wars, fared

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<sup>28</sup> Gilbert Foster, *Language and Poverty: The Persistence of Scottish Gaelic in Eastern Nova Scotia* (St John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1988), p.93.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* p. 83.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* p. 85.

little better in the urban districts. Scottish Highland dancing was a relatively new dance form in Nova Scotia, mostly associated with the early twentieth-century immigrant Lowland Scots, such as George Dey, and generally confined to the larger cities and towns. It had not “died completely” because the present form had never existed among the Gaelic population. Courses in indigenous Cape Breton step-dancing and fiddling would have to wait forty years after the Gaelic College’s founding before, in 1979, they were finally considered to be acceptable, teachable subjects.

A.W.R. MacKenzie sought to establish a centre for promoting Gaelic language, music and dance. While the concept was accepted by many, the subsequent introduction of a modern twentieth-century romantic view of Scotland eventually alienated those who were part of the indigenous Gaelic culture.

Almost from its beginnings, the Gaelic College fully embraced the modern cultural stylings and stereotypes of Scotland. It largely ignored Nova Scotia’s own native Gaelic traditions or gave them a decidedly secondary status and set about introducing one ‘Scottish’ expert after another to help educate local people in the error of their ways.<sup>31</sup>

In 1949, Major Calum Iain Norman MacLeod was brought over from Scotland to teach at the Gaelic College and was subsequently appointed Gaelic advisor to the Nova Scotia Department of Education. Although a fluent Gaelic-speaker, scholar and piper, he appears to have had little interest in local Gaelic instrumental music.

In spite of his qualification as a Gaelic scholar, there is little evidence that Macleod ever realized that he was in an environment with a richer, more traditional form of instrumental music and dance than he had known in Scotland. He appears to have taken little interest in the Nova Scotian Gaelic traditions but instead threw himself into the task of introducing the modern Scottish varieties- piping in the modern style, Highland dance in

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<sup>31</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p.181.

the *very latest style*, and even Scottish country dance, which had no basis in Gaelic culture whatsoever.<sup>32</sup>

For a cultural centre such as the Gaelic College, situated as it was in a declining rural community, the cost of flying and feting overseas instructors every summer was an expense the College could ill afford.<sup>33</sup> A.W.R. MacKenzie set about raising money from a variety of sources from all over North America. During the 1950s he instituted a “Celtic Tour” taking kilted pipers, drummers and Highland dancers on pilgrimages to major North American cities in effort to secure future funding.<sup>34</sup> MacKenzie eventually alienated local members of the Gaelic community and, as the College became focused on romantic distortions of Highland culture, it was nicknamed “The Tartan Circus” by its detractors.

The Gaelic College had certainly been successful in raising the awareness of the island’s Gaelic language and culture during the first ten years of its existence. The problem was that most Gaels living in Cape Breton had become increasingly ambivalent towards their language. Without the continued support of the local Gaelic community the Gaelic College became more of a tourist centre, relying on donations, volunteer workers and proceeds from its successful Gift Shop to keep the College afloat.<sup>35</sup> By the 1970s, the financially burdened Gaelic College became a ward of the provincial government.<sup>36</sup> While government support was necessary to keep MacKenzie’s dream alive, this action hastened the metamorphosis from Gaelic cultural centre to tourist attraction. Using the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 181. MacLeod did collect and publish two books on Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia, *Sgialachdan a Albainn Nuaidh* and *Bardachd a Albainn Nuaidh*; and worked jointly with Helen Creighton on *Gaelic Songs of Nova Scotia*.

<sup>33</sup> James Lamb, *Celtic Crusader* (Hantsport NS: Lancelot Press, 1992), p. 48.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p.42.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p.40.

<sup>36</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p. 247.

idea of tartans and other props, the government of the time continued to tie the provincial tourism strategy to a modified Victorian concept of Scottish culture.<sup>37</sup>

In the first decade and a half, local piping instructors were hired by A.W.R., but by the mid-1950s, professional pipers from Scotland were employed to teach the newer Scottish style at the expense of the regional forms of pipe music still prevalent at the time. Traditional dance was also affected. James L. MacKenzie, a Champion Highland dancer from Scotland, was engaged to teach Highland dancing, to the detriment of Cape Breton's Highland immigrant dance styles. Writing in the *Piping Times* in January, 1995 Seumas MacNeill reminisced about his and James L. MacKenzie's early days at the Gaelic College and, in typical colonial attitude, criticized the native dances of the Scottish Gael in Nova Scotia.

The great James L. MacKenzie spent an evening learning some of the steps, which of course he picked up very quickly. When it was suggested to him that this was a form of dancing which had come from Scotland but had died out in the home country, he laughed at the idea. To him it was obvious that this was a form of Irish dancing but in a country where Ireland and Scotland are fused together in people's minds it was probably wishful thinking to attribute the dance to the wrong source.<sup>38</sup>

While such diatribes against local tradition and its simplicity were not isolated occurrences it did not hinder MacNeill's acceptance as an authority on "traditional" piping by local promoters during his brief visits to Cape Breton. In retrospect, it is astounding that personalities such as C.I.N. MacLeod, Seumas MacNeill and James L. MacKenzie could influence an entire generation against the merits of their own culture. This influence highlights the precarious position of traditional piping within the context of a changing social milieu and re-evaluation of what constituted true Scottish culture.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Seumas MacNeill, Editorial, *Piping Times*, January 1995, p. 16.

The Gaelic College did employ local pipers as instructors in the early days including J. J. MacKinnon, piper, fiddler, and Gaelic playwright, of Sydney,<sup>39</sup> Bill Sutherland, a Presbyterian minister at Marion Bridge,<sup>40</sup> and Roddy Nicholson,<sup>41</sup> a veteran piper of the First World War. MacKinnon lasted a few years and Sutherland, who was originally from Ontario, joined the army as a Chaplain, went overseas during the Second World War and did not return to Cape Breton.

When the Gaelic College embarked on its series of summer school sessions in the early 1950s, Rod Nicholson became the chief instructor. Nicholson had been a piping student of Pipe Major MacKenzie Baillie and while overseas had several classes with some of the premiere Scottish Army pipers at the time. In 1951, the Gaelic College decided to offer a summer school at St. Ann's and a winter session for pipers and drummers in Sydney. Extension courses in piping were held at the Venetian Gardens in Sydney and in preparation for the celebration surrounding the opening of the Canso Causeway in 1955, almost one hundred piping students were learning to play the bagpipe. The Gaelic College enlisted the services of Pipe Major Danny MacIntyre and later, his brother Peter, to teach the winter sessions and assist MacNeill during his summer visits. Danny MacIntyre was a devoted instructor who had learned piping first from his father, Joe Hughie MacIntyre, a traditional style from French Road, Cape Breton County, but later embraced the modern piping traditions espoused by military-trained pipers such as Rod Nicholson of Sydney. Danny spent much of his leisure time teaching modern piping for little or no remuneration and even less recognition. While Danny and Peter MacIntyre instructed students for a good part of the calendar year during the 1950s, it was Seumas

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<sup>39</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p. 245.

<sup>40</sup> Personal Interview, Fred MacPherson, Marion Bridge.

<sup>41</sup> Personal Interview, Danny MacIntyre, Sydney.

MacNeill, who after spending a few weeks each summer at St. Ann's, starting in 1954, was given most of the credit for the progress and success enjoyed by many of the pipers.

The Gaelic College employed the services of Seumas MacNeil, Principal of the recently founded College of Piping in Glasgow, Scotland in an effort to attract world recognition for the quality of its summer school staff. The plan succeeded, and over the next few summers students from all over Nova Scotia and indeed North America were spending a few weeks of their summer holidays studying Scottish bagpipe music, drumming, Scottish Highland dancing and Gaelic, and the mandatory wearing of the kilt.

The finest instructors in piping, dancing and Gaelic were brought over from Scotland; the standard of teaching seemed unequalled, not only in North America, but in Scotland itself. In the United States, enrolment in the summer classes conferred a social cachet upon young students, and wealthy families planned vacations to suit a Scots college in distant Nova Scotia.<sup>42</sup>

Unfortunately MacNeill possessed no knowledge of Nova Scotia Gaelic musical traditions and very little understanding of Gaelic culture in his own country.<sup>43</sup> His job, as he perceived it, was to re-educate the local populace on the proper way to play the bagpipe and, as the co-author of "a new and improved" bagpipe tutor (which would eventually sell over one hundred thousand copies), he set about to denigrate any existing local musical traditions.<sup>44</sup> He dismissed local pipers as being decidedly inferior to the Scottish model and, with the help of A.W.R. MacKenzie and the local media, managed to reinforce the modern style of piping, especially in Cape Breton.<sup>45</sup>

MacNeill was not alone in his dismissal of local traditions; successive piping and dancing instructors at the Gaelic College from Scotland and, later Ontario (where

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<sup>42</sup> Lamb, *Celtic Crusader*, p. 41.

<sup>43</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p.182.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Personal Interview, Danny MacIntyre.

traditional forms of piping had been eliminated much earlier), continued to disparage local traditions by branding them as second rate. What seemed to be at stake were the promotion of “traditional” pipe music and the ownership of tradition. Scottish pipers claimed to be the true exponents of “traditional” pipe music and totally dismissed the notion that there existed in Cape Breton a much older, more authentic form of bagpipe playing. MacNeill came to Cape Breton, not to learn but to teach and to promote his own musical interpretations and notions of correctness. He was not interested in researching differing piping styles, tunes or piping folklore. MacNeill dismissed the musical interpretations of Nova Scotian Gaels as practically worthless and was confident that Canadian pipers only became worth listening to after they were systematically re-taught by Scottish pipers, particularly himself.<sup>46</sup>

In one sense, MacNeill epitomized the neglect Nova Scotians had shown toward their own musical culture. For much of the twentieth century, the goal of the piping establishment in Nova Scotia has been to dismiss any local tradition and “to copy, as closely as possible, the prescribed style laid out by cultural traditions in the Scottish Lowlands.”<sup>47</sup> The Gaelic piping traditions of Nova Scotia were overshadowed by the more powerful members of the piping establishment in Scotland. There was a lot at stake. Several members of the piping community in Scotland were associated with thriving businesses in bagpipe related paraphernalia such as the production of instruments, tutor books, music collections, and the manufacture of tartan kilts, jackets and other accoutrements associated with Scottish culture. In addition, the concept of a bagpipe summer school, which had its origins at the Gaelic College, was being adopted by other

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<sup>46</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p.182.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* p.179.

areas of North America, such as the Thousand Island's School of Scottish Performing Arts in Ontario and similar summer schools in Saskatchewan and California. The piping instructors at these various summer schools included Seumas MacNeill and a host of other top competitive pipers from Scotland. What better way to promote the Scottish tourist trade internationally than with regular summer visits from some of Scotland's top and most influential performers.

The most prominent members of the piping establishment in Scotland were not only frequently ignorant of Gaelic culture but also tended to be intolerant of the challenge its aesthetic presented to their own brand of traditionalism. Proponents of the modern style in Scotland claimed ultimate and indisputable authority over the tradition and sought to legitimize their stylistic innovations through reference to an almost apostolic line of pipers, which they claimed represented the only true link to the past. Quite simply, in that sort of intellectual environment, there was no room for such radically differing traditional styles, and the piping establishment vigorously dismissed the Gaelic style as inferior to its own, in order to establish and protect its authority. Most of what followed in Nova Scotia was "purely momentum and, more often than not, well intentioned".<sup>48</sup>

In this environment of narrow-mindedness the Gaelic-flavoured piping traditions of Scotland had been largely eliminated by the mid-twentieth century. That is not to say that the tradition of ear-learned dance piping in Nova Scotia was in a healthy state- it wasn't. Piping had been in decline in most areas of the province after about 1930. In the cities fewer musicians were being trained, and changing fashions in entertainment brought on by the shift from rural to urban life, improvements in communication and transportation, limited the need for community pipers and severely curtailed opportunities

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

to perform. The culture of the Gael in the New World has always had its ups and down. Early local historians mention a “Gaelic Revival” as early as 1917.<sup>49</sup> This unfortunately did not materialize. Perceptions among many native speakers, especially in the towns and villages, that their language and culture were inferior continued largely unabated among their descendants. Gradual erosion of Gaelic-speaking areas, and with it many of its traditional arts, has persisted despite several attempts to save it. Gaelic culture, and with it, traditional-style piping, weakened first in Colchester and Pictou counties in the late nineteenth century. By the 1930s and 40s it was in retreat in Antigonish and Richmond counties and parts of Inverness, Victoria and Cape Breton counties. It declined first in those regions which bordered mainly English-speaking communities and industrialized centres, but eventually affected all areas of the Nova Scotia *Gaidhealtachd*. For many Gaels in Nova Scotia it became easier to display one’s Scottish heritage by wearing a tartan tie, or wearing a kilt on special occasions, rather than maintaining a second language and its cultural adjuncts.

New pipers were still being trained in Nova Scotia, and in significant numbers, but their roles in society had changed. Many of these pipers were amateur players and a large percentage of them gave up piping after reaching adulthood. The growth of pipe bands, with their limited repertoires and performance requirements, severed any link with the ear-trained community piper. Traditional piping was seen by young pipers as an historical anomaly and by the 1970s there were only a handful of these ear-trained musicians left in Nova Scotia. The tradition consisted of a few elderly men and women who had learned their piping skills in early twentieth-century, rural Nova Scotia and who had been marginalized by new attitudes towards Scottish culture and music in the

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<sup>49</sup> R. Gillis, *Stray Leaves from Highland History*, p. 36.

province and by overall trends in leisure and recreation in a broader North American culture.

By the 1970s the transformation of the bagpiper in Nova Scotia society from a Gaelic-influenced community musician to a literate competitive piper was complete. The number of active pipe bands in Nova Scotia had increased considerably from two decades earlier and almost every weekend in the summer was taken up by Highland games and Scottish concerts. The mandatory wearing of a kilt during competitions and for presentation of awards, and the spectacle of kilted pipe bands marching in numerous parades, assured at least the visual presence of Scottish culture. Instructors were still being brought over from Scotland to teach piping and drumming at the Gaelic College and pipers in Nova Scotia continued to be exposed to the very latest developments in repertoire and pipe band performance in Scotland. The links with traditional piping had finally been severed. The reality is that, while commercially successful and important to the tourist industry of the province, none of this reflects the actual traditional piping culture of Nova Scotia.

## Conclusion

The Scots carried the pipes to the new land and there have always been those willing to retain the music and associated traditions. The proper setting for the pipes is a band parade: there, in the expanse of outdoors, in the required regalia and ritual, pipers produce their greatest effect. Participation in such activities has become almost a full-time occupation for some during the summer months in eastern Nova Scotia. During that time thousands of “diaspora” return home to participate in the leisure culture on an ethnic or regional basis. Though the bands are composed largely of young girls who eventually lose interest or move away, there are always those willing to replace them and the pipers may therefore witness the demise of the fiddlers.<sup>1</sup>

It has been a long journey for one of the most recognizable icons in Scottish music in Nova Scotia. The image of the kilted piper playing alone, or *en masse* with a pipe band, has become synonymous not only with Scotland but also with Nova Scotia. This colourful depiction illustrates how the Great Highland Bagpipe in Nova Scotia has managed to secure a niche in present-day society. From the bagpipe’s permanent arrival in Nova Scotia around 1773 to its present use in countless tourism brochures and advertising, street parades and Highland games, the bagpipe has managed to survive changing trends in entertainment and leisure and a collapsing cultural base which once supported it. In order to make this transformation a success the Nova Scotia piper has had to adapt to changing times and both external and internal pressures.

The Gaelic language and the music of the pipes were intertwined for much of the bagpipe’s presence in Nova Scotia, and in many ways traditional piping in Nova Scotia mirrored the fate of the Gaelic language. The relative isolation of many of the nineteenth century Gaelic communities in Nova Scotia was a period of growth both in

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<sup>1</sup> Campbell and MacLean, *Beyond the Atlantic Roar*, p. 190.

population, economic stability and the numbers of people who could perform and be entertained by the music of the bagpipe. Outward migration and industrialization in the province during the late nineteenth century de-stabilized many of these smaller communities and contributed to a decline in the number of Gaelic-speakers and traditional musicians. The arrival of Lowland Scottish pipers to Nova Scotia's growing industrial base (part of a much larger European workforce) throughout much of the first half of the twentieth century, and through two world wars, afforded Nova Scotia pipers an opportunity to observe, and be influenced by, changes which had occurred in Scotland in the hundred years since major immigration to Nova Scotia had ceased. Gradually the regional fingering styles, technique and tune repertoire brought to Nova Scotia with the original Highland settlers were replaced with a homogeneous form of bagpipe playing which was rooted in mid-twentieth century Scotland. The musicians who clung to the older styles were criticized as being backward and incorrect and, as Gaelic culture eventually slipped away, many of these pipers died without passing on their knowledge to anyone. There was little interest in preserving or perpetuating this particular aspect of Gaelic culture.

This transformation has been so effective that most pipers today refuse to entertain the idea that there was any other way to play the bagpipe, let alone acknowledge that the older, and probably more authentic style, continued in some areas of Nova Scotia until well into the twentieth century.

Similarly the language and culture of the Gael in Nova Scotia has been gradually replaced with the Victorian/Lowland Scottish stereotype of a kilted, Haggis-eating, Robbie Burns-quoting Scot, festooned in a costume of dubious authenticity. This

“Cult of Clanship”<sup>2</sup> did little to preserve and promote either Gaelic or traditional piping. In the nineteenth century Scottish writers such as James MacPherson, Sir Walter Scott and James Logan, succeeded in re-defining the culture of Scottish Gael. In Nova Scotia a similar metamorphosis occurred during the mid-twentieth century. These changes were spear-headed by organizations such as the Gaelic College and supported by the media and an emerging tourist industry.<sup>3</sup>

As a result traditional piping withered and died in many areas of the province as the English language and customs gradually replaced Gaelic. During the twentieth century the bagpipe was further displaced as a social instrument by more modern forms of entertainment and more versatile musical instruments, such as the violin. The community pipers of the nineteenth and early twentieth century were gradually replaced with musicians who represented standards of the modern Scottish style, and who were increasingly restricted in their function. During the mid-twentieth century there was renewed interest in bagpipe playing, but this occurred outside the Gaelic cultural community and did not reflect traditional or regional styles. Once the connection to this cultural community was severed, the role of the Highlander piper in Nova Scotia society changed from one of Highland minstrel to not much more than a tourist “prop”.

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<sup>2</sup> Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, p. 247.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 247. See also MacKay, ‘Tartanism Triumphant’.

## APPENDIX A

A Partial List of Early Immigrant Pipers from Scotland to Nova Scotia, 1773-1848 gleaned from sources cited in the bibliography, land grants applications, and family lore.

Abbreviations used: s/o- son of, b/o- brother of.

Name	Native of	Settled	Year	Comments
Campbell, Angus	Benbecula	Salmon River	c.1840	piper, fiddler, bard
Campbell, Neil	Mull	Alba Station		piper
Carmichael, John	Lewis	Tarbotvale	c.1848	piper
Chisholm, Kenneth	Strathglas	Antigonish	c.1801	Piper to Chisholm of Strathglas, killed by a falling tree, c.1833
Ferguson, Robert	North Uist	Catalone	c. 1829	Black Watch, veteran piper of Waterloo
Gillis, John	Morar	Bein Eoin	c. 1814	piper/fiddler
Johnson, Hector	Coll	River John	c. 1818	piper, later moved to PEI
MacAulay, Donald	Poss. Barra	Washabuck	c. 1817	piper
McCarle, Donald	?	Middle River	1814	piper
MacCormack, Allan	South Uist	West Lake Ainslie		piper
MacCrimmon, Donald	Skye	Shelburne	c. 1778	Via North Carolina. Hereditary piper to MacLeod of Dunvegan
MacDonald, Alexander known as 'The Big Piper'	?	Antigonish		piper
MacDonald, Alexander	Moidart	West Lake Ainslie	via PEI	piper
MacDonald, Archibald	Lochaber	Mount Young	1831	piper/fiddler
MacDonald, Donald	?	Halifax		piper, North British Society
MacDonald, Donald	Glen Urquhart	Thorburn		piper
MacDonald, Finlay	Glen Urquhart	MacLellan's Mtn	1801	piper
MacDonald	?	Sunnybrae		piper and pipe maker

Name	Native of	Settled	Year	Comments
MacDonald, Big Ronald	?	River Denys Mtn		piper
MacDonnell, Donald	Glengarry	Inverness		piper
MacDonnell, John		Inverness		piper
MacDougall, Angus Ban	?	West Lake Ainslie		piper
MacDougall, Donald	Arisaig	Inverness	c.1818	piper
MacDougall, Duncan	?	Halifax		piper, North British Society
MacGillivray, Hugh	?	Glenmorrison		piper
MacGillivray, John	Moidart	Malignant Cove	1818	piper and bard to MacDonald of Glenaladale
MacGregor, Alexander	?	Nine Mile River	1783	piper, 84 <sup>th</sup> Royal Highland Emigrants
MacGregor, Alexander	?	Halifax		piper, North British Society
MacInnis, John	North Uist	Kennington Cove		piper
MacIntosh, Kenneth	?	Halifax		piper, North British Society
MacIntyre, Duncan	South Uist	North Side East	c.1844	piper, s/o Lauchlin
MacIntyre, Lauchlin	South Uist	Beechmont	c.1844	piper, bard
MacIntyre, Donald Born 1748	South Uist	Boisdale	c.1820	piper
MacIntyre, Robert	Rannoch	Port Hood	c.1813	Clanranald's piper
MacIsaac, Alexander 'Ban'	Moidart	Giants Lake	c.1843	piper and

Name	Native of	Settled	Year	Comments
				pipe maker
MacKay, Angus	Gairloch	Pictou	1805	piper, s/o John Roy
MacKay, John	Gairloch	Pictou	1805	piper, s/o John Roy
MacKay, John Roy	Gairloch	Pictou	1805	Hereditary piper to MacKenzie of Gairloch
MacKenzie, John		Halifax	c. 1846	piper
MacKinnon, Archibald 1784-1872	Muck	East Lake Ainslie	1820	piper/ fiddler,
MacKinnon, Hugh born c. 1818	Barra	Woodbine		piper
MacKinnon, John A.	Skye	Meat Cove		piper
MacLean, 'Father' Allan born 1811	Morar	Judique	1857	piper/ fiddler, step-dancer
MacLean, Duncan	?	Shelburne		Via North Carolina piper, 76 <sup>th</sup> MacDonald Highlanders
MacLean, John	Barra	Big Pond	1831	piper
MacLean, Murdock	?	Halifax		piper, North British Society
MacLean, Neil died 1820	?	MacNab's Island		piper
MacLean, Peter	Barra	Washabuck	1817	piper, b/o Roderick
MacLean, Roderick	Barra	Washabuck	1817	piper
MacLeod, Donald 1791-1875	Skye	Landsdowne	c.1817	Black Watch, Veteran piper of Quatre Bras
Macleod, Alexander	South Uist	French Road		piper
Macleod, John	?	River Denys Mountain		piper

Name	Native of	Settled	Year	Comments
MacMillan, Donald 'Mor' born c. 1811	South Uist	Glenmorrison	1841	piper
MacMillan, James born c. 1822	South Uist	Glenmorrison	1841	piper, b/o Donald 'Mor'
MacMillan, Neil	South Uist	Glenmorrison	1841	piper, b/o Donald 'Mor', later returned to Scotland
MacMullin, Neil	North Uist	Red Islands		piper/ fiddler
MacNeil, Donald born c. 1758	Barra	Rua Dileas	1818	piper,
MacNeil, John	?	Big Bras d'Or		piper
MacNeil, Hector	Barra	Pipers Cove	1805	piper
MacNeil, Rory	Barra	Pipers Cove	1805	piper
MacNeil, ?	?	Cape North		piper
MacPhee, John	South Uist	French Road	c.1828	piper
MacPhee, Jonathon born 1835	Barra	East Bay		piper
MacPherson, Alexander	North Uist	New Boston		piper
MacPherson, Hector	?	Halifax		piper, North British Society
MacQuarrie, Archibald	Eigg	Antigonish	1852	piper, settled first at River Denys, later moved to Antigonish
MacQuarrie, John	Eigg	Antigonish	1852	piper, b/o Archibald
MacVicar, Neil 1779-1861	North Uist	Catalone	1829	Black Watch, Veteran piper of Waterloo
Matheson, Dougald	Lochalsh	River Denys		piper

Name	Native of	Settled	Year	Comments
Morrison, Angus 1792-1878	Harris	St. Annes	c. 1826	piper
Ross, Alexander	Dornoch	Pictou	c.1817	piper, s/o Robert Ross
Ross, Robert 1769-1843	Dornoch	Pictou	c.1817	piper and pipe maker
Ross, William	Dornoch	Pictou	c. 1817	piper, s/o Robert Ross
Steele, Donald born 1827	South Uist	Boisdale		piper, later moved to Glace Bay
Stewart, Donald	?	Mira		piper

## APPENDIX B

A Partial List of Second, Third, and Fourth Generation Pipers in Nova Scotia

Abbreviations: s/o- son of, d/o- daughter of, s/o-sister of, b/o- brother of, n/o-nephew of.

The information contained in this list was gleaned from sources quoted in the bibliography, newspaper clippings and personal interviews. This list does not include pipers born after 1910.

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
Beaton, Ambrose	b.1889	Black River	piper/ fiddler, moved to Detroit
Beaton, Angus Ranald	1866-1933	Mabou	piper/fiddler
Beaton, Archie A.	1840-1923	Mabou	described as a 'Professor' of pipe music
Beaton, 'Old' Donald	born c. 1855	Mabou	piper/fiddler
Beaton, 'Young' Donald	born c. 1860	Mabou	piper/fiddler, b/o 'Old' Donald
Beaton, Norman	c.1847-1891	Middle River	piper/dancer, moved to San Francisco
Beaton, Ranald	1858-1960	Mabou	piper/fiddler/bard, known in Gaelic as <i>Rannuill Mairi Bhan</i>
Beaton, Walter	c.1855-1922	Middle River	piper/fiddler, b/o of Norman
Briand, George		L'ardoise	piper/fiddler, Acadian descent
Brown, John		Bay St Lawrence	piper, moved to Washabuck
Buchanan, W.J.		Ingonish	piper, 185 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, WWI, moved to British Columbia
Calder, Fred	1868-1955	West Bay	piper, moved to Dawson City, settled in Cache Creek, B.C.
Cameron, John W. H.	1839-1925	Springville	piper, moved to Dartmouth, later returned to New Glasgow
Campbell, Hector		Judique	piper/ bard
Campbell, Fred		Judique	piper and pipe maker
Campbell, Michael	1876-1962	Boisdale	piper, later moved to Sydney
Campbell, Michael		Rear Hay Cove	piper/fiddler

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
Campbell, Neil	born c. 1847	Judique	piper
Campbell, Peter	born c. 1845	Hay Cove	piper/fiddler, moved to Bangor, Maine
Campbell, Robert		Scotsville	piper, moved to Boston c. 1914
Campbell, Roderick		North side East Bay	piper
Carmichael, John	1872-1964	Tarbotvale	piper, s/o John Carmichael, immigrant piper
Chisholm, 'Big' Colin	1845-1928	Marydale	piper
Chisholm, Duncan	1887-1947	Marydale	piper, s/o 'Big' Colin
Chisholm, John		Marydale	piper
Chisholm, John J.	died 1935	Maryvale	piper/historian, later moved to Pictou
Currie, Peter		MacAdams Lake	piper/ step-dancer
Currie, Lauchie		MacAdams Lake	piper, s/o Peter
Forbes, Charles	1855-1935	Old Barns	piper, later moved to Milford, NS
Gillies, Dougal		Pleasant Valley	piper, lived for awhile in Montana, c. 1905
Gillis, Alex		Margaree	piper, s/o Hugh, moved to Winnipeg
Gillis, Dan		Margaree	piper, b/o Peter
Gillis, Donald		Margaree	piper, b/o Hugh
Gillis, Duncan	born c. 1855	Grand Mira	piper and pipe maker
Gillis, Hugh	died 1905	Margaree	piper, died at Louisburg, b/o Donald
Gillis, James D.	1870-1964	Melrose Hill	piper/ fiddler/bard/author

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
Gillis, John		MacAdam's Lake	piper/fiddler
Gillis, Joe Lauchie		Grand Mira North	piper
Gillis, Malcolm H.	1856-1929	South West Margaree	piper/ fiddler/bard
Gillis, 'Young' Malcolm		South West Margaree	piper, s/o Malcolm H., went to Boston
Gillis, Peter		Margaree	piper, b/o Dan Gillis
Gillis, Ranald		South West Margaree	piper/fiddler
Gillis, Simon	born c. 1826	<i>Ben Eoin</i>	piper/fiddler
Harrington, William	1874-1948	Loganville	piper, moved to Kamloops, British Columbia
Henderson, John R. H.		Camden	piper, b/o Matt
Henderson, Matt	1892-1956	Camden	piper/fiddler/guitar player
Henderson, Winnifred		Camden	piper, b/o Matt
Holland, 'Big' John	1875-1960	Louisburg	piper, grandson of immigrant piper, Robert Ferguson
Holmes, Andrew		MacPhersons Mills	piper, learned with his son, Fraser
Holmes, Fraser	1897-1981	New Glasgow	piper, s/o Andrew Holmes
Jamieson, Neil	1837-1929	Piper's Glen	piper, moved to Whitney Pier
Jamieson, John	1870-1944	Piper's Glen	piper, s/o Neil, moved to Glace Bay
Jamieson, Charlie	born 1874	Piper's Glen	piper, s/o Neil, moved to Glace Bay
Jamieson, Charlotte	born 1880	Piper's Glen	piper, d/o Neil, married and settled at Sydney

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
Jamieson, Hector	born c. 1881	Piper's Glen	piper, s/o Neil, moved to Boston
Jamieson, James	born c. 1882	Piper's Glen	piper, s/o Neil, moved to Garry, Indiana
Jamieson, Jean		Piper's Glen	piper, d/o Neil
Jamieson, Flora	born 1877	Piper's Glen	piper, d/o Neil moved to Garry, Ind.
<b>Appendix B (continued)</b>			
Jamieson, Mary Jane	born 1878	Piper's Glen	piper, d/o Neil, married Archie D. MacLellan, Egypt Road
Jamieson, May		Piper's Glen	piper, d/o Neil, married a MacNeil and settled at Whitney Pier
Kennedy, Ronald	1870-1958	Broad Cove Chapel	piper/fiddler/step-dancer
Lynk, Anthony		Louisburg	piper
Lynk, Rodney	c. 1880-1950	Annapolis Valley	piper, moved to Maine
MacAdam, J. J.		East Bay	piper, 85 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, moved to Sydney
MacAskill, D. A.	died 1935	Loch Lomond	piper/fiddler, 246 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, died in Glace Bay
MacAskill, Donald John		Canoe Lake	piper, moved to Boston
MacAskill, ?		River Denys Mtn	piper
MacCormick, Duncan		Frenchvale	piper, b/o Kate
MacCormick, 'Little' Kate		Frenchvale	piper/step-dancer, b/o Duncan
MacCuish, ?		Glendale	piper, possibly moved to Pictou County
MacDonald, Alex		Lakevale	piper
MacDonald, Alex	c.1850	Sunnybrae	piper

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
MacDonald, Alexander		Springfield	piper
MacDonald, Alex S.	1893-1966	South West Margaree	piper/fiddler
MacDonald, Allan B.		Kenloch	piper
MacDonald, Allan C.		East Bay	piper, settled at New Waterford
MacDonald, 'Big' Angus		Little Mabou/ Colindale	piper, 185 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, moved to Ontario
MacDonald, Angus L.		Dunvegan	piper, Premier of Nova Scotia
MacDonald, Angus 'D.F.'	1893-1978	West Lake Ainslie	piper, 85 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, moved to Kingston, Ont.
MacDonald, Angus 'The Ridge'		Lower South River	piper/ fiddler/bard
MacDonald, 'Black' Angus	1849-1939	Mount Young	piper/fiddler
MacDonald, Archie		Grand River	piper
MacDonald, Augustus 'Gusty'		Springfield	piper, b/o Dave
MacDonald, Dannie 'Donald Big Ranald'		River Denys Mtn	piper
MacDonald, Dan 'Uisdean'		Soldiers Cove	piper
MacDonald, Dan A.		French Road	piper, moved to Bridgeport
MacDonald, Dan C.		East Bay	piper, b/o Allan C. MacDonald
MacDonald, Dave		Springfield	piper, b/o John
MacDonald, Donald 'Grace'	died c. 1917	Glencoe	piper
MacDonald, Duncan		Glace Bay	piper/fiddler
MacDonald, Elizabeth		Lower River Inhabitants	piper
MacDonald, Frederick 'D.F.'	1891-1973	West Lake Ainslie	piper, 85 <sup>th</sup> Battalion
MacDonald, Hector		Antigonish	piper

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
MacDonald, Hugh		Soldiers Cove	piper, b/o Black Jack
MacDonald, 'Black' Jack		Soldiers Cove	piper, 185 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, WWI
MacDonald, James		French Road	piper, s/o Mary MacDonald
MacDonald, John		Big Glace Bay	piper, won 'Best Piper' in 1876, Glace Bay
MacDonald, John Alex		River Denys Mtn	piper/ fiddler, b/o Dannie' Donald Big Ranald'
MacDonald, John Francis 'Jack'		Big Bras d'Or	piper/fiddler
MacDonald, John 'Jack'	1885-1971	Springfield	piper, n/o Alexander
MacDonald, Joseph		French Road	piper, s/o Mary MacDonald
MacDonald, Mary		French Road	chanter player, (nee' MacIntyre)
MacDonald, Michael (Mike)		Macleod's Hill, Whitney Pier	piper
MacDonald, 'Red' Mick		Morien Hill	piper/fiddler
MacDonald, Rannie Dan		North Side East Bay	piper
MacDonald, Sandy Malcolm	1860-1947	River Denys Mtn	piper
MacDonald, William		Antigonish	piper, s/o Hector
MacDonnell, Angus Hughie		River Denys Road	piper/fiddler
MacDonnell, Alexander 'Mor'		<i>Gleann Mor</i>	piper
MacDonell, Jim		Inverness	piper
MacDonnell, Neil		Gorry's Mountain	piper
MacDonnell, Sandy		Inverness	piper
MacDougall, Angus	1834-1919	Judique	piper
MacDougall, Catherine c.	1835-c.1905	Rear Christmas Island	piper
MacDougall, Dan Rory	1885-1957	Ingonish	piper/fiddler

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
MacDougall, 'Old' Mike		Sugar Loaf	piper/fiddler
MacDougall, Rory	1848-1936	Bay St Lawrence	piper/fiddler
MacEachen, Fadrick	born c.1847	River Denys Mtn	piper and pipe maker
MacEachern, Allan R.		North Side East Bay	piper
MacEachern, Angus		MacEachern Road	piper
MacEachern, Dan		Grand Mira North	piper
MacEachern, Hugh		MacEachern Road	piper, cousin of Angus
MacEachern, John		Grand Mira North	piper
MacEachern, Sarah		MacEachern Road	piper, s/o Angus
MacFarlane, 'Little' Allan		South West Margaree	piper/fiddler
MacFarlane, Angus 'Ban'		Egypt	piper/bard
MacFarlane, John		South West Margaree	piper
MacFarlane, Malcolm D.		South West Margaree	piper
MacFarlane, Patrick		South West Margaree	piper
MacGillivray, Dan C.		Truro	piper
MacGillivray, Hugh		Glen Morrison	piper
MacGillivray, Hugh		Gulf Shore, Ant. Co.	piper, 3rd prize winner, Antigonish Highland games, 1863
MacGillivray, John		Lismore	piper
MacGillivray, John		Maryvale	piper
MacGillivray, John	died 1901	Maryvale	piper, s/o John MacGillivray, immigrant piper and bard.
MacGillivray, Joseph	1885-1934	Glen Morrison	piper, s/o Hugh, died in motorcycle accident

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
MacGillivray, Steve	died 1916	Glenmorrison	piper, s/o Hugh killed overseas while serving with the 13 <sup>th</sup> Battalion
MacIntyre, Angus		Rear Boisdale	piper, moved to Gannon Road, North Sydney
MacIntyre, Archie	born 1865	Caledonia Mines	piper, s/o James
MacIntyre, Archie		Canoe Lake	piper
MacIntyre, Dan	born 1869	Caledonia Mines	piper, s/o James
MacIntyre, Donald 'Beag'		Boisdale	piper, s/o Donald Mor
MacIntyre, Donald John	born c. 1890	Louisbourg	piper
MacIntyre, Donald 'Mor'	1838-1906	Boisdale	piper
MacIntyre, Hugh		Boisdale	piper, served in the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, WWII
MacIntyre, James	1833-1916	French Road	piper/ step-dancer, moved to Glace Bay
MacIntyre, Joe	1872-1948	Caledonia Mines	piper, s/o James
MacIntyre, 'Long' Joe	born 1857	French Road	piper, moved to Glace Bay
MacIntyre, John		Lakevale	piper
MacIntyre, Capt. John		Gabarus	piper, Great Lakes sea Captain
MacIntyre, Kate		MacAdam's Lake	piper, married Dougal Currie
MacIntyre, Lauchie		Canoe Lake	piper, b/o Archie
MacIntyre, Michael 'Mickey'	born 1875	Caledonia Mines	piper, 185 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, WWI, s/o James
MacIntyre, Sandy		Lakevale	piper

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
MacIntyre, William		Gabarus	piper/ fiddler worked as a lighthouse keeper
MacInnis, Dan S.		Morley Road	piper, 94 <sup>th</sup> Regiment, lived at Glace Bay
MacInnis, Donald	born c. 1840	Glendale	piper, with Nova Scotia Militia
MacInnis, Steve		Morley Road	piper, 94 <sup>th</sup> Regiment, b/o Dan S.
MacIsaac, Alex Angus		Broad Cove	piper/ fiddler/step-dancer, b/o Donald Angus
MacIsaac, Catherine		Dunvegan	piper, moved to Washington State, s/o Dan Alex
MacIsaac, Dan Alex	died 1971	Dunvegan	piper and pipe maker, moved to Vancouver, B.C.
MacIsaac, Donald Angus		Broad Cove Banks	piper/ fiddler moved to Amherst, N.S. b/o Alex Angus
MacIsaac, 'Red' Dougald		Antigonish County	piper/ fiddler/step-dancer, moved to west coast of Newfoundland, c. 1860.
MacIsaac, Hughie		South West Margaree	piper
MacIsaac, 'Red' Jimmy		Margaree	piper
MacIsaac, John		Judique	piper/fiddler
MacIsaac, John R.	1896-1915)	<i>Bein Eoin</i>	piper, s/o Rory 'Shim', killed overseas
MacIsaac, Neil R.	died 1971	<i>Ben Eoin</i>	piper, s/o Rory 'Shim'
MacKay, Kenneth		Scotsville	piper
MacIsaac Rory 'Shim'	born 1855	<i>Bein Eoin</i>	piper/fiddler
MacKenzie, Hughie		Rear Christmas Island	piper/ fiddler/bard

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
MacKenzie, William		Centreville	piper
MacKinnon, Little Angus		Woodbine	piper
MacKinnon, Annie		East Lake Ainslie	piper/ fiddler, s/o Big Farquhar
MacKinnon, David		Meat Cove	piper/fiddler
MacKinnon, Duncan		Meat Cove	piper, b/o Dave
MacKinnon, Big Farquhar 1834-1923		East Lake Ainslie	piper/fiddler
MacKinnon, 'Little' Farquhar 1868-1941		East Lake Ainslie	piper
MacKinnon, Hector 1857-1943		Framboise	piper
MacKinnon, Hugh Fred		East Lake Ainslie	piper, b/o Little Farquhar
MacKinnon, Jimmy Alex		Framboise	piper/ step-dancer, moved to Boston
<b>Appendix B (continued)</b>			
MacKinnon, J. J.		Lewis Bay West	piper/ fiddler/Gaelic playwright
MacKinnon, Joe 1878-1963		Inverness	piper
MacKinnon, John 1869-1936		Inverness	piper, known as the 'Burnt Piper', b/o Joe.
MacKinnon, John		East Lake Ainslie	piper/fiddler
MacKinnon, John 1894-1975		Framboise	piper, 185 <sup>th</sup> Battalion
MacKinnon, John born 1808		Williams Point	piper
MacKinnon, "Red" John		Meat Cove	piper/ fiddler, b/o Dave
MacKinnon, Jimmy Alex		Framboise	piper/ step-dancer, moved to Boston
MacKinnon, Michael		Woodbine	piper
MacKinnon, Peter born c. 1897		Woodbine	piper, b/o Michael

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
MacKinnon, Rory	1898-1968	Meat Cove	piper/ story-teller
MacLachlan, John		Halifax	piper
MacLean, (Father) Allan		Judique	piper/ fiddler/step-dancer
MacLean, Angus Hector		Mull Cove	piper
MacLean, Hector	1874-1950	Orangedale	piper/fiddler
MacLean, John		Boisdale	piper, known as ' <i>Seanaidh Chaluim Ruaidh</i> '
MacLean, John Eddie	1878-1950	Malagawatch	piper/fiddler
MacLean, John M.		Scotsville	piper/fiddler
MacLean, Murdoch		Scotsville	piper, drowned at sea
MacLean, Ronald		Stillwater	piper and pipe maker, moved to Boston c. 1890
MacLean, Sandy		Foot Cape	piper/fiddler
MacLean, Stephen		Salmon River	piper
MacLellan, Angus		Egypt	piper
MacLellan, Archie A.		Egypt	piper, 185 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, killed by German sniper, November 11, 1918
MacLellan, Donald	c.1834-1912	Judique	piper
MacLellan, Johnnie Archie		Meat Cove	piper and bagpipe maker
MacLellan, John H.		Egypt	piper/fiddler
MacLellan, Neil		Upper Margaree	piper
MacLellan, Sandy		Meat Cove	piper
MacLellan, Vincent	1865-1935	Grand Mira	piper/fiddler/bard
MacLennan, James		Old Town	piper

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
Macleod, Daniel		Grand River	piper/fiddler moved to Bridgewater
MacLeod, Danny		Inverness County	piper, moved to New Waterford
MacLeod, Murdoch	1888-1931	Trenton	piper
MacLeod, Philip	1883-1968	Gabarus Lake	piper
MacMaster, Hector		Judique	piper/step- dancer
MacMaster, Hughie		Judique	piper
MacMillan, Andrew	born c. 1856	Glenmorrison	piper, s/o John, moved to Glace Bay
MacMillan, Angus	born 1865	Glenmorrison	piper, s/o John, moved to Reserve Mines
MacMillan, Annie		Grand Mira	piper, married John MacMillan, at Glen Morrison
MacMillan, Anthony		Glenmorrison	piper, s/o John, moved to Boston
MacMillan, J. J.	1876-1953	North Side Mira	piper, s/o John
MacMillan, John		East Bay	Marquis of Lorne's piper, 1878
MacMillan, Michael		Glenmorrison	piper, s/o John, died young
MacMillan, Murdoch	died c. 1940	Johnstown	piper/fiddler, grandson of Neil MacMillan, immigrant piper
MacMillan, Neil	1861	Glenmorrison	piper, s/o John, moved to New Glasgow
MacMillan, Patrick		East Bay	piper, died young
MacMullin, Alexander		Coxheath	piper
MacMullin, Annie	1843-1919	Boisdale	chanter player, (nec' MacIntyre)
MacNeil, Alex Dan		St. Rose	piper/step-dancer

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
MacNeil, Capt. Angus J.		Gillis Point	piper, 94 <sup>th</sup> Regiment
MacNeil, George	born c. 1818	Cape North area	piper, s/o pioneer MacNeil
MacNeil, Malcolm		Piper's Cove	piper
MacNeil, 'Black' Peter		Piper's Cove	piper and pipe maker
MacNeil, Stephen B.	1851-1940	Gillis Point	moved to Port Hawkesbury
MacNeil, Tom P.	1877-1975	Piper's Cove	piper, moved to Glace Bay, Peter
MacPhee, Dan Ranald		Cape North area	piper
MacPhee, E.		Nine Mile River	piper
MacPhee, Archie		French Road	piper
MacPhee, John Peter	born 1886	Glen Morrison	piper, moved to Bridgeport c.1919
MacPhee, Norman		French Road	piper
MacPherson, Daniel		Louisbourg	piper
MacPherson, Hector		New Boston	piper/fiddler
MacQuarrie, Angus Hector		Antigonish	piper
MacQuarrie, Dan		Antigonish	piper
MacQuarrie, 'Red' Gordon	1897-1965	Dunakin	piper/fiddler, served with the Cape Breton Highlanders, WWII
MacQuarrie, Hector		Kenloch	piper, n/o 'Big' Farquhar MacKinnon
MacQuarrie, Kenneth	1857-1902	Rear Port Hastings	piper, decapitated by a passing locomotive
Matheson, Daniel		River Denys	piper
Matheson, Dougal		River Denys	piper, went out west

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
Matheson, John Duncan	died 1923		piper, killed in Salt Lake mining disaster
Matheson, Kenneth		River Denys	piper/fiddler, played in Militia, 94 <sup>th</sup> Regiment
Matheson Pipers	c. 1900	Spittle Hill	a family of pipers Colchester County
Morrison, Dan		Blues Mills	piper, 25 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, WWI, moved to Boston.
Morrison, Jessie	died 1915	Point Aconi	piper
Murray, Donald	1830-1899	Rogers Hill	piper
Nicholson, Angus	1911-1943	Skye Mountain	piper, s/o Sam Nicholson, 48 <sup>th</sup> Highlanders, killed in England
Nicholson, Archie		Skye Mountain	piper, s/o Sam Nicholson
Nicholson, Donald 'D.J.'	1894-1917	Gillanders Mountain	piper, 185 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, died from wounds
Nicholson, John		<i>Coire Mor,</i>	piper
Nicholson, Patrick		Boisdale	piper
Nicholson, Roddy	born: 1891	Gillanders Mountain	piper, 185 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, b/o DJ Nicholson, later moved to Sydney
Nicholson, Samuel	born: c.1858	Skye Mountain	piper/fiddler
Ross, Colin		Lime Hill	piper
Ross, Norman	1886-1940	Peter's Brook	piper, 48 <sup>th</sup> Highlanders, WWI, later moved to Whitney Pier
Ross, William	1826-1915	Cummings Mountain	piper, involved in local militia
Rumley, P.		Truro	piper 85 <sup>th</sup> Battalion
Stewart, Daniel		Blue Mountain	piper

Name	Birth/Death	Locality	Comments
Stewart, Robert		Blue Mountain	piper
Sutherland, Alex	1903-2001	Earlton	piper, moved to Dartmouth
Sutherland, John		Earlton	piper/fiddler
Walker, Lauchie		Grand Mira	piper
Whyte, William		Canoe Lake	piper

## APPENDIX C

The following is a list of known bagpipe makers in Nova Scotia from 1807-1940. \* indicates the individual(s) made only one set of bagpipes. The information has been collected from personal interviews, newspaper articles, and books mentioned in the Bibliography.

Name	Locality	Date	Comments
Cameron, Dan	Centreville,	c. 1900	
Campbell, 'Old' Fred	Judique	c. 1900	Turner Repaired bagpipes.
Fraser, Thomas	New Glasgow	c. 1930	Cabinet Maker, repaired bagpipes
Gillis, Allan 'Turner'	Grand Mira	c. 1850	Bagpipe Maker
Gillis, Duncan 'Tailor'	Grand Mira	c. 1885-1920	Turner, Bagpipe Maker
Henderson, John R. H. *	Camden/Truro	c. 1940	
Henderson, Roy *	Camden/ Truro	c. 1940	Worked with brother, John
MacDonald, John	Centreville	c.1890	Made bagpipes and Violins, moved to Boston
MacDonnell, Alexander 'Mor' *	<i>Gleann Mor</i> / Big Glen	c.1860	
MacEachern, Fred	River Denys Mtn.	c.1890-1900	Made several sets of bagpipes
MacIsaac, Alexander ' <i>Ban</i> '*	Giants Lake	c. 1870	
MacIsaac, Dan Alex*	Dunvegan	c. 1930	Moved to British Columbia
MacKinnon, Rory	Meat Cove	c. 1920	
MacKinnon, 'Red' John*	Meat Cove	c.1920	
MacLean, Murdock*	Trenton	c. 1925	
MacLean, Ronald*	Stillwater/Louisburg	c. 1890	Wood-carver, Moved to Boston
MacLellan, Johnnie Archie	Meat Cove	c.1920	Carved bagpipes by hand



## APPENDIX D

### SONG TO DUNCAN GILLIS OF MIRA, A MAKER OF BAGPIPES

We received news a year ago  
 News which pleased and cheered me  
 News delightful to every Gael;  
 Who was brought up in this area:  
 Duncan Tailor of Upper Margaree  
 My dear handsome man  
 Is now making pipes in Mira-  
 Blessings on his bountiful hand!

Blessings on his skilful hand  
 Noted for every task,  
 And on his intellect which produced  
 Much artistic beauty:  
 There will be no defect in his work  
 It will be shapely, firm and secure,  
 Small wonder as his people were  
 Adept and talented long ago

In his youth he was brought up  
 In Upper Margaree  
 Among the kind and friendly Gaels  
 His relations there are many;  
 He loved that place well  
 He said to me this very Thursday,  
 "There is not a hill or dale or cairn there  
 Which is not dear to my heart today"

Said he to me; 'In my youth  
 In every group that congregated  
 Our custom was always  
 To sing songs with gusto;  
 Passing time cheerfully and happily  
 Dancing awhile on the chamber floor  
 While a toast went around  
 Which would banish sorrow from our minds.

And though I visit there today  
 I will be sad when I come over,  
 As I think on happy times  
 I once spent there;  
 Among the noble and kind people  
 Some of whom are now lost to the grave  
 While those few who survive  
 Have become slow of movement"

Blessings on his skilful hand  
 Noted for every task,  
 And on his intellect which produced  
 Much artistic beauty:  
 There will be no defect in his work  
 It will be shapely, firm and secure,  
 Small wonder as his people were  
 Adept and talented long ago!

Often was heard in battles  
 That noble music of the grandest tone,  
 To incite the kilted ones  
 When fighting grimly against an army;  
 In the castle, the chiefs would be  
 Cheerful and affectionate with their clansmen,  
 Invigorated by the chanter's music  
 Dancing close and nimble on the floor.

Many a very knowledgeable man  
 Praised your pipes in Mabou,  
 At the Exhibition where you earned  
 Much fame, so I heard;  
 Your musical instruments were so splendid  
 That as a result, before you parted  
 You sold one to Honourable Sam  
 And a couple in Margaree.

There is not a Gael in this place  
 But will gladly welcome you,  
 Dear, kindly, gracious man  
 You are renowned right now overseas;  
 Duncan Tailor I declare  
 I regard him as a courteous man,  
 Sensible of speech  
 Never inviting anger or reproach.

All those who made your acquaintance  
 Will desire your company,  
 You are learned but without arrogance,  
 Boastfulness or conceit of disposition;  
 Though I did not know you when I was young  
 I heard much from others,  
 And all I was told of your merits  
 I will never forget.

Many a tale of your fine qualities  
I listened to in my day,  
Which made me eager to meet you  
Long before the time arrived;  
You came over across the Narrows  
I can attest to that,  
Many a man in Upper Margaree  
Praised your warm humanity.

Well does a suit of elegant cloth  
Become your shapely, solid frame,  
You who are truly without fault  
Maker of most melodious pipes;  
Listening to the skirl of one  
Has inspired my mind to song;  
You who set the mountings tightly on it  
I wish you continued health.

## APPENDIX E

A Partial List of Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Immigrant Scottish Pipers  
The list has been compiled from local histories and personal interviews and does not include the names of piping instructors who taught on a weekly basis during the summer schools at the Gaelic College, St. Ann's.

Name	Place of origin	Year of immigration	Comments
Baillie, Catherine (MacIennan)	Inverness	1901	Loganville
Bowes, Alexander 'Sandy'		c.1900	Glace Bay/ Louisburg
Boyd, Alexander Ross 'Sandy'	Ayrshire	c.1940	itinerant piper / piping teacher
Cant, James	Broughty Ferry	c.1901	Boston/ Halifax
Carson, John 'Jock' Breton	Greenock	c.1920	Boston/ Cape Breton
Cooper, George	?	c.1914	Halifax/ Truro
George Dey	Bonniebridge,	1906	Halifax
Gillies, Alex	Moidart	1905	Port Hood, b/o Allan
Gillies, Allan	Moidart	1905	Port Hood, b/o Alex
Jamieson, John 'Jock'	Musselburgh,	1926	Glace Bay/ Donkin
Lavery, Arthur	Scotland	c.1910	Sydney Mines
Manson, David	Ross-shire	1895	Halifax
MacKay, P/M James	Tongue	1923	Annapolis Valley
MacLeod, Major Calum I.N.		1949	Cape Breton/ Antigonish
John Muir		1928	Glace Bay/ Valley Mills
Patterson, John 'Jock'		1856	Dartmouth
Russell, Alexander 'Sandy'	Dundee	c. 1910	Inverness Town

Name	Place of origin	Year of immigration	Comments
Thomson, Duncan	Jedburgh	1896	Halifax, s/o Robert, Snr.
Thomson, James	Jedburgh	1896	Halifax, s/o Robert, Snr.
Thomson, Robert, Junior	Jedburgh	1896	Halifax, s/o Robert, Snr.
Thomson, Robert, Senior	Galashiels	1896	Halifax
White, 'Gypsy'	Scotland	c.1910	New Glasgow
Wilson, P/M William Leaske 'Tug'		c.1910	New Glasgow

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# **Saint Mary's University**

## **Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Human Subjects**

**This is to certify that the Research Ethics Board has examined the research proposal or other type of study submitted by:**

**Principal Investigator: Barry W. Shears**

**Name of Research Project: The Role of the Highland Piper in Nova Scotia Society , 1773 - 1973**

**REB File Number: 04-130**

**and concludes that in all respects the proposed project meets appropriate standards of ethical acceptability and is in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Conduct of Research Involving Humans.**

**Please note that for "ongoing research", approval is only effective for one year from the date approved. If your research project takes longer than one year to complete, submit Form #3 (Annual Report) to the REB at the end of the year and request an extension. You are also required to submit Form #5 (Completion of Research) upon completion of your research.**

**Date:**

25 November 2004

**Signature of REB Chair:**

Dr. John Young