

History of the Name McClure



MacLeods of Lewis Tartan



MacLeods of Harris Tartan

Through the centuries the MCCLURE family was affiliated with many different clans through marriage. The clan MACLEOD claims the MCCLURE family as a sept or directly affiliated family, entitled to clan rights including the use of the clan tartan. The clan MacLeod is one of the most considerable clans of the Western Isles (The Hebrides), and is divided into two branches independent of each other, the MacLeods of Harris (our branch), and the MacLeods of Lewis.

Documentation for the McClure Coat of Arms can be found in "Burke's General Armory".
(*Ancestry.com*)

[http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The McClure Family/Introduction](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_McClure_Family/Introduction) which is the link to online text of The McClure Family by James Alexander McClure says:

The origin of the name has been frequently discussed in the genealogical literature of Great Britain. The following theories have been advanced:

1. The name (variously spelt McClure, McCluer, McClewer, Maclure, McLewer, McLure, and McLuir), comes from the Gaelic word MacLobhair, pronounced MacLour, and means "son of the leper."
2. That it comes from the Gaelic MacGiolla-odhar (which in the genitive is uidhar and pronounced ure), contracted to Maclure and hence McLure or McClure, and means "son of the pale one." This theory is advocated by Rev. Edmund McClure, M. A., London, Secretary of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge.
3. That it is a derivation of the Gaelic MacLeabhair, (pronounced MacLour) and means "son of the book," *i. e.* they were the teachers in the Clan McLeod, just as the McMCRimmons (or McCrimmons) were the clan pipers. They were MacLeabhair McLeods, MacLeabhair (McLour, McLure, McClure), eventually becoming the sir-name. Several Gaelic scholars deny this derivation of the name, tho' admitting the very ancient tradition of the McClure tutorship in the Clan McLeod.
4. That the name is identical with MacLir (or MacLur) the seagod of Ireland and the Isle of Man. This theory is advanced in an article published in the Dublin University Magazine on the late Sir Robert McClure, the navigator.

5. The McClures were originally a Manx family, the first legendary king of the Island being a Manannan McClure, is the tradition inherited by the McClures of Manchester, England, to which family belong the late Sir John W. McClure, M. P., and the Very Rev. Edward C. McClure, D. D., Dean of Manchester. Held also by Sir Edward Stanley McClure.

6. That the name means "great bruiser." An ancient king of Scotland was attacked by highwaymen. One of his attendants so distinguished himself by his prowess that he was called MacClure, "Mac" signifying "great" as well as "son of." A blow from the fist is still known in Scotland as a clure.

7. That it originated in the ancient sport of Falconry, in which the lure was used to recall the falcon. The crest of this family of McLures is a hand in armour holding a falconer's lure.

8. The name of Maklure or McClure came from the Greek word "Lure" which means "Harp". During the 12th century in Scot-land it was spelled Maklure.

9. A soldier from the ancient town of Lure in Normandy crossed over with William the Conquerer. He was rewarded for his service by a grant of land in the Island of Skye and was known as DeLure, Mac being later substituted for De, to harmonize with the Gaelic custom.

10. The theory advocated by Rev. J. Campbell McClure, Minister of Marykirk, Kincardinshire, Scotland, is that the McClures are a sept of the Clan McLeod. In addition to extant records in Galloway of the McClure family, showing it to be of McLeod origin, Mr. McClure states that the family tradition handed down to him through a long line of long-lived ancestors is, "In early times a sept of the MacLeods left the Island of Skye for Ulster, where the northern Irish slurred the 'd' of MacLuide (as it was then pronounced) into 'r,' hence, MacLure. Later many of the name passed over from the northeast of Ireland to Galloway, thus to Wigtonshire and so on to Ayrshire. These districts to day contain many McClures."

It is certain that McClures are in some way connected with the Clan McLeod, evidenced by the fact that the oldest traditions of the family in Scotland take them back to the Isle of Skye; the traditions of Skye link together the McClures and the McLeods; McClures have always had the same motto, crest and tartan as the McLeods, and their right to them has never been called in question.

McClure history, then, properly begins with the McLeods.

Further in the same text there is a paragraph under the heading: The McClure's Leave Ireland for America:

Landing in **Pennsylvania**, some of them crossed the Alleghenies and settled the western part of the State. Another stream flowed southward, entering the beautiful Shenandoah Valley, spreading over Augusta and Botetourt and Rockbridge counties; and then some of them vainly dreaming that there could be upon this continent a more beautiful or fertile country, pushed on to Southwest Virginia, to Tennessee, Kentucky and farther west. Others turning eastward crossed the Blue Ridge and found homes in Southside Virginia, or pressing on, **settled the piedmont section of the Carolinas.**

Yet more history and theory from various sources:

The McClure's descend from the McLeod Clan in Scotland which is of Norse Origin, with the same Tartan and Motto. Their right to them has never been disputed.

Some authorities aver that they are of Irish descent; that they held mainland estates under the crown as early as 1340 and the island estates at the same time under the Lords of the Isles.

When the final forfeiture of the Lords of the Isles took place at the end of the 15th century, the MacLeod's got charters of their island estates from the Crown.

Leod, the progenitor of this Clan was one of three sons of Olave the Black, King of Man and the Isles. He was born early in the 13th century. He died 1237. The Isle of Man is in the Irish Sea, midway between Northern Ireland, northern England and southern Scotland. Leod married the daughter of a Norwegian Chieftain, who was Governor of Skye. He received possessions in Skye in the Herbrides including the fortress of Dunvegan. This Castle of Dunvegan dates from the 13th century and is still in the possession of the family.

Sir Norman MacLeod was the son of Sir Rory Mor McLeod (1595-1626) of Dunvegan, the 15th Chieftan of the Clan. Sir Norman received Bernera (Bernary) island in the Herbrides which formerly belonged to Malcolm, who was the third Chieftan of the MacLeod Clan.

The McLeods fought under Sir Norman McLeod of Bernera in the battle of Worcester in 1651 on the side of the Royalists for Charles II, crowned King of Scotland. They were opposed and defeated by Oliver Cromwell. After the battle, the Scots who had fought for Charles were forced to flee. The MacLeods fled to Ulster Province in Ireland and changed their name to McClure to hide their identity. They settled in Convoys and Rapoe, County Donegal, near Londonderry in Northern Ireland. Charles II was restored to power as King of England in 1660.

The McClure's in history:

In this version they are Scots Irish and still end up in Pennsylvania.

The McClure name is conspicuous in Scottish history. They occupied a post of honor at the battle of Harlow, 1411; they were at the battle of Bloody Bay, 1485; they took part in the negotiations to transfer the allegiance of the Highland Chiefs from the Scottish to the English King and signed the commission under which these negotiations were carried on. They took part in the battle of Worcester, 1661, led by Sir Norman McLeod of Bernera, where they lost 700 men. Treated by Charles II with the grossest ingratitude they took no part in the subsequent Stuart uprising though there is a letter extant from James II, dated Dublin, 1690, imploring McLeod to join Dundee.

It is said that the name 'Maklure' occurs in Scotland as early as the 12th century. It is claimed by some that the original home of the McClure's in Scotland was in the southwest probably in Galloway. Ayrshire was also full of McClure's.

In Munsey's Magazine, February 1911, in an article on Robert Burns, illustrated with a photograph of an old Alloway Kirk yard, the name of George McClure appears on one of the stones. Many of the family are buried there.

The McClure family first appears in the records of Ayrshire where they were recorded as an ancient Ayrshire family before the year 1100. The notable McClure family is shown in the

ancient manuscripts and cartularies as tracing their ancestry to Dalriadan origin. The most ancient McClure family Coat of Arms was recorded between the 12th and 15th centuries.

In the 18th century a great many of the Scotch-Irish, as they were then called, left Ireland for America, among them were the McClures (McLeods). They were driven out by the Crown's opposition to their Calvinistic (Presbyterian) faith. They were deprived of all civil, religious and property rights. They were forbidden to hold public meetings, religious or otherwise, or even conduct religious burial services. What property they did have was confiscated. All this, along with the exorbitant prices they were charged, forced their departure from Ireland. A great many of the McClures came to America by way of Pennsylvania, some remained in Pennsylvania, others scattered out along the east coast, and some came down between the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

My personal feelings:

Records that far back are full of supposition and theory, I suppose you could just pick the one you like best as they are probably all correct to some degree and that we may never know. That there are ties to the McCleod's seems to be generally accepted. I personally like the theory that says they were the teachers of Clan McCleod.

What they do seem to agree upon is that they were Scotch-Irish, they came (among other places) to Pennsylvania, where my research leads me to believe our branch of the McClure's first came to America. Near as I can tell POSSIBLE parents of our Andrew McClure (1748-1815) came from Somerset Pennsylvania and his grand parents from Philadelphia.

[Norma Stamp]