

The Clan MacTavish Surname Origin and Variant Spellings.

With the Septs or Connected Names and their variants.

By Clan MacTavish Seannachie, Patrick Thompson - 2014

Understanding Scottish surname spelling evolution into more modern forms requires a study in both Etymology and Onomatology, as well as the interjection of English Law, Language, economics and influence as it entered Scottish society. Such has also required researching many documents and publications in order to find all the variations that have lead to their modern forms. I have found over 60 documents or copies of such documentation that reflect name variations on their way to becoming standardized English spellings.

Etymologies are not word or name definitions; they are explanations of what words meant and how they were sounded (pronounced) in the past. The etymologic science also comprises the study of the origin of words and the way in which their substantive original presence has undergone changes throughout history.

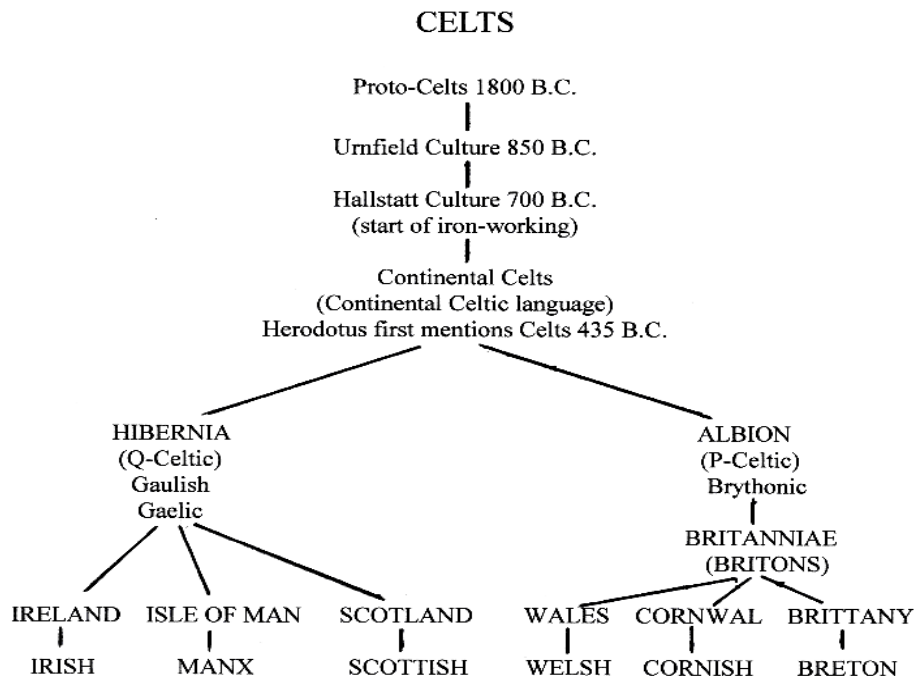
Onomatology is the study and documentation of proper names, such as surnames and their classification, including their origins and various forms of proper names, and also how they have changed. Also called Onomastics.

It is also necessary to understand the difference in two languages used in the Scotland, in the Highlands, the Lowlands and Borders, and a third language called “Buerl” used in Scotland and the northern reaches of England that transited both the Highland “Gaelic”, and Lowland “Scots” languages.

First, ***Highland or the Scottish Gaelic language*** - (*Gàidhlig*) sometimes called simply Gaelic, is a Celtic language which was the native tongue of the inhabitants of the Highlands of Scotland. A member of the Goidelic branch of the Celtic languages, Scottish Gaelic, like Modern Irish and the Manx language, developed out of what is termed Middle Irish, and thus its ultimate origin is from Old Irish (often seen in parentheses O.F. or OF, meaning OLD FORM of a place-name or surname). In old texts it is often called “*Erse*”, the Irish language of the Scottish Highlands. Scottish Gaelic should in no way be confused with “Scots”, the English-derived language mixture which had come to be spoken in most of the Lowlands and Border regions of Scotland. Gaelic and Scot are two completely diverse languages, and come from entirely different language family origins. Scottish Gaelic too has a variety of regional dialectic differences, but a Gaelic speaker from Argyll, Scotland can readily understand a Gaelic speaker from Inverness, Scotland or even a Gaelic speaker from Ireland, (with a few nuances that may need clarification). The Gaelic language dialect of the Argyllshire, including Glassary, Kintyre, and Knapdale, including most of the Cowal promontory, is a near clone of the Gaelic of

Donegal, Ireland, for Donegal, part of¹ the ancient expanse of Ulster, is from where a vast majority of Argyllshire inhabitants originated.

Following: Dialectic Diagram of the Goidelic/Celtic Languages, including P and Q forms of the Language – i.e. GAELIC. Note: Hibernia signifies Ireland. The Pictish Language is not in the diagram, but it has been asserted (true or not) that the Picts or Cruithnigh (Cruithne) spoke a P-Celtic language - that is a Celtic language related to the language of the Ancient Britons. When the Celts arrived in Britain they brought with them an Indo-European language which replaced the existing languages of country (of whatever they consisted). This is clear from the known Pictish place-names in both Ireland and Scotland.

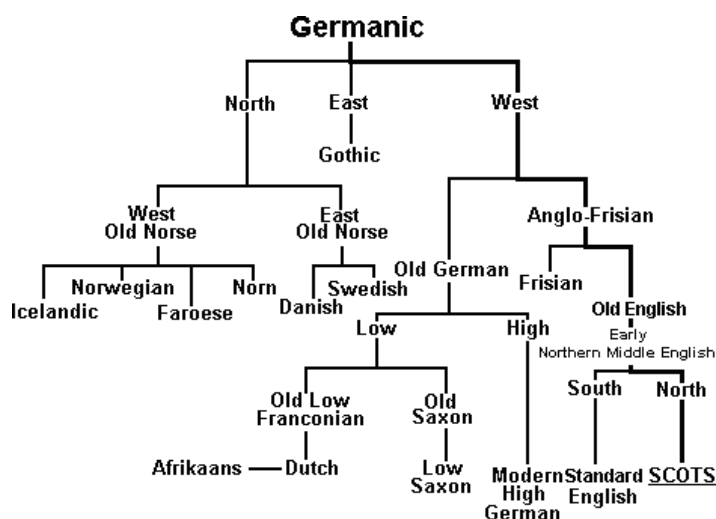


Second, **the Scots language** – ‘Scots’ (in past times called *Scottis*) is the Germanic language variety spoken in Lowlands of Scotland and its Borders as well as in parts of England’s Cumbria region, and later (16th century) in parts of Ulster, Ireland (where the local dialect among the non-Gaelic speakers is known as ‘*Ulster Scots*’, influenced by Ulster Irish (*Gaeilge*). It should not be confused with either *Scots English* or *Scottish Gaelic*. ‘Ulster Scots’ varies somewhat from the Scots language of the Lowland and Border regions of Scotland, because the majority of the Ulster populace spoke Irish

¹ It is difficult to say that the Picts spoke a P-Celtic Language for *The Lives of the Irish Saints*, makes note that Saint Columba, spoke to Brude, King of the Picts in Scotland, and *Journal of the Irish Archeology Society* indicates that Saint Columba was himself a Cruithne (or Pict) of the tribe of Dal-nAriadia (from which the Dalriadans emerged). On the side of his mother, Ethna (Eithne), he (Columba) was descended from Cathair Mor, King of Leinster. His grandmother, Erca, daughter of King Erc, was a sister of King Fergus Mor (Fergus Mor MacErc), who led a colony of Irishmen from Dalriada in Ireland to Argyll in Scotland at the end of the fifth century, thus laying the foundations of the Irish colony in Scotland which became known as Dalriada.

Gaelic (*Gaeilge*), which was partially incorporated into the Ulster Scots dialect. The Scots Language is based in Middle English (derived from Germanic dialects), with French (Norman) injected words. It is from this language that the people who later inhabited the Lowlands and Borders are often referred to as Teutonic or Teutons, meaning German. The Scots language is a Germanic language (introduced ca 800 AD) still spoken in parts of Scotland and is very similar to that dialect once spoken in Northumbria (northern England). Between the 15th and 17th centuries ‘Scots’ spread into more of mainland Scotland at the expense of Scottish Gaelic although Gaelic maintained a strong hold over the Scottish Highlands, Scots also began to make some slight headway into the Northern Isles and part of lower Kintyre and the Isle of Arran. Within the Scots language there were/are also some dialectic differences by region. Now in many areas both Gaelic and Scots have been replaced by English. Germanic Languages Diagram follows, which includes SCOTS:

Dialectic Diagram of the Germanic languages, including SCOTS.



Third, the *Beurl* (*Beurla*) language – It is often referred to as the merchants or tinkers language (traveling salesmen) which became understood (to some degree) in both the Highlands, and well as the Border and Lowlands, and Northern counties of England, particularly Northumbria. It borrowed words from both Irish and Scots Gaelic, French and Scots, and often had an influence in the disparity of name spellings within sales contracts for goods written between the tinkers and their customers, which were subsequently written into court records, copied from such contracts or other legal documents. Invariably, Beurl was partially responsible for the changing of both place-name and surname spellings, because it was mostly an Anglo-Scottish combination of words and names. Beurl is one reason Scots started to overcome Gaelic in some of the Highland regions as it became a universal method of doing business.

The Origin of the MacTavish surname.

Middle Irish is the source of Scottish Gaelic, ultimately derived from Old Irish. Middle Irish (sometimes called Middle Gaelic) is the name given by historical philologists to the Goidelic languages spoken in Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man from ca the 9th to 12th centuries; it is therefore a contemporary of late Old English and early Middle English, although English derived

from Germanic. Before the 9th century the major language in most of western Scotland and the northern half of Ireland was purely Old Irish. In the outer northern Isles a form of old Danish was also used by Norsemen who had settled there. Here are two prominently well known, respected, academically correct books by well credentialed intellectuals which yield the original construction the MacTavish surname with more modern variations. These two books are 1) *Sloinnte Gaedheal is Gall* or *Irish Names and Surnames*, by Father Patrick Woulfe, 1906 and, 2) *Irish Pedigrees, Origin and Stem of the Irish Nation*, by John O'Hart, 1892. There are other works from brilliant and learned scholars which introduce us to the various spelling variations over an incredibly long period of time used by the MacTavishes, a few of these altered spellings are still in use as surnames in the ultra modern era. Some of the spellings which follow later are taken from Scottish or Irish court documents or other historic papers.

Understand that Gaelic forms, particularly surnames or name designations were contracted or elided, where entire syllables or consonants were omitted (normally shortened for everyday use)² in many instances, and commonly in Scotland where a Catholic clerical scribe was involved who came originally from Normandy or Saxony in France, where Gaelic was not understood or spoken, this learned writer would pen what he heard (normally in Latin - with someone translating the Gaelic for him, and not spelling the name as it should have been). Often there was difficulty in the translation which presents multiple spelling variations. Where surnames are concerned the elidation (shortening) actually omitted parts of the surnames or otherwise contracted the spelling, in other situations clerics Latinized the Celtic names, offering even more deviation. For example MacTamhais was Latinized McThamais (the "m" in the latter should be pronounced in Gaelic as the consonant "v"). This instance is a clear indication the transcriber of the document was trying to spell a Gaelic name in Latin form, this is also seen in the name MacTawys, which is pronounced MacTavis (no "h"), where a "w" was often interchanged for the letters "m", "u" or "v".

Interesting as that may be, it does not tell us the original name of the MacTavishes or place of origin. For this we have to look at other very old documents. One is the *Ceart Ui'Neill*, the other is the *Topographical Poems of O'Dubhagain.*, as well as the various Irish annals.

² Elide / e·lide (i'lid) verb past tense: elided; past participle: elided : 1. to omit (a sound or syllable) when speaking, "the indication of elided consonants or vowels". 2. join together; merge.

The *Ceart Uí'Neill* (Right of the O'Neill)³ is a document with roots spanning the 6th to 9th centuries. It is a document that was combined from old writs, formulated and translated in the 1600s, listing the sub-kings, chiefs and sept leaders of the supposed descendants of King Conal Gulban and his brother, Eóghan (descendants of the 2nd century Northern Irish King, Conn of the Hundred Battles), and later others under the dynastic Uí Neills. It is the only surviving testament of the rulers and leaders of that region and era. Most of the older texts from which this document was transcribed have been misplaced, lost, or crumble into dust, some having become unreadable with age. The pedigree found then actually takes us back to another old Irish Writ called the *Chronicon Scotorum*, which links the MacTavish ancestors to the 2nd century Northern Irish High King, Conn of the Hundred Battles. (See: *History of Clan MacTavish*, Thompson, 2012).

Topographical Poems of O'Dubhagáin illustrates again who the MacTavishes are and their origin. Under the subheading of “*The Part of the Tir Chonail*”, that is Conal Gulban’s Land is this entry on page 43, “*To MacGillatsamhais the stout Belong Ros-Guill and Ros-Iroguil*”⁴

Irish Pedigrees: Origin and Stem of the Irish Nation, author John O’Hart gives on page 855 names which have been long lost or not contained in other lists such as the *MacFirbis Genealogies*. O’Hart’s ‘Englished’ transliteration (which is incorrect) of the original Irish **MAC GIOLLA TĪSOMAIR** (Mac Gille Tavis) is MacGilla tSamhais ... which is modernly MacIITavish, and MacTavish”. The Mac Gille Tavis Gaelic spelling is also seen written in various other forms such as: **MACGIOLLA TĪAMAF**, **MAC GIOLLA TĪAMĀIR**, **MACGIOLLA TĪOMAF**, **MAC GIOLLA ĪAMĀIR**, **MAC GIOLLA ĪAMAF**, **MAC GIOLLA ĪOMAF**, **MAC GIOLLA SĀMĀIR** all *Mac Gille Tavis* but written in nominative, genitive (possessive) or accusative forms. In total there are eight

³ One the 20th century’s most respected Irish academics and historians, Kenneth Nicholls, wrote in his *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland* (p. 36) regarding the *Ceart Uí'Neill*, that many of those listed were no longer extant in Ireland, and its contents refers to much older rather than 15th century conditions; that many of those listed had disappeared from the lands. In the host of the tribal chiefs given in the *Ceart Uí'Neill* are the **MAC GIOLLA TĪSOMAIR**, or MacGiollatSamhais (pronounced Mac Gillé Tavis) Chiefs of Guill and Ros Guill (Ros Buill). The MacTavish (i.e. MacGiollatsamhais) of Rosguill (Rosgull in English) and Ros Iroguill or Iroguill (now Horn Head), Donegal, appear among many other clans associated with the northern Kingdom of Tir Conaill (King Conal Gulban’s Land – now mostly Donegal, Ireland). The *Ceart Uí'Neill*, [as also attested by *Studies Celtica*, University of Wales, Board of Celtic Studies, 1966], mentions that this document was assembled from much older vellums, where the Mac-Gille-Tavis (phonetic) are the noted Chiefs in this kingdom, which has been assimilated by the dynastic Uí Neill Rulers from the south of Ireland. The name of MacGiollatSamhais or MacGillatSamhais is found in a plethora of spellings, over many generations while on its way to standardized English equivalents.

⁴ From the ***Topographical Poems*** (EDITED IN THE ORIGINAL IRISH, FROM MSS. IN THE LIBRARY OF THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY, DUBLIN ; WITH TRANSLATION, NOTES, AND INTRODUCTORY DISSERTATIONS, by JOHN O'DONOVAN, LLJ., M.R.I.A.), Printed for the Irish Archæological and Celtic Society, 1862, (from the original texts circa 1320) the Royal Irish Academy, poem texts, p. 43.

Gaelic variations of Mac Gille Tavis.⁵ In Scotland at an early period the Gille or Giolla was dropped from many surnames or what became surnames. MacIITavish, a given by O'Hart, is both an elided and contracted form of MacGilleTavish, and MacTavish or McTavish being further modern contractions.

A man proclaimed in his day as a Gaelic authority, the Rev. Dr. George Calder, BD, DD. DLitt., of Glasgow University⁶, published *A GAELIC GRAMMAR* in 1923, MacLaren & Sons, Glasgow, an examination of the Gaelic Language. Appropriate page numbers given prior to entry.

p. 8- "... Many of the derivations which he suggests are surprising, but, as Dr. Calder does not express hesitation on the matter, we must assume from his certainty that the surprise is due to our ignorance rather than to any far-fetched subtlety." — "Glasgow Herald."

"The name Colquhoun, whose pronunciation puzzles English people, is, so far as its derivation goes, as much of a puzzle to Scotsmen. Who would imagine it is a corrupted Gaelic equivalent of Thomson? In his Gaelic Grammar published the other day, Dr. George Calder seems to have little difficulty in proving that the MacTavishes, Holmes, MacCosh's, and MacCombies and the M'Couns of Galloway, as well as the Colquhouns and Maclehoses, are really all ' sons of Thomas.' "— "Glasgow News."

p.19- 3. "In a few proper names, *mac* son, projects the final c which eclipses the following consonant, and the pretonic unstressed ma of mac is dropped, e.g. MacDhomhnill Macdonald Ma Connel Conell MacMhuirich Murdoch Ma Cuirich Currie MacThomhais Thomson Ma Comhais Cosh

p. 143- "Tomas, Tomas, Tomhus ; Mac Thaimhs, Mac Thamhais MacTavish, Tawse ; Cause ; MacCosh, Cosh, Cash ; Mac-a- Chombaich, Mac Thomai(dh) MacCombie for which is substituted Colquhoun, i.e. G. Mac-Thomh-an, Comhan, McCoun (Galloway) ; Thompson, Holmes ; Mac gille Thomhas Maclehose; Cornish (Man)."

"...the Thomas-sons of the Highlands are generally said to have been descended from Tavis-cor,

(1) the bold and celebrated bastard son of one of the chiefs of Lochaw. Hence they are equally well known, and as often called M'Tavish, as Thomson, in Argyleshire." ⁷ (Underlining supplied)

⁵ Woulfe, *Sloinnnte Saedheal is Saal: Irish Names and Surnames*, Gill & Son, Dublin, 1906, pp. 22, 74, 75, 84, and 97. These names are written in the Old Irish Unical Alphabet (*Gaeilge*), an extension of the Old Latin alphabet, which is not the English alphabet.

⁶ Dr. Calder's obituary is available at URL:

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2507&dat=19410402&id=yT1AAAAAIBAJ&sjid=aVkMAAAAIBAJ&pg=3188,163315>

⁷ James Paterson, Dick, J., Stevenson, T.G., *History of the County of Ayr, with a genealogical account of the families of Ayrshire*, Vol. I., Historical and Antiquarian Bookseller, Edinburgh, 1847, p. 40.) Note that James writes Tavis vice Tavis, which would *probably* be a nominative Pictish (P-Celtic) form of Tavis.

“In Scotland the custom prevailed for some time to use the Gaelic name with the English translation superadded. Men called themselves McTavish alias Thomson, McCalmon alias Dorr, or Gow alias Smith.”⁸ (Underlining supplied) In many instances as people moved out of the Highlands the wild and wholly **Mac** prefix was dropped in favor of the suffix *son* and the surname was fully Anglicized (i.e. MacTavish or an equivalent form to Thomson or Thompson). This is clearly illustrated in several publications.

Ian McDonald wrote about the LARGIESIDE DISTILLERS, Issue 19 of the *Magazine of the Kintyre Antiquarian and Natural History Society*, Campbeltown, Argyllshire: Kintyre Magazine recalls in 1850 a shepherd in Scotmill, Archibald McTavish or Thomson, on the wanted lists, who ran away from the Revenue officers. They yelled after him, “Come back, Thomson, we know you”.

In KINTYRE: The Hidden Past, by Angus Martin, John Donald Publishers, Edinburgh, 1984, 1999, Mr. Martin substantiates the use of Shadow Names by MacTavishes in Glenbarr, Muasdale and Skipness areas of Kintyre. In Appendix II, p. 215, Martin refers to *THOMSONS as MacTAVISHES*, noting that the Anglicized names frequently co-existed with the older forms such as MacCavis, MacTavis, and McComas; and provides a significant number of examples. Two of Martin’s examples follow here: “*Peter Thomson or MacTavish was noted in Kilcalmonell & Kilberry Parish in 1855; John Thomson was in Beachmore and Archibald MacTavish in Stramolloch in 1797.*”

Flora McTAVISH was born 1822 Skipness, Argyll, and married James LINDSAY in 1851 at Kilcalmonell and Kilberry parish, the listing in OPR⁹ for Flora is McTAVISH. James and Flora’s first child was Gilbert Lindsay born 1852. Little Gilbert died age 4 1/2yrs old in Tarbert, Argyll. Parents given names in the record are James LINDSAY and Flora THOMSON (the McTavish name reflects the alias of Thomson in the Tarbert record, as opposed to McTavish in the Skipness record.).

From a Tombstone in old Skipness, Argyllshire, graveyard is this inscription:

"Here lies the remains of Archibald McTavish, late farmer at Altghalbhais who departed this life on the tenth day of June, 1790, aged 55 years, and of his wife Catherine Taylor, who died 8 June, 1832, aged 88 years. And Mary Livingston, wife of Archibald Thomson, Jr. tenant at Cullendrach."

Archibald McTAVISH’s son is noted in the memorial inscription as Archibald THOMSON Jr.

In Canadian records we find the same practice of using an alias for MacTavish as a surname, with the same relevance as used in Scotland.

Gilbert Cook in Quebec, Canada was the husband of Catherine McTavish. The following records

⁸ Schele de Vere, LL.D., Professor of Modern Languages, *Studies in English; or, Glimpses of the Inner Life of Our Language*, Scribner & Co., N.Y., 1867, p. 134.)

⁹ OPR (Old Parish Record).

of this family reveal: When, in 1835, Gilbert Cook and his brothers, natives of Cantyre (sic Kintyre), took up lots, Larocque's was the only house in St-Louis.¹⁰ Gilbert Cook was from Kintyre and married Catherine McTavish, daughter of Archibald McTavish and Mary McDougall. Noted are the recorded textual extracts showing the use of aliases.

Abstracted from the *Notary Books of Louis Sarault in Quebec, Canada*

-June 23, 1846 The McTavish Family Settles in Quebec

Mary McDougall widow of Archibald McTavish; children-Edward, Alexander, Dougall, Flora & Catherine McTavish, wife of Gilbert Cook

-Apr 5, 1849 Will recorded for:

Daniel Kinghorn; Miss Flora Thompson alias Flora McTavish; Dougall Thompson her brother

-A Second Will is recorded by Notary W. F. Lighthall, Quebec.

No 501 June 2, 1852 Will

Daniel Kinghorn; his present wife Flora McTavish or Thomson; his 1st wife the late Mary Baxter (All examples from *Abstracts of the Notary Books of Louis Saraul and W. F. Lighthall, Quebec, Canada*, The National Library and Archives of Quebec.)

From 'The National Library and Archives of Quebec', these few examples given from the Notary books record the use of three names. The actual surname McTavish and two aliases, or shadows, are used for the same person. Flora McTavish is alias Flora Thompson, alias Flora Thomson. Flora McTavish's brother, Dougall, is noted as a Thompson. Hence, Thomson and Thompson are the equivalents of MacTavish.

MacTavish Names:

Cash, MacCamish, MacCammish, MaCash, MacCash, MacCashe, MacCaish, MacCaishe, MacCais, MacCavais, MacCosh, MacCoshe, MacCoishe, MacLaws, MacLawes, MacLehose, MacTause, Stephen, Stephens, Stephenson, Steven(s), Stevenson, Stevenston, Stivan, Taweson, Tawesson, Thom, Thomey, Thomson, Thompson, Thomas, Thomasin, Thomason, Thomassine. Thomazin, Thomerson, Thome, Thomes, Tod/Todd, Tomey.

Other names associated with the Clan MacTavish over many generations: Cavis, Cevis, Kavis, Kevis, Kevais, Kemish, Kewish (all K variations are Manx Gaelic where "K" replaces Mac.), Hamais, Homas, Homais, Hawes, Haws, Hawson, Hawesson, Hawson, Holmes (Mostly found in Ulster, Ireland - oft shortened to Homes) MacAne, MacAnes, MacAvaish, MacAves, MacAvis, MacAvishe, MacAvish, MacAwis, MacAvishe, MacAws, Mccaijs (only seen once on the 2rd day of May 1615, for Hector MacTavish on Islay), MacCanish, MacCauis, MacCauish, MacCause, MacCavis, MacCavish, MacCavss, MacCaweis, MacCawis, MacCaws (seldom used), MacCawes, MacChosh, MacComas, MacGilchois, MacGilhosche, MacGillhois, Makgilhouse, Macgilhuash, MacHomas,

¹⁰ *The History of the County of Huntingdon: And of the Seigniories of Chateauguay & Beauharnois*, Robert Sellar, Canadian Gleaner, 1975, p. 328.

MacHamais, MacHomais, MacIlchash, MacIlchommie (a form of MacIlTavish) MacIlhaos, MacIlhois, MacIlhoise, MacIlhose, MacIlhouse, MacIllhois, MacIllhos, MacIllhose, McIlilhaish, MacKaish, MacKawes, MacKavis, MacKaviss, McKawiss, MacKilhoise, MacKillhose, MacKlehois, MacKomish MacLehose, MacTaevis, MacTais, MacTaise, MacTaish, MacThamaish, MacTamhais, MacThamhais, MacToshe, MacToishe, MacTause, MacTaveis, MacTavishe, MacTavish (shortened McTavish), Maktawis, MacTawisch, MacTawy, MacTawys, MacThamais, MacThavish, MacThompson (a rarely found surname from Canadian MacTavish descendants who returned to a more Celtic spelling), Makavhis, Makawis, Makcaus, MakCause, MacKnavish, MacKlavish, MacClavish, MacCause, Makcawis, Makcaws, Makcawys, Makgilhois, Makgilhoise, MacGlavish, Micklehose, Mucklehose, Taes, Tais, Taise, Taish, Taiss, Talvich, Tam, Tamsone, Tameson, Tamesone, Tammesson, Tamson, Tamsone, Taus, Tauise, Taus, Tause, Tavi, Tavais, Tavis, Taviss, Tavish, Tavus, Tausch, Taweson, Tawesson, Tawis, Tawy, Tawys, Taws, Tawse, Taweson, Taweson, Tawesson, Tawson, Tawsson, Tawssone, Tawst, Tawus, Thomason, Thomasson, Thomassone, Thomassoun, Thomessone, Thompseson, Thompson, Thompsone, Thompsoune, Thomson, Thomsone, Thomsoun, Thomsoune, Thomsson, Tomson, Tomson, Tomson, Towson, Towsson. (Note that *Mac* was/is abbreviated as *Mc* or *M'* in many of these names, also seen written as **mc** in lower case letters with a space then Tavish or Cavish, etc. *Mac* is used above merely to simplify and clarify the spelling.) Over 150 spelling variations have been found in Scottish and Irish documents so far.

Holmes: Derived from the Irish Gaelic of MacThōmais (Properly pronounced MacTomhais, *elided* as McOmais (Scottish Gaelic [Latinized] MacThamais (properly pronounced MacTōvais, properly spelled MacTomhais with the vowel “o” pronounce like the “a” in the English word ‘what’), a form of the modern MacTavish) - pronounced with stand alone elidation as Homais, variations include Homas and Hamais; from which Hammish is often associated wrongly. Hammish in English is James, Irish Gaelic yields Sheamas, **SEAMAS.**, which is not Tavish or Thomas

There are clearly only two septs within Clan MacTavish being Tod/Todd and the various spellings of the ‘Son of Steven’ surnames. All the other names listed are derived from **MAC SOILLA TΣÓMAIR**, or one of its other seven original Irish Middle Gaelic spellings, which were shortened in Scotland to simply the Scottish Gaelic MacTamhais/MacThamhais.

Tod or Todd names associated with Clan MacTavish: Originally Tahd. This was a professional surname derived from the Scottish word for fox, or a fox hunter, or for a person having a foxy or stealthy disposition. Tods or Todhunters were common in Argyllshire as well as throughout Scotland. They were skilled trappers and archers, and often employed in time of war for their archery skills. The Tods/Todds/ were usually fox hunters hired to rid estates of fox populations that devastated wild game or small farm animals. The name has but a few known spelling variations. Tods were accepted as sept of the MacTavish since the 12th century.

Tod surnames: Tad, Tahd, Tod, Todd, Todde, Todhunter, Toddhunter. Four of these names are still in common use today.

The Steven surnames associated with Clan MacTavish.

The name Steven or Stephen [Greek: Στέφανος (Stefanos)], comes from the Grecian word for garland, or a hoop crown, a golden embroidered wreath that was given to the winner of a contest usually involved in sports, or the triumphant winner of a battle. The Romans also adopted this practice. Steven/Stephen was adopted by the Celts as a given name. Scottish Gaelic spells the name as: Stiobhan, Stiophan, Stèaphan, Steaban and Stiban.

In Greek, the ph combination makes an f sound, as in the word telephone, or the female given name Phoebe, etc. However, when the first syllable of Stephen has a long eee (ē) sound, this affects the ph – f (sound) and it becomes a v; not in spelling, but in speech. In Scottish Highland Gaelic, however, PH becomes a V, as does BH or B. It became a Celtic surname with such spellings as: MacSteaphan, MacStoibhan, and MacSoiban, MacSoiphan, and MacStiban. The consonant “b” in such names sounding as a “v” in the Gaelic.

Steven Gaelic surnames: MacSteaphan, MacStoibhan, MacSoiban, MacSoiphan, MacStiban.

Medieval Anglicized Gaelic Steven, Stevens, Stevenson/Stephenson names: Seanason, Steenson, Steavansone, Stevenson, Stevensin, Stevensint, Stevensan, Stevensane, Stevensone, Stevensoune, Stevnesyn, Stivanson, Stivansone, Stein, Stiens, Steinson, Steinsone, Stenson, Sibans, Stibanson, Stivans, Stinson, Stinsoun, Stinsoune, Styvinson, Sytypsone, Stympson, Stimpson Stephen, Stephens, Stephinson, Stephensone, Stephenson.