

**The Transition of the MacGilletSamhais, MacStibhan,
and Tahd Surnames - being Associated Family Names of the Clan MacTavish.**

OR -How and Why Gaelic Surnames changed to Latin or Anglo-English.

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This document is a study of Clan MacTavish associated surnames, and was researched and written affectionately for all the members of Clan MacTavish and those who have an interest in the clan. The reader will encounter “associated family names”, or *sliochd*, in the English Language called *septs*, which make up the entire CLAN MACTAVISH. As there is so much nonsense on the Internet about Clan MacTavish - in general - accurate information like this is required for a much better understanding of the ancientness of our clan. Understand that we are dealing with three distinct languages, first Gaelic, then Latin, and lastly Anglo-English.

There are five significant reasons why Gaelic surnames transitioned from their *Goidelic* language form to English/Latin forms. The *Goidelic* or Gaelic languages (Irish: *teangacha Gaelacha*, Scottish Gaelic: *cànanan Goidhealach*, Manx: *chengaghyn Gaelgagh*) form one of the two groups of Insular Celtic languages, the other being the Brittonic languages. In the old classification, Goidelic languages are part of the Q-Celtic group.

Also, the old Gaelic alphabet contained but 18 letters, five of which are vowels. The letters are; a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, l, m, n, o, p, r, s, t, and u. Hence the old Gaelic alphabet is not the English alphabet we now use, which has 26 letters, 5 of which are vowels, 6 if counting the consonant y, which sometimes becomes a vowel.

Gaelic Society of Inverness, *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, Vol. II, 1872-1873, page 113: “We now turn to the Consonants, and with the exception of (7 which is always pronounced hard, like the Greek K, and a few others, they have in Gaelic mostly the same force as in English. J, K, Q, V, W, X, Y, Z, in English, are wanting in Gaelic, but, B and M, by aspiration (bh and mh) in the beginning and middle of words, both sound like V, hence the one sometimes occurs in lieu of the other, and some words are spelt indifferently with either.” ‘Ph’ however can be used in place of ‘bh’, and becomes a ‘v’, or it can become slenderized or aspirated.

Goidelic languages historically formed a group of dialects that reached out of **Ireland** through the Isle of Man and to Scotland. There are three modern Gaelic or *Goidelic* languages: Irish (*Gaeilge*), Scottish Gaelic (*Gàidhlig*) and Manx (*Gaelg*), the last nearly dying out in the 20th century but has been revived to some extent.

Why did so many Scottish Gaelic names change to multiple Anglicized or Latinized forms? There were forms of Gaelic that differed to some degree in both Ireland and Scotland by region, but were understood by nearly everyone even if speaking a different form. Even today should a Gaelic speaker from Kintyre, Scotland, talks to and Irish resident of County Donegal, Ireland, the speech is understood, with very few variances, most in spelling, and differences in spelling. There are other reasons for changes taking place, but here are the FIVE major reasons.

Reason 1. Gaelic surnames changed out of pure political motivation, by force, or by threat. One instance of this is when the Clan and surname MacGregor was banned and its members took on several other surnames to hide their identity; and another instance is after the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745-1746, when many Scottish Highland Gaelic families used English aliases.

Reason 2. Names changed out of an economic move for local commerce and/or foreign trade.

Reason 3. Gaelic names changed due to migration out of the Highlands, to regions where Gaelic was often misinterpreted, mispronounced, misspelled, or not understood at all. Hence the Latinization or Anglo-English variations of names. An ancestral name, whether Gaelic or modernized transliteration was frozen in time (at least to an extent) and used from that point onward (e.g. MacTavish, to Tomson, to Thomson, to Thompson).

Reason 4. (A political subset of Reason 1) After the Jacobite Rising of the '45 (1745 to 1748) the English Hanoverian Government of the Union was searching out those Highlanders (with Gaelic names and affiliated to the Stuart Jacobite Cause) who had supported the Stuart aim to take back the throne. Many Gaelic speaking Highlanders were considered traitors by the English Crown and Government. As there were no formal means of personal identification (like a drivers license or age of major card, etc.) an individual could easily take an “Englished” form of their Gaelic surname, and avoid being identified with a “wild and wooly” *Mac* prefix, using a more gentrified English form, turning *Mac* into “son” as a suffix or simply drop the *Mac* entirely and use an English or Latin form of their name. Such a change in name could misdirect government troops from pursuing them. Thus some names like MacRuairidh/MacRory became Rorieson or simply Rorie/Rory; Mac Gabhann/MacGowan changed to Gowan, Govan and Gowery; MacDhòmhnaill/MacDonald (Clan Donald) became Donaldson or simply Donald; Mac Dhomnuill/MacDaniel (Clan Donald) became Danialson, or simply Daniel; MacGriogair/MacGregor (Clan Gregor) became Gregory, Grier, and Gruer; MacGoraidh/MacGorrie in Perthshire became Godfrey, with a fully Englished form of Jeffrey(s); and MacGiollatgamhais/MacGilletSamhais or MacTamhais/MacTavish (Clan MacTavish) names became MacIltavis, MacGlehouse, MacLehouse, MacElhose, with MacLawes, became Laws, Lawsone, Laweson; Tomson, Thomson, etc., or the fully English form Thompson (the later usage of Thompson by MacTavish descendents (with intrusive “p”) was used mainly by MacTavishes who emigrated to Ireland, North America, Australia or New Zealand, and to some extent by those who migrated to Caribbean islands.

Reason 5. Nearly all languages have particular personal names or surnames, some of which are deeply rooted in the region, culture, or religion of the speakers for a specific language; consequently, they can pose unique misunderstandings of culture-specific ideas within texts. It is interesting to note that some personal names (which often became surname/patronymics) have specific connotations, and omitting this cultural information results in totally unacceptable translation and thus eclipses any true understanding in how or why particular Gaelic names evolved into less Gaelic forms. **“Guessing the meaning of a surname is a dangerous game to play. What seems to be an obvious explanation is often completely wrong. One reason for this is that surnames have changed considerably in form over the centuries, and another is that even where the word is the same it may well have had a very different meaning at the time when surnames were being formed back in the middle ages.”**¹ Therefore, understanding how Gaelic surnames originated and then changed over time becomes an important factor.

From glen to glen in Scotland, a given name or surname could vary, depending on how the bearer of that name used it, or the era in which it appeared. The surname could also change as a person aged. For example of a misunderstood cultural difference, what follows from *Surnames of Scotland* (SoS) by Professor George F. Black is **misleading** as MacTavish (modern Anglo-English), is derived from the shortening of MacTamhais/MacTamhais, which were derived from the root name **MacGilletSamhais** [literal English spelling from Irish: *Mac Giolla tgamhais*]; (i.e. the Gaelic form is: **MAC GIOLLA TGAMHAIS**, and not derived from the Lowland Scots form of “Tammias. See above text, ref. footnote 1). The name is purely Gaelic. Within the same context, though culturally different, Tammias/also Tammie (little Thomas), have no connection to the root from which Tavis(h) and/or Tamhais appear, while still bearing the meaning of **Thomas. Mac Giolla tgamhais (MAC GIOLLA TGAMHAIS) is derived from a Gaelic culture-specific naming practice, indicating the Biblical Saint Thomas, Apostle of Christ.** In the case of the Lowland Scots language Tammias or Thomas, etc., these are devoid of showing a direct connection to the Celtic Church or Saint Thomas. However, in the case of Gaelic, Mac Giolla tSamhais (**MAC GIOLLA TGAMHAIS**) provides a direct and culturally-specific indicator connecting the root name and its later variations to the Celtic Church of the early Irish Saints (including St. Columba of Iona) and its clergy. Many of Clan MacTavish’s ancestors and members of the clan itself were by occupation associated with the Irish and Scottish clergy from a very early period. **Gillospuig** (Servant of the Bishop) was our epytome’s father in the 10th and early 11th century. There is also an old Argyllshire tradition that our warrior epitome in Scotland, Tavis, was also a lay priest in the Celtic Church. Even before this era the name, **MAC GIOLLA TGAMHAIS**, means, **Son of the Devotee of St. Thomas (the Apostle)**, exhibiting a direct connection to the church in Ireland.²

¹ David Hey, **Family Names and Family History**, London : Hambledon and London, 2000, page 3.

² From an early period of Christianity in the Gaelic World, when a saint’s name is used as all or part of a Gaelic name, this is indicative of the person or persons being part the clergy, or at least having a strong association to the Celtic Church. All Celtic clergy were considered lay priests, as they took no oaths of ordination from the Roman Church.

Anglicized Gaelic names were more easily recognizable in Europe (particularly in Spain, France and Germany), rather than in the Lowlands and Borders of Scotland, and in England, Cornwall or Wales (Wales only to some degree, or other places where the Brittonic, Goidelic, or Celtic languages had disappeared in favor of Germanic Anglo-Saxon-English/Scots [now the English language]. The Lowland and Border Scots Language is a form of old Germanic English. Gaelic surnames changed over generations into a multitude of Anglicized or Latin forms. The reasons are as plentiful as the name variations. In Ireland, the reasons are a bit different from those of Scotland, but very much follow the same patterns of transition.³



UNDERSTANDING THE TRUE MEANING OF CLAN AND SEPT

In both Ireland and Highland Scotland the word for a family unit, also a family fighting force, was **clann** or **clanna**, meaning roughly “children” or the common individuals within a family unit, from which the English word *clan* is derived. *Clann* and *Clanna* are found in old Irish Brehon Law Tracts, where the words **Tuath**, **Cenél** (*Cinel* or *Kinel*) and *Clann(a)*, were frequently used interchangeably. *Tuath*, (pronounced *To-a* in both Irish Gaelic and Scottish Gaelic), means, tribe (of a large size), people of a country, or people descended from ‘X’, or a named territory. *Cenél* or *Kinel* (pronounced Kin-nel’) is often used in the Irish Annals to describe a group slightly larger than a traditional clan (as found in Scotland), where it can be thought of as a tribe or race defined in naming conventions. *Tuath* and *Cenél* eventually became synonymous with *Clanna*. (See: *The Brehon Laws* by Laurence Ginnell, 1894.) In Scotland or Ireland the native Gaelic word for a sub-division/sub-unit within a clan is **sliocht** (pronounced *Shly-eukt* in Irish Gaelic) or **sliochd** (pronounced *Sly-ukq* in Scottish Highland Gaelic) which means roughly the “offspring” and also “common people”, a sept, or an extended family unit that may or may not be related to the chief of the clan. In the English Language **sliocht/sliochd** is translated as **sept**, especially in reference to a Scottish or Irish clan. **Sept** is an English word. Hence a **Clanna** is one distinguish family unit, with a Chief (**Ceann Cinnidh**)⁴ at its head, and not associated with, or connected to, another clan. A **Sept** (**sliochd**) is a sub-unit with a clan (which is not a clan itself) that may have a different name than the clan or its chief, but regards that specific clan chief as their leader, and head of their family(ies). Note that these Gaelic Language terms do not apply to Border clans, who did not speak Gaelic.

A misconception regarding the population and origins of the peoples of Scotland is that all people belonged to clans, when in reality most of the inhabitants, predominantly in the Lowlands, had no clan connection at all. This status of non-clan is most noted in the Lowlands and Borders. Too, there are those who think that all of the Border regional inhabitants belonged to the notorious Border Reiver clans; this too is not at all accurate. The majority of the Scottish people (Lowland and Borders) never belonged to a clan, and were merely tenants (renters) of Scottish Landowners.



MACGILLETAVISH OR MACTAVISH SURNAMES

“MACAVISH, MacCause, MacCavish, MacCawis, MacCaws. In G. MacThamhais, son of "Tammas", the Scottish form of Thomas. (SoS p. 456) and,

MACTAVISH. From G. Mac Tamhais, a form of MacThamhais, 'son of Tammas,' the Lowland Scots form of Thomas. Mactavishes are numerous in Argyllshire. The Craignish MS. says the MacTavishes or Clan

³ REF: Woulfe, **Sloinne Gaelic is Gall** (*Irish Names and Surnames*), Gill and Son, Dublin, 1906.

⁴ Noun: **ceann-cinnidh** masculine is Scottish Gaelic for a “clan chief”. Chief in the English language is derived from the old Norman slang word *Chef*, which means head, it appeared nowhere in the Gaelic Languages, but was eventually adopted. Note that language differences and English influence in the Highlands caused the Norman word *Chef* (Chief modernly) to become the noun synonymous with Scottish Highland Chief. Gaelic to English transition: similarly this phenomenon is associated with surname changes.

Tavish of Dunardarie descend from Tavis Corr. (SoS pg. 566) ...and, ... the eldest, Taus Corr, or Thomas the singular, he was ancestor of the MacTaus, or Tomsons of Argyllshire, and some other parts.⁵

The two above references from *Surnames of Scotland* seem to imply that MacTavish is derived from the *Lowland Scots Language* form of “Tammass”, but the text does not actually link the name to the Lowland Scots name ‘Tammass’, only giving its parallel meaning in Lowland Scots. Read those passages again. The examples simply show that the Lowland Scots language equivalent of Tavis(h) (in the Gaelic), is Tammass. The two Languages, Lowland *Scots* and Scottish *Gaelic* are unique unto themselves, not originating from the same family of languages. Buchanan of Auchmar (See: Footnote 3), alternately, gives a direct association between Tomson (Thomson) and MacTaus (MacTavish). The original spelling of **MacTavish** (which is a modern Anglo-English [Anglicized] form comes out of the northern Donegal region of Hornhead and Rosguil (RosGuill or Guill and Irguill), Ireland, the later Irish Barony of Kilmacrennan. It is originally from Irish, *teangacha Gaelacha*, and was structurally seen in several forms, one explicitly proper and the others vernacular or genitive. The original forms of MacTavish in Ireland were (in Irish Unical Alphabet⁶): Proper-**MAC SIOULA TSAMBHAIS** (Note that the Gaelic consonants **S** and **s** are the English consonant G and g, capital and lower case and are silent), **MAC SIOULA TÁRHAS** and/or **MAC SIOULA TSÓRHAS**.⁷ These Gaelic names provide for the Anglo-English (Anglicized transliterations) MacTavish, MacClavish, MacCavish, MacIltavish and similarly *MacThòmais* (Irish form of the Scottish-Gaelic MacThamais (i.e. MacTavish). The old forms of Tamhus, Tamhas, Tamhais, as given names all share the same root as the modern Scottish Gaelic names Tomas and Tomais. The abbreviated transition of **MAC TOMAIS** or **MAC TSÓRHAS**, yields the Modern Thompson (derived from the Irish Gaelic/Scottish Gaelic), and as it translates without and within the Irish/Britanic isles, finds its form from the original **MAC SIOULA TSAMBHAIS** or **TSÓRHAS** (phonetically Mac-Gille-Tavis), as do the modern abbreviated Anglo-English forms **MacIltavish**, **Makgilhoise**, **MacLaws**, **MacLehose**, **MacLawes**, **MacTavish**, **Thomson/Thompson**.^{8 9 10} The Gaelic forms are clearly religious in nature as **SIOULA TSAMBHAIS**, is the sole root of the name,

⁵ William Buchanan of Auchmar *An Inquiry into the Genealogy & Present State of Ancient Scottish Surnames with the Origin and Descent of the Highland Clans*, pg. 33) Buchanan’s ancestor was John, Second Son to John Lord of the Isles. (Note that Taus is the genitive form of Tavis, and Tais (in Cowal) is pronounced the same as Taus.)

⁶ The Irish or Scottish (or Gaelic/Galic) Unical Alphabet is not the English Alphabet; they do not equate letter for letter. The *Galic* Alphabet or *An Cló Gaelach* (Gaelic has only 19 letters total) is another name for the Irish uncial alphabet, which was used in Ireland, on the Isle of Man, in Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall, and which is now used mainly as decorative script on road signs, street names, shop signs and elsewhere. Gaelic typefaces tend to include the letters and diacritics (di·a·crit·ic noun > plural noun: diacritics: are a sign, such as an accent or cedilla, or dotted letters, which when written above or below a letter indicates a difference in pronunciation from the same letter when unmarked or differently marked) and are a required element needed to write the Celtic languages. Old Irish spelling uses a series of dotted letters for lenited consonants instead of modern letters (e.g. *ś*, *ḟ* for *sh*, *fh*). The most commonly used dotted letters in Old Irish grammars and primers is *ś* and *ḟ*, although the use of other dotted letters is also demonstrated in old Irish. The letters *ś*, *ḟ*, *b*, *d*, *g*, *p*, *t*, *c*, and *m* can always be substituted with *sh*, *fh*, *bd*, *dh*, *gh*, *ph*, *th*, *ch*, *mh* (and *r*, *n* can be replaced with *r*, *n*).

⁷ The dotted *m*, *m̃*, equates also to “*mh*” (modern *mh*: see above footnote 1) in Gaelic, which is pronounced as the English consonant *v*. Hence from **MAC TSÓRHAS** (-Anglo-English) *MacTavis* is transliterated, the Celtic/Gaelic **S** (English G) being silent. In English the Gaelic *MacTavis* is MacTavish.

⁸ Woulfe, Rev. Fr. Patrick, *Sloinnnte Gaedheal is Gall: Irish Names and Surnames*, publisher Gill & Son, Dublin, 1906, pp. 22, 74, 75, 84, and 97.

⁹ O’Hart, John, *Irish Pedigrees; or, The Origin and Stem of the Irish Nation*, Fifth Edition, publisher Duffy and Co., Dublin, 1892, p. 855. O’Hart, however, mistranslates the name as Mac GilletSamhais, as he was not a Gaelic speaker. The English transliteration spelling shown by O’Hart gives the English consonant “*S*” that is actually the Gaelic “**S**”. The Gaelic consonants “**S**” and “**s**” (capital and lower case) equal the English consonant “*G*” and “*g*” (Capital and lower case). In this instance the Gaelic “**S**” is silent.

¹⁰ **MAC SIOULA TSAMBHAIS**, **MAC SIOULA TSÓRHAS** / **MAC SIOULA TÁRHAS** bear the meaning *Son(s) of the Devotee* [servant or follower] of *Saint Thomas (the Apostle)*. See also: 1900 edition of *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, Vol. XXII, p. 163. “*St Thomas. Gaelic is now Tomas; but older dialects had Tamhas, whence M’Tavish. Gil-Tavish appears as M’Laws and M’Lehose. Gilles Makgilhoise was keeper of the Royal Park at Stirling. 1479; Pat. Makgilhois, Kippen, 1510; J. Makgilhewous, Menteith, 1465 and 1622 M’Ilhoise; Duncan M’Ilhaos is one of*

meaning *Devotee or Servant of Saint Thomas the Apostle*. **MAC** is prefixed to denote son(s) of *Gilletgamhais/GilletSamhais* (latter Englished spelling – with the g/S silent).

Thomas is the English equivalent for the Irish Gaelic Tomalhaird, Tomaltach, Toirdelach, Tamhus, Tamhas, and Tamhais, or Taus/Tauis/Tauise (genitive forms), Homais (Northern Scottish Gaelic), or the much older Irish Tamhus. The Latin modern form is Tomas. Thomas *in modern Gaelic* assumes such forms as Tomas (from Latin) and Tomais; and with the prefix Mac for “son [of]”, bears the meaning “Son of Thomas”, where they become Thomson, Thomasson, etc. within Anglo-English usage in Highland Scotland, and where the gliding ‘p’¹¹ is evident, **Thompson** by spelling.

You may have seen on the INTERNET such statements as: Thompson is NOT MacTavish, and, “Also, on the Chief MacTavish website, the Seannachie asserts: “Families in Skipness who were MacTavish, used the Thomson name interchangeably, as noted in the parish records.”¹⁰ A pure fabrication. The Skipness parish records do NOT show MacTavish-Thomson names being used interchangeably.” **What is clearly fabricated, showing a very anti-MacTavish bias, is the immediately preceding quote. Parish records do show this, and are not the only records that show the transition from MacTavish to Thomson, another of these parish examples is given following. See also following: Extracts from: The Book of Arran, and Extracts from: CLANS OF SHISKINE, PAST AND PRESENT. Additionally, William Buchanan of Auchmar gives for the MacTavishes: “Taus Corr, or Thomas the singular, he was ancestor of the MacTaus, or Tomsons of Argyllshire, and some other parts.” These clearly indicate the transition as well.**

Another anti-MacTavish statement seen is: “George F. Black’s *The Surnames of Scotland* remains the definitive work on Scottish genealogy. He states,” Many individuals of this name (Thomson) in Perthshire and Argyllshire are really MacTavishes. The surname in these districts is an Anglicized form of Gaelic Mac Thomais, ‘son of Thomas,’ or of Mac Thomaigh, ‘son of Tommie’ ” As no examples, or other evidence, have ever been provided to show an evolution of MacTavish into Thomson, this statement must be questioned. In fact, the wide spread use of the Thomson surname in these districts reflects the Scottish patronymic naming convention and the popularity of Tom/Thomas as a first name. Black says ‘MacTavish. from the G. Mac Tamhais, a form of MacThamhais, ‘son of Tammas,’ the lowland Scots form of Thomas.” You will note a slightly different Gaelic spelling between the MacTavish and the Gaelic of Thomson in Perthshire (*sic* probably meaning Perthshire)”. **There is no historical or logical mention to be found of ,“the Gaelic of Thomson in Perthshire”, and this author has no knowledge to what this is in reference to, nor can be found a reference for it, or what this could possibly mean; as Thomson itself is NOT a Gaelic name, but a transliteration of MacTavish.**

Can you image where such illogical thought comes from? Illogical thinking has no boundaries; it ranges from accepting the most bazaar to rejecting and ignoring facts, or rejecting what is most obvious. Reading the particular sentence, “As no examples, or other evidence, have ever been provided to show an evolution of MacTavish into Thomson, this statement must be questioned.” Provided above are several examples of this “evolution”, making this most illogical statement extremely misleading, and factually inaccurate. Just open the book *Sloinne Gaedheal is Gall (Irish*

*Dunolly's men in 1623. Gille-Thomas, Dunfermline Charters, 1230.” All these derive from the Irish **MAC GIOLLA TSAMHAIS**.*

¹¹ The gliding consonant ‘p’ does not show up in Scotland until the 16th century. It became part of the name of Campbell (Cambel), Simpson (Symson/Simson), Thompson (Thomson) and other surnames. The origins of the Thomson families within Scotland takes many paths. Not all of this name in Scotland are related, and regional placement, as well as the history of the regions, plays an important role for the origins of the many different family groups of Scottish Thom(p)sons. There are three general groups of Thom(p)sons, being the Highland Thom(p)sons (Clan MacTavish and Clan MacThomas, and to some extent the Clan Campbell), the Lowland Thom(p)sons, and the Border Thom(p)sons (the last two who are all of later Teutonic/Germanic origin). Therein there are Thompson kin-groups that overlap in modern times by region because of migration, so the three divisions are not necessarily fixed by region since the 19th century, nor are all Thom(p)sons related (not having a familial relationship or connection). The Borders and Lothian were once Gaelic Speaking areas, as evidenced in their Gaelic Place-Names, and overcome by Anglo-Norman settlers. Mute evidence of the fact that a *Gaelic speaking* people dwelt in *Scotland's Borderland* can be found in many of the place-names of that region.

Names and Surnames) and anyone reading it shall find examples of the transition of MacTavish to Thomson/Thompson, all transiting from Gaelic to English (as well as examples given herein). As the author of *Irish Names and Surnames*, Father Patrick Woulfe, explains on page 9 of his work, “**Scotch Gaelic surnames were formed in the same manner as Irish surnames, and indeed need not be specifically, dealt with**”. The transition of surnames in Ireland, paralleled the transition of surnames in Scotland, occurring at a near simultaneous rate on both sides of the Irish Channel (modern ref: North Channel).

The above is simply an attempt to dissuade a correct understanding of the use of aliases between Argyll and Perthshire. Both the M(a)cTavishes in Argyll and Perthshire, used Thomson as an alias, and the form of *Gaelic in Perthshire* used by the Campbell Earls of Breadlabane (Perthshire), and the MacTavishes who resided on those lands, with Campbells, used the *Kintyre Gaelic* dialect. From where does the writer of the above statement think the Perthshire MacTavishes originated, except Argyllshire? There is no such thing as a “Gaelic of Thomson in Persthire” (*sic* correctly written as Perthshire). Thomson in its true Scottish Gaelic forms are *MacTamhais* and pronounced *MacTavis*, (i.e. for Clan MacTavish), and *Mac Thomaidh*, pronounced *MacOmie* or *MacTommie* (i.e. for Clan MacThomas). The Gaelic of Thomson in Persthire (or Perthshire) does not exist! Simply stated; there is no such thing.

The names MacTavish and Thomson were so interchangeable that even John, the son of Chief Dugald MacTavish of Dunardry went by the name of Thomson. The following is a letter from the *MacTavish of Dunardry Papers* collection at the Manse, Argyll and Bute Archives, in Lochgilphead, Scotland, from John MacTavish-Thomson to his father Dugald MacTavish of Dunardry, dated Kingston (Jamaica) 16 July 1756:

“My Dear father

I received yours of 13th January by Capt. Wyllie it gave me great Pleasure to hear of your welfare and the rest of my Dear Friends at Dunance.^{i[1]} Since my last to you by Capt. Thomson I’ve had a touch of fever which has given me a thorough seasoning. I’m but just recovered. I’m sorry to acquaint you that Cussine Duncan (Campbell) is but in a very bad State of Health. He’s obliged to leave all Kind of Business, he has lost the power of his hands which has rendered him incapable of writing to you, he’s going to North America for 3 or 4 months to see if he can recover his health. It will be a very great loss to him. I spoke to him about the Situation of your Affairs, all the answer he gave me was that it was not in his power to do anything as yet. I spoke to him likewise about sending you a little rum & sugar. He told me he intended sending you some, as to Lime Juice it was impossible for me to send you any by this Voyage but you may be sure of some by the time Capt. Wyllie comes out, Likewise some rum & sugar for by that time I’ll have the charge of an Estate so that it will be in my power to send you as good rum as is in Jamaica, I’ve sent you two Jars Tamerinds mark’d D & M & T no. 1 & 2. I forgot in my last to let you know of poor Cardell’s Death likewise Cameroon’s, they both died in January last. Dugald Malcolm is Cameroon’s Executor how Cardell made his will I never heard. I have not seen any of my Argyle Shire friends save Duncan Mr Petter’s son who I saw in Town a few days ago, he’s very well & tells me that Duncan Mr James’s son is very well for they are Neighbours, he Complains very much that his father hase never write him since he came to the Island, not even once, he says he wrote often to his Father, he swears he never shall write him any more till he hears from him, I saw Dugald McDuffee who was very kind & civil to me & desired his kind compliments to you, I lodge with Captain James in Town who’s excessively kinde to me, two days before the date of my letter he received a letter from Knockbuy acquainting him that you had got a lease on Sr. James’s estate for six years at £600 a year with a Deduction of £100 the first year, he seem’d to be a little thoughtfull about it, I never said anything to him about it nor he to me, tho’ at the same time I was very glad to hear of it. Knockbuy in his first letter to Capt. James (which was by Capt. Wyllie) writes him that you and Sherieff Campbell intended to ruin him to all intents and purposes, this I had from Duncan who was with the Capt. when he rec’d Knockbuy’s letter. I asked the Capt if he’d write you he said he did not know but he wou’d so that I belive he’s a little chagrin’d at you, I have not heard anything of Dugie Knap (Campbells of Knap) since my last all that I have to say about him is that

he'll be such another Man as John Ormsary who's neither a credit to himself or Friends. I have hear'd nothing of John McLachlan's son, only that he's a Leeward.

I pray send me a Broad Sword, & a Highland Pistoll will be very acceptable also, there's one thing I have to beg of you which is to write Mr. Lambie & to return him thanks for his civility and kindness to me for I assure you he uses me with the greatest civility imaginable & will do for me as much as any Man in Jamaica, write him as soon as possible.

I am so weake after my sickness that I can hardly hold the pen in my hand which makes me write so bad. —Remember my Love & Duty to my Dear Mother & tell her to excuse my not writing her at present as I very much want to leave the Town for it is very sickly at present, however I'll endeavour to write aer after I get home, there's a Fleet of vessels to sail by the 22nd of this month of which Capt. Wyllie is one. I saw Neill Campbell who told me he saw you on you way home, at Greenock, he's to sail likewise with the Fleet. Remember my Love & Duty to my Grandmother aunt & all the rest of my Dear Friends, remember me kindly to all that ask about me. Adieu my Dear Father & may God grant all happiness & prosperity attend you & yours which is the Earnest wish & Desire of, my Dear Father, your loving and affectionate Son

Signed: *John Thomson*

P.S. You'll direct to Mr William Lambie at St. Thomas in the East. Direct to me at Nutts River Plantation, St. Thomas in the East

Additionally in Canada, McTAVISH; REF: **1871 census** 030d1 **family 046** @ca.on. perth_county_north.easthope_north_township division 1 page 014 **film C9940 lds0349157**. **This census reveals that Thompson, Thomson, Tompson and Tomson are related to the McTavish family (family 046) in North Easthope, Perth County, Ontario, as follows:**

17 046 THOMPSON/THOMSON/TOMPSON/TOMSON John m 45 Scotland Presb Scotch farmer married
lot 44 concession 3 according to agricultural

18 THOMPSON/THOMSON/TOMPSON/TOMSON {?} Elizabeth f 34 Scotland Presb Scotch married

19 THOMPSON/THOMSON/TOMPSON/TOMSON Grace f 12 Ont Presb Scotch

20 THOMPSON/THOMSON/TOMPSON/TOMSON Jane f 10 Ont Presb Scotch
page 015

01 THOMPSON/THOMSON/TOMPSON/TOMSON Andrew m 9 Ont Presb Scotch

02 THOMPSON/THOMSON/TOMPSON/TOMSON Margaret m 6 Ont Presb Scotch

03 THOMPSON/THOMSON/TOMPSON/TOMSON Martha f 4 Ont Presb Scotch

04 THOMPSON/THOMSON/TOMPSON/TOMSON John Russell m 2 Ont Presb Scotch

05 McTAVISH Margaret ▲ ▼ f 22 Ont Presb Scotch servant

((census research preformed 2000-2012 by Don and Marilyn Holmes of Listowel, Ontario))

Another interesting alteration of MacTavish is M'Thorne (MacThorne: common to Argyll, Inverneess-shire and Perthshire), which is further altered to Thorne, Thomey, Tomey, Ptomey (and in Ireland: Toomey and Twomey are also surname variations within some families, but not all of this name). (See various volumes of: **THE CLAN CAMPBELL ABSTRACTS**, for Scotland, and **Irish Families - Their Names, Arms and Origins**, by Edward MacLysaght).

Also seen are such statements as: **"The Chief's surname is that of his clan and a clan has only ONE name."** Yes that is true, a clan has one name(Lyon Couert records the ENGLISH name of the Clan according to the matriculation of its Chief, but the recordation of the Chiefs of Clans by Lyon Court does not preclude, restrict, hamper, impede, or disqualify any clan from having members of a different surname.

Then too, there is found this very hypocritical statement: **"A chief can only be the head of ONE family surname. The chief of Clan MacTavish is only the legitimate chief of the clan and name MacTavish."** Illogical thought yet again; and **definitely misleading**. Many clans have *sept names* (now preferred by Lyon Court to be listed as *associated family names*.) that are not the name of the clan or its chief. For instance, Clan MacGregor septs include such names as Fletcher, Grier, Lecky and MacNee; while

Clan Campbell has Bannatyne, Denoon, Haws, MacKellar, and many others; and Clan MacKintosh lists among its connected names, Adamson, Dallas, Hardie, MacAndrew, and others, just to give a few examples. Strangely askew is the reasoning that puts forth such illogical statements as above. A chief is the chief of his/her clan, no matter what surnames make up the members of that clan.

One clearly has to wonder at the imaginative logic that produces such highly prejudicial statements. We can conclude from these anti-MacTavish statements that those who write them are truly ignorant of facts surrounding the Gaelic Language and Gaelic names as they transitioned into English or Latin based naming practices, and also of the Highland Clan Structure that includes *sept* names of the various clans. **As for clan structure, there is a significant problem with: “A chief can only be the head of ONE family surname”.** If that were strictly and truthfully the case, were did clan *septs* (associated family names) come from - that have are not the clans' name, or are, in fact, a different surname from the chief's surname? That the Clan MacTavish is extremely old is found in written historical texts. Here are just two of those mentions:

The Reverend John Dewar, B.D., of Kilmartin, in 1882, addressing the Argyllshire proprietors, mentions thirteen Campbell landowners in the year spanning 1629-30 (during the time of Bishop Carswell of Argyll) that many of the other landowners, despite other assertions to the contrary, were of Dalriadic stock, and these Dalriadic Landowners include, The MacArthurs, The MacLachlans, The MacNeills, and The MacTavishes.¹²

1793 publication of the Philological Society of London, it is written the “**Mac Tavifh or Thomfon of Dunardary**” held their lands for “**upwards of 900 years**” (that is, since ca 893 AD)¹³ (The ‘f’ is considered a long ‘s’),

MacTavishes, and those Thom(p)sons (etc.) who are genetically MacTavishes, are firmly established being of Dalriadic settlement stock and predate the Lowland or Border Thomsons of Teutonic stock by (at least) 173 years.¹⁴

It is also interesting to read from the *Calendar of Documents Relating to the Mullikine/Amuliganes 1500-1539*, these two entries from the Borders (Dumfries) indicating that MacTavishes were also present.

“William Amuligbhan-- November 5, 1506: [Dumfries] Action before the Burgh Court of Dumfries by which Robert McBair and Bessie **McGillhauch** were obliged to stand and [text very poor] in the case of William (sic. Willie) Amuligbhan, Huchon [blank] and John Durand.”¹⁵

---**McGillhauch is a variant of MacIlTavish, which became MacElhose, a form of MacTavish.**”

And...

“Margaret Amuligane of Dumfries-- May 15, 1508: [Dumfries] Action before the Lords of Council by Lawrence Grierson against Thomas MacBriar son and heir of the deceased Herbert MacBriar, Nicolas MacBriar his tutor, Margaret Amuligane spouse of the deceased **David MacKauis**, **John MacKauis** his son and heir, for wrongfully with holding from Lawrence the mails of 3 crofts of land and certain houses lying in the Bridge of Dumfries. The **MacKauis** are to pay Lawrence the mails for a tenement in Dumfries between

¹² *The Celtic Magazine*, Vol. VII., MacKenzie, A & W MacKenzie, Inverness, 1882, p. 451: (Bishop Carswell and His Times, VI, by Rev. Dewar).

¹³ *European Magazine and London Review*, Vol. 23, Philological Society of London, J. Sewell, Cornwall, 1793, p. 358. London society became well aware of the ancientness of the MacTavishes through Mr. Duncan McBride's article.

¹⁴ 173 years taking into account the Norman invasion of 1066, which probably produced some of the distinct and unrelated Lowland or Border Thomsons at some after-period to the Dalriadic Settlement of Argyll Scotland.. However, Lowland and Border surnames did not appear before the 15th century and were not fixed until the 16th century, **while Highlanders used their chief's name for identity**, in essence their surname, and this method of description occurred before the Scottish/Dalriadic colonization of ancient Alba/Scotland in the 6th century, by Irish settlers. The Irish followed the same pattern to describe themselves even before the 6th century. There were relatively few Teutonic settlers in Scotland before the Norman invasion of 1066. The Borders and Lothian were once Gaelic Speaking areas, as evidenced in their Gaelic Place-Names, and overcome by Anglo-Norman (Teutonic) settlers. Mute evidence of the fact that a *Gaelic speaking* people dwelt in *Scotland's Borderland* can be found in many of the place-names of that region.

¹⁵ *Transcripts of Dumfries Burgh Court*, 1506-1537 (DA), folio 3.

the land of William Cunningham and John Paterson. Defenders not compearing, decreet granted to pursuer.”
---**MacKauis is an elided form of MacTavish.** (Boldened text supplied for emphasis; both entries.)¹⁶

Additionally from the borders (Dumfries) is this earlier entry: “Donald de Meligane October 18, 1457: [Dunscore] Instrument recording that Vedast Grierson of Lag went in person to the land of Betwixt the Waters, that is to the house of Patrick McQuonquhe, and there he took up earth and stone with these words “I justly break and destroy the intrusion, called sasine, wrongfully taken by William McCulloch of these lands with their pertinents” and he cast down the earth and stone in front of the house and broke, destroyed, annulled and quashed the said intrusion, called sasine, as far as in him lay. Done in the house of Patrick McQuonquhe. Witnessed by Andrew Grierson, Adam de Gordon, **Finlay McGilhauch**, Matthew McMurdie, Andrew Grierson and Donald de Meligane”¹⁷ (Boldened text supplied.)

These notations indicate that the Pictish MacTavish-Thomsons had a presence in Dumfries (along side Thomsons of later Teutonic stock) some of these MacTavish had altered their names, assuming the aliases or altered spellings, some became Thomson or Thompson, as is clearly noted in documentation. One example of an altered MacTavish surname is shown for a well known and highly regarded family, as follows:

There is a family recorded of some great proliferation and descent of one William C. Thomson, who is traced out of Glasgow about 1700. Two of his descendants became well known figures. Reverend William McClure Thomson, a Presbyterian missionary to Syria, wrote, among other works, *The Land and the Book*, detailing the Holy Lands. His son, William Hanna Thomson, M.D., was a well regarded physician of his day and served in the Union Army Medical Corps as an Inspector during the American Civil War. Dr. Thomson’s son, Herbert Gordon Thomson, graduated from Yale University in 1893, died January 11, 1928; and it is (recorded) within the pages of the *Obituary Records of Graduates of Yale University* (Edition of 1928, p. 137.) is recalled this vast family are really MacTavishes, by saying, “.... **descended from members of the Clan McTavish, who came from Scotland to Indiana County, Pa.**”¹⁸ (Bold text supplied.)

Note: The Thomson Family Tree chart detailing the family’s great proliferation was drawn up by Rev. Nathaniel McConaughy and was preserved in the Iowa Historical Society Archives.¹⁹

Dr. George Calder, Glasgow University, published *A GAELIC GRAMMAR* in 1923, a close examination of the Gaelic Language. Page 8 reveals “... 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.” AND....

“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.”

In reference to Holmes, noted above. It may not sound like MacTavish, but it certainly is. Holmes is derived from the Irish Gaelic of MacThōmais (Properly pronounced MacTomhais, elided as McOmais (Scottish Gaelic [Latinized] MacThamais (properly pronounced MacTōvais, properly phonetic MacTómhais (seen written as MacTamhais) with the vowel “ó” pronounce like the “a” in the English word ‘what’), a form of the modern MacTavish. This is the exact pronunciation used in the Knapdale dialect of Gaelic. When the name is pronounced with stand alone elidation it is seen as Homais, and variations include Homas and Hamais; from

¹⁶ R. C. Reid (ELD, *Acta Dominorum Concilii, 1505-1514, Vol. 148, p. 46*

¹⁷ Scottish Record Society, *The Lag Charters* 1400-1720 (SRS), no. 8 (otherwise: SIR PHILIP JAMES HAMILTON-GRIERSON'S CALENDAR).

¹⁸ Thompson, *History of Clan MacTavish*, Otter Bay Books, 2012, p. 258

¹⁹ Ibid.

which Hammish is often associated wrongly. Hammish in English is James, while Irish Gaelic yields Sheamas/Seamas which is neither Tavish or Thomas. Holmes as a form of MacTavish is now mostly seen in Ireland, or Lowland Scotland, the United States. Australia, and New Zealand, and likely has no relationship to the Lowland Clan Holmes.

In 1646 Chief Malcolm MacNaughtan of Dunderave commanded a garrison in the defense of the Skipness Castle for the Campbell's who were besieged by the Colkitto MacDonald's (Clanranald) army. From the Papers of Duchess Ina Campbell at Inverary Castle is a poem about those days, describing a **MacTavish/Thomson hero** who overcame a siege machine used against Skipness Castle. Alistair Campbell of Airds in his second volume of *A History of Clan Campbell*, pp 238 & 239, reveals a portion of the poem thusly:

"...they had a siege engine or gun called Muc Nimhe or 'Deadly Sow'. The hero of the day was a MacTavish – perhaps the laird of Dunardry, perhaps not – who destroyed the Muc Nimhe.

[Campbell of Airds provides this fragment of the poem]

**The Thomson who was in the castle
Was the best of their Thomsons,
He set the Muc Nimhe in a blaze
And he brought the crushed iron home.**

Here is a rare and interesting mention of the name."

ABOVE QUOTED From: A History of Clan Campbell, Volume 2, Copyright ©, Alistair Campbell of Airds.

Be aware that in truth the use of Thomson as an alias for MacTavish is not a rarity at all, and in that era (ca 1600s) we would probably have seen an elided or Englished/Latinized form like MacCauis, McCawis or McTawis used, vice MacTavish.

A few more examples of Thomson being an alias for M(a)cTavish:

-From the *Kintyre Magazine*, a Publication of the THE KINTYRE ANTIQUARIAN & NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY, Campbeltown, Argyllshire, The Kintyre Magazine, Issue 28, April 1999, Ian Stewart and Ian McDonald wrote, "**McAvish is the same as MacTavish Anglicised to Thomson.**"

-AGAIN FROM: *Kintyre Magazine* is recalled in 1850 a shepherd in Scotmill, Archibald MacTavish or Thomson, on the wanted lists, who ran away from the Revenue officers. "**They yelled after him, "Come back, Thomson, we know you"**.

- Flora McTAVISH was born 1822 Skipness, Argyll, and married James LINDSAY in 1851 at Kilcalmonell and Kilberry parish, Argyll. The listing 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 (McTavish reflects the alias of Thomson in the Tarbert record).

-John THOMSON married Barbra MCCOLL in 1814 at Kilcalmonell & Kilberry

Their Children were listed as:

2 born in Kilcalmonell & Kilberry Parish

1. Flory THOMSON 1815

2. Donald THOMSON 1817

And 3 born in South Knapdale,

3. Duncan McTAVISH 1820

4. Matilda McTAVISH 1824

5. John McTAVISH 1827

-“...the Thomas-sons of the Highlands are generally said to have been descended from Tavus-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.”²⁰

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

“Here lies the remains of Archibald McTavish,
late farmer at Altghalbhaish
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.”

Note: Parish records reflect that Archibald Thomson was Archibald McTavish’s son; dates of birth, and marriage, indicate the connection.

A quite but informative iteration exists in the book excerpt following:

REMINISCENCES OF A CANADIAN PIONEER.
CHAPTER I.
THE AUTHOR'S ANTECEDENTS AND FORBEARS.

“The writer of these pages was born in the year 1810, in the City of London, and in the Parish of Clerkenwell, being within sound of Bow Bells. My father was churchwarden of St. James's, Clerkenwell, and was a master-manufacturer of coal measures and coal shovels, now amongst the obsolete implements of by-gone days. His father was, I believe, a Scotsman, and has been illnaturally surmised to have run away from the field of Culloden, where he may have fought under the name and style of Evan McTavish, a name which, like those of numbers of his fellow clansmen, would naturally anglicise itself into John Thompson, in order to save its owner's neck from a threatened Hanoverian halter.” ²¹

---“A curious case of double names belongs to families who bear them on the pretext of an alias. Documents abound in which the same name occurs not once, which might have been an accident, but continually accompanied by its shadow. Thus, under the date of 1535 already we meet with a “Richard Jackson, alias Keneren.” 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. Hence, probably, arose the eccentric, and otherwise inexplicable custom of some families to write themselves by one name and to call themselves by another, as with the Enroughty's, who are called Derby.” ²² (Underlining supplied.)

The progressive language trends and regionally employed Gaelic dialects lead to variations of **MacGiollatgamhais** (direct spelling into its English transliteration) such as: (Mac)Kemish and MacKewish or Kewish on the Isle of Man, or MacKevish, Kevish Kavish in Colonsay and the Isles (transmitted to Cavis, Kavis, Kevis, Kemish), MacIltavish, MacLehose, MacElhose, MacLaw(e)s,

²⁰ 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, pg. 40) ⁽¹⁾ Paterson writes Tavus vice Tavis.

²¹ SAMUEL THOMPSON, in the Office of the Minister of Agriculture. Toronto, **REMINISCENCES OF A CANADIAN PIONEER For THE LAST FIFTY YEARS, An Autobiography, Entered according to an Act of the Parliament of Canada in the year one thousand eight hundred and eighty-four**, Hunter, Rose and Company, pp. 11, 12, 1884.

²² M. Schele de Vere, LL.D., Professor of Modern Languages, **STUDIES IN ENGLISH; OR, Glimpses of the Inner Life of Our Language**, 1867, Scribner & Co., N.Y., pg. 134

MacTavish, M'Caus and M'Taus, M'Cosh and Cash, Tawse and Tawis, Thomas and Thomason, Thomson and Thompson ... et cetera, elsewhere, in both Ireland and Scotland; and over the course of generations, such aliases were borne from glen to glen and region to region. Not all MacTavishes, or those who took variant spellings were relegated to living at Dunardry in Knapdale, as some insinuate, but were spread over the width of Scotland (found in multiple sources.) For instance some MacTavishes who had left Knapdale, settled at Garthbeg, and surrounding area are well known for having lived on Fraser lands in Inverness-shire. Others lived on Lochawe, Argyllshire, at Auchnacraf, Ardbrechnish and at Borindryne, and north of Loch Craignish at Baravullin. Still others were in Kilmicheal-Glassarie at Auchachoish, Achnashelloch and Rudle in Glassary. Then there were MacTavishes at Garvalt and Largeimore in Cowall, plus at Leanach in the Barony of Strathlachlan. Alexander McCaus of Ardnamurchan (Ardnamurtho) is recorded in the *Leslie Family Papers* as a witness to a charter in 1478 to Alexander Leslie of Wardis for the Barony of Kynndeward, and parish records show several MacTavish families resided there from an early period. There were MacTavishes who ran a ferry from Tirvine or Tiravein on Lochawe (from time immemorial). Then *The Manx Gazetteer* (Isle of Man) records Ballakewish as the place of Kewish's Farm (from the Ir: MacTamahais, i.e. MacTavish's Farm). The **Manx Scrapbook** Chapter IV says: MacGilhaws, 1429 ; MacGilhacosse, apparently the same man ; " co " an error for " w " ? Mac-giolla Tamhais, (St.) Thomas. Sc. MacGilhoise, 1479, modern McLehose. The obs. and extant Mx Kemmish, Kevish, Kevish, in a riot of spellings, appear to contain " Hamish " (Sheamus), i.e. James. Cf. McHeamische, 1616-19, keg. Privy Cncl. Scotd., and p 67 has Kevish1653 Kevish in Ballaugh Par. Reg., 1679. Sc. MacThamhais, son of Thomas; mod. McTavish. See also MacGilhaws, chap. IV.,

Also the MacTavish are found on the Isle of Islay at Ardachie, and again at Sron Clachan (Ardtalnaig – Killin, Tayside), and still again at Glen Quaich, in Perthshire. Other MacTavishes in Perthshire sold Learagan or Lurgan in Rannoch to Gregor MacGregor of Roro. In 1675, Neill MacTavish of Bargirgug, is situated in the Parish of Kilmartin, in Glassary. Still others are noted on the Isle of Arran, in Glasgow and Edinburgh, as well as in Sterlingshire, and beyond. Hence depicting the MacTavishes as a wee – small clan from Knapdale is quite a fiction.²³ Some of these MacTavish families are found to have taken alias names such as Thomson. Because of the transitions to other spellings/aliases, many genetic MacTavishes have lost his/her rightful MacTavish family heritage.

Understanding the fine distinctions of Gaelic: Dealing with *Mac* prefixed patronymic surnames-- Patronymic surnames for men feature either the *Mac* (e.g. MacDhòmhnaill) element or the nominalizing suffix *-ach* (e.g. Dòmhnallach). In the case of women, the element *Nic* (and rarely, but at times *Vc*) is used (derived from *nighean mhic* "the daughter of the son of").²⁴ Various other morphological changes (such as lenition or slenderization) may apply in Gaelic, so the surname MacDonald, for example, may appear as MacDhòmhnaill, MhacDhòmhnaill, 'IcDhòmhnaill, MhicDhòmhnaill, NicDhòmhnaill depending on the grammatical context. When fully Anglicized MacDonald becomes Donaldson, but such names from Gaelic to English are relatively modern name adaptations, formed about the 16th century (1500s). This was due in part to the adoption of English naming practices into the Gaelic Language structure. (See: Reasons preceding.)

As a result of misspelling (usually by English or Lowland Scots translators/scribes), one Gaelic surname often corresponds to numerous English forms, e.g. MacDhonnchaidh "son of Duncan" may appear as: Duncan, Duncanson, Donagh(y), Donnagh, Dono(u)gh, MacConachie, MacConachy, MacConaghy, MacConchy, MacConechie, MacConkey, MacConnachie, MacConnechie, MacConnichie, MacConochie, MacConoughy, MacDona, MacDonachie, MacDonachy, MacDonaghy, MacDonaugh, MacDonnach, MacDonnagh, MacDonnoghie, MacDonogh, MacDonoghue, MacDonough, MacDunphy, MacKonochie, MacOnachie, MacOnechy, MacOnochie, (sometimes further transliterated as Robertson/Robison), or as Connichie, Conchy, Donohue or Donohoe (ignoring the Mac/Mc prefix entirely).^{25 26 27}

²³ see Thompson, *History of Clan MacTavish*, Chapter 7, © 2012.

²⁴ MacBain, A. *Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language*, 1896.

²⁵ Mark, Colin, *The Gaelic-English Dictionary* (2004), publisher Routledge ISBN 0-415-29761-3

²⁶ de Bhulbh, Seán, *Sloinne na h-Éireann: Irish Surnames* (1997), publisher Comhar-Chumann Íde Naofa, Limerick, ISBN 0-9530560-1-5

Here are a few more examples of transition:

MacGiollaBhrighde/MacGilleBhrighde in Ireland and Scotland became Anglicized as Gibb, Gibbs, Gibson, Gilbert, Gilbride, MacBryde and MacBride. Transitions between Scots Gaelic, Irish Gaelic, and English show the direct Gaelic translations, *and transliterated* English forms.

Scots Gaelic	Irish Gaelic	English Transliteration
MacAonghais	Mac Aonghasa	MacInnes or Innes/Innis et al.
MacDhòmhnaill	Mac Dónaill	MacDonald or Donaldson et al.
MacEòghainn	Mac Eoghain	MacEwen or Ewen/Ewin/Owin. Ian et al.
MacMhàrtainn	Mac Máirtín	MacMartin or Martin et al.
MacRuairidh	Mac Ruaidhrí	MacRory or Roryson/Rorieson, Rory et al.

Gaelic language surnames, nor their transitions to more Anglo-English styles or Latin forms cannot, therefore, be equated directly to fully English or Lowland/Border Scots names because Gaelic names were transliterated²⁸ to conform to English naming practices. The Gaelic names often do not share an etymology (origin), or culture-specific ideals with their English forms, simply because of the differences in these unrelated languages; and Scottish and Irish Gaelic are of the same root, so they do not equate directly to any form of English in speech or grammar²⁹ (Germanic root) or other Teutonic bred languages.

Even before the 1745 Rising of the Jacobites, the first known instance of a MacTavish taking the surname of Thomson appears in Glassary (Glassarie), Argyllshire in 1533, a full century before the Earl of Argyll (Chief of Clan Campbell) invited Lowland families and their lairds to move to Kintyre. Thusly, the original Thomsons in the Highlands, and particularly in Argyllshire, were MacTavishes, which in English literally means “Son of Thomas”. Alistair Campbell of Airds states in *A History of Clan Campbell, From Origins to Flodden*, pg, 243, Appendix 3: **“The name Tavis is anglicized as Thomas, and nearly all the names here grouped together from the ‘official’ sept list mean either Thomas or ‘son of Thomas.’ It is quite wrong to suggest that all Sons of Thomas derive from the Argyllshire MacTavishes.”** (Underlining supplied) *Clan MacTavish agrees that not all Sons of Thomas-styled surnames indicate a relationship to MacTavish, and no MacTavish has ever made such an all-inclusive, widespread, claim. However, people have exaggerated the MacTavish claim, implying that The MacTavishes insist that “all” Thomas surnames are of MacTavish. This assertion is simply inaccurate, and highly exaggerated.*

²⁷ Patronymics and the loss of the prefix Mac: Patronymic names were formed by the use of the Gaelic prefix Mac to the father's, grandfather's, etc. name. The "Irish" O (Ó) never took root among Manx names and is seldom seen in Scotland. By the early 16th century, the Mac prefix was almost universally used on the Isle of Man; but, by the 17th century, it had almost completely disappeared. The pronunciation of the prefix *Mac* in Manx was unstressed, so that the final consonant became the first consonant (replacing the Mac entirely) in the second element of the name (the father's personal name). When the *Mac* prefix fell out of use, the final consonant (Mac or Mhic, and even Mak - the C or K [being sounded as a Q]) became the first sound of the surname. Because of this, many Manx names characteristically begin with the letters C, K, or Q. Patronymic forms of personal names beginning with element *Giolla* "servant, devotee, follower of" (for instance, MacGillchrist) underwent a transformation of their own; the prefix *Mac* and the element *Giolla* were contracted into Myley. For example, MacGillchrist became Mylechreest or Mylchreest. In other names the *Giolla* was completely dropped and the name abbreviated, such as in the surnames MacGiollacalonn (Mac Ghille Chaluim or MacGiollaColumn) to MacCallum and eventually to Malcolm, and MacGiollatgamhais to MacGilleTamhais, to MacIltavish, then MacTamhais, then MacTavish. In some instances the *Giolla*, *Ghille*, or *Gille* was abbreviated to Il or Ille, hence MacIITavish or Maciltavish. MacLehose and MacElhous, etc., are also corrupted forms of Mac Gille Tavish.

²⁸ **Transliterate: verb** > (used with object), transliterated, transliterating. to change (letters, words, (or names) etc.) into corresponding characters of another alphabet or language.

²⁹ English Language: Is a West Germanic Language. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language]. Hence the later inhabitants of Lowland Scotland and the Borders, the Lowland Scots, are mostly considered Teutonic or German in origin, as the Scots language is a form of Germanic English. Grammatical form is different in English as it is a neutered language.

Of significance is the very fact that not every person in the World bearing a Thomas-styled surname, like, Thomson or Thompson is of Scottish or even Gaelic lineage. Thom-like surnames (patronyms) are also borne by the Welch, German, and Scandinavian (Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish) peoples. The Scandinavian Thomsen and Thomssen, are often Anglicized as Thomson and Thompson in North America. In Germany it is often rendered as Thomsin, and translated to Thomson in North America, England and Wales.

Tamhus (the oldest known Irish form/*teangacha Gaelacha*), then *Tamhas*, *Thamais*, *Thómais* (spelled *Thámais* in Kintyre Gaelic dailect), *Thamhais* and *Tamhais*, and *Tavis* (*Tavis* which is the Pictish form (Ogham text and translated is *TAMIS*, where 'M' is the English 'V'), with its genitive form being *TAUS*) all transliterate to Thomas, thus giving the modern form of the Chiefly family and Clan name MacTavish. **However, the name of Clan MacTavish in Gaelic is: *Clann MacTamhais*.** MacTavish is found in many old and curious forms, such as: MacTawys, Tawys, Tawse, Tauiss, Tauise, Tawis, Tawesson, Makcaus, MacCauise, Maktaus(e), M'Avish, McAvish/MacAvish, M'comish, M'Cawis, M'Cawes, MacCavish, McKavish, MacClavish, MacTauise, MakAwish, MacAwis, MacCawes (not generally MacCaws) MacAne, M'Thorne (MacThorne), M'Tawish, M'Tosche, M'Cosch, Makkaos, Makcaus, M'Cauish, McCabish ('b' is pronounced 'v'), M'Tavishe, McKawiss, and even the ill-gotten Mccaijs, and Mc caishe, to give only a few (there are over one hundred variations), some early transliterations showing as Tamason, Tamson, Tomson, Tawis, Tawse, Tawesson (Tawesson, from which on group of Thomasons is formed, and now rarely seen) and eventually Thomson and Thompson.

The Dewar Manuscripts, originally in Gaelic, were compiled by John Dewar and written for the 8th Duke of Argyll, George Douglas Campbell. It contains a very interesting tale of the surname *MacGlashen*, being an offshoot of MacTavish. The tale goes like this: A MacTavish couple whose children had all died in infancy, and afraid their newborn son would also die, were advised to look for the first living creature they saw while on their way to have him baptized, and to name him after that creature. While on their journey to the church, they saw a bird called *glaiseun* (Gaelic for sparrow), and named him, Glasieun. His descendants are the MacGlashens, and some of these call themselves MacThomais (Thomson or Thomas-son). It is debatable if the tale is true or not, but there are MacGlashens that appear to have originated in Argyllshire. Other MacGlashens are of Irish heritage, and take their name from the Gaelic *glas*, which means green. Surname variation include MacGlashin, and MacGlasson, with some exhibiting Dalriadic DNA, and Scottish origin.

Extracts from: *The Book of Arran*

Vol. 2, W. M. MacKenzie, Arran Society of Glasgow, Hopkins, Glasgow, 1914 pp. 114, 115, and 127.

"We have already seen one way of their coming as settlers ; another report is that MacAlisters came over to Shisken from their home country in the south side of Loch Tarbert to fill up places vacant by a destructive visit of the plague in 1666. The year preceding is that of the Great Plague of London, but there is no record of the infection having passed to Scotland. But the MacAlisters had been so often a plague to the island that it was fitting such a forerunner should prepare a place for them. Other families credited with occupying these sorrowful vacations are **Thomsons** and MacMillans, while Bannatynes came from Rothesay. But no doubt there was normally, from time to time, an infusion of Kintyre and Cowal blood in Arran. The ecclesiastical connection between Saddell and Shisken would be one channel. **Several families of the name of Thomson are descended from Lachlan MacTavish or Thomson, a shepherd brought over from Skipness by Hector MacAlister (Eachann Og), tenant of Moine-choille and Glaster.** Lachlan, after some time, married a relative of his employer's wife, and later on, being desirous of acquiring a farm, got the sympathies of his own and his master's wife enlisted to the end that Eachann Og should solicit this favour for him. During a visit to the castle Eachann Og did so, with the result that some families of MacGregors and MacAlisters were removed from their holdings in Achancar (sic Achincar) **to make room for Lachlan MacTavish or Thomson.**" [Underlined and Bold Text supplied] (Achincar for clarity.)

(Notes: - MacTavishes took and used the name (alias) Thomson, and over a great expanse of time; for many families the alias became their surname.

- The American 38-gun (Frigate) USS Chesapeake, was captured by HMS (Frigate) Shannon, in a single ship action on 1st June 1813. This two ship action remains one of the bloodiest of the war of 1812, and the numbers of casualties aboard both ships remained the worst for any single ship action for those years. Among the USS Chesapeake dead, was her captain, James Lawrence, whose dying words were "Don't give up the ship!" It has been a rallying cry in the U.S. Navy ever since.]

CLANS OF SHISKINE, following, divulges still another MacTavish-Thomson connection.

Extracts from: **CLANS OF SHISKINE, PAST AND PRESENT** ³⁰

(Skishkine, the Isle of Arran)

-Extracts from Parts 1 and 2-

**Compiled and read by Mr. Charles Robertson, Burncliff, Shiskine,
to the Natives of Arran in Glasgow, March, 1936**

From Part 1, p. 1.- “Mr Chairman and friends:- It gives me the greatest pleasure to be here this evening. I invariably read the reports of your meetings, and they seldom fail to strike a sympathetic note, as each and all of us are intensely interested in all that concerns our native Island. I am especially pleased to have in the chair this evening my friend and kinsman, **Duncan Thomson**. In fixing the title of my address, I had at the back of my mind the feeling that nothing could interest my audience more than to hear something (to use a Scripture phrase) of the rock from whence most of us were hewn. The subject must have a local setting. I therefore, at the outset, crave the indulgence of those from other parts of the Island. Yet I hope my whole survey will make a general appeal.”

From Part 2, p. 3 – “ **THOMSON. The Thomsons came to Arran from Argyllshire, farmed in Auchincarr.** There are no Thomsons in the district now. One cannot mention clans without associating certain Christian names with those clans, for instance, you could not think of Bannatynes without Ebenezers and Ronalds; M'Alisters without Hectors and Matthews; M'Kenzies without Gilberts and Angus; Robertsons, Archibalds and Charles; Sillars without Malcolms; and Curries without Johns and Donalds, and M'Brides without Peters. I was very surprised at finding so many Old Testament names among the Christian names of the clans of Arran.”

[Note: Duncan Thomson, Part 1, above, is friend and kinsman to Mr. Robertson, of Shiskine, Isle of Arran, a direct descendant of the Thomsons who sprang from Lachlan MacTavish out of Skipness in Argyllshire, who had settled at the farm of Achancar (Achincarr) about 1667, as provided in *The Book of Arran*. Duncan Thomson is noted living in Glasgow, in the Lowlands. The foregoing entries reveal that for nearly two centuries extended families of the MacTavishes, had acquired and used as an alias the surname of Thomson. They had occupied lands on the Isle of Arran and elsewhere. Later, none-too-few of them, had removed themselves from the island, and settled in Glasgow or the surrounding area about the time of the Industrial Revolution.]

MacGillettSamhais (G: *MAC GIOLLA TGAMHAIS* or *TSÓMAIS*) appears as the surname associated with the chiefs of the ancient Kingdom of Guile and Irguile (Rosguile and Hornhead) now part of County Donegal, Ireland, in the old extent of Ulster.

The meaning of the name *MacGillettSamhais* (literally Mac Giolla Tgamhais): *Son(s) of the Devotee of St. Thomas the Apostle*. The name originates from Saint Thomas the Apostle of Christ. The later derivations clearly show this as: MacilTavish, M'Gilhaus, MacIlhose, MacLehose, MacElhose, M'Tavis, MacTavish, Tomson, Thomson, or Thompson.

The MacTavishes (and offshoots) claim ancestry from the line of Pictish/Cruithne Kings of the Kingdom of Guile and Irguile (Goll and Irgoll), latter RosGuile and Hornhead, now mostly consisting of the what became the Irish Barony of Kilmacrennan (Gaelic: Cill Mhic nÉanáin); in the old extent of County Donegal, once a part of old Ulster, and via descent from Conn of the Hundred Battles. This tribe of Cruithne is mentioned in the second century by Ptolemy in his map materials. They were the Windukatii (Ouenniknioi) Picts (Ptolemy), who later fell under the dynastic Ui Niells of the North. This tribe is also known as the Cenél nDuach. The *Chronicon Scotorum* clearly establishes this descent via Nuadha (d. 712-722 AD), a King of the North of Ireland of the Cenél nDuach, whose ancestral connection is the *Sil Cuinn*, the Race of Conn of the Hundred Battles, 2nd century King of Northern Ireland.

The Scottish Highland MacTavishes (Tomsons, Thomasons, Thomsons and Thompsons, etc.) who have taken on an Anglo-Englished or Latinized alias, and clearly of Clan MacTavish are thusly not of the same bloodline (Genetics), culture or regional origin as are those of the name Thom(p)son who have roots in the

³⁰ <http://mull-of-kintyre.50megs.com/>, *History of Arran*.

Lowlands or Borders of Scotland ... and who are of Teutonic origin. The latter Teuton/German Thom(p)sons are historically later settlers in the Scottish Borders and Lowlands, while others in the Borders and Lowlands are originally of Highland origin, using aliases of their former Gaelic names.



THE MAC GIOLLA STEAFÁIN OR MACSTIBHAN SURNAMES

Ancient Irish has **MAC GIOLLA STEAFÁIN**, which means Son(s) of the Devotee of Saint Stephan or Stephen. Old Middle Irish has these contracted forms, **Ó STEAFÁIN**, **MAC STÍBAN**, **MAC STIOFÁIN**, **MACSTEVEN** (Stephen) or **O'STEVEN**. **MACSTIBHAN** or **MACSTIBAN** are old forms from Northern Ireland (Pictish in race or origin, as are the MacTavishes), mainly out of the old extent of Donegal. Stephen or Stephan (Greek: Στέφανος, Stephanos; Latin: Stephanus) is venerated as the first martyr of Christianity, and was according to the **BIBLE, Book of Acts of the Apostles**, a deacon in the early church in Jerusalem, Israel, who aroused hatred within the Jewish synagogues by his teachings of Jesus and deliverance from the Hebrew Law. Accused of blasphemy, at his trial he made a long speech fiercely denouncing the Jewish authorities who were sitting in judgment on him and was then stoned to death. His martyrdom was witnessed by Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee who would later himself become a follower of Jesus, and upon his conversion was known as Paul, venerated as Saint Paul, the selector of the Bishop of the Roman Church after Saint Peter's martyrdom. Hence the Irish-Pictish *Steven patronymics* are in honor of Saint Stephen.

The Irish/Scottish (Pictish) MacStibhans, took on other spellings as well, such as: MacGilsteffan, MacIlStibhan, MacIlstephan, MacSteaphan, MacStihan, MacStophane, MacSteen, Stephenson, Stephanson, Steenson, Stinsen, Stinson, Stephen, Stevens, Stevans, Stevin, Stivan, Steven, Stinson, Stinsone, and even the German sounding Stein. Additional variants are see such as, Stanson, Staphanson, Staphenson, Steensson, Steevense, Steinson, Stempson, Stenson, Stensson, Stephansen, Stephensens, Stephensson, Steverson, and Stivinson in various Highland locations, some appearing in Duncan MacTavish's work, *The Commons of Argyll*, and found in *The Surnames of Scotland*, by Prof. G. F. Black.

Another origin for Scottish Stephensons, is from the French/Norman invasion of William the Bastard, "The Conqueror", in 1066 AD, England. Stephen of Blois (France), Norman Knight, was the grandson of The Conqueror, and later King of England. Some of his descendants, or namesakes, are said to have taken the name Stephenson, making their way to Scotland, either directly from Normandy or via migration to Scotland from England. Another Stephen, within the Scottish sphere, is noted in the *Roll of Battle Abbey*, as Stephen, Count of Chartres. He was the son-in-law of Theobald Paganus de Montmorency, Seneschal of Gisors, and died in Palestine, 1147, a crusader. Stephen is deduced as a common French/Norman (Norse) given name from which some Stephensons (possibly Stevensons) descend.

MAC GIOLLA STEAFÁIN is the ancient Irish form. The Stephensons in Scottish Highland Gaelic has 'ph' as the consonant 'v', and therefore pronounced Stevenson, but the Gaelic 'f' (English 'f') was sometimes in use. Stevenson is unique to the Highlands, while Stephenson is frequently seen elsewhere, but both spellings and pronunciation can often be found within the same family, both honoring Saint Stephen. In old French/Norman, Stephenson is pronounced Stefenson ('ph' is pronounced as 'f'), from the Greek Stephanos. Both spellings (Stevenson and Stephenson) are often pronounced by their bearers as Stevenson, forgiving a Norman and Greek origin. Not all modern persons bearing these two names would be of French/Norman or even Celtic/Gaelic descent. There were/are Scottish Stevensons/Stephensons found in Paisley, Renfrewshire, Stirlingshire, Argyllshire, Perthshire, and elsewhere in the eastern shires of Scotland.

There was a John Steywyson recorded in Banff in 1388, a John Stevin in Aberdeen in the early part of the 16th century, as well as an Alexander Stevyn in Glasgow about the same time frame. Steenson and Stiven, as found in Argyll, are also found in Ulster Province, Ireland, where the Gaelic name, **MACSTIBHAN**, originated, from **MAC GIOLLA STEAFÁIN**. Stevenson/Stephenson is a truly Celtic/Gaelic language name, and it means either the Sons of Steven, as a group of descendants, or the Son of Steven as an individual

person. *Mac* in the Gaelic Language simply means SON, but when *MacSibin* (and variants) becomes FULLY Anglicized and spoken in the English Language, they become Stephenson/Stevenson. In Gaelic the prefix *Mac* for 'son' is at the beginning of patronyms, but in English 'son' comes at the end of the name, not the beginning. Often seen is the situation where a family would drop the hanging 'son', and the name would appear simply as Steven or Stevens (i.e Stiven, Stein, Stiens).

Many Stevensons or Stephensons were of Northern Irish and Highland origin, some of whom moved into the Lowlands of Scotland, and the Lowland people speaking a form of English (Germanic language) called Scots, which is not Gaelic, altered their surname to fit their locality. Highlanders who settled in the Lowlands and Borders eventually began to speak Scots vice Gaelic. The Stevensons who moved into the Scottish Lowlands took to calling themselves Stephenson, Stevenson, Stevens and Steven, to conform to the Lowland Scots language, turning their *Mac* into Son and put it at the end of their name, or eliminating it altogether. However there are indeed Stephensons who are of Lowland Teutonic ancestry and not of Gaelic heritage. Highland variants like Stephens, Stivens or Stivenson, and even a German sounding variant of Stein, are peculiar to the western Highlands of Scotland and the general region of Argyll, as is Stiven. Two other forms of the name were MacSeban/**MacSeban** and MacSibean/**MacSibean**. These more Anglicized variations show up as English government and language intruded into the Gaelic speaking world. In Greek/Norman (old French) the 'ph' combination in the name 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 ēēē sound, this affects the 'ph – f' (sound) and it becomes a 'v'; not in spelling, but in speech. In Scottish Highland Gaelic, however, 'ph' can be sounded as 'v', as is 'bh' or 'b'. Some of the Gaelic surname variations appear as: MacSteaphan, MacStoibhan, and MacSoiban, MacSoiphan, and MacStiban. The consonant 'b' in such names sounding as a 'v', as well as the 'ph'. In Ireland, originally the 'f' in Steafáin is pronounced as the English 'f' (carried over from the Greek), which gradually changed to the 'v' sound in some locals.

In Argyll parish of Kilcalmonell, Kilberry, James STIVENSON and Isobel Campbell are recorded with six children between 1803 and 1818. Two sons John and Neil STIVENSON moved to Perth County, Ontario, Canada in about 1815, and settled in the Downie and Fullarton Townships.

Alexander Hugh STEVENSON b 1791 Argyll, Scotland, m Mary McNAB 1816 Parish of Kilcalmonell, Kilberry, Scotland and came to Renfrew County, Ontario, Canada in 1842.

John STEVENSON family from Kilcalmonell, Kilberry, Argyllshire, Scotland settled in 1892 in Downie Twp., Perth Co., Ontario, Canada - A son, John STEVENSON b: 1857 in Downie Twp., Perth Co., Ontario, Canada

Dr. Colin STEVENSON was born in Islay, Argyll, Scotland around 1780. He married Isabella Campbell born circa 1800, Islay, Argyll. They had a daughter, Elizabeth Stevenson and possibly (according to the IGI) a son James Stevenson born around 1825. Colin, Isabella and Elizabeth immigrated to Australia in 1840.

John STEVENS from Orkney, was admitted to the Scots Charitable Society of Boston, Massachusetts, in 1750.

At two different times when the name of MacGregor was outlawed in Scotland, one sept of MacGregor took the name of Stephenson, named after a MacGregor male child born in secret on a hillside in Argyll. This implication of the name is "Son of my love", as the sept was also known. This sept was never thereafter a name accepted as a *sept* by the MacGregors, and some became associated as *sept* to Clan MacTavish. A little known fact recorded in the Canadian Library and Archives, is that Chief Dugald MacTavish (2 centuries past) had possession of Rob Roy MacGregor's letters, given to him for safekeeping. Unfortunately MacTavish loaned out the letters, and they were never returned to him (thus far gleaned from research). The letters ultimately found their way into several diverse collections.

The renowned author, Robert Louis Steven wrote in *Records of a Family of Engineers*, Page 8:

"STEVENSON—or according to tradition of one of the proscribed of the clan MacGregor, who was born among the willows or in a hill-side sheep-pen—"Son of my love," a heraldic bar sinister, but history reveals a reason for the birth among the willows far other than the sinister aspect of the name': these are the dark words of Mr. Cosmo Innes; but history or tradition, being interrogated, tells a somewhat tangled tale. The

heir of Macgregor of Glenorchy, murdered about 1858 by the Argyll Campbells, appears to have been the original 'Son of my love'; and his more loyal clansmen took the name to fight under. It may be supposed the story of their resistance became popular, and the name in some sort identified with the idea of opposition to the Campbells. Twice afterwards, on some renewed aggression, in 1502 and 1552, we find the Macgregors again banding themselves into a sept of 'Sons of my love'; and when the great disaster fell on them in 1603, the whole original legend reappears, and we have the heir of Alaster of Glenstrae born 'among the willows' of a fugitive mother, and the more loyal clansmen again rallying under the name of Stevenson. A story would not be told so often unless it had some base in fact; nor (if there were no bond at all between the Red Macgregors and the Stevensons) would that extraneous and somewhat uncouth name be so much repeated in the legends of the Children of the Mist."

Some Stevenson Gaelic surnames: MacSteaphan, MacStoibhan, MacSoiban, MacSoiphan, MacStiban, MacSeban. **Medieval Anglicized Gaelic has:** 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, Stympsoun, Stimpson, Stephen, Stephens, Stepkinson, Stephensone, and Stephenson.

One of the most famous Stevensons is the Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson (noted preceeding), who with his wife, Fanny lived at **Skerryvore House**, in Bournemouth (south England). This dwelling was inherited and built by Stevenson's father and it was named after a lighthouse the Stevenson family firm built in Argyll, Scotland.

Anyone bearing a "Son of Steven" surname, or who is descended of such a name, and not having affiliation with another clan in the direct male line, is eligible for membership in Clan MacTavish.



THE TAHD OR TODDEBUNTER SURNAMES

The surname of Tod or Todd (early spellings Tahd, Tohd, or Todde) could find its origin in the Lowlands of Scotland and was often seen as **Toddebunter/Toddbunter**, Anglicized further to Todhunter, which infers its actual meaning of Fox Hunter. Tadh is a Highland form of the name. A *todde* was the English and Lowland Scots language word for a fox, its is also see as *tahd* in Gaelic form. Todbunter is, or was, a trade-name which became a surname. Todbunters were skilled archers and trappers, and as their fame increased in Scotland, their skills were sought after, particularly were wolves or foxes were at near pestilent levels. Due to their skills as archers Todbunters were also employed as warriors by many clan chiefs, and there were quite a number of them in Argyll at an early period. This designation for a family of fox hunters came about very early, where a son followed the father's profession of ridding an estate or forest of the fox population. Foxes devastated small game populations, and gorged on such animals as hares, chickens and pheasants. The designation for some families was eventually shortened to Tod or Todd from its trade/profession surname.

Clan MacTavish is the only Highland Clan that considers Tod/Todd to be an associated family name, (formerly called sept) from the 12th century onwards. The name commonly signifies *fox hunters*, but wolves were also Todbunter prey. A poem in *The Book of Highland Minstrelsy*, 1846, tells of the devastation wrought by Scotland's wolf population. Here is part of that poem:

The lean and hungry wolf,
With his fangs so sharp and white,
His starveling body pinched By the frost of a northern night,
And his pitiless eyes that scare the dark
With their green and threatening light.
The savage and gaunt ware-wolf,

That never was nursed in nest,
That holds a witch's heart
Under a shaggy breast,

For human hurt and for human life
That nightly goes in quest.
He climbeth the guarding dyke,
He leapeth the hurdle bars,
He steals the sheep from the pen,
And the fish from the boat-house spars;
And he digs the dead from out the sod,
And gnaws them under the stars.

In the *Commissariat Records for Argyll* (Argyll) is found recorded:

"Helen, spouse to Donald Todd, in Campbeltoun, par. of Kilkeran 1 May 1676", and "Todd, Donald, in Campbeltoun. See Galbraith, Helen". indicating that these Todds lived in Campbeltoun, Kintyre, Argyllshire. Another entry says, "Tod, George, tenant in Bannitie T. 9 Apr. 1706." And at Kilchattan, Southend, is a place called Todd Hill. Also, from a list of tenants in Campbeltoun, Kintyre, Argyll is this listing: "1685-Donald Omev inhabitant of Campbeltoun, Nocholas Todd his man."

Toddesses were mostly found in the Lowlands of Scotland, and the North or England, but the name Tohd/Tahd was found in the Highlands, including Argyll, where it gradually transformed to Todd or Tod. Both Tods and Todds were to be found in Argyllshire proper, including Knapdale and Kintyre. Todbunter and Todhunter are still modernly found as surnames. As early

as the 12th century Todbunters were found in Argyllshire, where they were awarded bounties for ridding the region of foxes. An excerpt from *A Vertebrate Fauna of Argyll and the Inner Hebrides*, from MAMMALS, John Alexander, 1892 - page 13 (at right) examines the effect of fox hunting.

There were Tods/Todds in Glassary and Knapdale connected to Clan MacTavish from the 12th century, and some moved south into Kintyre, others eventually moved on to Ireland and North America. There was a Todd family in Lochgilphead in the 19th century. The book *Kintyre Country Life*, by Angus Martin, 1987, page 73, mentions the Todds in Argyll came originally from Dumfriesshire, but had become Gaelic speakers, and thus fit well into the indigenous populace. However it is not confirmed that all the Tod/Todd families in Argyll originate from Dumfriesshire, as the names *Tohd/Tahd* (Gaelic forms) are noted at an early period; nor were these families considered a clan in their own right, probably because of the diversity of their surname origin. Tod(d)s may also derive from an ancestral nickname, due to the stealthy nature of foxes.

Not all Tod/Todd families would necessarily be genetically related if they were todebunters/todhunters by trade, as this was a profession that was in high demand in certain regions. The men who followed this profession were skilled in trapping, and in the warrior's art of archery; so were also employed in times of war or clan strife due to their skill with the bow.

MAMMALS.

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It is worth while also to consider our notes under the Mole (*Talpa europæa*) in this connection, though the introduction of that species to Mull is more likely to have happened *accidentally* than the introduction of the Fox.

Mr. P. C. Mackenzie, junior, of Calgary, writes us as follows : " I knew an old gentleman (now dead), who said he knew the man that had killed the last Fox seen in the island. My brother tells me that MacLaine of Lochbuie has some old Lochbuie papers, in which Foxes are mentioned."

Several attempts to discover these old papers have failed up to date (November 1890); but The MacLaine writes to Harvie-Brown : " You can give my name as vouching for the fact of there having been, within the present century, Foxes in Mull." Repeated searches for the "old fox-hunter's letter" have failed up to date of going to press.

In the old *Statistical Account* the Fox is mentioned as *absent* in all the other islands belonging to the political division of Argyll, including Gigha and Carna, Coll and Tiree, Jura and Colonsay, and it would almost seem that special stress has been put upon the negatives. But on the mainland its presence is almost universal,—the "Lismore and Appin" negative record excepted.—In the *New Statistical Account* it is worthy of notice in passing, that there is no repetition—yet no contradiction—of the statement regarding Mull amongst an equally extensive enumeration of localities given.

The old *Statistical Account* goes on to record, amongst many positive affirmations—"though abundant in Kilbrandon and Kilchattan forty years ago" (i.e. previous to the issue of the old *Statistical Account*, 1795), "there are none there now"—but :—"appears to have been generally distributed over the county and district, as indeed it still is at the present time."—(O. S. A.)

Coming to more recent dates, seventy-four foxes, old and young, have been killed on the estate of Glen Etive during the eighteen years prior to 1887 (J. D. Sutherland, office of Messrs. Hossack, Sutherland, and MacDonald, land agents, Oban, in *lit.* March 1887). On Appin only two old Foxes were got in 1885. At Torcastle Foxes are rare, according to Buckley.

The earliest of these families found in the Argyllshire Highlands date to the late 12th and 13th centuries onwards. Tod or Todd is a name divided between Clans Gordon (House of Gordon) and MacTavish. The Tod(d) surname is accepted in Clan MacTavish since the 12th century. If your family came from the west of Scotland (Glassary, Knapdale and Kintyre, etc.), it is likely of Clan MacTavish. Otherwise, it is likely to be of the Lowland **House of Gordon**. There are still Todds that live in Campbeltown (as of 2015).

There was put forth to me some years ago that *Tahd/Todhe* (Tod) was once pronounced *Tause* in the Highlands, and was affected by the English language. If this is true, then some of the name would be of Dalriadic (Irish) stock. I have not, to date, been able to substantially verify this theory, but many of this name bear the R-M269 DNA Haplotype (according to Family Tree DNA test results) which is a strong indicator of Celtic origin.

Also See: Thompson, *A Short Guide to Clan MacTavish Associated Family Names* (formerly referred to as *Clan Septs*), © 2015 Clan MacTavish & Patrick L. Thompson, Seannachie, for a further listing of surnames associated with Clan MacTavish.

NOTE: Different clan surnames within a Scottish Highland clan do not represent separate and definable sub-clans (as some would have you believe) but instead reflect the vagaries or unpredictability in the transition from the Gaelic language into the English naming system which occurred over a large expanse of time, well into the 19th century; some of which are represented by marriages, and more so by migrations, where names could and did change from glen to glen, or region to region; as migration took place, or even as people aged. The same surnames can and do appear in multiple clans, but where this happens, such does not make one clan part of, or related to, another clan. A clan is distinct unit unto itself. The “septs” were commonly other family units who did not share the same surname as their chief, though they might have been related by direct bloodline, or not at all related, but regarded a distinct chief as their true head. One did not (and still does not) need to be related to the chief to be a member of his or her clan. A *sept* is not, therefore, a distinct clan since different clans may have a *sept* of the same or similar surname.