

# THE TIES THAT BIND

## My Scottish Loyalist Ancestor, Neil MacRae/MacRae/McGraw

ARTICLE|PHOTOS: CARL STYMIEST UE

MacRae/McGraw [Surname] The surname Macrae (and its variations) is an anglicization of the **patronymic** from the Gaelic personal name MacRaith. This personal name means "son of grace" from rath `grace`, `prosperity`. The name is recorded numerous times in the Middle Ages and was used by various unrelated families.

### Source:

Dictionary of American Family Names, Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-508137-4

First Families of New Brunswick (NBGS) [file:///C:/Users/Carl/Downloads/first-families-is-a-collection-of-genealogical-information%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Carl/Downloads/first-families-is-a-collection-of-genealogical-information%20(1).pdf)

As a member of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada, and knowing that I have 18 loyalist ancestors, I ventured to prove my direct lineage to all of them. In my varied research on my MacRae/McRae family connections, it is noted that Neil MacRae UEL is my 3<sup>rd</sup> Great-Grandfather. He was b. 1755, Argyllshire, Scotland, the son of Loyalist Pvt. Duncan/Donald MacRae b.1720, Scotland. Neil was a private in the 42nd Highland Regiment in the American Revolutionary War. His father and his brother, Duncan Jr. also served in the 42<sup>nd</sup> regiment.

Neil, while in the southern colonies migrated to North Carolina and fought in the Battle of Moore's Bridge near the beginning of the American Revolution. From here, we find Neil joined the 42nd Royal Highland Black Watch and was mustered out after the Revolutionary War to Nova Scotia on Oct 24, 1783. The bulk of the discharged veterans from the 42nd who would settle in New Brunswick accompanied the final Loyalist fleet to leave New York. Fifty of these were on board the transport "**Mercury**" and 48 on the "**Jason**". They arrived on the St John River on 17 Oct 1783.

Neil's father, Loyalist Duncan MacRae settled on Lot # 53 on the south bank of the Miramichi River, (Loggieville), Northumberland Co., Canada and later moved with his in-laws, the "Hierlihy's" to Tabusintac, Alnwick Parish, Northumberland Co., New Brunswick in 1798.

Loyalist Duncan MacRae Sr. married Mary Ann (Polly) Blake. My research notes on Mary Ann Blake reads, "**Mary was listed as a recipient of a pension for the widows of American Revolutionary War veterans in 1842 and 1846. When she received the pension, she lived in Northumberland Co., New Brunswick.**" (CS)

Name: Neil MacRae Year: 1784 Place: New Brunswick  
Publication Code: 9758 Primary Immigrant: MacRae/McGraw

### Sources: Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, Fredericton, York Co., New Brunswick, Canada

"Private Papers of the Stymiest/Tait Families, PANB, Fredericton, York Co., New Brunswick, Canada, 2010

"Private Papers of The MacRae Family," Miramichi, Northumberland Co., New Brunswick, Canada

Whyte, Donald, "A Dictionary of Scottish Emigrants to Canada before Confederation", Toronto: Ontario Genealogical Society. Volume 1, 1986. 443p. Page: 229

In the late 1780s, Neil moved to Loggieville (Miramichi), Northumberland Co, following his father, Duncan Sr. from the Nashwaak Valley. In 1796, Neil married, Mary Edwards. Mary's mother died when Mary was born in England. Upon the death of her mother, her father, Col. Edwards resigned from the army and traveled to the East Indies as a trader. He became quite successful and after he returned, settled a sum of money for Mary. When her father decided to leave again, he left her with a family named *Ray*. He returned to the East Indies but was never heard from again.

Mary Edwards came to North America with the Ray family from England and settled in Nashwaak River Valley, near present day Fredericton, York County, New Brunswick. She worked as a housekeeper for a Rev. Fraser, caring for his wife who was extremely ill. Eventually, Mary married Rev. Fraser when his first wife died. Records reveal that the Rev. Fraser made a trip to Scotland, but the ship was lost at sea with all onboard. Col. Edwards fortunately, for Mary left a Will leaving everything to her.

Widow Mary moved to the Miramichi when the veterans of the American Revolution became dissatisfied with their respective land grants and decided to move further north. Here, Mary met our Neil MacRae, and married 30 June 1796 in Newcastle Parish, Northumberland Co., New Brunswick. Neil and Mary had a large family and as one genealogist said, "**they had a bunch of kids (10)**". Neil died in May 1834. Mary remarried for a 3<sup>rd</sup> time to Ernest Dickson, yet another relative from another direction. Both Neil and Mary are buried in St. Stephen's Cemetery in Black River, Northumberland Co., New Brunswick, Canada.

Source: The Rev James Fraser Private Papers, (The Rev. James Fraser papers are now the property of Duke University,

Durham, North Carolina, USA.(CS)

Children of Neil MacRae and Mary (Edwards) MacRae:

1. **FARQUHAR MacRAE** b. ca. 1792, m. 1st JEAN MacKINNON (*Direct line to Carl Stymiest UE*)
2. EUPHEMIA ("EFFIE") MacRAE b. ca. 1794 m. 31 May 1829 DONALD McLEOD (b. 1803; Bay du Vin, New Brunswick, Canada, d. Bay du Vin, NB 8 May 1884; m. 2nd 14 Feb 1846 ELEANOR MILLER MURRAY), s/o John and Jane (MacAlpine) MacLeod
3. ALEXANDER MacRAE b. ca. 1796
4. DANIEL MacRAE b. ca. 1800
5. DUNCAN MacRAE b. ca. 1803, m. Jan 1832 ISOBELLA MacDOUGALL
6. MARGARET MacRAE b. ca. 1808, m. 9 Feb 1828 THOMAS JONES
7. JANET ("JENNIE") MacRAE b. ca. 1809, m. 3 Jan 1831 WILLIAM GIBSON
8. SUSANNA MacRAE b. ca. 1813, m. JOHN MURRAY
9. EMMA ("AMY") MacRAE b. circa. 1816, m. Glenelg Parish, Northumberland Co., New Brunswick, 24 Oct 1837, WILLIAM PATTERSON
10. J. GEORGE MacRAE, ca. 1817, unmarried, served in the Highlanders Regiment in Scotland in 1775.

#### Just who were the 42<sup>nd</sup> Highland Black Watch Regiment?

Before the posting in Ireland, the regiment had been in America, protecting the colonists from native uprisings. The regiment returned to America in 1776, 1000 strong of which 900 were Highland Scots; to fight those same colonists who were now rebelling at Long Island in the Battle of Brooklyn, and later that fall at York Island, the attack on Fort Washington and at Black Horse on the Delaware. Through 1777 and 1778 the regiment took part in the battles of Brandywine, Germantown, and Monmouth and in April and May of 1780 they were part of the force that laid siege to Charleston.

Pleasant Valley Cemetery, Nashwaak, New Brunswick, Canada. (Neil is NOT buried here, but is named, along with his father, Duncan and brother, Duncan, Jr on the Cairn for their involvement with the 42nd Black Watch Highlanders who came to the Nashwaak Valley when disbanded in 1784. (CS) CG(C)

<https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=7441>

#### Oh, the Ties That Bind!

After the French joined the war of the American Revolution, the 42nd Highlanders were part of Cornwallis' force that surrendered at Yorktown. They received a grant of land at Manawagonish, New Brunswick but later moved upriver to the Nashwaak Valley. Gregor MacKinnon (another of my loyalist, great-grandfather ancestors) took a



grant at Keswick, York Co., New Brunswick, while Neil MacRae received a grant on the Nashwaak River. Many soldiers even-



tually drifted to the Miramichi along with others from the 42nd Highlanders or Black Watch.

Neil was granted Lot #10 on the north side of Black River (now referred to as, the Kelly Place). As

we know that Neil and Mary had 10 children, the descendants are many; some of note: William (Bill) MacRae was a grandson of Neil MacRae; Farquhar MacRae's (my 2<sup>nd</sup> Great-Grandfather) came to the Kelly's when Sarah McLean arrived there to keep house for the 3 bachelor MacRae's - she married Joseph (Joe) Kelly who made boots, and the land was left to Sarah. Joe was a brother of William Kelly, one of the Fathers of Canada's Confederation. He drove a stagecoach and had mail routes down the north side of the river.

#### MacRae Land Grant, Black River, NB, Canada

##### Source:

(RMacD) (Dick) MacDougall, New Brunswick 05 April 2020 (CS)

The photo is of a New Brunswick Cadastral Map, (a map of land grants) to the Glenelg area in Northumberland Co. You can see Neil MacRae's land there (1798), as well as many others. It also shows when these land grants were awarded. It was common for settlers to apply for and receive more than one land grant, as they were reaching out for better and more lands. The story I heard about Neil and fellow 42nd soldiers is that their original grants in Nashwaak were not the best lands, nor the best location, and many left for other pastures. This fact is what brought several of the 42nd soldiers to the Miramichi and Black River areas.



#### Cadastral Map of Land Grants and Dates of Grants

The record photo here is the marriage record of Neil and Mary. It is dated June 13, 1796 in Newcastle Parish, Northumberland Co., New Brunswick. Interestingly it gives Neil's residence as Newcastle. Seems he may have abandoned the Nashwaak grant by this

time. It also lists Mary as "spinster," not widow.

**Marriage Record Neil McRae and Mary Edwards**



Mary (Edwards) McRae's pension is well documented as the wife of loyalist, Neil MacRae. In my research papers, I have some 32 pension receipts and official communications regarding her status, all digitized from the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick

(PANB). Mary's initial application for relief in the form of Soldiers and Widows Relief (pension) which was granted. 10£ sterling per annum.

**1840 Pension Request as wife of Soldier of the American Revolution**

The second is from the same source and lists the pensioners in the Black River area in 1843. Mary is among them, as are many widows and a few surviving veterans. It is interesting that occasionally her name was rendered as McRae. This caused some confusion, as can be seen in her sons' final application after her death. (attachments 4 and 5). You can see that a John McRae who was the scribe for this (the sons were appar-

ently unable to read/write) goes out of his way to explain that she is McRae, not McGraw. John McRae also indicates that his own father, Duncan McRae was also a soldier in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Highland Regiment.



**List of Widows**

From the research on Loyalist Pvt Neil MacRae, I have been able to ascertain so me 67 pages on his lineage. Covering NINE generation from 1720 to 2020; from their home in Scotland to the Colonies of North America (now USA) and to what is now Canada; settling in many areas of the province of New Brunswick. Some of the original land grants of the MacRae family are still lived on to this day by their courageous ancestors who came to this land out of adversity, but now must be looked upon as a great contribution fo4r the formation of this great country we live in- CANADA.

Carl Stymiest UE  
07 September 2020, Vancouver, BC



PHOTO TAKEN AT THE BC HIGHLAND GAMES IN PHOTO OWEN, CARL, AND DAVE.