



# Gaelic Nova Scotia: A Resource Guide

***Earrann o'n duan "Moladh Albann Nuaidh"***

*Nis o'n thàinig thu thar sàile  
Chum an àite ghrinn,  
Cha bhi fàilinn ort ri d' latha  
'S gach aon nì fàs dhuinn fhìn*

*Tighinn do dhùthaich nam fear glana  
Coibhneil, tairis, caomh,  
Far am faigh thu òr a mhaireas;*

*Aonghas 'A' Rids' Dòmhnallach á Siorramachd Antaiginis,  
Tìr Mór na h-Albann Nuaidhe*

***An excerpt from "In Praise of Nova Scotia"***

Now that you have come from overseas  
To this fair place  
You will lack for nothing all your days  
As all things fare well for us;

Coming to the land of fine people  
Kindly, gentle and civil,  
Here you will find lasting gold;

Angus 'The Ridge' MacDonald, Antigonish County,  
Mainland Nova Scotia

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# INTRODUCTION

*Nova Scotia's Culture Action Plan: Creativity and Community 2017* supports *Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education 2015* which states that the language, history, and culture of Gaels should be taught in grades primary to 12. In response, this resource guide was created to provide research-based information about Gaels in Nova Scotia, facilitating the inclusion of Gaelic language, culture, and history in the province's public school curriculum.

This guide is for educators and those who wish to learn more about Gaelic language, culture, and identity in Nova Scotia.

The following organizations and individuals worked together to produce the content for this guide:

- ***Comhairle na Gàidhlig***  
**The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia**
- ***Iomairtean na Gàidhlig***  
**The Office of Gaelic Affairs**
- the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- Gaelic educators in Nova Scotia's public schools
- members of the Gaelic community
- Communications Nova Scotia

# OBJECTIVES

This resource guide is intended to help educators accomplish five key tasks:

- help Nova Scotians to understand Gaels and their unique Gaelic language, culture, and identity so they can tell the story of Nova Scotia Gaels as a people
- celebrate Nova Scotia Gaels as a unique ethno-cultural group who continue to contribute to Nova Scotia's diversity through their unique Gaelic language, culture, and identity
- demonstrate how Nova Scotia's society and economy can benefit from supporting the languages, cultures, and identities of distinct groups
- strengthen our collective sense of culture and identity
- show how recovering, reclaiming, and renewing Gaelic language, culture, and identity in our communities strengthens the foundations upon which communities are built by
  - instilling a sense of pride
  - fostering connections between youth, adults, and elders
  - re-establishing connections to place in our communities

Fostering positive feelings among Gaels and those with whom they interact encourages residents to remain in the community and contribute socially and economically.



SECTION 1

# THE GAELS

**Who are the Nova Scotia Gaels?**

**Gaelic—The Language of the Gaels**

**Peoples, Celtic Languages and Regions**

**Where Did Nova Scotia Gaels Come From?**

**Map: Settlement of Gaels between 1773-1855**

**Gaelic Historical Timeline in Nova Scotia**

**Nova Scotia Gaels: A Context**

**Nova Scotia Gaels Today**

**Map: Gaelic Sites in Nova Scotia**

# WHO ARE THE NOVA SCOTIA GAELS?

Nova Scotia Gaels are descendants of the Gaels of Scotland. They also have connections to Irish Gaels through language, culture, and origins.

An estimated 50,000 Gaels immigrated to Nova Scotia from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland between 1773 and 1855. They settled in Colchester, Pictou, Antigonish, and Guysborough counties, and in all the counties of Cape Breton.

By the late 1800s, there were about 100,000 Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia. Although they were discriminated against for generations because of their Gaelic language and culture, many Nova Scotia Gaels persevered in maintaining their language, culture, and identity.

Historically, Gaels settled throughout most regions of Canada.

Today, Nova Scotia is the only region outside Europe where Gaelic language, culture, and identity continue to be passed down through the generations, and where Gaelic is spoken as a community language.

One third of Nova Scotians have Gaelic heritage. Gaelic language, music, and oral traditions permeate Nova Scotia's culture. This has had a significant effect on the province's society and economy.

## MORE INFO

### PATRONYMICS AND LINEAGE

In Gaelic communities, individuals are identified by their father. They can also be identified by their mother; their father's father or their mother's father or both; or their father's grandfather, mother's grandfather or both and so on.

Gaels refer to this as **sloinneadh lineage**. For example, 'Donald, son of John Peter' and 'Mary, daughter of Elizabeth Archibald'. Today, many Gaels in Nova Scotia use **sloinneadh** to explain who their forebears are.

### SURNAMES AND FIRST NAMES

In the past, Gaelic surnames were typically used when speaking of someone outside of one's immediate kinship group. A kinship group is the group of people to whom you are related.

Many of these surnames were brought to Nova Scotia by Gaels from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

**Mac** is the Gaelic word for **son**. When used in surnames, mac means **son of** and signifies the masculine. **Nic** means **daughter of** and signifies the feminine. In surnames that do not have **mac** or **nic**, the masculine and feminine forms are presented differently as the following examples show: **Seamus Boidhdach James Boyd; Màiri Bhoihdhdach Mary Boyd**. Another example is: **Iain Dòmhnallach John MacDonald; Sine Dhòmhnallach Jane MacDonald**.

The list below includes Gaelic surnames, in both masculine and feminine forms, and their English versions. A more extensive list can be found in Appendix II with a list of common Gaelic first names.

GAELIC MASCULINE FORM	GAELIC FEMININE FORM	ENGLISH VERSION
MacGill'Anndrais	NicGill'Anndrais	Anderson
Peatan	Pheatan	Beaton
Boidhdach	Bhoihdhdach	Boyd
Camshron	Chamshron	Cameron
Caimbeul	Chaimbeul	Campbell
MacGill'Ìosa	NicGill'Ìosa	Gillis / Gillies
Greumach	Ghreumach	Graham
Grannd	Ghrannnd	Grant
MacLaomainn	NicLaomainn	Lamond
MacArtair	NicArtair	MacArthur
MacAsgail	NicAsgail	MacAskill
MacEòghainn	NicEòghainn	MacEwen
Mac an t-Saoir	Nic an t-Saoir	Macintyre
MacMhaighstir	NicMhaighstir	MacMaster



The 2017 poster: **Mios nan Gàidheal**, reflects the generations of Gaels who have lived in Nova Scotia and created the vibrant and distinct Gaelic culture that we know today. The Gaelic community in the province is rooted in that past, and has a greater understanding of itself because of it.

The poster uses photos in a layered fashion to illustrate time and depth for past and present generations. Striking images of young Gaels are most prominent and radiate happiness and pride in their lineage behind them. These and many other Gaelic youth are our Gaelic leaders of tomorrow.

On the poster, faces are labeled with their Gaelic names. The faces gently fade away and decrease in size to illustrate time and past generations.

### CONNECTIONS

Look online for our Gaelic Nova Scotia Month posters  
 Gaelic Runs Deep Here 2017  
 Our Story to Tell 2018  
 The Power of our Songs 2019

# Gaelic—The Language of the Gaels

*A' Ghàidhlig* The Gaelic language, is a member of the Celtic family of languages. Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Gaelic in Nova Scotia, Manx, Welsh, Cornish, and Breton are all Celtic languages. *Gàidheil* is the Scottish Gaelic/Gaelic in Nova Scotia word for *Gaels*, those who identify with, or speak the Gaelic language, participate in and share Gaelic culture, and have a Gaelic connection, heritage, and identity. English, by comparison, is a member of the Germanic family of languages. This family includes, German, Dutch, Alsatian, Luxembourgish, Afrikaans, Frisian, Scots, Icelandic, Faroese, Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish.

Although they are members of the broader Germanic language family, English speakers tend to identify themselves through the English language and their country of origin. Therefore, English speakers from Canada might refer to themselves as English speakers or Anglophones and Canadians. They may further identify themselves with the region they come from, such as, Maritime Canada, or Nova Scotia, mainland Nova Scotia, or Cape Breton Island.

Similarly, the term 'Celtic' is a way of highlighting historic and current linguistic commonalities. Individual and group identity, however, are communicated in different, unrelated terms that are based in a specific language and place of origin. For example, a person would identify as a Nova Scotia Gael, Scottish Gael, Irish Gael, Manx, Welsh, Cornish, or Breton, rather than using the term Celtic or Celt.

The cultures that go with each Celtic language express and inform the identity of the people who share them. These cultures include poetry, song (page 30), music, dance, stories, traditional dress, traditional foodways (page 38), customs (page 36), world-views, vernacular beliefs, and spirituality (page 29).

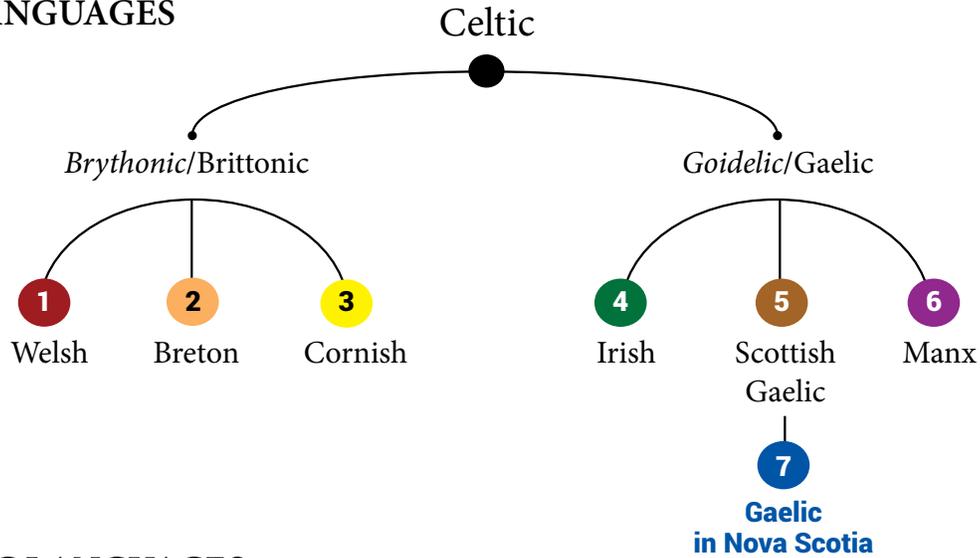
# MORE INFO

## WHAT DOES CELTIC MEAN?

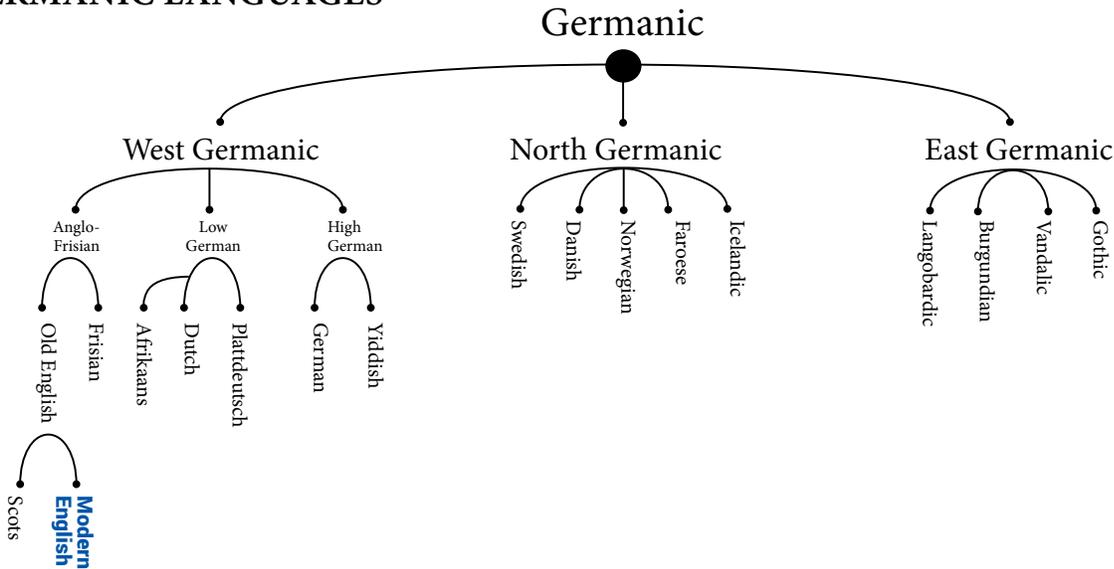
Celtic refers to a family of languages that has its origins in an earlier form of language, known as Proto-Celtic. Possibly 6,000 years old, Proto-Celtic was spoken by a group of peoples who

were referred in antiquity as Keltoi by the Greeks and Celtae by the Romans. In the 18th century the languages that these peoples spoke became referred to as the Celtic language family.

## CELTIC LANGUAGES



## GERMANIC LANGUAGES



## WHERE CELTIC LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN



- 1 Wales (Welsh)
- 2 Brittany (Breton)
- 3 Cornwall (Cornish)
- 4 Ireland (Irish)
- 5 Scotland (Scottish Gaelic)
- 6 The Isle of Man (Manx)
- 7 Nova Scotia (Gaelic)

# PEOPLES, CELTIC LANGUAGES, AND REGIONS

Today, the people who speak Celtic languages, or come from regions or backgrounds associated with a Celtic language, identify themselves using words that are associated with the name of their language.

There are speakers and learners of Celtic languages around the world. Below is a list of the peoples, Celtic languages, and regions where Celtic languages and their accompanying cultures are found.

PEOPLES	CELTIC LANGUAGES	REGIONS
<i>Gàidheil na h-Albann Nuaidhe</i> Nova Scotia Gaels	<i>A' Ghàidhlig an Albainn Nuaidh</i> Gaelic in Nova Scotia (having Scottish Gaelic as its origin).	<i>Alba Nuadh</i> Nova Scotia
<i>Gàidheil na h-Albann</i> Scottish Gaels	<i>A' Ghàidhlig</i> Scottish Gaelic	<i>Alba</i> Scotland
<i>Gaeil</i> Irish Gaels	<i>An Ghaeilge</i> Irish language (referred to by some outside of Ireland as Irish Gaelic)	<i>Éire</i> Ireland
<i>Manninee</i> Manx	<i>Gaelg</i> Manx Gaelic	<i>Mannin</i> Isle of Man
<i>Cymry</i> Welsh	<i>Cymraeg</i> Welsh	<i>Cymru</i> Wales*
<i>Breizhiz</i> Breton	<i>Brezhoneg</i> Breton	<i>Breizh</i> Brittany* *
<i>Kernowyon</i> Cornish	<i>Kernowek</i> Cornish	<i>Kernow</i> Cornwall

\* Welsh is also spoken in Patagonia, Argentina

\*\* Brittany is located in northwestern France

## MORE INFO

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### THE PEOPLES WHO SPOKE CELTIC LANGUAGES

Like many people whose history goes back to early and pre-historic times, those who spoke Celtic languages were tribal people. Their societies spanned central Europe—from the Caucasus in the east, to Britain and Ireland in the west. These people spoke related languages and shared common cultures which included governing structures, trade, spirituality, agriculture, and military tactics.



# WHERE DID NOVA SCOTIA GAELS COME FROM?

Beginning with the arrival of the Ship *Hector* in Pictou Harbour in 1773, an estimated 50,000 Gaels immigrated to Nova Scotia from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Between 1773 and 1855, Gaels settled in Colchester, Pictou, Antigonish, and Guysborough counties, and in all counties of Cape Breton. Frequently, members of a family group would arrive and settle in an area with other members arriving in the following years. This is called ‘chain migration.’ It is the result of whole communities of Gaels being uprooted from their homes in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland to settle in a new place and environment—Nova Scotia.

Map courtesy of Gaelic Nova Scotia: An Economic, Cultural, and Social Impact Study



## NOVA SCOTIA'S NAME

Nova Scotia, the Latin name for New Scotland, got its name in 1621 when Sir William Alexander, of Menstrie, Scotland, arrived to establish a permanent settlement in *Mi'kma'ki*, the traditional lands of the Mi'kmaq. *Mi'kma'ki* was territory to which both France and England laid claim. Earlier French settlers called this area *Acadie*. Sir William established a colony under the direction of and with support from King James I of England (King James VI of Scotland). Settlements occurred in Annapolis Royal, and on Cape Breton Island. The territory in which the settlements were established was ceded to France in 1634. As a result, the settlements were broken up and abandoned. It is believed that some of these settlers from Scotland joined already established Acadian communities in the Annapolis Valley. Due to limited documentation, it is uncertain if these early settlers from Scotland spoke Gaelic.

## MORE INFO

### ORIGINS

Gaels were an early people of Scotland and Ireland.

Our earliest evidence of Gaelic settlement comes from the first century AD, in what is now Argyll, Scotland. Gaels from Ireland arrived in this area in the 5th century AD and established a kingdom called ***Dál Riata***.

Referred to as Scotti by Roman writers, this Latin name became Anglicized to Scot which, eventually, became the term for the people (Scots) and the country they inhabited (Scotland).

At the time of the Gaelic Kingdom of ***Dál Riata*** on the west coast of Scotland, a closely related Gaelic language and culture was well established in Ireland.

Like the Gaels of ***Dál Riata***, Irish Gaels had a highly developed society. This included a system of civil law known as ***Am Féinneachas The Brehon Laws***, some of which go as far back as the Iron Age. These laws lasted until the 17th century.

Gaelic society began expanding into northern and eastern Scotland, which was inhabited by an early Celtic speaking people known in Gaelic as ***Na Cruithnich The Picts***. Faced with the threat of attack by Norse invaders, Gaelic and Pictish aristocratic families intermarried resulting in a political merger of the two peoples by the early 9th century AD. By 900 AD, a Gaelic-speaking kingdom emerged called ***Rioghachd na h-Albann The Kingdom of Scotland***.

At its height in the 12th century AD, the Gaelic was a high-status language. It was spoken in the king's court, among church officials, and by all levels of society throughout Scotland.

Social and economic changes brought about by the introduction of feudalism, the restructuring of the early Gaelic Church, and the expansion of an early form of English, resulted in Gaels being seen as foreign in both their language and their customs.

By the 15th century AD, Gaelic society had receded to the geographic area referred to as ***Na Garbh-Chrìochan The Highlands and Islands of Scotland***.

#### Gaelic Kingdom of *Dál Riata*



6th & 7th centuries AD

#### *Na Garbh-Chrìochan* HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS of SCOTLAND



15th century AD

# Settlement of Gaels between 1773-1855

Historically, it was for the eastern counties of Nova Scotia that the majority of the immigrants who landed on Nova Scotia's shores made at the end of the 18th and up to the middle of the 19th century. It turned out that the first Gaelic settlement was situated in Pictou by immigrants from Wester Ross who came over on the sailing vessel, the ship *Hector* in 1773.

Community after community was settled until ultimately by the 1840s, Gaels were in the majority throughout the eastern mainland and Cape Breton Island.

In the late 1800s, it is estimated that there may have been up to 100,000 Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia. 1901 Canada Census figures documented 50,000 Gaels who were willing to claim Gaelic as their mother tongue.

Scholarly estimates during this period reveal a potentially higher number of up to 80,000 speakers on Cape Breton Island and Antigonish and Guysborough counties on the eastern mainland.

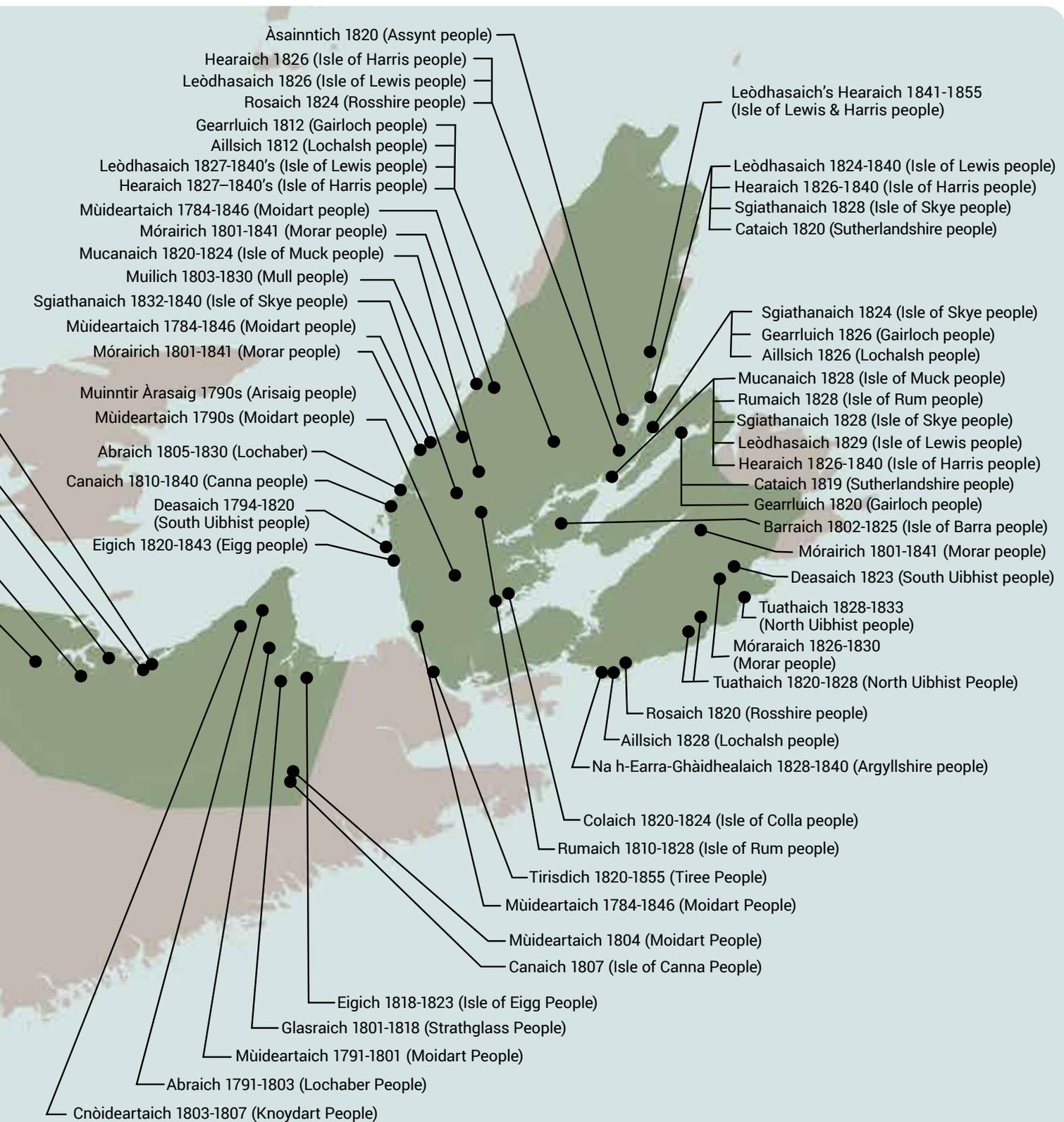
Moireasdanaich 1801 (Glen Moriston people)

Urchdanaich 1801 (Glen Urquhart people)

Cataich 1802-1817 (Sutherlandshire people)

Rosaich 1773-1805 (Rosshire people)

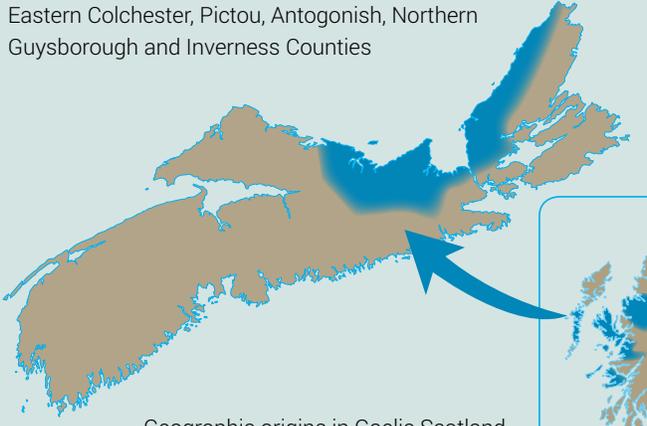
Sgiathanaich 1797 (Skye people)



# NOVA SCOTIA'S GÀIDHEALTACHD

## GAEELIC SETTLEMENT AREAS BY DISTRICT

Eastern Colchester, Pictou, Antigonish, Northern  
Guysborough and Inverness Counties



Geographic origins in Gaelic Scotland



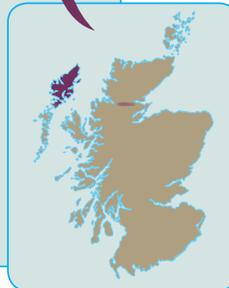
Nova Scotia's traditional **Gàidhealtachd Gaelic language and cultural area** comprises local Gaelic language and cultural variants that respective communities identify with, and validate their uniqueness. Factors that distinguish the Province's **Gàidhealtachd** by district are:

- geographic origins in Gaelic Scotland
- Gaelic language dialects
- musical expression
- story collections
- song collections
- food specialties
- Social customs
- kinship network
- religious adherence
- local economic activity
- history of settlement

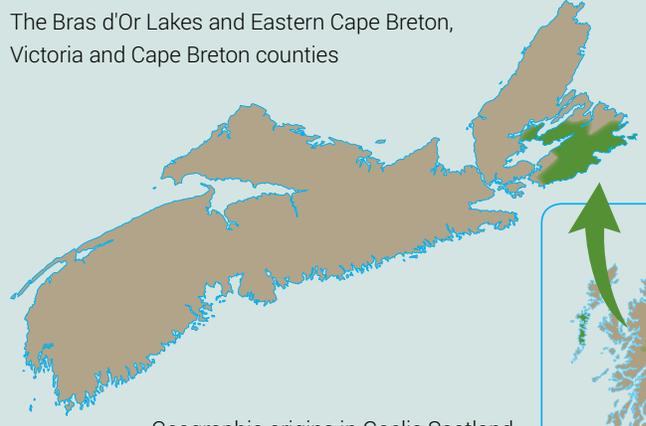
St. Anns Bay and North Shore,  
Victoria County



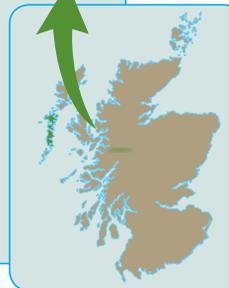
Geographic origins in Gaelic Scotland



The Bras d'Or Lakes and Eastern Cape Breton,  
Victoria and Cape Breton counties



Geographic origins in Gaelic Scotland



## GAELIC HISTORICAL TIMELINE IN NOVA SCOTIA

### 19TH CENTURY

Gaelic cultural expression is shared and passed on in Nova Scotia in the **taigh-céilidh visiting house** where people gather to sing, play music, dance, tell stories, and share customs. During this time, Gaelic is spoken on a daily basis among Gaels throughout the Gaelic community in Nova Scotia.

#### 1841

- The Education Act allows the use of Gaelic in schools but there is no evidence of support for the program's implementation.

#### 1850

- The superintendent of schools writes about Gaelic as a barrier to English education in the public schools.

#### 1851

- The first Gaelic magazine is published in the province: **An Cuairtear Òg Gaelach** The Young Gaelic Traveller.

#### 1864

- Gaelic loses its status within the school system.

#### 1890

- Canadian Senator Thomas Robert McInnes introduces a bill in the Senate to make Gaelic Canada's third official language. The bill is defeated.

#### 1891

- St. Francis Xavier University offers a course in Gaelic language and literature—the first of its kind.

#### 1892 – 1904

- The Gaelic weekly **Mac-Talla Echo**, is published out of Sydney. It is the longest running Gaelic periodical in the world.

### 20TH CENTURY

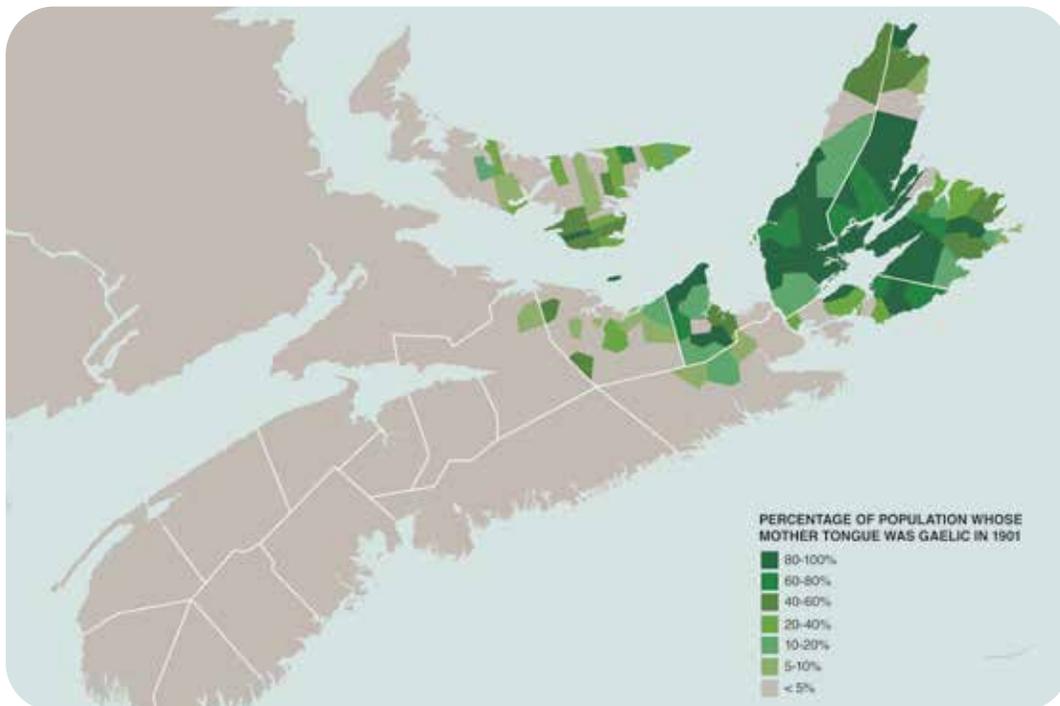
From the late 1800s into the early 1900s, Gaelic was actively discouraged in Nova Scotia public life. There are a number of accounts of mockery and ridicule for speaking Gaelic and being associated with Gaelic culture during this time. Teachers punished children for speaking Gaelic in schools. While a number of Gaels worked to advance Gaelic language and culture, others began to view their language as backward, unfashionable, and associated with poverty.

#### 1901

- Scholars estimate that 80,000 Nova Scotians, or 17% of the population, speak Gaelic.

#### 1902

- The **Mac-Talla** editor estimates that about 75,000 Cape Bretoners are of Gaelic descent and that 50,000 of those are



# OVERVIEW

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familiar with Gaelic. On Cape Breton Island, Gaelic is preached in 33 Presbyterian churches and 31 Catholic churches. Four out of five federal parliamentarians speak Gaelic, and five of eight provincial parliamentarians are Gaelic speaking. In Cape Breton, 58 of 78 county councillors speak Gaelic.

## 1906

- Lieutenant Governor Duncan Cameron Fraser is welcomed to Government House with a Gaelic address. He replies with a Gaelic speech of his own.

## 1920

- A petition requesting that Gaelic be included in the Nova Scotia curriculum is signed by 5,468 people from more than 230 communities and sent to the Nova Scotia Legislature.

## 1921

- The legislature approves Gaelic as an optional subject in the curriculum.

## 1939

- The House of Assembly calls for the enactment of measures to ensure the teaching of Gaelic in schools and passes a resolution calling for the appointment of a Gaelic teacher.
- The Gaelic College of Arts and Crafts is founded in St. Ann's, Cape Breton.

## 1950

- Major C.I.N. MacLeod becomes Gaelic advisor to the Department of Education and serves for eight years.

## 1956

- The first annual Broad Cove Scottish Concert is held in St. Margaret's Parish, Broad Cove, Inverness County, Cape Breton.

## 1964

- Gaelic is again dropped from the public school curriculum.

## 1972

- A pilot program for Gaelic studies is introduced in Inverness County.

## 1974 – 2017

- Cape Breton University Press publishes a number of books on Gaels, Acadians, Mi'kmaq, and African Nova Scotians.

## 1975

- Seven public schools provide Gaelic language instruction in Inverness County, with three teachers doing a circuit.

## 1977

- The Gaelic-language pilot in public schools in Inverness County ends and Gaelic is again included in the Department of Education's curriculum.

## 1982

- Funding for Gaelic studies pilot program is cut.
- The Cape Breton Gaelic Folklore Collection: a collection of interviews, stories, and songs of native Gaelic speakers is

completed. It is later used as content for *Sruth nan Gàidheal Gael Stream*.

## 1983

- A Chair of Gaelic Studies is established at St. Francis Xavier University.

## 1990

- *Comhairle na Gàidhlig* The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia, is established.

## 1993

- *Am Bràighe*, a Gaelic community-based magazine begins publication and runs for 10 years (1993-2003)—100 years after *Mac-Talla*.

## 1994

- The first of many high school student exchanges with students in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland takes place.

## 1995–1996

- Students are given the option to have Gaelic- or Mikmaw-language instruction instead of French-language instruction in public schools in Nova Scotia.

## 1996

- Gaelic Awareness Month is declared in the Nova Scotia Legislature.

## 1997

- The report, *Gaelic in Nova Scotia: Opportunities*, is presented to the Minister of Education.

## 1998 – 2015

- *Sìol* Cultural Enterprises publishes and distributes Gaelic books and resource materials to Gaelic community members across North America.

## 1999

- The Department of Education develops the first Gaelic Cultural Studies program and makes it available to Nova Scotia public school students in grade 11.

## 21ST CENTURY

### 2001

- Gaelic Cultural Studies 11 is offered to all students online.

### 2002

- The report, *Gaelic Nova Scotia: An Economic, Cultural and Social Impact Study*, is published as a curatorial report by the Nova Scotia Museum.
- Nova Scotia signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the Highland Council in Scotland. It highlights the Gaelic language, culture, and kinship shared between the two regions.
- Cape Breton University begins an exchange program with *Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (SMO) The Gaelic College on the Isle of Skye* in Scotland.

# OVERVIEW

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## 2003

- The Department of Education offers Gaelic Studies 11 as one of the options for the mandatory Canadian history credit.
- A Gaelic cultural officer position is established in Nova Scotia along with funding to assist community-based language and cultural learning opportunities.

## 2004

- The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia presents the report, *Developing and Preserving Gaelic in Nova Scotia: Strategy for a Community-Based Initiative*, to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage.
- The Department of Education supports the development of *Gaelic Teachers' Resource Book* and a new curriculum designed for grades 10, 11, and 12.
- Total Immersion Plus (TIP), a new way of teaching language to adults, is introduced from Scotland and shows early signs of success.
- The Department of Education supports the first week-long Summer Institute on Gaelic in Mabou, Inverness County.

## 2005

- The Department of Education supports the development of an elementary to grade 9 Gaelic curriculum.

## 2006

- The first Ministry of Gaelic Initiatives is established.
- The province establishes a boundary sign policy that includes Gaelic, Mi'kmaq, and French along with English for the eastern districts of the province.
- *Sruth nan Gàidheal Gael Stream*, an interactive website, goes live. The website is an archive of songs, stories, anecdotes, prayers, customs, and rhymes by native Nova Scotia Gaelic speakers.
- The first *Oifis Iomairtean na Gàidhlig The Office of Gaelic Affairs*, is established with locations in Halifax, Antigonish, and Mabou.
- *Sgoil Ghàidhlig an Àrd-Bhaile The Gaelic Language Society of Halifax*, is established to offer Gaelic language and cultural programming in the Halifax area.

## 2007

- The Department of Education establishes a Gaelic-language program grant initiative for public schools. This results in an increase in the number of schools offering Gaelic-language instruction and Gaelic Studies 11.

## 2008

- *Comhairle na Gàidhlig* and *Oifis Iomairtean na Gàidhlig* work together to develop a symbol to represent the Gaelic community of Nova Scotia. The symbol is officially recognized by the province.
- The first Gaelic academic conference is held outside of Scotland at St. Francis Xavier University.
- *Cainnt Mo Mhàthar My Mother's Speech*, goes live on the internet.

## 2009

- The community-based mentorship program that matches Gaelic learners with native Gaelic speaking elders, *Bun is Bàrr Root and Branch*, is created.

## 2012

- The Scottish government and *Bòrd na Gàidhlig The Gaelic Language Board of Scotland*, establish a Gaelic Language Bursary to support Nova Scotians learning Gaelic. The bursary also helps to promote greater awareness and understanding of Gaelic cultural expression.
- The Gaelic language and cultural expression online resource, *An Drochaid Eadarainn The Bridge Between Us*, is launched. It provides examples of Gaelic dialect and folklore from the Gaelic districts in Nova Scotia.

## 2013

- *Colaisde na Gàidhlig The Gaelic College*, initiates the youth mentorship program, *Na Gaisgich Òga The Young Heroes*.

## 2015

- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development launches its Education Action Plan, which talks about including the languages, histories, and cultures of Acadians, African Nova Scotians, Gaels, and Mi'kmaq, in the grade primary to 12 curriculum.

## 2017

- Nova Scotia's Culture Action Plan: Creativity and Community recognizes Gaelic culture's role in shaping Nova Scotia's unique voice and character. This includes teaching the language, history, and culture of Gaels in grades primary to 12 and strengthening the office of Gaelic Affairs.
- *Mios na Gàidhlig Gaelic Awareness Month*, is rebranded *Mios nan Gàidheal Gaelic Nova Scotia Month*. A Gaelic licence plate initiative featuring the symbol of the Gaels in Nova Scotia is launched.
- *Sgioba nan Taoitearan The GaB Instructors Team*, is the established.

## 2018

- Supporting Gaelic language and cultural initiatives, a Gaelic licence plate is made available for purchase at Access Nova Scotia.
- A mini-documentary on the Gaelic Affairs' mentorship program, *Bun is Bàrr Root and Branch*, is launched.
- *Daltachas An intermediate language mentorship program*, is developed and launched.

## 2019

- A mini-documentary titled *Dòchas Hope* (Gaelic youth in Nova Scotia) is launched.
- *Gaelic Nova Scotia: A Resource Guide* is developed to raise awareness and help educators to teach Gaelic language, culture, and history in Nova Scotia.

# NOVA SCOTIA GAELS: A CONTEXT

The story of Nova Scotia Gaels is a complex one that takes into account the long history of Gaelic Scotland and a series of events that still resonate in contemporary Gaelic Nova Scotia. These are some of the conditions and events that have left a mark on Gaelic Nova Scotia:

- ethno-cultural othering—the outlawing and undermining of linguistic and cultural marks of identity
- the Anglicization of the elite in Gaelic society
- political and military conquest
- societal break up and collapse
- large scale evictions and clearances
- large scale immigration and chain migration to new homes in British colonies such as Nova Scotia

As subjects of the British Empire, Gaelic settlers in Nova Scotia were offered land grants. These grants were issued by colonial authorities for lands that were the traditional home of the Mi'kmaw people—*Mi'kma'ki*.

Gaelic language, culture, and identity thrived for a time in a largely independent communal context in *Tìr Mór na h-Albann Nuaidhe an Ear* Nova Scotia's Eastern mainland, and on *Eilean Cheap Breatainn* Cape Breton Island. During the 19th and 20th centuries, efforts to preserve and develop the Gaelic language were undertaken by a number of individuals and groups. However, they faced many obstacles:

- Gaelic was considered a low-status language and had no official recognition.
- Gaels were excluded from political power and decision-making.
- Gaels had no meaningful role in the public domain including in their own communities.
- Economic migration and rural depopulation impacted planning and sustainability.

All of the above resulted in a widespread loss of group self-confidence among Gaels. This, in turn, inhibited efforts to preserve the Gaelic language, culture and identity.

Despite living in Nova Scotia since 1773, Catholic Gaels were not granted full citizenship rights until 1829. Once they were granted citizenship, many Nova Scotia Gaels could advance their position in the broader society. Though some Gaels did reach influential positions in religion, politics, and medicine in Nova Scotia, they did so by speaking English. In the post-colonial system, English was required for social advancement. Gaelic language, culture, and identity were excluded.

There is no evidence to indicate that Gaelic language, literature, history, culture, or music courses were offered in any of Nova Scotia's public schools in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This is despite two important facts:

- Gaelic was the second most widely spoken language after English—with an estimated 100,000 speakers by the late 1800s.
- Prominent Gaels held such high offices as Lieutenant Governor and Premier.

Post-colonial attitudes toward linguistic and cultural diversity across the public domain in Nova Scotia ignored the social and economic interests of Gaels. Therefore, many Gaels saw English as both a way to integrate into the broader English-speaking Canadian society, and a path out of poverty and powerlessness.

Some prominent Gaels learned to speak Gaelic fluently and gained a profound understanding of Gaelic culture from their parents, grandparents, and elders in the community. This happened mainly through the *céilidh* visit. But it was through their English education that they achieved success and status in wider Nova Scotian society. To advance in that society, they needed to assimilate into the Anglo-centric power and decision-making structures of the time. Thus, the message to many Gaels in the province was one had to shun, ignore, and hide one's Gaelic language, culture, and identity to advance in society.



*This photograph was taken during a re-enactment and celebration of the landing of the ship Hector at Pictou (1773). In 1923, descendants of the original Mi'kmaq in their traditional lands and Gaels who settled in the area took part in this event.*

*Photo credit:  
Detail of a photo in the collection  
of the Nova Scotia Museum*

# NOVA SCOTIA GAELS TODAY

Gaels and their Gaelic language, culture, and identity are unique aspects of Nova Scotia's diversity today. One third of Nova Scotia's population claims *dualchas Gàidhealach* Gaelic heritage. The Gaelic language has experienced a resurgence as more learners come to realize the importance it plays in terms of culture and identity. Many people of Gaelic heritage are reclaiming terms that relate to their identity and cultural expression, such as *Gàidheil* Gaels and *céilidh* visit.

The establishment of *Oifis Iomairtean na Gàidhlig* Office of Gaelic Affairs in 2006, has produced a number of initiatives aimed at strengthening Gaelic language and culture. These include

- *Gàidhlig aig Baile* Gaelic in the Community—a method of learning language based on Total Immersion Plus (TIP)
- *Bun is Bàrr* Root and Branch—an intergenerational mentoring program
- *Daltachas* Fostering—an intermediate language level mentorship program
- *Na Gaisgich Òga* The Young Heroes—a youth mentorship program

Other opportunities for strengthening Gaelic language and culture include social-based learning opportunities such as Gaelic-language gatherings, immersion days, weeks, and weekends offered in communities on mainland Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island. All of these help people to do three things:

- learn to speak and use Gaelic
- gain a deeper awareness of and engagement in Gaelic cultural expression
- acquire greater sense of individual and collective Gaelic identity

Gaelic language and cultural courses are offered through the following institutions:

- The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, which funds Gaelic Language and Studies courses in 13 schools across the province
- Saint Mary's, St. Francis Xavier, and Cape Breton universities
- *Baile nan Gàidheal* Highland Village
- *Colaisde na Gàidhlig* The Gaelic College

## MORE INFO

- the Celtic Music Interpretive Centre (CMIC)
- *Sgoil Ghàidhlig an Àrd-Bhaile* Halifax Gaelic Language Society

There are also a number of festivals and events across the province that present Gaelic language and cultural performing arts. These include: *Féis an Eilein* Christmas Island Festival, *Féis Mhàbu* Mabou Festival, *Féis a' Chidsin* Kitchen Fest, Broad Cove Scottish Concert, Antigonish Highland Games, Celtic Colours International Festival and The Halifax Celtic Festival.

### NOVA SCOTIA GAELS: RECONNECTIONS

In 1969, the Gaelic Society of Cape Breton was formed giving wider support to Gaelic retention across rural Cape Breton in particular. Native Gaelic speakers from Scotland were invited to immigrate to Cape Breton. This resulted in significant developments in Gaelic instruction in the Inverness County public school program and at the University College of Cape Breton (now Cape Breton University). These educators made numerous contributions to Gaelic student education and Gaelic language and cultural curriculum development at both the local and provincial levels.

In the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, Gaelic learners, enthusiasts, activists, and educators from the United States and Scotland immigrated to Cape Breton and the northeastern Nova Scotia mainland. Some learned Gaelic through immersion in the Gaelic speaking communities. Many of these individuals later

took on leadership roles in teaching Gaelic and advocating for Gaelic language and cultural identity in Nova Scotia. Internationally recognized Gaelic language and cultural field work, resources and programs are the legacy of these language and cultural champions.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, there were further advancements in Gaelic language and culture with enhanced Gaelic instruction at the *Baile nan Gàidheal Highland Village, Colaisde na Gàidhlig* The Gaelic College, and with the establishment of events such as *Féis an Eilein* The Christmas Island Festival.

In 1987, the University College of Cape Breton, hosted an international conference with focus on the Politics of Gaelic Cultural Maintenance. The result was the organization of grass-root advocates island-wide to form *Comhairle na Gàidhlig*



**Bun is Bàr**  
participants with  
Gaelic mentor.

Courtesy of  
Gaelic Affairs.

## MORE INFO

**The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia.** Established in 1990, *Comhairle na Gàidhlig*, a non-profit society, dedicated its efforts to maintaining and promoting Gaelic language and culture.

In 1995, the Gaelic language was once again introduced into the province's Education Act. The act stated that such language instruction could be built into the curriculum of a given school as a heritage language or local history study under the following conditions:

- there is demand from the student population
- the teaching resources are available

In 1997, *Comhairle na Gàidhlig's* Gaelic in Nova Scotia: *Opportunities* report was submitted to the Department of Education. Out of 8 recommendations, one, the creation of a curriculum for public schools, was adopted.

In 2002, the first report that attempted to provide a historical context, as well contemporary data, on the social and economic impact of the Gaelic community in the province, was issued. *Gaelic Nova Scotia: An Economic, Cultural, and Social Impact Study* (2002) was followed by *Developing and Preserving Gaelic in Nova Scotia* (2004). The latter report reflected community advocacy efforts and resulted in steps being taken by the Government of Nova Scotia to recognize the language's decline, and to engage local speakers in reversing this trend.

Increased ties were called for between Nova Scotia and the Highland Council in Scotland and a first such agreement, a Memorandum of Understanding, was signed in 2002.

Recommendations from these reports include focusing on community development, strengthening education, place name signage policy, publications, and building ties between the Gaelic community and other Nova Scotia "heritage language" communities such as the Mi'kmaq and Acadian.



**Froilig-luadhaidh milling frolic** at the **Colaisde na Gàidhlig Gaelic College**

### CONNECTIONS

**Bun is Bàrr** – Master Apprentice Intergenerational Learning in Gaelic Nova Scotia

Trailer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FcS44BD1Q6g>

Full Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tu8KfJV4KE>

# Gaelic Sites in Nova Scotia



## MAP KEY

### MONUMENTS

- 1** Culloden Memorial Cairn  
*Knoydart*

### PERFORMANCE CENTRES/FESTIVALS

- 1** Celtic Music Interpretive Centre (CMIC)  
*Judique*
- 2** Celtic Colours  
*Sydney*
- 3** *Féis a' Chidsin / Kitchen Fest*  
*St. Ann's*
- 4** *Féis an Eilein / Christmas Island Festival*  
*Christmas Island*
- 5** Strathspey Place  
*Mabou*
- 6** Antigonish Highland Games  
*Antigonish*

### COLLEGE & UNIVERSITIES

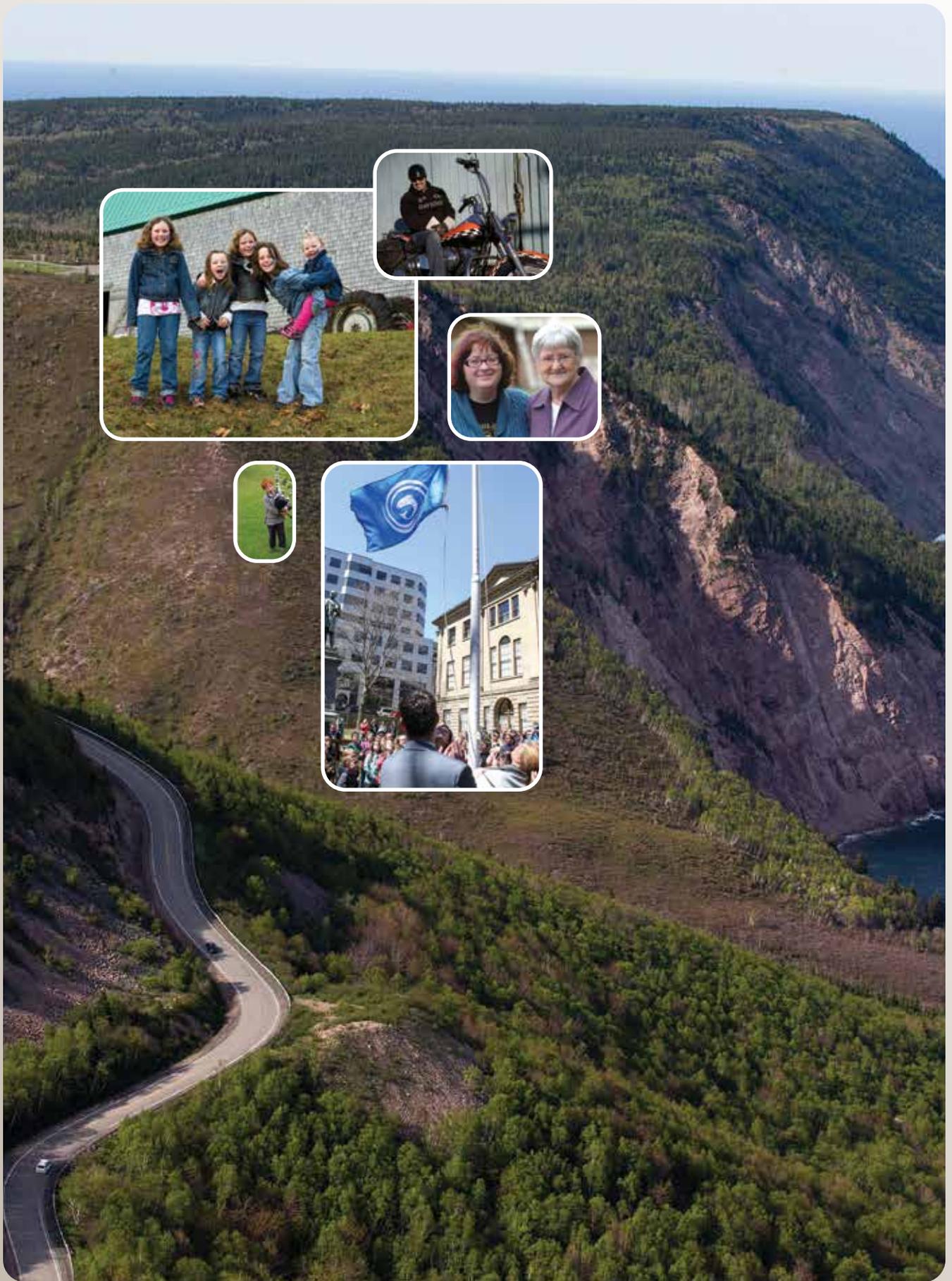
- 1** *Colaisde na Gàidhlig / The Gaelic College*  
*St. Ann's*
- 2** Cape Breton University  
*Sydney*
- 3** Beaton Institute  
*Sydney*
- 4** Celtic Studies & Special Collections  
*StFX University*
- 5** Saint's Mary University, Irish Studies  
*Halifax*

### GAELIC AFFAIRS OFFICES

- 1** *Halifax*
- 2** *Antigonish*
- 3** *Mabou*

### HERITAGE SITES

- 1** Hector Heritage Quay  
*Pictou Town*
- 2** McCulloch Heritage Centre  
*Pictou Town*
- 3** Antigonish Highland Society  
*Antigonish*
- 4** Antigonish Heritage Museum  
*Antigonish*
- 5** *An Drochaid Mabou Gaelic & Historical Society*  
*Mabou*
- 6** *Baile nan Gàidheal / Highland Village*  
*Iona*
- 7** *Taigh an t-Sagairt*  
**Father John Angus Rankin Cultural Centre**  
*Glendale*





SECTION 2

# CULTURE

## **Values**

Hospitality

Family

Stewardship

Inclusion

Spirituality

## ***Bial-Aithris* – Oral Tradition**

Song

Music/Dance

Storytelling

## ***Céilidh***

## **Customs**

## **Food**

## **The Symbol of the Gaels of Nova Scotia**

# VALUES

## HOSPITALITY

*Aoigheachd* Hospitality, is a time-honoured Gaelic value. Many proverbs point to its cultural importance. So, too, do Gaelic stories.

This tale describes the Gaelic way of welcoming and providing food and drink for visitors—often with considerable effort. The host in this story prepares *bonnach* a type of bread. It is made from scratch—from cutting a swatch of grain with a sickle to serving the hot treat covered in butter.

AM FALBHANACH AGUS AM BONNACH  
*Le Eòs Nìll Bhig*

Bha mi 'staigh ann a' seo a' coimhead air brà airson bleith gràin. Bha i staigh 's an t-seòmbar air mo chùlaibh. Chunna mi gu robh i air a togail suas; gu robh iad a' dol 'ga breacadh, a' gearradh innte claiseachan beaga mar a fhreagras. Agus tha sin a' toirt dha mo bheachd naidheachd. Bhiodh 'ad a' bleith a' ghràin 's an t-seann aimisir (aig an taigh.) Bhiodh iad a' bleith a' ghràin a bha 'ad a' togail leis a' bhrà. Cha robh 'ad 'ga chuir gu muileann; a' mhór-chuid dhe na bh' ann. Agus thall aig a' Phon Mhór, air taobh eil' a' loch mhóir ann a' seo, thall faisg air an àite 's a bheil mi-fhìn a' fuireach aig an àm seo, bha fear a' gabhail a' rathaid mar a bheireamaid. Bha e 'dol sìos an dùthaich. Agus co-dhiubh, bha e 'na cheannaiche-siubhail, na fear a bha 'falbh mun cuairt a' gabhail òrdan na gu dé bha dol. 'S e fear-siubhail a bh' ann co-dhiubh. Ma dh' fhaoidte gura h-ann a chuid dhe 'n chléir a bha e - gur h-ministear a bh' ann. Ach thànaig e dh' ionnsaidh an taigh' a bha seo thall aig a' Phon Mhór agus dh' fhoighneachd e do bhean an taigh' a faigheadh e biadh, gu robh an t-acras air. O, thuir i ris gu faigheadh, ach gu feumadh e dàil bheag a dhèanamh. "Ach tha mi cinnteach," ors' ise, "gu bheil sibh sgìth, agus gum biodh e cho math dhuibh a dhol tacan 'nur sìneadh ann a' sin air beinge agus gu faigh mi biadh a



Photo courtesy of Colaisde na Gàidhlig

THE TRAVELLER AND THE BONNACH  
*From Joe Neil MacNeil*

Translation: I was in here (at Highland Village) looking at a hand quern for grinding grain. It was in the room behind me. I noticed it was elevated and that they were going to notch it - cut small, corresponding grooves in it. That reminds me of a story. They used to grind grain in the olden times (at home.) The grain they raised was ground with the hand quern. The majority of grain wasn't sent to a mill. Over in Big Pond, on the other side of the big lake here, near to where I'm living myself just now, there was a man traveling the roads as we would say. He was going down the country. In any event, he was a peddler, or a fellow going around taking orders (for goods), or whatever was going. Anyway, he was a traveler. Maybe he was a clergyman, a minister. So he arrived at this house over in Big Pond, and he asked the housewife if he could get something to eat. He was hungry. Oh yes, she said that he could, but he would have to wait for a little while. "But I'm sure that you're tired," she said, "and it would be just as well for you to stretch out on the bench there until I prepare food for you." And she took the sickle, that's a reaping knife, and she went outside and cut a bunch of the grain out there, whether it was wheat or barley. She brought it indoors. The grain was just ripe at the time, and she stripped the seed and

dheasachadh dhuibh.” Agus thug i leath’ an corran, ’s e sin sgian-bhuain, ’s ghabh i a-mach agus bhuain i bad dhe ’n ghràn a bha muigh, co-dhiubh ’s e cruinneachd, na eòrn’ a bh’ ann. Agus thug i sin astaigh. Bha an gràn dìreach abaich anns an àm, agus fhrois i a’ siol dheth, agus chriathair i sin, na shéid i dheth a’ chath, am moll, air dòigh air choireiginn agus chuir i sin ann am pan, na ann an amhuinn, agus thug i teasachadh dha agus chruadhaich i a’ sin an gràn. ’S chuir i an gràn a’ sin thro’ ’n bhrà. Chuir i mun cuairt a’ bhrà agus nuair a thog i a’ mhin, tha mi cinnteach gun dug i criathradh oirre airson ’s gun tigeadh an stuth garbh aiste, agus rinn i breacag, na mar a thogras sinn a dh’ràdh bonnach beag, leis a’ mhin a bha sin. Bhruich i e co-dhiubh, cha dean e deifir. Bhruich i a’ bhreacag a bha sin agus ’s cinnteach fhad ’s a bha a’ bhreacag sin blàth gun deachaidh im gu leòr a chuir oirre, agus còmhla ri bobhla do bhainne, thug i am biadh dha ’n fhear-siubhail a bha seo. Agus tha mi ’smaointinn gu robh e cho toilichte gun duirt e gum b’ e sin biadh cho math ’s fhuair e fad ùine mhóir. Agus bha naidheachd aige air a’ sin ’s a h-uile h-àit’ a rachadh e fad greiseadh: an taigh a thànaig e thuige agus am biadh a’ fàs a-muigh anns an achadh agus nuair a leig e tacan dhe sgios seachad gun do dh’ ith e-fhein pàirt dhe ’n bhiadh a bha sin air a bhruich. Agus sin a-riamh mar a bha gnothaichean a’ dol. Agus sin mar a bha cuid mhór dhe na gnothaichean a’ dol air obair an àite. Bha iad a’ deanamh móran do dh’ obair a tha ’ad an diugh a’ faighinn air a deanamh ann an ceann eile na dùthchadh, ma dh’ fhaoidte na dùthchannan fada às. Agus sin agaibh mo naidheachd-sa.

winnowed it, or blew the chaff of it, the dross, in some way, and she put it in a pan, or in the oven, gave it heat and then hardened the grain. Then she put the grain through the hand quern. She turned the quern around and when she picked up the meal - I’m sure she gave it a fanning to take the rough portion out of it and she made a breacag, or as we like to say a little bannock, from that meal. No difference, she cooked it anyway. She cooked that breacag, and for sure it was lathered with butter while still warm and given to the traveler with a bowl of milk. I suppose he was so pleased that he declared it was the best food he had gotten for a long spell. And for a while after that he took that story everywhere he went: about the house he came to, and the food growing outside, and how - after he rested a bit - he ate a share of that food when it was cooked. And so that’s the way things have always gone. And that’s the way things have been around local work. They were doing lots of things at home that they now get done at the other end of country, or even from countries far away. That’s my story.

*Provided courtesy of Baile nan Gàidheal*

### CONNECTIONS

*An Rubha*, vol. 11, no. 01 found on Highland Village’s website, also includes related content.

## FAMILY

For Gaels, *teaghlach* family and who your people are, is important. A Gael might ask someone whom he/she has met, *Có na daoine agaibh? Who are your people?* Family includes grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, and keeps Gaels rooted in the stories of who they are and where they come from, helping to keep them connected to their community.

*Daltachas* fosterage in Gaelic culture, is a practice that included both biological and non-biological relations, reinforcing a sense of solidarity amongst groups of Gaels more broadly.

The central role of *dàimh* connections including kinship (immediate and extended family members) in Gaelic heritage may explain the attraction some have to clan organizations.

### CONNECTIONS

Teaching videos are available on youtube that focus on Gaelic language for *teaghlach* family.

## STEWARDSHIP

Generations of Nova Scotia Gaels farmed, raised animals, fished, made textiles, took up trades, worked in the woods, and mined. This was how many made their living, supported their families, and contributed to building local communities.

Gaels' *stiùbhartachd* stewardship, of the local environment and relationship to the world around them is reflected in numerous connections expressed in Gaelic culture and vernacular beliefs.

For example, Gaels' connected to astronomy through their adherence to the phases of the moon. Gaels called the waning of the moon the 'dark', 'growing', or 'planting' stage. During this time, people wouldn't cut their hair. They believed it would recede if they did. Nor would they butcher animals during this time. They would however, cut wood for both house building and for burning, as they knew it would dry and cure well.

The Gaels also had an intimate connection to the landscape and the creatures that inhabit it. Over generations, Gaels assigned language to the sounds of animals, birds, pond life, and domestic animals. This shows a relationship to nature that personifies wildlife and gives it human-like traits.

Examples of this can be found in the Gaelic language attributed to the sounds made by *na fithich* the crows, *an ceann-dubh* the chickadee, and, in springtime, *na màgain* the peepers.

*Càit' a bheil an còrr, an còrr, an còrr?* Where are the others, the others, the others? calls out the first crow that arrives.

*An do nigh thu do chasan? An do nigh thu do chasan? An do nigh thu do chasan?* Did you wash your feet? Did you wash your feet? Did you wash your feet? one group of peepers calls out while the other group responds, *Nigh, cha do nigh. Nigh, cha do nigh. Nigh, cha do nigh.* Yes, no. Yes, no. Yes, no. While *an losgann* the toad calls out in a deep voice, *Grunnd grot, grunnd grot, grunnd grot.* Rotten bottom, rotten bottom, rotten bottom (referring to the bottom of *a' bhoglach* the bog).

*Spid oirbh! Spid oirbh! Spid oirbh!* Hurry up! Hurry up! Hurry up! sings the chickadee.



### CONNECTIONS

[akerbeltz.org](http://akerbeltz.org) offers more examples of Gaelic rhymes in the *Cainnt nan eun* section of their site.

The **Cape Bretons Magazine** online provides more information.



*Exchange of gifts at a MAGIC (Mi'kmaq, Acadians, and Gaels in Inverness County) event, 2017. Photo courtesy of Steve Rankin Photography.*



*Descendants of the Maxwell twins courtesy of Highland Village.*

### INCLUSION

Gaels influenced and were influenced by many peoples, languages, and cultures in Nova Scotia.

*Kajjmenewi'simk* is the Mi'kmaq word for a Gaelic speaker. It means “to speak like a Scotchman”, that is, like a Gael. Stories tell of first meetings between the Mi'kmaq and Gaelic settlers where cross-cultural sharing occurred and care and hospitality given.

Gaels married people of other heritages. Often, those who integrated into the Gaelic community adopted Gaelic language and culture. The Maxwell twins, who were adopted by a Gaelic speaking family in Malagawatch, Cape Breton, are a well-known example. They were African Nova Scotian and acquired the local language and culture of the area. They became a noted Gaelic-speaking family and composed Gaelic songs and fiddle tunes.

### CONNECTIONS

*Ebb and Flow: The Moon in Gaelic Tradition* by Calum Maclean can be found online

*An Rubha*, vol. 13, no. 02 found on Highland Village's website, also includes related content.

## CROSS CULTURAL SHARING: THE GAELS AND THE ACADIANS

Profile written by Gaelic Affairs for the Gaelic Nova Scotia Month 2015

Two of the most visible and well-known expressions of Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia are fiddling and step dance. Although

the bagpipes and harp predated the violin as principal instruments in Gaelic Scotland, the 18th century saw a Golden Age of music with the rise of Gaelic-speaking fiddler-composers, like Niel Gow and William Marshall. Influenced by the Highland pipes, these fiddle tunes, as well as Gaelic songs, were the music Gaels brought with them to the New World.

As music came down through the generations, through jigging (mouth music), bagpipes and the fiddle, and communities became less isolated, Gaels began influencing the repertoire and fiddling styles of other ethno-cultural groups in Northeastern Nova Scotia.

One of the most gifted and influential fiddlers of the last century was Angus Chisholm of Margaree. In the 1940s he worked as park warden in Cape Breton's National Park and influenced fiddlers in the nearby Acadian Region.

While working at the National Park, Chisholm visited the home of young Didace Leblanc of St.-Joseph-du-Moine. Didace's daughter Kathleen Leblanc-Poirier of Grand Étang said her father's home was a 'big fiddle house,' when he was growing up. A fiddler and piano player herself, Leblanc-Poirier says her father continued the 'fiddle house' tradition in her childhood home, especially after the Saint-Joseph-du-Moine Scottish Concert, an event Didace Leblanc began.

"I remember when they used to have parties at my house," said Kathleen. "Donnie (Leblanc – her first cousin) would play and Kinnon and Betty Lou (Beaton) would come down. And Donald Angus Beaton, Theresa MacLellan, Jerry Holland. You name them and most of them had been at the house."

Another frequent guest was fiddling great Arthur Muise, an Acadian who step danced at the Antigonish Highland Games at the age of six. Influenced by the Margaree Chisholms, when active he would play strathspeys (dance tunes that can have a strong Gaelic sound), and reels as if he were a Gaelic-speaking bagpiper. He in turn influenced fiddlers like Donnie Leblanc of Petit Étang, who in 1977, with Andre Leblanc (piano) and Gelas Larade (guitar), began playing every Saturday at the Doryman Pub & Grill in Cheticamp. The Doryman is a cultural institution that has helped to keep traditional music and dancing alive in Nova Scotia, as every fiddler of note since 1977 has likely played on its stage. In fact, Ashley MacIsaac recorded portions of a DVD at the Doryman.

The atmosphere at the Doryman is a mix of Acadian *joie de vivre* and hospitality mingled with lively strathspeys, jigs and reels – a living example of cross-cultural sharing, fueled by a passion for the traditional music of Gaelic Scotland and Nova Scotia.

### CONNECTIONS

Look on YouTube for

- *Arthur Muise and Janine Muise Randall great strathspeys and reels*

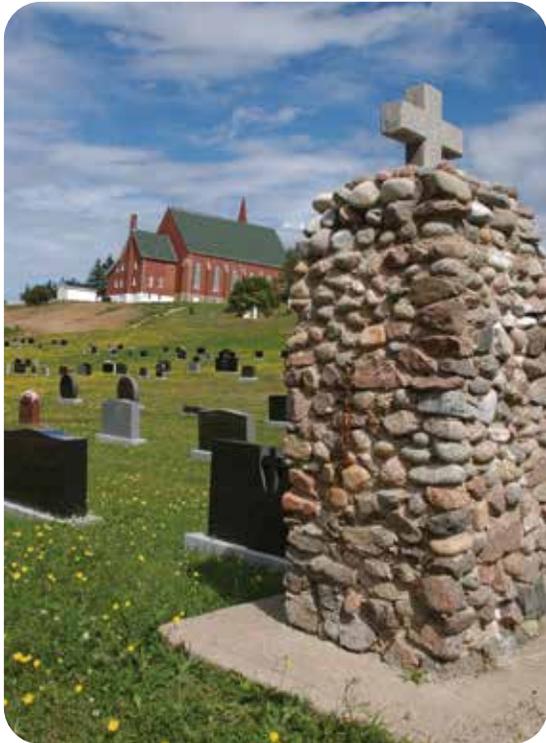
- *Saturday afternoon at the Doryman*

Also learn more about the Maxwell twins on the Highland Village website

## SPIRITUALITY

Gaelic *spioradalachd* spirituality, involves caring for each other and valuing animals and the natural world.

Early Gaelic settlers brought their *creideamh Crìosdaidh* Christian faith, and traditions to Nova Scotia, as well as some customs and beliefs that predate *Crìosdaidheachd* Christianity. Some Gaels in Nova Scotia today still recite prayers that originated in early Gaelic society.



## CONNECTIONS

Some Gaels follow the phases of the moon for planting. An article on this topic, *Ebb and Flow: The Moon in Gaelic Tradition*, can be found online as part of the Calum Maclean Project (University of Edinburgh).

## Còmhnaidh Dhé\*

Dia dha mo chaim,  
Dia dha mo chuairt,  
Dia dha mo chainnt,  
Dia dha mo smuain.

Dia dha mo chadal,  
Dia dha mo dhùsg,  
Dia dha mo chaithris,  
Dia dha mo dhùil.

Dia dha mo bheatha,  
Dia dha mo bhilibh,  
Dia dha m'anam,  
Dia dha mo chridhe.

Dia dha mo riaradh,  
Dia dha mo shuain,  
Dia dha m'anam siorraidh,  
Dia dha m' bhioth-bhuan.

## God's Aid

God in my sanctuary,  
God about me,  
God in my speech,  
God in my thoughts.

God in my sleeping,  
God in my waking,  
God in my watching,  
God in my hoping.

God in my life,  
God on my lips,  
God in my soul,  
God in my heart.

God to satisfy me,  
God in my slumber,  
God in my eternal soul,  
In my everlasting.

\*Alexander Carmichael collected many religious, folkloric, and historical materials from Gaels throughout the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These included prayers, hymns, charms, incantations, blessings, literary-folkloric poems and songs, proverbs, lexical items, historical anecdotes, natural history observations, and miscellaneous lore.

Significant portions of the Gaelic language, culture, and identity that Carmichael collected were brought by immigrant Gaels to Nova Scotia as part of their living Gaelic culture.

In this prayer there is a blending of both pre-Christian and Christian beliefs.

# BIAL-AITHRIS ORAL TRADITION

## SONG

*Òrain* Songs, composed here in Nova Scotia honoured the old tradition, but dealt with subjects in a new environment. Song categories in Gaelic culture include milling, milking, rowing, walking, love, praise of place, and *puirt-à-bial* mouth music. Typical themes for Gaelic songs include love, pride of place, the death of an outstanding person, humour, satire, religious devotion, local characters, drinking, and the chronicling of local and historical events.

*Bàird/Bana-Bhàird a' bhaile* male and female village poets, 'make' songs about local, contemporary events and characters. These songs, when addressed to a local audience, may do one or more of the following:

- tell a story with a moral
- provide social commentary
- reinforce communal values and beliefs
- amuse the audience

*Am bárd* The poet, in the Gaelic sense, can be both chronicler and critic.

During early Gaelic settlement, people lived off the land and sea. Communal co-operation, such as milling, spinning and harvest frolics, lightened heavy work while maintaining local language, culture, and social bonds. Men and women joined together to help their neighbours while they sang songs appropriate to each task. When Gaels gather today, they continue to sing these communal work songs.



*An luadhadh* The milling, is a process of shrinking newly-woven woolen cloth by hand. Gaels turned this shared labour into a social event. They made it more enjoyable by singing which maintained the rhythm of the work, preserved older songs, and encouraged original compositions that encompassed local events, personalities, and humour. Today, milling is done in factories, but *am froilig-luadhaidh* the milling frolic, continues as a social event in Gaelic Nova Scotia.



Courtesy of Steve Rankin Photography

### MUSIC/DANCE

In the 19th and 20th centuries, Gaelic musical traditions flourished throughout Nova Scotia's eastern mainland and in Cape Breton. Musicians usually learned to play at home from friends and relatives. As with other forms of Gaelic cultural expression, instrumental music was often passed down through families. *Ceòl* music, and *dannsadh* dancing, were always practised at home. As time went on, dances were held in schoolhouses and, after the turn of the 20th century, in community halls.

Musical traditions were relatively conservative. Hundreds of traditional *puirt* tunes, were retained in Gaelic communities, and hundreds more were composed.

As many could not read music, most people learned both tunes and musical style by ear. This most likely contributed to the strong influence that Gaelic language had on Gaelic music. The fact that a fiddler or piper usually learned a tune and then 'made it their own' by using self-styled ornamentation likely contributed to the variety of musical styles.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the organ was played to accompany a fiddle player. Eventually the organ gave way to the piano. The guitar also became an

accompanying instrument. Along with *a' chlàrsach mhór* the piano, the guitar accentuated the rhythm, intonation, and ornamentation of Gaelic music played on the fiddle.

The music played at that time included slow airs, marches, and dance music consisting of *srath spéithean* strathspeys, *ruidhleachan* reels (page 80), and *puirt-chruinn* jigs. Often fiddlers added pipe tunes into their repertoires. It was common for the same person to be a *ban-phìobaire/pìobaire* piper, *ban-fhìdhlear/fidhlear* fiddler, *ban-dannsair/dannsair* dancer, and *ban-sheinneadair/seinneadair* singer.

### STORYTELLING

*Sgeulachdan* tales, are elaborate stories that take a long time to tell—up to several hours. They may be clan sagas or stories of international wonder, *Sgeulachdan* often tell of kingdoms, kings, queens, knights, princes, princesses, giants, witches, warriors, and more. Usually, in the reciting of a *sgeulachdan*, a moral comes to light for the listening audience.

In Gaelic Nova Scotia, *naidheachdan* anecdotes, are integral to sessions. *Naidheachdan* often entail irony and a unique Gaelic sense of humour. They often include beliefs in such things as *an dà shealladh* second sight, *na sìthichean* the fairies, and *bòcain* spooks (unseen entities that make inexplicable sounds).

*Storytelling with  
Na Gaisgich Òga  
The Young Heroes.*



## AN NAIDHEACHD AIR FIONN MAC CUMHAIL AGUS AM BRADAN

A-nist 's e Fionntan a bh' ac' air a' bhradan seo 's an t-seann aimsir agus e fear dhe na sior-mhaireannaichean agus rachadh e air ithe agus dh' fhuiricheadh beò e. Ach 's a linn aig Finegas 's e Bradan na Linne Faiche a bh' ac' air, is sin an t-àite far a leudaicheas an abhainn bhàn a-mach air linne mhóir chiùin le bruthaichean uaine a' dol suas gu bog ás an uisge shoilleir dhonn.

Seachd bliadhna is Finegas a' coimhead air a' linne, ach cha bheireadh air a' bhradan agus an d' thàinig Fionn Mac Cumhail a bhith 'na fhear-leanmhainn dhà.

Is an uair sin, thug Finegas gu Fionn e airson bruich, ag iarraidh air nach itheadh e sian dheth. Ach nuair a chunnaic Finegas e a' tighinn leis an iasg, bha fhios aige gun do dh' éirich sian air, a chionn gum b' àbhaist do shùil a' ghille òig a bhith aige ach a-nist bha sùil an t-saoi aige.

Arsa Finegas, "An do dh' ith thu am bradan?"  
"Cha do dh' ith", thuirt Fionn Mac Cumhail.  
"Ach loisg e mi mar a thionndaidh mi e air an rois-iarunn agus chuir mi mo chuid òrdaig 'nam bhial."

Bhuail Finegas a làmh an r' a chéile agus e sàmhach treis bheag. Is an sin thuirt e ris a' ghille a bha r'a thaobh gu h-umhail, "Thoir thusa am bradan is ith e, Fhinn, mac Cumhail, a chionn 's ort-fhéin a thàinig an fhàisnich.

Tog thusa ris, a chionn 's nach urrainn dhomh do theagaisg tuilleadh, agus gum biodh gach buaidh is piseach ort."

## THE STORY OF FIONN MAC CUMHAIL AND THE SALMON

Now this salmon was called Finntan in ancient times and was one of the Immortals, and he might be eaten and yet live. But in the time of Finegas he was called the Salmon of the Pool of Fec, which is the place where the fair river broadens out into a great still pool, with green banks softly sloping upward from the clear brown water.

Seven years was Finegas watching the pool, but not until after Finn had come to be his disciple was the salmon caught.

Then Finegas gave it to Finn to cook, and bade him eat none of it. But when Finegas saw him coming with the fish, he knew that something had happened to the lad, for he had been used to having the eye of a young man but now he had the eye of a sage.

Finegas said, "Have you eaten of the salmon?"  
"No," said Finn, "but it burned me as I turned it upon the spit and I put my thumb in my mouth".

And Finegas struck his hands together and was silent for a while. Then he said to the lad who stood by obediently, "Take the salmon and eat it, Finn, son of Cumhal, for to you the prophecy is come.

And forward now, for I can teach you no more, and blessing and victory be yours."



# CULTURE

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Some creative ways to share Gaelic language, culture, and identity include traditional *rannan* rhymes, *seannfhacail* proverbs, and *tòimhseachain* riddles and/or guessing games.

## TRADITIONAL RHYMES

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GAELIC

### *Rann mu na miaran*

*Seo an té a bhris an sabhal,  
Seo an té a ghoid an t-arbhar,  
Seo an té a sheas ag amharc,  
Seo an té a theich air falbh,  
Is seo an té a dh'innis e,  
a dh'innis e, a dh'innis e!*

*Bho'n leabhran, Aithris is Oideas*

ENGLISH

### **A rhyme about fingers**

This is the one that broke (into) the barn,  
This is the one that stole the grain,  
This is the one that stood watching,  
This is the one that fled,  
This is the one that told about it,  
told about it, told about it!

From the booklet, *Aithris is Oideas*

## PROVERBS

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***A' fear as fhaide a bha beò 'riamh,  
fhuair esan am bàs.***

Every dog has his day (literally meaning, The man who ever the longest lived, he too died).

***Thig là Nollaig.***

He's always late (literally meaning, Christmas day is coming).

***Na sir 's na seachainn an cath.***

Neither seek nor shun the fight.

***Is leth-aon, an caothach agus an gaol.***

Twins are lunacy and love.

***Is ionann, an galar gaoil agus an galar caothaich.***

Alike the complaint of love and the complaint of madness.

***Gunnachan móra gun shrad fùdair.***

Big guns, no spark, i.e. All talk, no action.

## RIDDLES

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GAELIC

### ***Tòimhseachan***

*Tha tòimhseachan agam ort –  
Chan e do cheann,  
Chan e do chas,  
Chan e t-éideadh,  
Chan e t'fhallt,  
Chan e ball a tha 'nad chorp,  
Ach tha e ort,  
Cha tomhais thu e.*

*T'ainm*

ENGLISH

### **A riddle**

I have a riddle for you –  
It isn't your head,  
It isn't your foot,  
It isn't your clothing,  
It isn't your hair,  
It isn't a part of your body,  
It is on you,  
But you won't guess it.

Your name\*

\* *Dé an t-ainm a th'ort? What name is on you?* is a Gaelic way of asking "What's your name?"

# CÉILIDH

A session in *an taigh-céilidh* the visit house, is a gathering of two or more members of the Gaelic community. It begins with polite inquiries as to how everyone's family and relatives are doing, and moves on to everyday news. After these formalities, storytelling begins. Guests are especially fortunate if a *céilidh* visit is attended or hosted by a *sgeulaiche* storyteller, who is well versed in *sgeulachdan* elaborate, full length tales that often take a long time to tell.

General conversation is the basis of socializing at a *céilidh*. Acting as the informal educational vehicle, *seanchas* traditional speech, plays a prominent role fostering the intellectual life of Gaels in Nova Scotia. *Seanchas* guides the discussion of place names, riddles, genealogies, lyrics of songs, and local and Gaelic history.

Singing, music, and dance are the most common Gaelic cultural arts shared through a *céilidh*.



# CUSTOMS

There are many customs observed in Gaelic Nova Scotia. Some are unique to particular communities. The following represent customs associated with two dates in the Gaelic calendar year.

**May 1st** is known as *Là Buidhe Bealltainn* The lucky day of May. It marks the beginning of summer. Traditionally young women collected *dealt dew*, on this day. They believed that washing their faces with the morning dew on May 1st would give them everlasting youth. In some Nova Scotian homes today, Gaels bless their homes, family members, and animals to ensure health and well-being for the year ahead. They also bless their vehicles and the seeds they will soon plant in their gardens.

In earlier Gaelic society *teine na bealltainne* the **beltane fire**, was lit on May 1st. Fires were lit apart from each other and livestock was herded between them. This was both a symbolic and real purification as the smoke from the fires helped to rid animals of parasites, such as lice, that they carried through the winter.

**October 31st** is known as *Oidhche Shamhna* Halloween. On this day, Gaels make a treat of whipped cream and fine oatmeal called *fuarag*. In earlier times, the person who prepared the *fuarag* hid various items within it including *bonn-airgid* a coin, *miaran* a thimble, *putan* a button, and *fàinne* a ring. This was meant to predict the future. If a person got the coin while eating their *fuarag*, they would be wealthy. If they got the thimble, it meant that they would go without wealth. The button indicated that the person would remain single, while the ring predicted marriage.

For Gaels it is important to do things in a *deiseal* clockwise, direction. Many early people also follow the clockwise movement of the sun. As a result, to do things in a *tuathal* counter clockwise, direction is believed to be *mì-shealbhach* unlucky.

### **OIDHCHE CHULLAINN: CLEACHDAIDHEAN NAN GÀIDHEAL**

Air Oidhche Chullainn (Oidhche Challainn is Oidhche na Bliadhna Ùire cuideachd), bidh feadhainn ann an coimhearsnachd nan Gàidheal a' tighinn cruinn aig taigh sònraichte airson an oidhche 'chumail. Na bu tràithe 's an là, ghearrar slatagan beaga. Bidh feadhainn a' gearradh mhiaran-féarnaidh. 'S na seann làthaichean bha e coltach gu robh iad a' cur chamain gu feum.

Nas anmoiche air an oidhche, théid iad a-mach is théid iad mun cuairt air an taigh trì tursan, an rathad deiseil. Fhad 's a tha iad a' dol mun cuairt, bidh iad a' bualadh bhallachan taobh a-muigh an taighe leis na slatagan! 'S e seann chleachdadh a bha seo gus an ruaig a chur air droch spiorad sam bith a bhiodh a' tighinn cruinn mun cuairt air an taigh.

As deaghaidh dhaibh trì tursan a dhèanadh mun cuairt air an taigh, stadaidh iad aig dorust mór an taighe is gabhaidh iad duan Cullainne.

As deaghadh dhaibh duan a ghabhail, leigidh bean no fear an taighe iad a-staigh airson bìdhe agus dibhe.

Seo samhladh do dhuan a dh'fhaodadh feadhainn gabhail aig an dorust:

#### **DUAN CULLAINNE**

'Chullainn seo, 'Challainn seo,  
Buail a' bhuidh' bhoicinn!  
Sgrìob an craiceann às a' bhoicinn!  
Cailleach 's a' chùl  
Is cailleach an aire air an teine,  
'S i 'na coire,  
'S i 'na teine,  
'S i 'na teine dearg!

*Bliadhna Mhath Ùr dhuibh is móran dhiubh!*

### **NEW YEAR'S EVE: CUSTOMS OF THE GAELS**

On New Year's Eve, some in the Gaelic community gather together at a designated house to celebrate the evening. Earlier in the day, they cut short sticks. Some cut alder branches. In the olden days, it seems that they used shinty sticks.

Later on the in night, they go out and walk around the house three times in a clockwise direction. As they are going around, they strike the outside walls of the house with the sticks! This is an old custom intended to drive away any bad spirits that could be gathered around the house.

After they have gone around the house three times, they stop at the main entrance and they recite a New Year's poem.

After they recite the poem, the woman or man of the house lets them in for food and drink.

Here's a sample of a poem that some may recite at the door:

#### **A NEW YEAR'S EVE POEM**

This New Year's, this New Year's,  
Strike the yellow of the goat skin!  
Scrape the skin of the goat skin!  
An old woman in the nook,  
And an old woman tending the fire,  
And her in the cauldron,  
And her in the fire,  
And her in the flaming red fire!

*Happy New Year to you all and many of them!*

# FOOD

These are some traditional Gaelic foods:

- *aran-coirce* oatcakes
- *bonnach* traditional bread
- *maragan geala / dubha* savory white and blood puddings
- *iosbannan* sausages
- *fuarag / stapag* a treat of whipped cream and fine oatmeal made at Halloween

In Gaelic Nova Scotia, when you go on a *céilidh* visit, you will typically be offered a *srùbag* a cup of tea and something to eat with it.



**Srùbag**

# THE SYMBOL OF THE GAELS OF NOVA SCOTIA

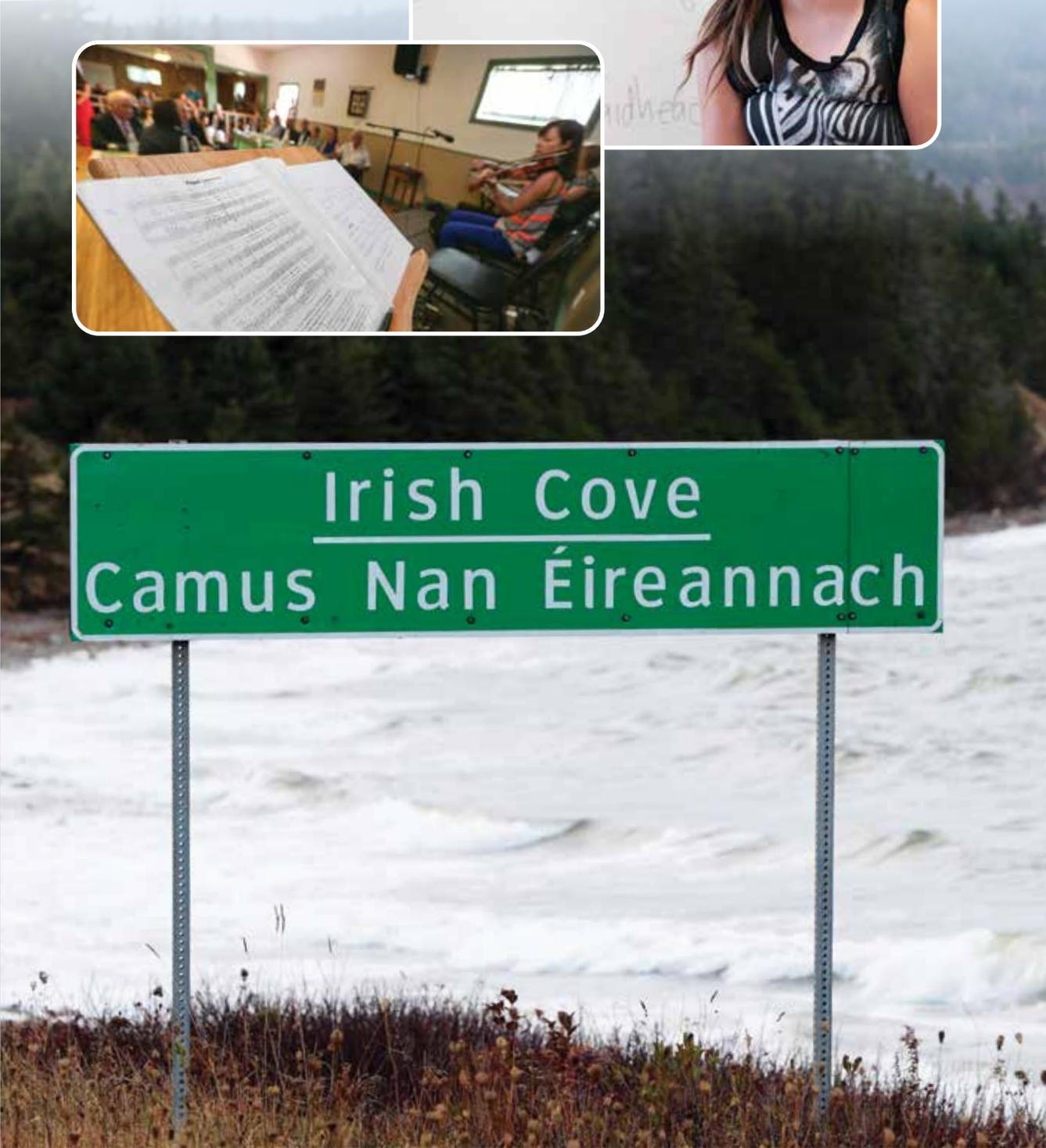
In 2008, *Comhairle na Gàidhlig*, in consultation with the Gaelic Community of Nova Scotia and with support from Gaelic Affairs, developed the Symbol of the Gaels in Nova Scotia. The design is inspired by the ancient tale of *Fionn MacCumhail* Finn MacCool, and *am Bradan Fiosa* the salmon of knowledge. The story of Finn MacCool and the Salmon of Knowledge appears on page 33.

The symbol is that of a salmon in the shape of the letter 'G'. The salmon represents the gifts of knowledge and wisdom in the Gaelic tradition in Nova Scotia, Scotland, Ireland, and on the Isle of Man. The 'G' represents Gaels as a people, and how their unique Gaelic language informs their culture, and identity. The ripples flowing out from the salmon reflect the manifestation of these through song, story, music, dance, foodways, lineage, customs, beliefs, and hereditary connections to place.





Irish Cove  
Camus Nan Éireannach





SECTION 3

# LANGUAGE

**Gaelic language-based culture**

**Gaelic Phrases**

**Saying 'Yes' and 'No' in Gaelic**

**How do you pronounce Gaelic?**

# LANGUAGE-BASED CULTURE

Nova Scotia Gaels are a distinct group who depend on their language to express their cultural markers, that is, those things that assert their ethnicity as a people.

Through the Gaelic language, the oral culture and literature of Gaels, comes to life. The Gaelic language is, therefore, the primary tool for Gaelic activities, events, and life. It is the delivery system for the people's cultural expression—the outward manifestation of their ethnicity.

Identity for Nova Scotian Gaels is formed through language. The Gaelic language shows fellow Nova Scotians how Gaels express themselves through their culture, and how Gaels see and define the world around them.

With identity being determined by language-based cultural expression, people from many different ethnic origins have integrated into Gaelic society and become Gaels over the centuries. The term Gael, in this context, is broadly inclusive—open to any and all who wish to participate.

## CONNECTIONS

### SIGNS OF GAELIC IN NOVA SCOTIA

Since 2007, Gaelic names have been appearing on boundary signs in those Nova Scotian communities that have Gaelic heritage. To date almost 300 boundary signs have been erected in Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough, Inverness, Victoria, Richmond, and Cape Breton counties.

*The Gaels and Their Place Names in Nova Scotia* is a map available online.



## MORE INFO

### GAELIC PHRASES

In Nova Scotia, some Gaelic speakers greet one another with: ***Ciamar a tha sibh?*** or ***Ciamar a tha thu?***, which means **How are you?** in both the plural formal and singular informal forms respectively.

***Tha mi gu math***, which means **I am well**, is a typical response.

The responder might then follow up with ***Ciamar a tha thu fhéin?*** or ***Ciamar a tha sib' fhéin?***, which means **How are you, yourself?** in both the plural formal and singular informal forms respectively.

Gaels also greet each other with ***Dia dhut*** (informal) or ***Dia dhuibh*** (formal), the literal translation of which is **God to you**. It can also be a way of expressing the greeting, 'Good day'. The expression ***Là math dhut*** or ***Là math dhuibh*** **Good day to you**, is used as well.

Another greeting is ***Beannachd Dhia dhut*** (informal) or ***Beannachd Dhia dhuibh*** (formal), the literal translation of which is **God's blessing to you**.

Gaels also greet each other according to the time of day:

- ***Madainn mhath dhut/dhuibh*** means **Good morning to you**
- ***Feasgar math dhut/dhuibh*** means **Good afternoon/evening to you**
- ***Oidhche mhath leat/leibh*** means **Goodnight to you**

To say **goodbye**, Gaels literally leave a blessing with someone: ***Beannachd leat/leibh*** **A blessing with you**.

### SAYING 'YES' AND 'NO' IN GAELIC

Gaelic is a verb-based language. The verb, in its positive or negative form in the tense being used, becomes the response to the question being asked. Thus, there is no single word for either 'yes' or 'no'. See the examples below:

***A' bheil thu sgith?*** **Are you tired?**, is answered with either ***Tha*** **I am**, or ***Chan eil*** **I am not**.

***Am faca tu i?*** **Did you see her?**, is answered with either ***Chunnaic*** **I saw her**, or ***Chan fhaca*** **I didn't see her**.

***An seinn thu a-nochd?*** **Will you sing tonight?**, is answered with either, ***Seinnidh*** **I will sing**, or ***Cha sheinn*** **I will not sing**.

### HOW DO YOU PRONOUNCE THE WORD 'GAELIC'?

In Nova Scotia, 'Gae-lick' is the most commonly heard way to say the word in English.

Some Nova Scotians and almost all Scots refer to the language as 'Gah-lick'.

### Ciamar a tha sibh?

How are you? (speaking to a group)

### Ciamar a tha thu?

How are you? (speaking to one person)

### Tha mi gu math.

I'm well.

### Dia dhut or Dia dhuibh.

God to you. (greeting)

### Là math dhut or Là math dhuibh.

Good day to you.

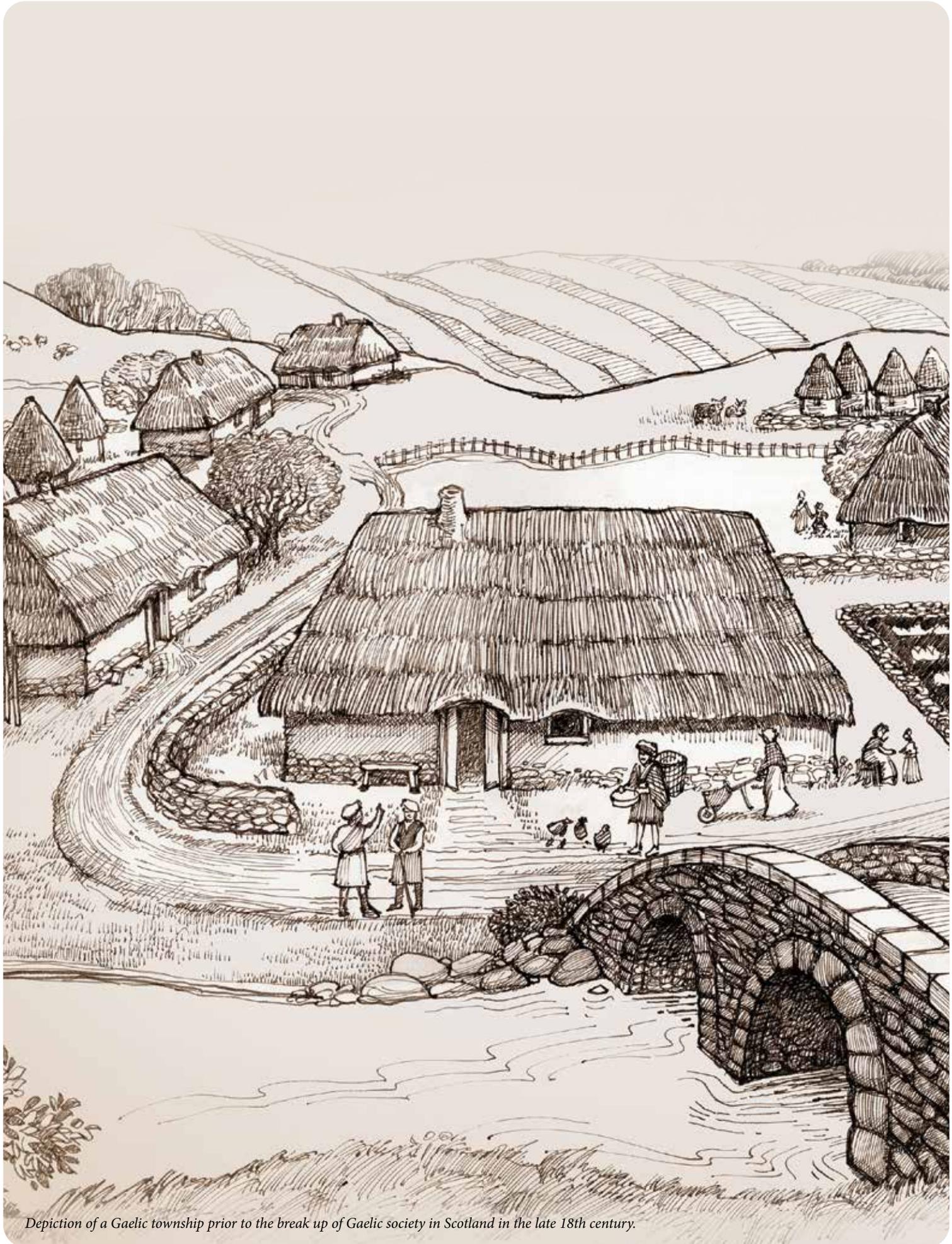
### Beannachd leat or Beannachd leibh.

Good bye.



#### CONNECTIONS

<https://highlandvillage.novascotia.ca/gaelic-nova-scotia/sample-gaelic-phrases>



*Depiction of a Gaelic township prior to the break up of Gaelic society in Scotland in the late 18th century.*



SECTION 4

# **HISTORY**

**Gaelic History Before Nova Scotia**

**Gaelic Society**

**Gaels: Expansion, Upheaval and Evictions**

**Traditional Clothing**

**Connection to Nature**

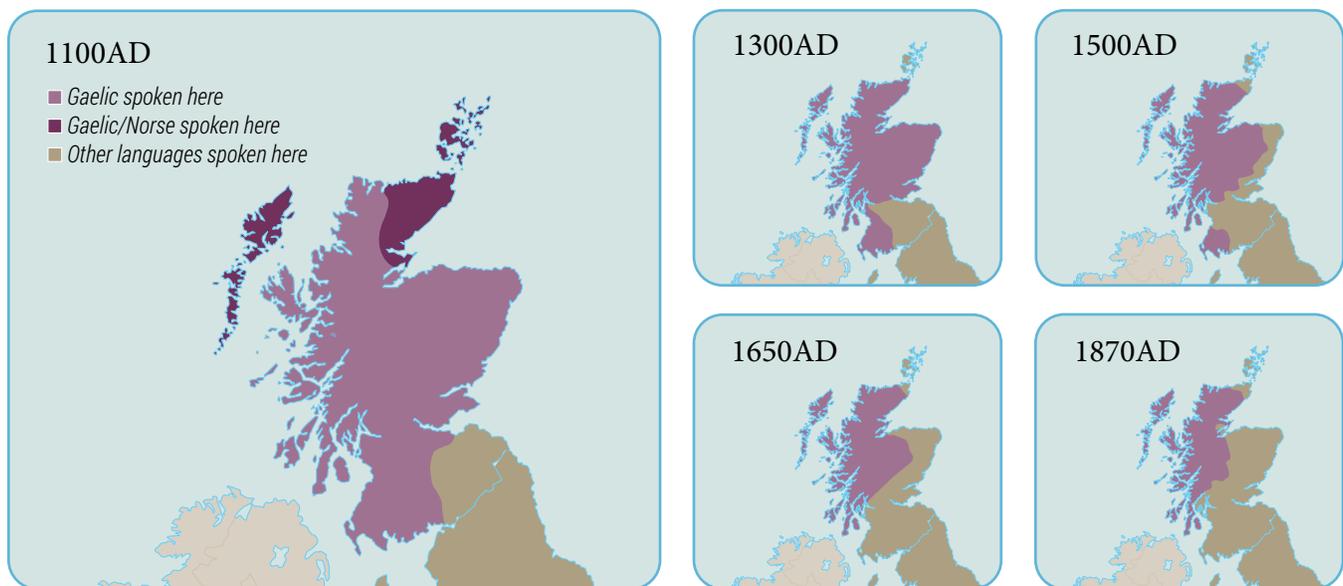
**Settlement Maps**

**Gaelic Timeline in Nova Scotia**

# Gaelic History Before Nova Scotia

Gaelic recorded history goes back to at least the 5th or 6th centuries AD. During and following the Norse period (793–1266 AD)\*, Gaelic civilizations in Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man were expanding and developing. By the 12th century, they came into contact with the expansionist policies of their powerful neighbour, England.

## Gaelic Speaking Areas of Scotland



In the latter 12th century, as the kings of Scotland were becoming increasingly Anglicized, *Somhairle MacGilleBhrìghde Somerled*, a formidable military and political leader of the Gaels in the west of Scotland, rose to prominence. Somerled, who held the Gaelic title *Rí Innse Gall King of the Hebrides*, created a stable system of government that lasted for centuries. Established in 1156 AD, *Rìoghachd nan Eilean, The Kingdom of the Isles* as it was known to Gaels, and *Tighearnas nan Eilean The Lordship of the Isles*, as it was referred to by authorities in the court and parliament of Scotland, fostered medicine, law, and the arts, including poetry, song, music, storytelling, and stone carving. Somerled united *Gàidheil* Gaels and *Lochlannaich* Norse in *Na h-Eileanan an Iar* The Western Isles, and established a dynasty that would flourish for over three centuries.

While the Scots language, a northern form of English, was expanding in the southern parts of mainland Scotland, *Tighearnas nan Eilean* was asserting its power and influence in the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland. While at times this Gaelic-speaking kingdom served the kings of Scotland and England, *Tighearnas nan Eilean* remained functionally independent.

As it possessed political as well as military power, *Tighearnas nan Eilean* was seen as a threat to the central authority of the now anglicized Scottish Kings. The Scottish Parliament abolished *Tighearnas nan Eilean* in 1493.

Following the loss of *Tighearnas nan Eilean*, Gaelic society became increasingly engulfed in the social, economic and political spheres of Lowland Scotland and British and Continental European powers who were struggling for colonies and conquest around the world.

*Tighearnas nan Eilean*'s legacy of fostering Gaelic language and culture within its own geographic jurisdiction is evident amongst the descendants of Gaels who arrived as settlers in Nova Scotia as early as the late 18th century.



★ THE NORSE PERIOD— From their northern homelands, Norse colonizers, mainly speaking the Old Norse language, raided, traded with, and colonized the western islands and mainland of the Kingdom of *Alba* during the late 8th to late 11th centuries AD. This period of Nordic military, mercantile, and demographic expansion is an important period in the early medieval history of *Alba*. Norse colonizers married into Gaelic society, integrating and eventually adopting Gaelic language and cultural norms. The legacy of the Norse is found in hundreds of Gaelicized place names, Gaelic surnames such as MacLeod, MacAulay and MacAskill, and Gaelic language terms for shipping, currency, and barter.



Example of 15th century stonecarving from *Tighearnas nan Eilean* period.

# GAELIC SOCIETY

The de-Gaelicization\* and Normanization\* of the kingdom of *Alba Scotland*, began during the reign of Malcolm III (1058-93 AD). In response, powerful Gaelic *Mormaor* Earls, in southern Scotland rose up in revolt in the 1100s and 1200s AD. These revolts ended in eventual defeat. Following this, a new economic system called feudalism was introduced as well as the replacement of Gaelic speaking clerics in the medieval church with English speaking ones. Norman French and Scots (a northern form of English) languages were also introduced. All of these changes ushered in the ultimate decline and displacement of Gaelic language and culture in most areas of southern Scotland. In *A' Ghàidhealtachd* the Gaelic language and cultural region—later to become synonymous with the geographic area referred to as *Na Garbh-Chriochan* The Highlands and Islands of Scotland—a local governing structure known as the clan system emerged. This system preserved social and economic practices based in earlier Gaelic society.

*Fine* and *cinneadh* are Gaelic terms for clan. The English word clan comes from the Gaelic word *clann* children and signifies a kinship group among Gaels. Clans hold a sense of shared identity and common ancestry for members.

Historically *cinnidhean* clans, had their own *ceann-cinnidh* clan chief, and generally identified with a specific geographic area that included an early form of communal land use. Gaels in the clan system paid a form of rent to the chief. In turn, the chief ensured the well being, patronage and protection of clan members.

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\* de-Gaelicization is the act of undoing the characteristics of the Gaels as an ethno-linguistic group. In this context, de-Gaelicization refers to the displacement of the Gaelic language and any other Gaelic cultural features such as social norms, governing structures, customs, music, and sport.

\*\* Normanization refers to the introduction of Norman French in the court of the Scottish kings, the entrenchment of feudalism, the establishment of burghs (towns) throughout southern Scotland, and primogeniture—the passing of estates from father to first-born son, a system used by powerful elites.

## MORE INFO

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### WOMEN IN EARLY GAELIC SOCIETY

When a woman married, her family contributed a **tochair dowry**. A woman was entitled to recover this wealth if her marriage ended in divorce.

The wife's duties in a household were to maintain domestic affairs properly, and to raise children who would benefit the entire family in coming years. A number of proverbs relate to the importance of the role of the wife in a family, such as **Is fhèarr bean ghlic na crann is fearann Better a wise wife than a plough or land.**

Women were seen as nurturing and giving strength to children. The milk received at birth was credited for the great strength or endurance of a warrior.

Formal education was limited to the clan elite. This sometimes included women. Samples of poetry made by women in Classical Gaelic have survived from medieval Gaelic society.

Women were involved in the labour-intensive, important activity of waulking\* woolen cloth. Some of the songs composed during this work had social or political messages for the leading men in the community. These often influenced major decisions made by the chief on behalf of the clan.

In a warrior age, women were brave and strong. Although they mourned their family members killed in battle, they did not seem to question the warrior society in which they lived. Though they rarely took part in warfare, they believed in fighting and dying honourably. They could shame a timid chief or leading man for not wanting to go to battle.

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\*waulking is a way to finish woven woolen to make it wind and water resistant and to give it tension.

### WOMEN IN EARLY GAELIC NOVA SCOTIA

Gaelic women were resilient and endured many hardships. They cared for large families, and nurtured family members, including elders and others in the extended kinship group. They were responsible for the household work as well as the livestock. Some of many tasks that women undertook included baking and preparing fresh food every day and knitting, sewing, and mending garments for family members. Some women also worked outside the home to provide for their families, just as their husbands did. They did this in addition to their domestic work.

Some Gaelic women were **bana-bhàird bardsesses**, that is, female poets and song composers. Others worked their whole lives in education or religion, sharing their Gaelic language and culture where possible.



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### FINE CLAN STRUCTURE

#### **Ceann-Cinnidh** Chief

**Aos-dàna Learned Class** — included the **filidh highest ranking poet**, **bàrd poet** and artisans such as musicians, doctors, lawyers, stonemasons, and chroniclers of clan history

#### **Buannachan** Fighting Men

**Fear-Taic Tacksman** — literally 'supporting man', more commonly called **Fear-baile The Rent Collector**. This person was also responsible for communications within the clan.

**Tuath Common People** — including the farmers, fishers, shepherds, and brewers.

# GAELS: EXPANSION, UPHEAVAL AND EVICTIONS

Gaels have had a long presence on the west coast of Scotland. Gaelic-speaking inhabitants of this area formed strong social and political ties to the north of Ireland. In the late 5th century AD, Irish Gaels relocated their kingdom of *Dàl Riata* from Ulster in Ireland to *Earra-Ghàidheal* Argyll, which means ‘the coastland of the Gael’. By the 11th century AD, they had expanded their territory and influence throughout *Alba* Scotland.

From 1054 to 1096 AD, under *Ceann Mór* Great Leader (King Malcolm III) the Gaelic language spoken in the kingdom of *Alba* began to lose its status. For a period of time, the Norman French language became the status language at court and among the aristocracy. Due to political and social upheaval, Gaelic language and ways were displaced in southern Scotland with inhabitants taking on the Anglian (English) speech of the burghs (towns). This speech became the basis of a language, eventually referred to as Scots, and was spoken in southern Scotland. By the later middle ages, Gaelic had retreated to the geographic region of *Na Garbh-Chrìochan* **The Highlands and Islands**, which maintained some degree of independence within the Scottish state.

Between 1494 and 1698, the Scottish Parliament passed legislation to establish English language as first among all ranks of society in Scotland. In 1609-10 and 1616, *Reachdan Ì* **The Statutes of Iona** outlawed the Gaels’ intellectual orders (*Aos-dàna* **the learned class** included *filidhean* **the highest-ranking poets**). External political, military and cultural forces dramatically impacted the semi-autonomous governing structures and marked the beginning of the breakdown of Gaelic society. Events that contributed to this breakdown included

- the suppression of *Tighearnas nan Eilean* **The Lordship of the Isles** in 1493
- the advent of the Reformation in 1560
- the final failure of the Jacobite cause in 1746 (page 63)
- the violent pacification of the Highlands
- the dismantling of the clan system

## MORE INFO

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During the ensuing *Fuadach nan Gàidheal* **The Highland Clearances** (pages 63), which took place between 1763 and 1881, an estimated 250,000 Gaels were evicted from their ancestral lands. These lands were then turned into massive sheep farms. During this period, huge numbers of dispossessed Gaels left to settle in British North America (Canada and the United States), The West Indies, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.

### EARLY GAELIC SOCIETY AND CLAN SYSTEM

In the 12th century, at the height of its influence, Gaelic was spoken in most parts of Scotland, and even south of the English border. The influence of the English language expanded during the reign of King David I of Scotland, son of Malcolm **Ceann Mór**.

David set up burghs (towns) and military outposts in many parts of southern and eastern Scotland after becoming king in 1124 AD. He brought people from the north of England and the Low Countries of Europe (now Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands) to the burghs and introduced a new social order—feudalism. Feudalism was a system in which the nobility held lands from the Crown in exchange for military service. Vassals were in turn tenants of the nobles, while the peasants, also called villeins or serfs, were obliged to live on their lord's land and give him homage, labour, and a share of the produce in exchange for military protection. The spread of the English language accompanied this new social order.

After King David's reign, the Scots language, a form of Northern English, slowly became the language of the king and court as well as the southern and eastern regions of Scotland.

The people of **Na Garbh-Chriochan The Highlands and Islands**, held on to their identity and to their ancestral language and culture—Gaelic. By the late Middle Ages, **coimhearsnachdan nan Gàidheal Gaelic communities**, were governed by the **fine the elite members of a clan grouping**, a social structure that lasted throughout Gaelic-speaking Scotland until the 18th century.

Gaelic society was complex. Gaels shared resources communally. They supported their chief through their loyalty and received a guarantee of sustenance and security in return. Gaels engaged in the processes that governed the **clann the broader kinship group, ie clan** and fostered a rich oral tradition.

### THE HIGHLAND CLEARANCES AND EMIGRATION

For many centuries Gaels had been under intense external political and cultural pressure. Following the last Jacobite rising (page 62) in 1746 AD, Gaelic society, embodied by the clan system, was broken up. The central government set up a

new series of repressive measures designed to undermine the Gaels' unique social organization and cultural solidarity.

A massive reorganization of the local economy began. Rents for clanspeople increased. Lands were confiscated. Long-established roles, customs, rights, and obligations inherent to Gaelic society had to be abandoned.

The value of land in Gaelic society was based in its ability to support a large, robust community. In this new socio-economic regime, land became a commodity designed to provide maximum profit for the two groups at the very top of the local social structure:

- the land-holding and increasingly Anglicized **cinn-chinnidhean clan chiefs** who were often not part of the immediate clan group nor intimately connected to its ancestral lands
- the English speaking social and economic elite from the Scottish Lowlands and England

Rents were increased to more than the productive value of the land. People were cleared off the best lands in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland so the land could be turned into large farming operations that would earn more money.

Part of the logic behind clearing Gaels from their ancestral lands was to create a large landless population with limited options for making a living. These Gaels could then be compelled to provide cheap labour for various economic schemes on other parts of the landlords' estates.

As a result, most landlords actively opposed emigration and, in so doing, had the full support of their government who feared depopulation throughout the Highlands and islands of Scotland. This was particularly true during the first half-century of the Highland Clearances in the regions from which Nova Scotian settlers emigrated.

As a result, it took considerable determination to leave for the British colonies. It is hardly surprising, then, to find that early Gaelic poetic accounts of the migration process, as well as other sources, are filled with a sense of defiance, independence, and hope for freedom and a better life.

Most Gaels who came to Nova Scotia before 1815, did so voluntarily. Those who came later were forced to due to poor economic circumstances.

# TRADITIONAL CLOTHING

## THE GREAT KILT

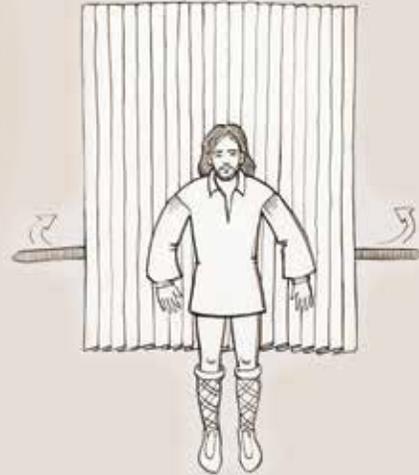
The English word ‘tartan’ may be derived from the French *tartarin* meaning ‘tartar cloth’. It has also been suggested that tartan may be derived from modern Scottish Gaelic *tarsainn across*. *Breacan* is the traditional word in Gaelic for **tartan pattern**. Today tartan usually refers to patterns in specific colours, though originally a tartan did not have to be made up of any pre-designated pattern at all. Tartan patterns were created from dyes made from plants in a given Gaelic community.

The *breacan an fhéilidh* belted plaid, or *am féileadh mór* the great plaid, is likely to have evolved over the course of the 16th century from the earlier *brat* woolen cloak (also known as a plaid), which was worn over a tunic. This earlier *brat* may have been plain in colour, or in various checkered or tartan designs, depending on the wealth of the wearer.

Over the course of the 16th century, with the increasing availability of wool, *am féileadh* the part of the dress of the Gael from the waist to the knee, had grown to such a size that it began to be gathered up and belted. This belted plaid was originally a length of thick woolen cloth made from two loom widths sewn together for a total width of 54 to 60 inches (137.2 to 152.4 cm), and a length of up to 7 yards (6.4 m). This garment, also known as the great kilt, was gathered up into pleats by hand and secured by a wide belt. The upper half could be worn as a cloak draped over the left shoulder, hung down over the belt and gathered up at the front, or brought up over the shoulders or head for protection against weather. It could also serve as a kind of camping blanket. The great kilt was generally worn only when leaving the homestead. Under it, Gaels wore a *léine* a long-sleeved garment that extended to the thigh.

## MORE INFO

Depiction of a Gaelic *buannach* fighting man dressed in *am féileadh mòr* the great plaid.



### THE TARTAN: CULTURAL ORIGINS, PROHIBITION, REINTRODUCTION, AND APPROPRIATION

In the aftermath of the last Jacobite Rising in 1746 (page 62) and the subsequent institution of the Dress Act, civilian men were prohibited from wearing the tartan:

*That from and after the first day of August, One thousand, seven hundred and forty-six, no man or boy within that part of Britain called Scotland, other than such as shall be employed as Officers and Soldiers in His Majesty's Forces, shall, on any pretext whatever, wear or put on the clothes commonly called Highland clothes (that is to say) the Plaid, Philabeg, or little Kilt, Trowse, Shoulder-belts, or any part whatever of what peculiarly belongs to the Highland Garb; and that no tartan or party-coloured plaid of stuff shall be used for Great Coats or upper coats, and if any such person shall presume after the said first day of August, to wear or put on the aforesaid garment or any part of them, every such person so offending ... For the first offence, shall be liable to be imprisoned for 6 months, and on the second offence, to be transported to any of His Majesty's plantations beyond the seas, there to remain for the space of seven years.*

*(Abolition and Proscription of the Highland Dress 19 George II, Chap. 39, Sec. 17, 1746)*

In 1782, the Act Proscribing the Wearing of Highland Dress was repealed.

While the Dress Act was in force, only Gaels who joined the British army were able to wear tartan without fear of prosecution.

Several factors led to the end of the wearing of the tartan:

- the Dress Act
- the clearances of an estimated 250,000 Gaels from their ancestral lands in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland from the 1760s to the late 1800s
- the loss of economic means to obtain the resources to produce tartan

Tartan became popularized among Scottish people more widely in the early 19th century through romantic writings about Highland Scottish life. When King George IV of the United Kingdom visited Edinburgh, Scotland in 1822, he began what is referred to as a tartan craze.

From that time on tartan has become a national phenomenon in Scotland and internationally.

Today, there are different tartan patterns for those whose surnames are connected to a specific clan group. This is a recent invention. Original tartan patterns varied according to the districts in which they were made. Those who prepared the cloth in earlier Gaelic society used mostly plant-based dyes when creating tartan patterns. Most patterns were brown, yellow, green, and grey. The colours depended on the plants that were available in a specific area. Red and blue could only be made with imported dyes.

The word plaid, also used to mean 'tartan', comes from the Gaelic **plaidè blanket**. Men in Gaelic society wore a large bolt of cloth around their shoulders and waist, which could be taken off and used as a blanket.

Though the tartan was created by the Gaels in Scotland, it is seen today as a Scottish cultural product. While it is worn around the world by people of Gaelic and non-Gaelic heritage, its origins are rooted in early Gaelic society.

# CONNECTION TO NATURE

The Gaels have traditions that go back to the prehistoric period, demonstrating their strong connection to the local environment. An example of this is found in their alphabet. *Aibidil na Gàidhlig* the Gaelic alphabet, has 18 letters. Each letter is traditionally associated with *craobh* a tree, or *preas* a bush.

This tree alphabet referred to as *Ogham* was used by early Gaels. These letters have been found carved in stone around the Irish Sea from the 5th century AD. Scholars believe that the *Ogham* alphabet predates these carvings.

This *Ogham* alphabet was not organized in the same order as the modern day Gaelic alphabet. Instead of the way the Latin alphabet is organized (ABCD, etc.), this earlier alphabet organized letters in groups based on their construction and whether they were consonants or vowels.

## OGHAM

Strokes on right side  
of pendicular strokes

┆ B - *beith* (birch)  
 𐌀 L - *luis* (rowan)  
 𐌁 F - *fearn* (alder)  
 𐌂 S - *saille* (willow)  
 𐌃 N - *nuin* (ash)

Strokes on left side  
of pendicular strokes

┆ H - *úath* (hawthorn)  
 𐌄 D - *duir* (oak)  
 𐌅 T - *tinne* (holly)  
 𐌆 C - *coll* (hazel)  
 𐌇 Q \*

Strokes on angle across  
pendicular strokes

┆ M - *muin* (vine)  
 𐌈 G - *gort* (ivy)  
 𐌉 NG \*  
 𐌊 Z \*  
 𐌋 R - *ruis* (elder)  
 𐌌 P - *peith* (downy birch)

Strokes straight across  
pendicular strokes (vowels)

┆ A - *ailm* (elm)  
 𐌍 O - *onn* (gorse)  
 𐌎 U - *úr* (heather)  
 𐌏 E - *edad* (Aspen)  
 𐌐 I - *idad* (Yew)

\* These letters do not appear in the modern Gaelic alphabet.

# MORE INFO



# ONLINE RESOURCES

## Gaelic Nova Scotia Resources

***Oifis Iomairtean na Gàidhlig*** The Office of Gaelic Affairs

[www.gov.ns.ca/oga](http://www.gov.ns.ca/oga)

<https://www.facebook.com/gaelicaffairs/>

***Comhairle na Gàidhlig*** The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia

[Gaelic.ca](http://Gaelic.ca)

***Am Peatan*** Beaton Institute

<http://www.cbu.ca/beaton/>

<https://www.facebook.com/thebeatoninstitute/>

***Am Bràighe***

<https://stfx.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/AmBraighe>

***Cainnt Mo Mhàthar*** My Mother's Speech

<http://www.cainntmomhathar.com/>

***Sruth nan Gàidheal*** Gael Stream

<https://stfx.cairnrepo.org/islandora/object/stfx%3Agaelstream>

***Commun Féis an Eilein*** Christmas Island Festival

[www.feisaneilein.ca](http://www.feisaneilein.ca)

<https://www.facebook.com/events/862047610837589/>

***Baile nan Gàidheal*** The Highland Village Museum

<http://museum.gov.ns.ca/hv>

<https://www.facebook.com/highlandvillagemuseum/>

***Colaisde na Gàidhlig*** The Gaelic College

[www.gaeliccollege.edu](http://www.gaeliccollege.edu)

[https://www.facebook.com/GaelicCollege/?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/GaelicCollege/?ref=br_rs)

***Sgoil Ghàidhlig an Àrd-Bhaile*** Halifax Gaelic Society

[www.halifaxgaelic.ca](http://www.halifaxgaelic.ca)

<https://www.facebook.com/sgoilghaidhlig/>

***Suas Leis a' Ghàidhlig*** Up With Gaelic

<https://www.facebook.com/upwithgaelic/>

***Ionad-Mineachaidh a' Chiùil*** Celtic Music Interpretive Centre

<http://www.celticmusiccentre.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/celticmusiccentre/>

***An Roinn Cheiltis, Oilthaigh an Naoimh Fransaidh*** Xavier Celtic Studies, StFX University

<https://www.stfx.ca/academics/arts/celtic-studies>

<https://www.facebook.com/CelticStudiesStFX/>

***Oilthaigh Cheap Breatainn*** Cape Breton University

<https://www.cbu.ca/academic-programs/program/gaelic/>

<https://www.facebook.com/LanguageInLyrics/>

***Féis nan Dathan*** Celtic Colours

<https://celtic-colours.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/celticcolours/>

***Oilthaigh na Ban-Naoimh Moire*** Saint Mary's University

<https://smu.ca/academics/departments/irish-studies.html>

The Virtual Gael

<https://gaelic.co/>

[androchaid.ca](http://androchaid.ca) (*An Drochaid Eadarainn*)

[halifaxpubliclibraries.ca](http://halifaxpubliclibraries.ca) (Halifax Public Libraries)

#### GAELIC SCOTLAND RESOURCES

[parant.org.uk/](http://parant.org.uk/) (*Comann nam Pàrant*)

[bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/parents/](http://bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/parents/) (BBC, Alba, *Foghlam*, Parents & Teachers)

[bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/parantan/](http://bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/parantan/) BBC, Alba, *Foghlam*, Pàrantan & Tidsearan)

[bbc.co.uk/scotland/learning/bitesize/higher/gaidhlig/](http://bbc.co.uk/scotland/learning/bitesize/higher/gaidhlig/) (BBC, Bitesize, *Àrd Ìre Gàidhlig*)

[bbc.co.uk/alba/](http://bbc.co.uk/alba/) (BBC, *Fàilte gu BBC ALBA*)

[dasg.ac.uk/en](http://dasg.ac.uk/en) (Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic)

[facebook.com/DasgGlaschu/](https://facebook.com/DasgGlaschu/) (Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic Facebook page)

[gaelicworld.co.uk/](http://gaelicworld.co.uk/) (Gaelicworld.co.uk)

[ltscotland.org.uk/gaidhlig/](http://ltscotland.org.uk/gaidhlig/) (LT Scotland.org.uk)

[storlann.co.uk/](http://storlann.co.uk/) (*Stòrlann, Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig*)

[gaelicresources.co.uk/](http://gaelicresources.co.uk/) (Gaelic Resource Database)

[bargainbooks4kids.com/](http://bargainbooks4kids.com/) (Tempe, AZ Daycare & Preschool: Bargainbooks4kids, includes a Gaelic Section)

[anseotal.org.uk/](http://anseotal.org.uk/) (*anseotal, Stòr-data Briathrachais Gàidhlig*)

[bbc.co.uk/scotland/alba/clann/nadaoinebeaga/](http://bbc.co.uk/scotland/alba/clann/nadaoinebeaga/) (*Na Daoine Beaga*)

[bbc.co.uk/scotland/alba/radio/rapal/](http://bbc.co.uk/scotland/alba/radio/rapal/) (BBC, *Radio nan Gàidheal, Rapal*)

# Gaelic Names

These are Gaelic surnames that may be found in Nova Scotia. They are listed in their masculine and feminine forms along with their English versions.

Gaelic Masculine Form	Gaelic Feminine Form	English Version
Gill'Anndrais	Ghill'Anndrais	Anderson
Peatan	Pheatan	Beaton
Boidhdeach or Bóid	Bhoidhdeach or Bhóid	Boyd
Canonach or Bochanan	Chanonach or Bhochanan	Buchanan
Camshron	Chamshron	Cameron
Caimbeul	Chaimbeul	Campbell
Siosal or Siosalach	Shiosal or Shiosalach	Chisholm
MacFhearghais or Fearghastan	NicFhearghais or Fhearghastan	Ferguson
Friseal or Frisealach	Fhriseal or Fhrisealach	Fraser
MacGhill'Íosa	NicGhill'Íosa	Gillis / Gillies
Gòrdan or Gòrdanach	Ghòrdan or Ghòrdanach	Gordon
Greumach	Ghreumach	Graham
Granndach	Ghranndach	Grant
MacShimidh	NicShimidh	Jamieson
Ceannadeach or MacUaraig	Cheannadeach or NicUaraig	Kennedy
MacLaomainn	NicLaomainn	Lamond
MacDhunLéibhe	NicDhunLéibhe	Livingstone
MacEamoinn	NicEamoinn	MacAdam
MacArtair	NicArtair	MacArthur
MacAsgaill	NicAsgaill	MacAskill
MacAmhlaidh	NicAmhlaidh	MacAulay
MacCormaig	NicCormaig	MacCormick
MacCullach	NicCullach	MacCulloch
MacDhiarmaid	NicDhiarmaid	MacDermid
MacDhòmhnuill or Dòmhnallach	NicDhòmhnuill or Dhòmhnallach	MacDonald
MacDhùghaill or Dùghallach	NicDhùghaill or Dhùghallach	MacDougall

Gaelic Masculine Version	Gaelic Feminine Version	English Version
MacDhòmhnuill	NicDhòmhnuill	MacDonell
MacEachuinn	NicEachuinn	MacEachen
MacEachuirne	NicEachuirne	MacEachern
MacEòghainn	NicEòghainn	MacEwen
MacPhàrlain	NicPhàrlain	MacFarlane
MacGilleBhràth	NicGilleBhràth	MacGillivray
MacGhriogair	NicGhriogair	MacGregor
MacGuaire	NicGuaire	MacGuire
MacIain	NicIain	MacIain
MacAonghais	NicAonghais	MacInnis / MacInnes
Mac an Tòisich	Nic an Tòisich	MacIntosh
Mac an t-Saoir	Nic an t-Saoir	Macintyre
MacIosaig	NicIosaig	MacIsaac
MacIomhair	NicIomhair	MacIver
MacAoidh	NicAoidh	MacKay
MacCoinnich	NicCoinnich	MacKenzie
MacPhilip	NicPhilip	MacKillop
MacFhionghuin	NicFhionghuin	MacKinnon
MacLachlainn	NicLachlainn	MacLachlan
MacIomhair	NicIomhair	MacIver
MacAoidh	NicAoidh	MacKay
MacGilleathain	NicGilleathain	MacLean / MacLaine
MacLabhuinn	NicLabhuinn	MacLaren
MacGill'Fhaolain	NicGill'Fhaolain	MacLellan
MacGill'innein	NicGill'innein	MacLennan
MacLeòid	NicLeòid	MacLeod
MacMhaighstir	NicMhaighstir	MacMaster
MacMhaolain	NicMhaolain	MacMillan
MacGillemhaoil	NicGillemhaoil	MacMullin
Mac an Aba	Nic an Aba	MacNab

## APPENDIX II

<b>Gaelic MASCULINE FORM</b>	<b>Gaelic FEMININE FORM</b>	<b>ENGLISH VERSION</b>
MacGhill'Eathain	NicGhill'Eathain	<i>MacLean / MacLaine</i>
MacNill	NicNill	<i>MacNeil / MacNeill</i>
MacPhàil	NicPhàil	<i>MacPhail</i>
Mac a' Phi	Nic a' Phi	<i>MacPhee</i>
Mac A' Phearsain	Nic A' Phearsain	<i>MacPherson</i>
MacGuaire	NicGuaire	<i>MacQuarrie</i>
MacCuithein	NicCuithein	<i>MacQueen</i>
MacRàth	NicRàth	<i>MacRae</i>
MacSuain	NicSuain	<i>MacSween</i>
MacBhiocair	NicBhiocair	<i>MacVicar</i>
MacMhathain	NicMhathain	<i>Matheson</i>
MacGumaraid	NicGumaraid	<i>Montgomery</i>
MacMhoirein, MacGilleMhoire or Moireasdan	NicMhoirein, NicGilleMhoire or Mhoireasdan	<i>Morrison</i>
Rothach	Rothach	<i>Munro</i>
Moireach	Mhoireach	<i>Murray</i>
MacNeacail	NicNeacail	<i>Nicholson</i>
MacFhraing	NicFhraing	<i>Rankin</i>
MacDhonnchaidh	NicDhonnchaidh	<i>Robertson</i>
Rosach	Rosach	<i>Ross</i>
MacGilleSheathanaich or Seathach	NicGilleSheathanaich or Sheathach	<i>Shaw</i>
Mac na Ceàrda or Sincleireach	Nic na Ceàrda or Shincleireach	<i>Sinclair</i>
Mac a' Ghobhainn	Nic a' Ghobhainn	<i>Smith</i>
Stiolach	Stiolach	<i>Steele</i>
Stiùbhart or Stiùbhartach	Stiùbhart	<i>Stewart / Stuart</i>
Suthurlanach	Shuthurlanach	<i>Sutherland</i>
Urchardan	Urchardan	<i>Urquhart</i>
Mac an Fhùcadair	Nic an Fhùcadair	<i>Walker</i>
MacBhatair	NicBhatair	<i>Watson</i>

These are some Gaelic first names that may be found in Nova Scotia along with their English versions.

<b>Gaelic FIRST NAMES</b>	<b>ENGLISH VERSION</b>
<b>Annag</b>	<i>Anne, Annie</i>
<b>Barabal</b>	<i>Barbara</i>
<b>Beathag</b>	<i>Beth, Rebecca</i>
<b>Brighde</b>	<i>Brigit</i>
<b>Catriona</b>	<i>Catriona</i>
<b>Ceit</b>	<i>Kate</i>
<b>Diorbhail</b>	<i>Dorothy</i>
<b>Ealasaid</b>	<i>Elizabeth, Liz</i>
<b>Eilidh</b>	<i>Helen</i>
<b>Fionnaghal</b>	<i>Fiona</i>
<b>Gobnait</b>	<i>Debra, Debbie, Deb</i>
<b>Iseabail</b>	<i>Isabelle</i>
<b>Lileag</b>	<i>Lily</i>
<b>Mairead</b>	<i>Margaret</i>
<b>Màiri</b>	<i>Mary</i>
<b>Mórag</b>	<i>Sarah, Sara</i>
<b>Oighrig</b>	<i>Effie, Erica, Etta</i>
<b>Peigi</b>	<i>Peggy, Margaret</i>
<b>Raonaid</b>	<i>Rachel</i>
<b>Seòrag</b>	<i>Joan, Joanie</i>
<b>Alasdair</b>	<i>Alistair</i>
<b>Aonghas</b>	<i>Angus</i>
<b>Brian</b>	<i>Brian</i>
<b>Cailean</b>	<i>Colin</i>
<b>Calum</b>	<i>Malcolm</i>
<b>Diarmad</b>	<i>Diarmad</i>
<b>Dòmhnall</b>	<i>Donald</i>
<b>Donnchadh</b>	<i>Duncan</i>
<b>Eachann</b>	<i>Hector</i>
<b>Eòghann</b>	<i>Hugh</i>
<b>Fionn</b>	<i>Finn</i>
<b>Gilleasbuig</b>	<i>Archibald</i>
<b>Goiridh</b>	<i>Jeff, Jeffrey</i>
<b>Griogair</b>	<i>Greg, Gregory</i>
<b>Iain</b>	<i>John</i>
<b>Lachlann</b>	<i>Lauchie, Lachlin</i>
<b>Niall</b>	<i>Neil</i>
<b>Pàdraig</b>	<i>Patrick, Peter</i>
<b>Raghnall</b>	<i>Ronald, Ranald</i>
<b>Seumas</b>	<i>James, Jim</i>

# CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

## SCIENCE

### TIDES, PHASES OF THE MOON, THE EARTH'S ORBIT AROUND THE SUN & MACKEREL SKY

Tide levels, phases of the moon, and the movement of the sun are all important elements for Gaels in terms of their cultural expression and worldview.

Gaels and people of Gaelic heritage work in such fields as shellfish harvesting and inshore fishing. Both of these require knowledge of tides. A number of Gaelic proverbs speak to the role of tides in Gaelic culture.

*Bhuain e maorach an uair a bha an tràigh ann.*

**He gathered shellfish while the tide was out.**

The English proverb equivalent is: Make hay while the sun shines.

The following are ways Gaels express the phases of the moon:

*An Solust Ùr* the new moon

*Ciad Cheathramh na Gealaich* the first quarter

*Solus na Làn-ghealaich* the full moon

*Ceathramh Deireannach na gealaich* the last quarter

Gaels rely on the phases of the moon to determine when to plant crops. For more information visit:

<http://www.gardeningbythemoon.com/phases.html>

The Gaels' cultural tradition of doing things in a *deiseal* clockwise, direction is connected to their observation of the path the earth takes as it orbits around the sun. As a result of this time-honoured connection, many Gaels perceive doing things in a *tuathal* counterclockwise, direction as *mi-shealbhach* unlucky.

### PURIFYING: CULTURAL PRACTICES WITH PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

In the Gaelic calendar, May 1st marks the beginning of the summer season.

On May 1st *teine na bealltainne* the beltane fire is lit. In earlier Gaelic society, these fires would be lit a distance apart from each other and livestock would be herded between them. While symbolizing a form of purification, the smoke from the fires would help to rid animals of any parasites that they carried through the winter months such as lice.

### TREES

There are 18 letters in the Gaelic alphabet. Each letter was linked to the name of a tree and used as an aid to learning.

**A – Ailm** Elm

**B – Beith** Birch – This tree's bark produces an analgesic. The sap is collected in spring to make wine.

**C – Coll/Calltuinn** Hazel – The branches of this tree were used for withies in fencing frames (hurdles). The nuts were roasted and eaten in winter.

**D – Dair/Darach** Oak – This hardwood was used to make carts and ploughs (ards) and buildings.

**E – Eadha** Aspen

**F – Feàrna** Alder – This wood is very resistant to rot.

**G – Gort** Ivy

**H – Uath** Hawthorn – This long-lived tree was sacred to Gaels.

**I – Iogh/Iubhar** Yew – The wood of this tree was used to make bows.

**L – Luis** Rowan – It was considered bad luck to cut down this powerful, sacred, anti-witchcraft tree.

**M – Muin** Vine

**N – Nuin** Ash – The sap of the Ash was given to newborn babies to make them strong and immune to snake bites. This tree produced the hardest wood in the glen.

**O – Onn** Yellow Gorse

**P – Beith Bhog** Downy Birch / Bog Birch – This tree was used in a similar way to Beith.

**R – Ruis** Elder

**S – Suil/Seileach** Common / Goat Willow – Gaels made pain-killing compounds from the bark. Branches were used for basket making.

**T – Teine** Furze

**U – Ur** Yew

## APPENDIX III



### WEATHER

In addition to its *deiseal* clockwise, movement, Gaels observed the sun to predict impending bad weather as found in the following proverb:

*Dearg na madainne, fearg na farraige.*  
**Redness (of the sun) in morning, anger on the sea.**

The English language equivalent of this proverb is:  
 Red sky at night, sailors delight,  
 red sky in morning, sailors take warning.

Gaelic fishers looked into the eyes of a cat before going out to sea to find out if the weather would be good or bad. They used the cat's eye as a form of barometer.



*Breacadh-rionnaich* Mackerel Sky, is a common term for a sky with rows of cirrocumulus or altocumulus clouds in a rippling pattern that looks like fish scales. This pattern is caused by high altitude atmospheric waves.

Cirrocumulus clouds appear almost exclusively ahead of a warm front. They are a reliable way to tell that the weather is about to change. When these high clouds invade the sky and the barometric pressure begins to fall, wind, rain, or snow is likely about 6 to 12 hours away.

The Gaelic proverb:

*Breacadh-rionnaich air an adhar latha math a-màireach*  
**Mackerel sky, a fine day tomorrow refers to the period following the change in weather.**

*Roth air a' Ghealaich* A ring around the moon, occurs when moonlight passes through thin ice crystals in cirrus clouds high in the Earth's atmosphere. As moonlight passes through the ice crystals, it is bent like light passing through a lens. The shape of the ice crystals causes the moonlight to be focused into a ring.

Cirrus clouds don't cause rain or storms, though they do precede some low-pressure systems by a day or two, and low-pressure systems bring rain and snow storms.

### FOOD

*Feamainn* is the common Gaelic word for seaweed.

*Carageenan*, which comes from the Gaelic word *cairreagan*, is used in the food industry for its gelling, thickening, and stabilizing properties. Its main application is in dairy and meat products, due to its strong binding to food proteins.

Many seaweeds are used as *dathan* dyes, in food and also the traditional process of dyeing *cló* cloth.



## APPENDIX III

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

#### GEAMANNAN Games



Games in Gaelic culture can be played individually, in pairs, or as a group. Some games involve items that can be easily found in or outside the house. Others are about finding the strongest or most clever one in the group. Games are not just an opportunity to have fun, but to build physical and intellectual skills.

Gaels as a people value physical prowess and athletic feats. There are written accounts of games, which feature feats of strength, being played by *an Fhéinn/na Fianntaichean the Fenians*, an ancient group of Gaelic warriors that travelled about Scotland and Ireland around 2,000 years ago. The great Gaelic warrior, *Cù Chulainn* appears in stories as a superior athlete and was known especially for his 'Hero's Salmon Leap', his ability to jump high and far to avoid being harmed.

This legacy of physical prowess and agility appears in many Gaelic stories about strong men and women in Gaelic Nova Scotia.

One of those strong Gaels was *Gille Mór* or *Gille Mór na h-Earradh Giant MacAskill*. MacAskill was born on the Island of Berneray, in the Western Isles of Scotland and immigrated to Englishtown, Cape Breton with his family when he was a boy, *Aonghas Mór MacAsgaill Big Angus MacAskill*, as he was also called, is recorded as the being the tallest, non-pathological giant in recorded history at 7 ft 9 in, or 2.36 m. He also had the largest chest measurements of any non-obese man. His chest measured 80 inches, or 200 cm).

MacAskill was well known for feats of strength such as lifting a ship's anchor that weighed 2,800 pounds (1,300 kg) to chest height. He could carry barrels that weighed more than 350 pounds (160 kg) each under each arm. People say he could lift a hundredweight (50 kg) with two fingers and hold it at arm's length for ten minutes. They also claimed to see *Gille Mór Big Boy*, lift a full-grown horse over a 4-foot (1.2 m) fence, without breaking a sweat.

Highland Games, a Victorian era creation, take in some elements of earlier Gaelic culturally-based feats of strength, such as *a' cur na cloiche*, the stone throw.

The following are some examples of physical prowess found in traditional home-based games that were popular in early Gaelic communities in Nova Scotia:

#### *Leum a' Bhradain* The Salmon's Leap 1

Participants lay flat on their backs and keep their upper bodies still as they try to flip using only their legs to propel them.

#### *Leum a' Bhradain* The Salmon's Leap 2

Participants stand, with their feet together, in a line and see who can leap the farthest or the highest.

#### *Leum a' Bhradain* The Salmon Leap 3

Similar to clap push ups, participants lay face down on the floor, supported by their hands and the tips of their toes. They then then push their bodies up and try to clap their hands before hitting the floor again.

#### GEAMANNAN NAN SEIDHRICHEAN Chair Games

##### *Geam 1*

Place two chairs so that their fronts face each other. A participant sits in one chair and tries to jump into the opposing chair in one fluid motion.

##### *Geam 2*

Place chairs in rows of three chairs each. Participants each take a row of chairs and lie on the chairs with their feet on the first chair and their heads on the third. They then try to remove the middle chair from under their mid-sections while maintaining their position. If successful, they then try to pass the chair over themselves and slide it in back under themselves from the other side.

#### *Leum ás a' Bhailleire* Jump Out of the Barrel

Place barrels in a row. Participants jump in and out of the barrels in sequence without using the sides of the barrels to help in any way.

#### *An Duine Marbh*, The Dead Man Lift

One group of participants lie on the floor and stiffen their bodies. Their opponents then try to raise the 'dead' participants to their feet.

#### *A' Breabadh Mullach an T-Seòmbair* Kick The Ceiling

Participants try to jump up and kick the ceiling from a standing position on the floor. Some participants can do this with two feet at the same time.

## APPENDIX III

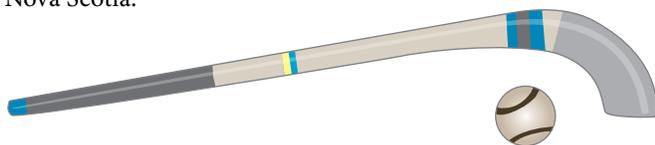
### *Am Maide Leisg* Lazy Stick

A strong stick is needed for this game. Two people sit facing each other with the soles of their feet on the ground and toes touching. The stick is between them. Both grasp the stick with their hands. They may not grasp the stick over their opponent's hands. The winner is the one who can either pull the other up and out of their place or, if possible, to their feet.

### *Camanachd Shinty*

*Camanachd*, also referred to as *Iomain*, is called shinty in English. It is older than the recorded history of Scotland and is thought to predate Christianity. It is similar to hurling, an Irish pastime and competitive sport that has been played for at least 2,000 years. Both hurling and shinty are derived from a historic game common to Gaels in Ireland and Scotland.

*Camanachd-deighe* ice shinty, was played in Gaelic Scotland. Since the Gaels who immigrated to Nova Scotia were familiar with this form of *camanachd*, they would have very likely influenced the early development of the sport of hockey in Nova Scotia.



Shinty, or hurling, appears prominently in the legend of *Cú-Chulainn*, the Irish Gaelic mythological hero. A similar game, called *cammag*, was played on the Isle of Man. The name is similar to *camanachd*. The old form of hurling, played in the northern half of Ireland, called 'commons', resembled shinty more closely than the standardised form of hurling of today. Like shinty, it was commonly known as *camánacht* and was traditionally played in winter.

It has been proposed that the English term 'shinty' comes from the Scottish Gaelic *sinteag*, a word that implies hopping or bounding about. There was never one all encompassing name for the game, as it held different names from glen to glen, including *cluich-bhall* play-ball.

The game was traditionally played through the winter months. On New Year's Day, whole villages would gather together to play games featuring teams of up to several hundred a side. Participants often used any piece of wood with a hook as a *caman shinty stick*.

A modern *caman* is made from several laminates of ash or hickory, which are glued and cut into shape, although a one-piece *caman* was still commonplace until the early 1980s. The ball was traditionally a round piece of wood or bone, sometimes called a *cnapag*, but it soon developed into the worsted leather balls used today.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

### THE JACOBITE UPRISING OF 1745-46 AD

The Jacobite risings, also known as the Jacobite rebellions or the War of the British Succession, were a series of uprisings, rebellions, and wars in Britain and Ireland between 1688 and 1746.

The central aim of these risings was to return of James II of England and VII of Scotland and his descendants to the throne of Great Britain. King James, of the House of Stuart, was the last Catholic British monarch and was deposed by Parliament during the Glorious Revolution. The series of conflicts takes its name Jacobitism, from *Jacobus*, the Latin form of James.

During the last Jacobite Uprising of 1745-46, Charles Edward Stuart, the grandson of James II, used Gaelic-speaking clans to mount a military campaign in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland to assert his claim as rightful king. Charles, referred to as *am Prionnsa the Prince*, in Gaelic, was the last Stuart king of the United Kingdom.

### *Blàr Chùil Lodair* The Battle of Culloden (April 16, 1746)

*Blàr Chùil Lodair* The Battle of Culloden, was the last major military engagement of the Jacobite Rising of 1745-46. The battle was fought between the central government army under the Duke of Cumberland and the Jacobite, or Highland Army, under *am Prionnsa the Prince*. It ended in the defeat and brutal suppression of the Jacobites. This marked the beginning of the breakup of Gaelic Society and paved the way for later mass evictions and emigrations of an estimated 250,000 Gaels who settled in the colonies of the British Empire.

*Carragh-chuimhne Chùil Lodair*, The Culloden Memorial Cairn, located in *Cnòideart, Knoydart*, Pictou County, commemorates three men who fought in the Clan Ranald Regiment on the side of *am Prionnsa*, at the Battle of Culloden and immigrated to the area in the 1780s. The *cairn*, erected in 1938, is a replica of the one found in Scotland. It contains stones from the battlefield. Every year since 1982, there is a ceremony to commemorate the anniversary of the battle.

### EDWARD CORNWALLIS & THE GAELS

Edward Cornwallis, an English Government Army officer and later Founder of the City of Halifax and Governor of Nova Scotia who fought at Culloden, led a regiment into the

## APPENDIX III

western Highlands of Scotland to deal with any clanspeople believed to be supporters of the Jacobite cause. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/edward-cornwallis/>

Some historians hold the view that Cornwallis and other military leaders who participated in the suppression of the Jacobite uprising of 1745-46 honed their tactics of military brutality through the pacification of the Gaels in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. They later used these tactics on indigenous populations in the colonies of the British Empire, such as the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.



### GAELS: 18TH & 19TH CENTURY REFUGEES

Tens of thousands of Gaels left Scotland voluntarily or were evicted from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland during the later 18th century and throughout the 19th century. They were forced to leave their ancestral lands, cross international boundaries, and were prevented from returning home safely. Like modern day refugees, Gaels sought shelter and protection from distress and danger in *A' Ghàidhealtachd* **The Gaelic language and cultural area** in Scotland.

Gaels found it difficult to maintain their unique language, culture, and identity for many reasons:

- repressive legislation, including *Na Pèin-dlighean* **The Penal Laws**, which made it illegal to practise the Catholic faith
- military occupation and eventual conquest
- cultural and social pressure to assimilate into the mainstream English-speaking society of the British colonies in which they settled

Despite these pressures, Gaels in Nova Scotia have maintained their Gaelic language, culture, and identity for more than 245 years. A story of resilience, the experience of Nova Scotia Gaels provides a useful reference point for better understanding the plight of refugees and newcomers to Nova Scotia today.

**FUADACH NAN GÀIDHEAL**, Highland Clearances & **LE GRAND DÉRANGEMENT**, The Expulsion of the Acadians

Like the Acadians, Gaels experienced societal upheaval and displacement. With the pacification of the Highlands, beginning in 1746 and the resulting breakup of Gaelic society, many Gaelic settlers arrived in Nova Scotia before the *Fuadach nan Gàidheal* the eviction of the Gaels began.

**Fuadach nan Gàidheal** The eviction of the Gaels, also called the Highland Clearances, took place during the late 18th century and throughout the 19th century. During this time, about 250,000 Gaels left or were removed from their hereditary homes in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The Clearances resulted from the establishment of 'enclosures', common public-use lands that were fenced off to be used by wealthy landlords, and a change from subsistence farming to large-scale sheep farming. These landowners, who were clan chiefs in earlier Gaelic society, became anglicized and disconnected from their own clanspeople. They carried out these complex changes over more than a hundred years. A Highland Clearance has been defined as "an enforced simultaneous eviction of all families living in a given area, such as an entire glen".

The effect of the Clearances and the large-scale emigrations over the same period devastated the cultural landscape of Scotland and, in the end, destroyed much of Gaelic language, culture and identity.

**NA SÌTHICHEAN** The Fairies  
& **MIKUMWESUK OF THE MI'KMAQ**

Both Mi'kmaq and Gaelic peoples have beliefs about fairies.

In the Gaelic tradition there are many stories about the activities of the fairies. Often in these stories, over-confident humans are put in their place during their encounters with the fairies. In Nova Scotia, fairies like to make horsehair braids, and hide them. Braids have been found in hay fields and barns, as well as in the manes and tails of horses.

While there are many accounts of mischievous fairy behaviour there is also a belief that the fairies bestowed exceptional talents to some renowned fiddlers and dancers in the Gaelic community in Nova Scotia.

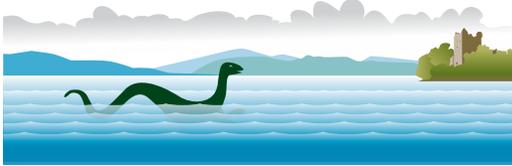
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**An Sìthean** The fairy mound is an early Gaelic name for Inverness Town, Inverness County, Cape Breton Island due to the alleged sightings of *sìthichean* fairies in that area in the early Gaelic settlement period.



**UILE-BHÉIST LOCH NIS** The Loch Ness monster

First sighted around the sixth century by the Gaelic monk later known as *Calum Cille Saint Columba*, *Uile-bhéist Loch Nis* the Loch Ness monster most likely represents an early Gaelic belief in water deities found in lakes and rivers.



**HIGHLANDER, SCOTTISH HIGHLANDER, SCOTTISH, SCOTCH & GAEL**

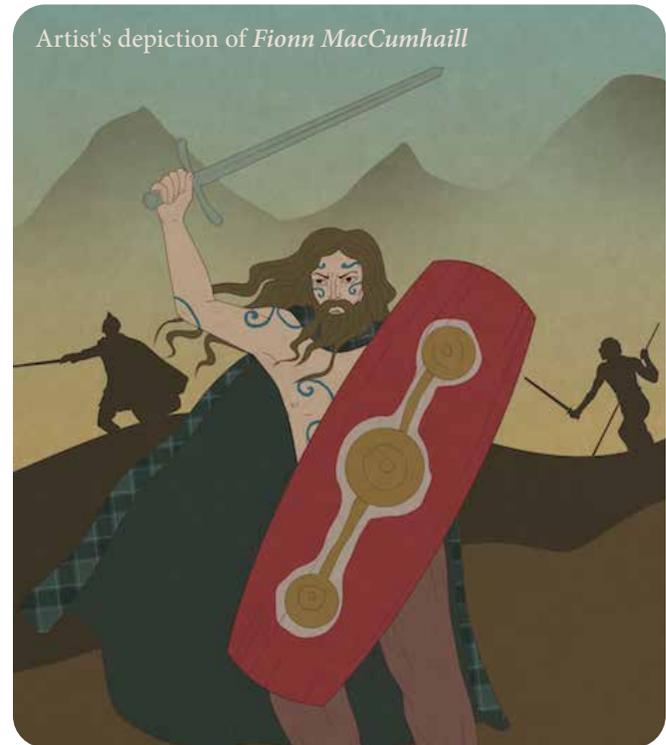
As a result of the decline of the Gaelic language, Gaelic language-based culture and Gaelic identity over the past 150 years in Nova Scotia, those who have Gaelic heritage and referred to themselves as *Gàidheil Gaels*, are often called Highlander, Scottish Highlander, Scottish, and Scotch in English.

In the Gaelic language, emigrants from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland referred to themselves as *Gàidheil Gaels*, as do many of their modern day descendants.

Today, with almost a third of Nova Scotians tracing their ancestry to early emigrant Gaels, many are working to reclaim the word Gael as the English-language term to describes this unique ethno-cultural group.

**FIONN MACCUMHAILL** Finn MacCool & GLOOSKAP OF THE MI'KMAQ

*Fionn MacCumhail* is a mythological Gaelic warrior. There are many tales about the exploits of *Fionn* and his followers *an Fhéinn / na Fiantaichean* the Fenians. Stories about *Fionn* reflect similar mythological warrior hero stories such as those of the Mi'kmaq god, Glooskap.



## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Gaels, through their Gaelic language, culture, and identity, have underpinned the social fabric of many communities in the northeastern mainland of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton.

Gaelic language terms and grammatical structures are found in Nova Scotian English expressions:

*Bha e/i air tilleadh.*  
He or she was after returning.

*Bha e/i airson dol...*  
He or she was for going...

*Cum sios.*  
Keep down.  
(This is said when welcoming a visitor into your home.)

*Bha mi ag iarraidh siod a dhèanadh.*  
I was wanting to do that (instead of 'I wanted to do that').

*Chan eil mi ach 'ga do chumail air ais.*  
I am only keeping you back (meaning to detain someone).

Some English words that come from the Gaelic language.

ENGLISH	Gaelic
ceilidh	<i>céilidh</i>
brogue	<i>bròg</i>
galore	<i>gu leòr</i>
loch	<i>loch</i>
slew	<i>sluagh</i>
trews	<i>triubhsair</i>
caber	<i>cabair</i>
cairn	<i>càrn</i>
bog	<i>boglach</i>
strath	<i>srath</i>
dillick	<i>dileag</i>
clan	<i>clann</i>
ben	<i>beinn</i>
bannock	<i>bonnach</i>
bard	<i>bàrd</i>
claymore	<i>claidheamh mór</i>
glen	<i>gleann</i>
whisky	<i>uisge-beatha</i>
calyick	<i>cailleach</i>

# RESOURCES

## VIRTUAL MUSEUM

### CAPE BRETON CEILIDH

Virtual exhibit that explores the Gaels' language, history, song, oral tradition, dance and music.

[http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/ceilidh/index\\_play.html](http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/ceilidh/index_play.html)

## YOUTUBE

### BUN IS BÀRR Root & Branch

Intergenerational Learning in Gaelic Nova Scotia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6tu8KfjV4KE>

### DÒCHAS Hope

Gaelic Youth in Nova Scotia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDQt9x2sgaA&t=23s>

### A' SEINN AN AGHAIDH NA BALBHACHD

#### Singing Against The Silence

A documentary about Gaels, and Gaelic language and cultural renewal efforts in Nova Scotia.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbDsfgoLsn8&t=2s>

### DÒMHNALL AGUS NA SÌTHICHEAN

#### Donald and the Fairies

A Traditional Scottish Gaelic folktale passed down by Nova Scotia Gaelic tradition-bearers.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Al8wxUzHqh0>

### NAIDHEACHD A' SGADAIN Story of the Pet Herring

A Gaelic folktale based on the telling of

Angus Cù MacDonald

Gaelic subtitles:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2vUnWgd\\_6s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2vUnWgd_6s)

English subtitles:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5u7YPvQhgk>

## E-BOOK

### AN GÀRADH AIG SÌNE Sheena's Garden

A children's story about growing and counting vegetables (English and Gaelic). It was written by Laurinda Matheson, illustrated by Janice Watson, narrated by Lewis MacKinnon, animation by David Carlson & Fern MacDonald.

<http://www.parl.ns.ca/projects/sheenas-garden-ebook.htm>

## SHORT FILMS

### FAIRE CHALUIM MHICLEOID

#### The Wake of Calum MacLeod

The first Gaelic language short film made in North America, it is a tale highlighting the importance of the oral tradition.

Free online at <https://vimeo.com/7221607>

# Gaelic Calendar

## Làthaichean is Féilltean 's a' bhliadhna Ghàidhealaich Cultural Days and Holidays in the Gaelic Year

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**An 31mh dhen Dàmhair** October 31st  
**Oidhche Shamhna** Halloween and first day  
of the New Year in the Gaelic calendar.

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**A' chiad là dhen t-Samhainn** November 1st  
**Samhainn** All Saints' Day

---

**An 30mh dhen t-Samhainn** November 30th  
**Là Fhéill Anndra** Andrew's Feast Day

---

**Grian-stad a' Ghreamhraidh** The Winter Solstice

---

**Àm na Nollaig** Christmas Time

**An 24mh dhen Dùbhlachd** December 24th  
**Oidhche Nollaig** Christmas Eve

**An 25mh dhen Dùbhlachd** December 25th  
**Là na Nollaig** Christmas Day

**An 26mh dhen Dùbhlachd** December 26th  
**Là Fhéill Steaphain** Stephen's Feast day  
(Boxing Day in North America).

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**An 31mh dhen Dùbhlachd** December 31st  
**Oidhche Challain/Chullainn/Chullaig/  
na Bliadhn' Ùir(eadh)** New Year's Eve

---

**A' chiad là dhen Fhaoillteach** January 1st  
**Là na Bliadhna Ùir(eadh)** New Year's Day

---

**An 6mh dhen Fhaoillteach** January 6th  
**Là nan Tri Rìghrean** Feast of the Epiphany =  
Three Kings day

---

**A' chiad là dhen Ghearran** February 1st  
**Imbolc/Là Fhéill Brìghde** Bridget's Feast Day  
and the first day of Spring in the Gaelic  
calendar.

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**An Carghas** Lent  
**Là na h-Inide** Shrove Tuesday  
**Di-ciadain na Luathre** Ash Wednesday

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**An 5mh dhen Mhàirt** March 5th  
**Là Fhéill Ciarain** Ciaran's Feast Day

---

**An 17mh dhen Mhàirt** March 17th  
**Là Fhéill Pàdrùig** Patrick's Feast Day

---

**Co-fhad-thràth an Earraich** Spring Equinox

---

**Àm na Càisg** Eastertime  
**Di-ardaoin Borb** Holy Thursday  
**Di-haoine na Ceusda** Good Friday  
**Di-sathuirn' na Càisg** Holy Saturday  
**Di-Dòmhnach na Càisg** Easter Sunday

---

**An 16mh dhen Ghiblean** April 16th  
**Là Blàr Chùil-Lodair** Culloden Day

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*A' chiad là dhen Chéitean* May 1st

*Là Buidhe Bealltainn* The Lucky Day of Beltane and the first day of Summer in the Gaelic calendar.

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*An 16mh dhen Chéitean* May 16th

*Là Fhéill Brianain* Brendan's Feast Day

---

*An 9mh dhen Òg Mhìos* June 9th

*Là Fhéill Caluim Chille* Columba's Feast Day

---

*Grian-stad an t-Samhraidh* The Summer Solstice

---

*A' chiad là dhen Lùnasdal* August 1st

*Lùnasdal* Harvest Time and the first day of Fall in the Gaelic calendar.

---

*An 25mh dhen t-Sultain* September 25th

*Là Fhéill Barra* Barra's Feast Day

---

*Co-fhad-thràth an Fhoghair* The Fall Equinox

---

*An 29mh dhen t-Sultain* September 29th

*Là Fhéill Micheil* Michael's Feast Day

# THE SEASONS

## *Na Ràithean*

While Gaels do have names for the 12 months of the year, they also have an older way of dividing the year. For each season there are three parts—a beginning, middle and, end.

### **An t-Seann-dòigh** *Old Style*

<b>An Geamhradh</b>	<b>Winter</b>
Toiseach a' Gheamhraidh	Beginning of winter (November)
Mios Meadhanach a' Gheamhraidh	Middle month of winter
Mios mu Dheireadh a' Gheamhraidh	Last month of winter

<b>An t-Earrach</b>	<b>Spring</b>
Toiseach an Earraich	Beginning of spring (February)
Meadhan an Earraich	Middle month of spring
Mios mu Dheireadh an Earraich	Last month of spring

<b>An Samhradh</b>	<b>Summer</b>
Toiseach an t-Samhraidh	Beginning of summer (May)
An Darna Mios dhen t-Samhradh	Second month of summer
Mios mu Dheireadh an t-Samhraidh	Last month of summer

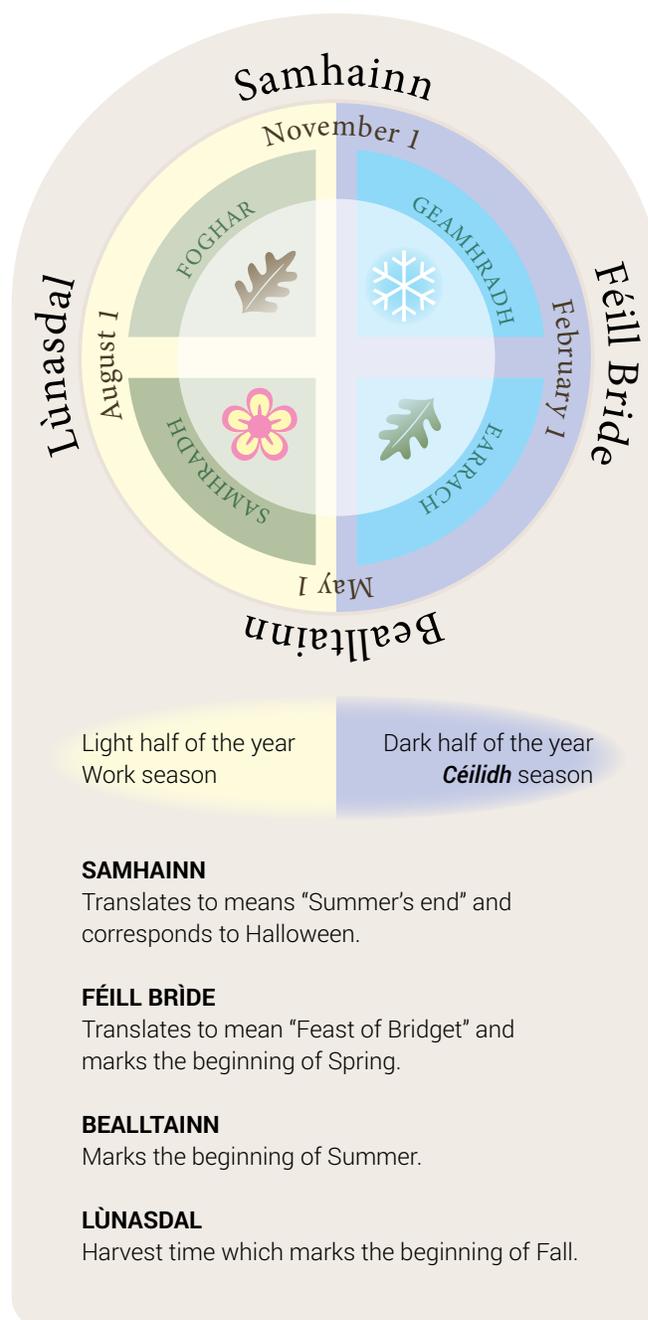
<b>Am Foghar</b>	<b>Fall</b>
Toiseach an Fhoghair	Beginning of fall (August)
Mios Meadhanach an Fhoghair	Middle month of fall
Mios Deireannach an Fhoghair	Final month of fall

### **An dòigh ùr** *The New Way*

An t-Samhain	November
An Dùllochd	December
Am Faoilleach	January
An Gearran	February
Am Màirt	March
An Giblean	April
An Céitean	May
An t-Òg Mhios	June
An t-Iuchair	July
Lùnasdal	August
An t-Sultain	September
An Dàmhair	October

### GAELIC CALENDAR YEAR

The Gaelic calendar is based on the solar calendar. Major celebrations are set by the new moon and the new year begins at the beginning of winter.



# CALUM CILLE:

## Naomh nan Gàidheal

CALUM CILLE:  
NAOMH NAN GÀIDHEAL

*Ged a bhios feadhainn dhe na Gàidheil a' cumail Là Féill Anndra an diugh, 's e Calum Cille an nao-mh a bhuannaich cliù a-measg nan Gàidheal ann an Comann nan Gàidheal na bu tràithe is chaidh am bial-aithris mu dhéidhinn a ghléidheadh is a chompàirteachadh le Gàidheil ann an Albainn Nuaidh. Rugadh Calum Cille ann an Éireann is stéidh e manachainn ann an Eilean Ì's na h-Eileannan beaga 's an t-6mh linn. Sgaoil luchd-leanmhainn Caluim Chille a' Chrìosdaidheachd a-measg nan Gàidheal, nan Cruithneach agus nan Sasunnach. Bha faclan aig na Gàidheil a chuireadh feadhainn aig an robh an comas-leighis gu feum gus leigheas a dhèanadh do dhuine no bheothach a bha tinn. Seo samhladh dhe na faclan a tha a' toirt iomraidh air comas-leighis Caluim Chill' a dh'innseadh cuideigin aig an robh an comas-leighis.*

*Chaidh Calum Cille a-mach,  
Chunnaig e casan a chuid each.  
Chuir e gaoisid ri gaoisid;  
Craichdean ri craichdean;  
Feòl ri feòl;  
Cnàimh ri cnàimh;  
Smir ri smir.  
'S mar a leithis E sud,  
Leiseadh E seo;*

*Gu tric, 's e an seachdamh mac ann an teaghlach aig am biodh an comas-leighis a tha seo.*

ST. COLUMBA:  
THE SAINT OF THE GAELS

While today some Gaels celebrate St. Andrew's Day, it was St. Columba that gained renowned amongst the Gaels in early Gaelic Society and folklore about him has been preserved and passed down by Gaels in Nova Scotia. St. Columba was born in Ireland and he established a monastery on Iona in the Inner Hebrides in the 6th century. St. Columba's followers spread Christianity amongst the Gaels, the Picts and the English. The Gaels had incantations that individuals who had the healing ability would use to heal a person or an animal that was sick. Here is an example of the incantation that references the healing power of St. Columba that someone would utter who had the healing ability.

Calum Cille  
Came out in the morning  
He saw the legs of the horse.  
He put hair to hair;  
Bone to bone;  
Flesh to flesh;  
Skin to skin;  
Marrow to marrow.  
And, as He healed that,  
Let Him heal this.

Often it was the seventh son in a family who would have the healing ability.

# The Gaelic World

1500 AD

■ *Gaelic spoken here*

■ *Other languages spoken here*



# IRISH NOVA SCOTIANS:

## Gaels, Irish Language and Cultural Heritage

Common linguistic and cultural origins, and in some instances ancestry, unite the Gaels of Ireland and Scotland. Until about the 12th century AD, both groups spoke *Seann-Ghàidhlig* Old Irish / Gaelic. From the 13th to the 18th centuries AD, a literary language known as Classical Gaelic connected the learned classes of Gaels in both countries. Separated by geography and through subsequent social, economic, and political events, distinct Gaelic languages and their accompanying cultural expressions evolved.

Over centuries, the Gaels of Ireland and Scotland were oppressed. Their languages, culture, and identities were dismissed and excluded by the ruling classes. Because of this, Gaelic identity was drastically eroded as Gaelic society in both Ireland and Scotland became increasingly absorbed into the sphere of Anglo-centric empire building and industrial expansion. Gaelic Ireland was invaded numerous times and finally conquered in 1603.

Irish Gaels emigrated from Ireland for reasons similar to those of Gaels from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Details and dates differ, but in both nations, Gaels experienced the denigrating and oppressive effects of colonizing forces.

The earliest documented Irish person to arrive in Nova Scotia was Roger Casey who moved to Port Royal around 1660. Roger married into the Acadian community, leaving generations of Francophone descendants, now named Cassie. Irish people were among those who took part in the English settlement of Halifax in 1749. During 1713-1758, when the French occupied Louisbourg in Cape Breton, Irish Catholics were found among the inhabitants. Many of them came from British-controlled Newfoundland and elsewhere in search of religious freedom.

The first significant wave of Irish immigration occurred in the late 1750s, a time when Ireland was largely a country of tenant farmers and labourers. Its economy was dependent on Great Britain and constrained by protective tariffs. These economic barriers, plus the prospect of land ownership in North America, led many to immigrate to Nova Scotia. Most early Irish immigrants known as 'Scots-Irish' or 'Ulster Scots' were descendants of Lowland Scots who had been moved to the Irish province of Ulster.

The south of Scotland, a historically Gaelic-speaking area, had had significant upheaval in the early medieval period when a form of northern English, referred to as the Scots language, replaced Gaelic and eventually became widely spoken. During the Reformation (1517-1648), many of these southern Scots (by the 14th century referred to as Lowland Scots) accepted the new religion, Protestantism. From 1600 to 1690, English authorities sent many Lowland Scots, by now mostly English-speaking Protestants, to the north of Ireland to displace its Catholic, and mostly Gaelic speaking, inhabitants.

Settlers who eventually emigrated from the north of Ireland were called the 'Scots-Irish.' This is not an entirely accurate term as many of the northern Irish who came to Nova Scotia in the 1750s and 1760s were third and fourth-generation descendants of Lowland Scots who had been moved to the northern Irish province of Ulster. They are more accurately called 'Scots from Ireland' or 'Ulster Scots,' since few of them had native Irish ancestry. Some might have learned to speak Irish or may possibly have spoken Gaelic when they arrived from Lowland Scotland. They may also have had Gaelic as a linguistic heritage.

## APPENDIX VIII

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The second wave of Irish immigrants arrived in Nova Scotia between 1815 and 1845. The population of Ireland had more than doubled in the fifty years before 1815, and the country was no longer able to support all of its people. Emigration became attractive to the Irish for a variety of reasons:

- religious discrimination
- civil disorder
- forced union with Great Britain in 1801
- opportunities offered in the Americas

Nova Scotia received thousands of people from the southern Irish counties of Wexford, Waterford, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Cork, and Kerry. In the south of Ireland, during this period, *An Ghaeilge Irish language*, was widely spoken. The majority of these immigrants would have referred to themselves as *Gaeil Gaels*, in the Irish language. Their main ports of arrival were Halifax and Pictou, although smaller numbers landed at the Gut of Canso, Sydney, and Yarmouth. Some became fisher folk, but many applied for free land from the government in order to start farming. Dozens of Irish families settled central-western Nova Scotia in communities such as New Ross, East and West Dalhousie, and along the old Annapolis Road.

Due to economic opportunities, Halifax and Dartmouth in particular were focal points for the southern Irish who arrived after 1815. By the early 1860s, nearly 50 per cent of the population in the two communities was Irish. Irish people were labourers and servants. They were involved in building the waterfront, the Citadel, the Shubenacadie Canal, and railways. Many of these workers lived in Irishtown in Halifax. In the 1901 Canadian Census, some residents listed Irish Gaelic as their native language.

Overall, most Irish immigrated before *An Gorta Mór The Great Famine*. Irish immigrants arrived here alone or with family and settled across the province. Because of this they didn't have the opportunity to create, larger, more cohesive communities in which the Irish language was passed down from generation to generation. The arrival of the

Irish in Nova Scotia has been described as “gentle as the snow on a rooftop.”

Many Irish immigrated to Nova Scotia on ships directly from ports in Ireland, and it is possible that more arrived as ‘two-boaters’. Two-boaters were people who made at least one other port of call before or after Nova Scotia. In fact, Roger Casey (page 71) may have been a two-boater. It has been suggested that he left Plymouth, New England in 1664 in search of religious freedom in Catholic New France.

The first wave of two-boaters came from the British colony of Newfoundland. Irish immigrants had been landing in large numbers in Newfoundland before 1815, so many of the Irish who arrived there later soon moved further west in search of opportunity. Some arrived on ships, but many more may have come to Cape Breton in smaller boats. Some Irish Gaelic speakers from Newfoundland integrated into the Scottish Gaelic-speaking communities of Nova Scotia.

As the population in Nova Scotia grew, a different kind of two-boater arrived. Irish immigrants landed in Nova Scotia ports. Not long after they arrived, they continued on to points west—New Brunswick, Ontario, and mainly New England in the United States. Nova Scotia was, therefore, part of the ‘maritime funnel’ through which thousands of Irish poured all over North America.

While the arrival of Irish immigrants may have been “gentle as the snow on a rooftop,” their numbers grew, and their presence was felt in Nova Scotian society. In 1786, “a number of respectable Inhabitants of this Province, natives of the Kingdom of Ireland,” established the Charitable Irish Society. This society was made up of both Protestants and Catholics, which may be why it was able to survive the British Penal Laws, which restricted the rights of Catholics. These laws were applied off and on throughout the colonial period in Nova Scotia. The Charitable Irish Society still exists today.

## APPENDIX VIII

Society members tended to the needs of all Irish people, Catholic and Protestant alike. State oppression, together with other historical factors, led to fewer opportunities for the Irish Catholics but, over time, their lot improved in Nova Scotia, and some rose to positions of prominence. For example, in 1917, Edward Condon was Chief of the Halifax Fire Department. He was one of many Irish-Nova Scotians who were killed in the Halifax Explosion. The Irish population in Halifax had by that time shifted from the South to the North end, which bore the brunt of the devastation. Families were dispersed in the aftermath, and there was no longer an Irish settlement area in Halifax. During this period, the intergenerational passing on of Irish language in Nova Scotia ceased.

In the 20th century, many Nova Scotians of Irish ancestry began delving into their heritage, including the Irish language. Saint Mary's University—founded by Irish Christian Brothers—established an Irish Studies Interdisciplinary Program, and the D'Arcy McGee Chair of Irish Studies. In 1990, *An Cumann The Irish Association of Nova Scotia* was established to foster knowledge and enjoyment of the Irish language and Irish Nova Scotian culture and history. Traditional Irish music sessions are found throughout the province, and people can participate in several styles of Irish dance. Inspired by the resurgence of Nova Scotia Gaelic through community-based language programs, Irish Nova Scotians are also reconnecting with their heritage language.

### IRISH SURNAMES

Casey/Caissie/	Farrell	Murphy
Archibald	Boyle	Cavanagh
Allison	Doyle	Fitzpatrick
Coady	Crowley	Power
Curran	Fulton	Tobin
Kehoe	Creelman	Tracey
Thompkins	Donahue	
Parks	Donovan	

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Surnames\\_of\\_Irish\\_origin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Surnames_of_Irish_origin)

### HISTORICAL IRISH IMMIGRATION AREAS

Port Royal	West Dalhousie
Louisbourg	Pictou
Halifax	Gut of Canso
Ingonish	Sydney
Yarmouth	Erinville
Herring Cove	Truro
Ketch Harbour	Chignecto
Mount Uniacke	Granville
New Ross	New Dublin
East Dalhousie	New Donegal

### HISTORIC EVENTS & LANDMARKS IN NOVA SCOTIA

- The Halifax Explosion
- The Sinking of the Titanic
- The Enforcement and Repealing of the *Na Péindlíthe The Penal Laws*: a series of laws imposed in an attempt to force Irish Roman Catholics and Protestant dissenters (such as local Presbyterians) to accept the reformed denomination as defined by the British Crown
- The Irish influence on the creation of hockey in Nova Scotia
- St. Patrick's Church, Brunswick Street
- St. Paul's Church, Grand Parade
- St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica, Spring Garden Rd
- Holy Cross Cemetery and Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel
- Uniacke Museum Estate Park
- The Celtic Cross: Irish Settlers' Memorial
- Fortress of Louisbourg, Cape Breton
- Irishtown, Halifax South
- Carleton House, Argyle Street
- Saint Mary's University

## APPENDIX VIII

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### ORGANIZATIONS

Charitable Irish Society  
<http://www.charitableirishsocietyofhalifax.ca>

D'Arcy McGee Chair of Irish Studies,  
Saint Mary's University  
<http://www.smu.ca/academics/departments/irish-studies.html>

*An Cumann*  
<http://www.ancumann.org/>

### RESOURCES

<https://novascotia.ca/archives/cis/>

<https://archives.novascotia.ca/genealogy/irish>

<http://gail25.tripod.com/ns1.htm>

<http://www.novascotia.com/about-nova-scotia/blogs/irish-nova-scotia>

<https://uniacke.novascotia.ca>

<https://archives.novascotia.ca/genealogy/irish>

<http://www.holycrosshalifax.ca>

<http://www.smu.ca/academics/departments/irish-in-nova-scotia-database.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rw-FbwmzPKo>

# TÌR IS TEANGA

## The Nova Scotia Gael and Their Relationship to the Environment

AnRubha Vol. 13, No. 2 15

By Daniel MacDonald

Undeniably, the physical and natural environment has always played an integral role in the human experience.

Though this role has been greatly diminished in a number of first-world cultures due to the industrial revolution and various stages of economic growth, it is still quite prevalent in agrarian and land-based groups. The Gaels have always had a deep connection to the land, dating right back to the Celt of prehistoric Ireland. When examining interpretation and understanding of this inherent quality of words in a way that makes it accessible to the general community.

The way in which these words are interpreted presents a particular viewpoint based on certain beliefs, previous experiences and cultural acceptances. It draws not merely on the descriptive and geographical but aims to inform a community of a history and cultural significance while remaining loyal to the linguistic nuances which feature so prominently in the minds of the Gaels. Such historical and cultural conservation becomes even more important within immigrant communities, such as those which came to exist in Nova Scotia throughout the late 18th and mid-19th centuries.

It also changed significantly in a number of ways from that of Scotland. As noted in the work of Meg Bateman, the Gaels have always understood that some elements of nature cannot be controlled.

This is known, according to all songs or stories were written in a positive light. There are still many examples of the Gaels condemning and criticizing their new home, however even with these examples, the larger focus is on the new environment in which they find themselves and their relationship to the unknown fàsach.

The instinct one has when faced with the unknown is to name it. The manner in which something is named tells a lot about the background and cultural values of a person and their society. Again, considering the power of words in the Gaelic conscience, this naming process takes in more than just identifying a location. In his essay discussing natural influences on Gaelic poetry, John MacInnes notes:

The native Gael who is instructed in this poetry carries in his imagination not so much a landscape, not a sense of geography alone, nor of history alone, but a formal order of experience in which these are all merged.

The native sensibility responds not to landscape, but to *dùthchas*. And just as 'landscape' with its romantic aura, cannot be translated directly into Gaelic, so *dùthchas* and, indeed, *dùthaich* cannot be translated into English without robbing the terms of their emotional energy. The complexity involved can be appre-

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ciated by reflecting on the range of meaning: *dùthchas* is ancestral or family land; it is also family tradition; and, equally, it is the hereditary qualities of an individual.

As a society based on the oral passage of knowledge, the Gaels' concept of *dùthchas* includes a strong cultural element that is heavily reliant on symbolism and representation. Just as is evident within the patronymic nomenclature and its ability to recall an entire family history, not just a genealogy, it is not enough to be able to physically describe the landscape. A description must include elements that detail a community's relationship to its landscape. Take, for example, a stream. The simple act of naming a stream as such does not go far enough to create a connection with nature. Many other factors must be considered, such as its location, its size and how the community interacts with it. Whether the community is a fishing community will impact on the importance they give the stream as well, and likewise if this becomes reflected in the *dùthaich* it will in turn inform outsiders of other complimentary elements of nature. If such a community is more interested in certain varieties of fish, a stream could be described as being full of or not having many of such fish. If one looks for the Gaelic equivalent of stream, at least four words will present themselves, each varying in regards to the amount of water running through the stream, its physical location, the manner and speed with which the water flows. It is on detailed descriptions of the *dùthaich* such as these that the storytelling tradition and, subsequently, the song tradition of the Gaels are based.

As time passed in Nova Scotia and the Gaels became more and more settled in this new world, their connection to the land grew stronger and stronger, with links to the country they left behind weakening. This was reflected in the oral literature of the various communities, much as it has happened in other Gaelic communities. As communities become more static, they expand their understanding and appreciation for the land in which they live. Due to the strong sense of cultural conservatism that is present amongst the Gaels, many elements of the "homeland" become part of the realm of *seanchas*. In this way they are still remembered, but are not as present within the minds of the community. A similar concept was noted by Seán Ó Tuama in Irish culture. He wrote:

It seems then that it is the sacred wedding of territory to chief – and by extension of territory to kin – which is at the heart of the passion for place in Irish life and literature. Parallel with this bonding, of course, was the bonding of each free family group with its own particular inherited land. Down to our own day each field, hill and hillock was named with affection. There is a sense in which place finally becomes co-extensive in the mind; not only with personal and ancestral memories, but with the whole living community culture. If one's day to day pattern of living is found good, the feeling of identification with its place of origin is accordingly enhanced. Community becomes place, place community.

As these tales of the old country fell further and further into the realms of history, they were replaced by recent equivalents discussing similar themes, but within a new cultural paradigm. As those entrusted with the knowledge and *dùthchas* of their communities, the first bards (poets) and *seanchaidhean* that arrived in Cape Breton would be well-versed in the descriptive power of words. As there would have been no local sources to draw on when they first settled in Nova Scotia, the initial stories told would be ones from their home communities. However, as explained above, these would slowly give way to tales of local events that took place as immigrants grew more and more accustomed to their new lifestyle. Taking this to be true, a series of changes can be seen occurring within the Gaelic story and songmaking traditions. These stories initially steeped in the heritage of Scottish Gaelic culture – for example, the Fenian tales col-

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lected by John Shaw from Joe Neil MacNeil – slowly became overwhelmed by local compositions involving the experience of the immigrant Gaels as they seek to gain a certain degree of control over their new environment. Once again, due to cultural conservatism present within immigrant communities, these older epics are not lost, however it comes to be that they are heard far less often in the *céilidh* houses than they once were. Similarly, it can be seen in the song tradition that songs which initially were written about the physical aspects of nature – written as the Gaels tried to describe the world around them and determine their place within it – are now morphing into songs dealing with more symbolic and emotional interactions between the Gaels and their environment. If we consider Meg Bateman’s concept of *am baile* and *am fàsach*, it becomes understandable that as the edges of the domesticated land continue to expand, the focus shifts slightly from an outward perspective to one which is centered inward on the understanding of one’s own community.

In the song tradition of Gaelic Nova Scotia, this becomes apparent through examples such as *A’ Choille Ghruamach*, a song written by Tìre bard John MacLean shortly after his arriving in Nova Scotia in 1819, condemning the land in which he finds himself. One doesn’t have to go beyond the first verse to notice how clearly descriptive this song is:

*Gu bheil mi ’m ònarachd ’s a choille ghruamaich,  
Fhuair mi ’n t-àite so’n aghaidh nàduir,  
Gun thrèig gach tàlant a bha ’n a m’cheann.*

Lonesome in the gloomy forest,  
I’ve found this place to be so against nature,  
that all of my talents I had in my head have abandoned me.

Years later, songs begin to appear in praise of both nature as well as the various forms of interaction that the Gaels have with it. Songs such as *Moladh Albann Nuaidh*, by Allan The Ridge MacDonald, are great examples of this, creating links between nature and his perspective of it, according to the views of his own community. The relationship between Nova Scotia Gaels and their environment is constantly changing, particularly among the initial immigrant communities. The great number of unknown features and experiences resulted in a rich story-telling tradition that differed from Scotland in a variety of ways.

The increase in *naidheachd*, or small stories, and *seanchas* over *sgèulachdan*, or the longer more formal tales common in Scotland, gave way to a number of personal experience narratives describing how various immigrants came to understand their environment. Many of these further morphed into a rather strong collection of tales relating to the supernatural. Completely unknown experiences in the mind of the Gaels came to be represented as ghosts and apparitions. This belief in the supernatural, supported by a long heritage no doubt rooted in the pagan traditions of the druids, continues to be one of the many ways in which the *seanchaidhean* and bards interpret the world around them.

Many themes have been noted in regards to the Gaels’ relationship with their environment. In his paper discussing this within the Scottish song-making context, Michael Newton makes mention of four such themes:

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'S e mo bheachd gun do rinn an gnàthas seo leasachadh agus lion-sgaradh tro litreachas anns na ceumannan seo:

- 1) Ainmean-àite a' nochdadh ann an litreachas.
- 2) Bàrd a' labhairt ri dùthaich mar gum b' e duine a bha innte.
- 3) Còmhradh eadar bàrd agus dùthaich (guth na dùthcha ga riochdachadh)
- 4) Còmhradh eadar buill na tire (gun ghuth mhic-an-duine ann)

It is my opinion that this convention created developments as well as areas of division throughout (Gaelic) literature in the following ways:

- 1) Place-names appearing in literature
- 2) A bard speaking with nature as if it were a person
- 3) Conversation between a bard and nature (the voice of nature being present)
- 4) Conversation between elements of the land (without a human voice present)

Some of these themes can be easily identified within the Nova Scotia Gaelic community when one examines the song-making tradition. There are a number of songs written by Nova Scotia Gaels which involve conversations between the bard and various elements of nature, both plants and animals, as well as those personifying the land. A good example of a song written strictly from nature's perspective is that of *Òran do Bheinn Chlann Dòmhnuille*, written by Angus MacDonald of French Road, Cape Breton County. A number of these themes can also be seen to a lesser degree within the ancient Fenian tales and certain accounts of the supernatural. It is by looking at themes in this way that it becomes apparent how Gaelic song-makers were seen to be mediums within their community; bridging the gap between the domesticated land of *am baile* and the unknown wilderness of *am fàsach* through their interpretations and understanding of nature and its complexities while still remaining loyal to the nuances of the language.

When discussing the concept of environment and landscape in relation to a specific community, there are many facets which need to be explored and considered. As is apparent with the Gaels of Nova Scotia, language plays a large role in the interpretation of and interaction with such an environment. Their cultural heritage and strong oral literary tradition coupled with a certain degree of immigrant conservatism, shows that - although highly important and no doubt the stemming point for many of the other cultural manifestations - the physicality of the landscape is only one piece in a multi-layered relationship the Nova Scotia Gaelic community has developed with the world around it!

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**ANGLICIZED** - make English in form or character.

**ANGLO-CENTRIC** - centred on or giving priority to England or things English.

**ANGLOPHONES** - English-speaking people.

**ANTIQUITY** - the ancient past, especially the period before the Middle Ages.

**CIVIL LAW** - also known as civilian law, or Roman law. It is a legal system originating in Europe, intellectualized within the framework of Roman law, the main feature of which is that its core principles are codified into a referable system, which serves as the primary source of law.

**CLAN SYSTEM** - The English word 'clan' is derived from the Gaelic word *clann*, meaning children. Clans developed a territory based on the native men who came to accept the authority of the dominant group in the vicinity. A clan also included a large group of loosely related septs – dependent families – all of whom looked to the clan chief as their head and their protector.

**CLASSICAL GAELIC** - Gàidhlig Chlasaigeach (Scottish Gaelic), Gaeilge Chlasaiceach (Irish language) was the shared literary form that was in use in Scotland and Ireland from the 13th century to the 18th century. The language may be thought of as a high-register version of Early Modern Irish.

**CUSTOMS** - traditional and widely accepted ways of behaving or doing something that is specific to a particular society, place, or time.

**DISCRIMINATION** - the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex. Gaels in Nova Scotia and Scotland experienced discrimination against their language and culture and, over generations, were the recipients of microaggressions. Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to people based solely on their membership in a marginalized group.

**FEUDALISM** - the dominant social system in medieval Europe. The nobility held lands from the Crown in exchange for military service. Vassals were tenants of the nobles and peasants (*villeins* or *serfs*) were obliged to live on their lord's land and give him homage, labor, and a share of the produce in exchange for military protection.

**FOODWAYS** - In social science foodways are the cultural, social, and economic practices relating to the production and consumption of food. Foodways often refers to the intersection of food in culture, traditions, and history.

**INCANTATIONS** (also called 'enchantments') – charms or spells created using words. An incantation may take place during a ritual, either a hymn or prayer, and may invoke or praise a deity.

**IRON AGE** - the final epoch of the three-age system, preceded by the Stone Age (Neolithic) and the Bronze Age. It is an archaeological era in the prehistory and protohistory of Europe and the Ancient Near East and, by analogy, other parts of the Old World.

**LATIN** - the language of daily societal interaction, government, and politics during the Roman Empire. Latin is a classical language belonging to the Italic branch of the Indo-European languages. The Latin alphabet is derived from the Etruscan and Greek alphabets, and ultimately from the Phoenician alphabet. Latin was originally spoken in Latium, in the Italian Peninsula.

**PREHISTORIC** - relating to or denoting the period before written records.

**MEDIEVAL CHURCH** - Church and state in medieval Europe includes the relationship between the Christian church and the various monarchies and other states in Europe between the end of Roman authority in the West in the fifth century and the beginnings of the Reformation in the early sixteenth century.

**MORMAOIR, MORMAERS** - In early medieval Scotland, a *mormaor mormaer*, was the Gaelic name for a regional or provincial ruler, theoretically second only to the King of Scots, and the senior of a *Taoiseach* Chieftain. Mormaers were equivalent to English earls or European counts, and the term is often translated into English as 'earl'.

**MUSICAL ORNAMENTATION** - ornaments or embellishments are musical flourishes—typically, added notes—that are not essential to carry the overall line of the melody (or harmony), but serve instead to decorate or 'ornament' that line (or harmony).

**NORMAN FRENCH** - the northern form of Old French spoken by the Normans, the people who inhabited Normandy, France. Brought to England and eventually Scotland in the medieval period, Anglo-Norman French was the variety of Norman French that was used in English law courts from the 11th to 13th centuries.

**ORAL TRADITION** - is a way of communicating where knowledge, wisdom, artistic expression, ideas, customs, spirituality and venacular beliefs, are received, preserved and passed on orally from one generation to another. This transmission is done through speech, poetry, song, story, and folktale. Through this way of communicating, it is possible for a society to transmit history, literature, law, custom and other knowledge across generations without a writing system, or concurrently with a writing system.

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**THE BRITISH ARMY** - The modern British Army traces back to 1707, with an antecedent in the English Army that was created during the Restoration in 1660. The term "British Army" was adopted in 1707 after the Acts of Union between England and Scotland.

**THE IRISH SEA** - *Muir Éireann / An Mhuir Mheann* (Irish language), *Muir Èireann* (Scottish Gaelic), separates the islands of Ireland and Great Britain.

**THE SHIP HECTOR** - a ship famous for having been part of the first significant migration of Gaels from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland to Nova Scotia in 1773. The replica of the original ship is located at the Hector Heritage Quay, Pictou Harbour, Pictou County, Nova Scotia where a heritage center is located.

**REELS** - All reels have the same structure, consisting largely of quaver (eighth note) movement with an accent on the first and third beats of the bar. A reel is distinguished from a hornpipe in two ways. First, a reel is played with even beats, without an implied dotted rhythm. Second, a reel is played twice as fast, implied by the 22 time signature. Reels usually have two parts (A and B). In most reels, each part is repeated (AABB), but in others it is not (ABAB). Each part (A and B) typically has eight bars, which in turn are divisible into four-bar and two-bar phrases.

**SCOTS LANGUAGE** - Scots is the Germanic language variety spoken in Lowland Scotland and parts of Ulster (where the local dialect is known as Ulster Scots). It is sometimes called Lowland Scots to distinguish it from Scottish Gaelic, the Celtic language, which was historically restricted to the Highlands and Islands, and Galloway after the 16th century. The Scots language developed during the Middle English period as a distinct entity.

**SLOINNEADH** - is technically one's patronymic or in some instances matronymic or lineage. It denotes or relates to a name derived from the name of a father or male ancestor.

**SPIRITUALITY** - the deepest values and meanings by which people live. It embraces the idea of an ultimate or an alleged immaterial reality. It envisions an inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of their being.

**STRATHSPEYS** - a type of dance tune in 4.4 time. It is similar to a hornpipe but slower, more stately, and contains many dot-cut 'snaps'.

**VERNACULAR BELIEFS** - In religious studies and folkloristics, folk religion, popular religion, or vernacular religion comprises various forms and expressions of religion that are distinct from the official doctrines and practices of organized religion. The precise definition of folk religion varies among scholars. Sometimes also termed popular belief, it consists of ethnic or regional religious customs under the umbrella of a religion, but outside official doctrine and practices.

**WORLDVIEW** - an individual or society's comprehensive view of the world and human life.

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