

# The McCords of Skaith, Wigtownshire

*Alan Milliken, Scotland*

George F. Black, in his book *Surnames of Scotland*, offers an interesting explanation for the origin of the surname McCord in Scotland. He says it is an old surname in the parish of Ballantrae and cites Paterson's History of Ayrshire as his source. Paterson, however, offers no examples to illustrate its antiquity in the parish<sup>1</sup>. From the earliest parish church records, which date from 1731, the names of a number of McCords appear in the baptismal, marriage and burial registers. On November 8, 1734, John McCord and Margaret McNilly both of the parish of Ballantrae gave up their names to be married before the Kirk Session and after the calling of banns three Sabbaths, they were married on November 28, 1734. Over the next ten years, John McCord and Margaret McNilly had at least six children<sup>2</sup>.

1. Thomas McCord bapt., February 12, 1736.
2. John McCord bapt., February 22, 1738.
3. Agnes McCord bapt., March 2, 1740.
4. Jean McCord bapt., June 23, 1742.
5. Unnamed child bapt., either June 12, 1745, or July 12, 1746.
6. Unnamed child bapt., May 30, 1749.

They lived for a time in the little hamlet of Carlefin, which is located south of the village of Ballantrae across the river Stinchar. It is very possible John McCord was either the son or grandson of another John McCord, who lived at Little Bennan to the north of Ballantrae in the parish of Colmonell. According to the 1691 Hearth Tax of Colmonell, John was liable for the one-off tax payment of 14 shillings at Candlemas (February 2<sup>nd</sup>)<sup>3</sup>. Interestingly, the McCords are not mentioned in the tax roll covering the parish of Ballantrae, where in 1691 the McNilly (sic. McNeillie) are listed in Garfer.

The earliest baptismal records for the parish of Colmonell begin in 1759; whilst the marriage records only start in 1838. Two Thomas McCords appear almost simultaneously in the parish of Colmonell in the 1760s: Thomas McCord in Knockdaw, who married Marion McCunn, and Thomas McCord in Cundry, who married Agnes McCunn<sup>4</sup>. Where these two McCunn sisters who had married to two McCord cousins? The names of their children born after 1759 are only known: Thomas and Marion had William (born in Cundry March 11, 1761), Thomas (born in Almont November 10, 1768), David (born in Barchlewan July 7, 1770) and Sarah (born in Barchlewan February 6, 1774). Thomas and Agnes had Sibylla

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<sup>1</sup> Paterson, James: History of Ayrshire with a Genealogical Account of Families of Ayrshire (1847), Vol. I, p. 247.

<sup>2</sup> General Registry of Scotland, Ballantrae OPR 579.

<sup>3</sup> Urquhart, Robert H. J. & Close, Robert: The Heath Tax For Ayrshire 1691, Vol. 1, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> General Registry of Scotland, Colmonell OPR 582.

(born in Knockdaw May 29, 1763) and Mary (born in Knockdaw May 14, 1765). It was from the parish of Colmonell and almost certainly, from this family of McCords that John McCord of Shawangunk in Ulster County, New York, America, emigrated from in 1774. He was born on December 29, 1747, in the parish of Colmonell and was probably the son of a Thomas McCord, as he named his eldest son Thomas. In the map below, Cundry, Barchlewan and Knockdaw are located near Lendalfoot.



**Figure 1 Parishes of Girvan, Colmonell and Ballantrae**

The McCords of Little Bennane, Cundry, Barchlewan and Knockdaw may well descend from Rodger McCord in Ardmillan in the parish of Colmonell, who died in the month of May 1627, leaving a widow, Kathrine Inglis, and four sons, William, Thomas, Rodger and James, all minors at the time of his death. He died intestate, in other words, he died without leaving a last will and testament. Prior to 1824, if a deceased person had died intestate leaving a widow and children, the 'deceased's moveable goods, gear, sums of money and debts' were

divided into three parts; the widow's, children and the decease's third part, which had to be confirmed by the commissary court. A testament dative was drawn up by the court and it served to appoint and confirm an executor on the court's behalf, to dispose of the decease's third part, which was usually taken up by the deceased's next of kin by confirmation.

On May 27, 1628, we find John McPedan in Lanragane, on behalf of William, Thomas, Rodger and James McCord, present at the Commissary Court in Glasgow, where a decree was issued in favour of Kathrine Inglis and William McCord, appointed executors. I have had Rodger's testament dative abstracted below. It will be noted that Rodger was a tenant of Thomas Kennedy of Ardmillan and paid annual rent of £18 for his farm.

### **Testament Dative of Rodger McCord in Ardmillan**

Testament dative and Inventar of the 'guids geir debtis and sowmes of money' which pertained to the late Rodger McCord in Ardmillane within the parish of Colmonell at the time of his death who died in the month of May 1627, faithfully made and given up by Kathrine Inglis his relict in name and behalf of William, Thomas, Rodger and James McCorde(s) bairnes lawful to the defunct and executors dative duly decerned to his goods and gear by decree of the Commissary of Glasgow on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1628<sup>5</sup>.

### **Inventory**

The sewing of 4 bolls of oats estimated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> corn price of the boll with the fodder at 13s 4d, total £32.

The sewing of ½ boll bear estimated to the 4<sup>th</sup> corn price of the boll with the fodder at £4 13s 4d, total £9 6s 8d.

Two Ky (cow), one pregnant, and one farrow (young pig), price of the first £12 and the farrow £10, total £22

Five yew and five lambs, price of the yew and the lamb £3, total £15.

Two steers, price of both £4

The insight of the house in utencills and domicills with the clothes of the deceased estimated to £13 6s 8d.

Sum of the Inventory .... £95 13s 14d.

Debts owing out

To Thomas Kennedy of Ardmillane of mail (rent) the said year £18.

Rest of frie geir debts deducted £77 13s 4d.

Deceased part is £29 13s 4d

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<sup>5</sup> Commissariot of Glasgow, National Archives of Scotland, CC9/7/12.

The which day compeared personally Johnne McPedane in Lannragane and of his own consent acted himself as cautioner and surety for William, Thomas, Rodger and James McCordes bairnes lawful and executors confirmed to deceased Rodger McCord that the goods and gear contained in his confirmed testament shall be forth coming to all parties having interest as Law will and the said Kathrine Inglis relict of the defunct and William McCord, one of the executors acted themselves to warrant free relieve and skaithless keep the forenamed cautioner of the premises and of all damages there anent. Whereupon they asked acts.

The testament is ratified and approved and confirmed by the Commissary of Glasgow who gives and commits full power of intromission with the guids and gear abovementioned to the said executors dative above specified only with power to them to call and pursue therefore because the upgiver has made faith as use is in respect of the executor minorities and has found caution as Law will as an act there upon bears at Glasgow 27<sup>th</sup> day of May 1628.

Future research might well unearth new information linking the McCords of Little Bennane, Cundry, Barchlewan and Knockdaw, and clarify if they or at least some, descended from Rodger McCord or possibly, another John McCord, who is believed to have lived in the parish of Barr. In 1657, the Kirk Session of Barr paid 'lon McCord' £2 Scots for the help in burying his mother<sup>6</sup>. He and all the rest probably descend to an even older family.

To the northeast of Girvan lies Barneil, where the McCords lived from as early as 1500. Black notes 'John M'Cord and George M'Cord occupiers in Nether Barneil', in 1544<sup>7</sup>. However, the name first appears in Barneil in 1514, when a Thomas M'Cordzane witnessed a charter infetting Donald McClune in certain lands in Barneil<sup>8</sup>. Thomas appears to have been the father of John and George McCord. The McCords of Nether Barneil were tenants of the Kennedys and appear to have lived the Barneil area near Girvan for well over two hundred years, as they appear in the heath tax rolls, which note the name of William McCord in Craigance near Girvan. He was liable to pay 14 shillings hearth tax in 1691<sup>9</sup>. It is possible this branch of the McCords moved into the district of Girvan sometime after John Kennedy of Blairquhan purchased the land of Skaith near Newtown Stewart in Wigtownshire, anciently the family seat of the McCords of Scotland.

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<sup>6</sup> Love, Dane, *Scottish Kirkyards* (1989), p. 63.

<sup>7</sup> Black, George F.: *The Surnames of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1999), p. 472.

<sup>8</sup> *Papers of the Family of Bennan and Finnarts 1451-1926*, National Archives of Scotland, GD60/3.

<sup>9</sup> Urquhart, Robert H. J. & Close, Robert: *The Heath Tax For Ayrshire 1691*, Vol. 1, p. 10.

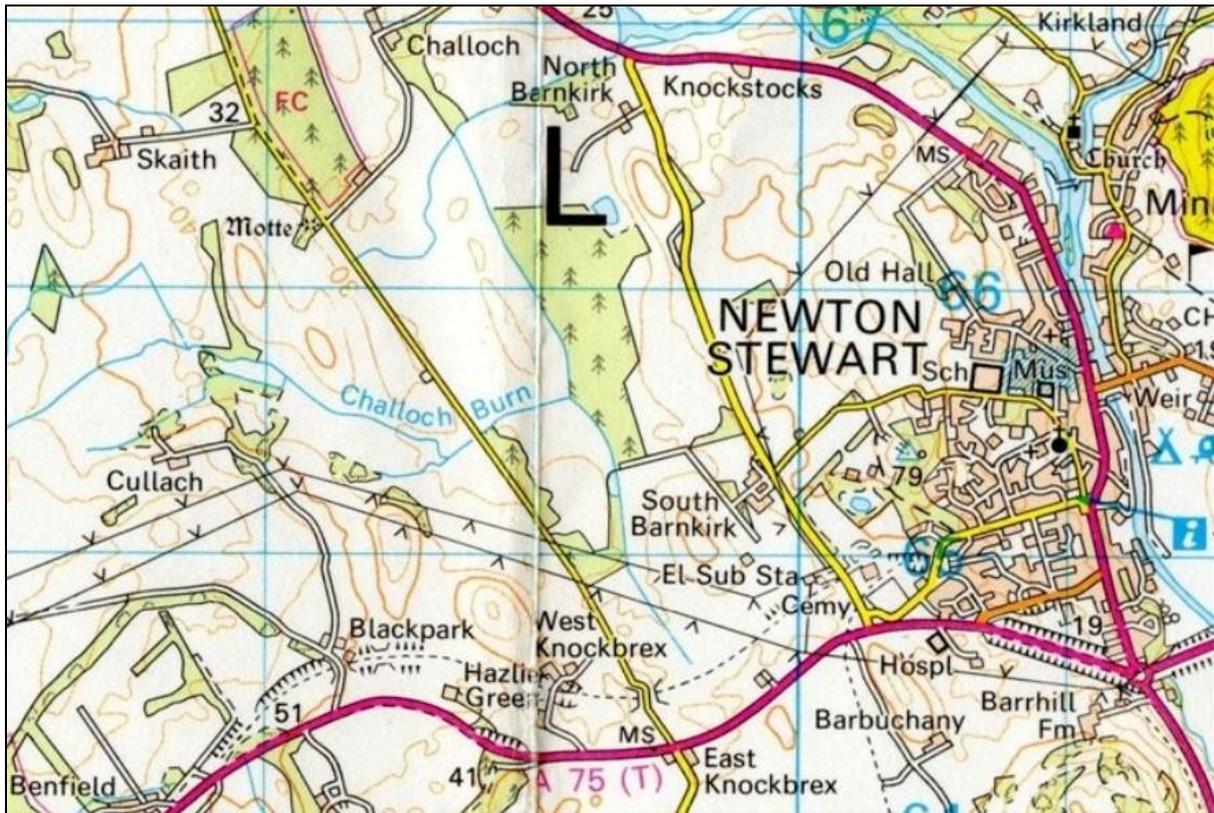


Figure 2 Skaith Farm (top left)

On June 12, 1471, Neil or 'Nigel M'Corde', the last of the McCord lairds, resigned the land of Skaith (sic. Skeich) in the sheriffdom of Wigtown in favour of John Kennedy of Blairquhan in Ayrshire<sup>10</sup>. In the *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland* there is no reference to a sasine being granted to Neil McCord in 1471. It is apparent, however, he paid the fees for 'entry and relief' as heir, as the sheriff of Wigtown, Andrew Agnew was answerable to the Lord Auditors of Exchequer in Edinburgh on July 11, 1471, for the sum of £86 due to the crown from the rents on the land of Skaith (sic. Skeich), which had been in the 'hands of the king for the space of six years without a sasine having been taken up by reason of ward'<sup>11</sup>. We also learn the 'wardship' of Skaith (sic. Skaych) had been granted to Donald McClellan of Gelston in 1465. Neil was served heir to William McCord, who died in 1465. William is known to have held several other properties in Wigtownshire, including, the lands of 'Castlecriuk and Keranannoch', which he had secured against a loan granted to him by Donald McClellan of Gelston. In 1549, a John McQuhan of Wigtown attempted to recover both these properties and claimed right to them as heir to his great grandfather of William McCord of Skaith (for details, see instruments of monition and transumpt below). The original letter or contract of agreement between William McCord and Donald McClellan, probably dating from the 1450s,

<sup>10</sup> Thomas, J. M. & others: *Registrum Magni Sigillii Regum Scottorum* (1882), Vol. II, no. 1025.

<sup>11</sup> Burnett, George (editor): *Rotuli Scaccarii Regum Scottorum* (1885), Vol. VIII, p. 38-39.

has not survived and as far as I am aware, no copy of it has come to light. As a result, it is difficult to date when both men drew up the original loan and the terms of its repayment.

#### **Instrument of Monition by John McQuhan of Wigtown**

July 1, 1549: Instrument of monition at the hand of Michael Hawthorn N.P. narrating that Nicolas McKee as procurator for John McQwhy great grandchild and heir to William McCorde of Skeyth went to the mansion house of William Gordon of Craichlaw called Munnuchtione where Alex McClellane of Gelston and William Gordon his tutor testamentary dwelt and warrand them to be for the Kirkiner Kirk on the Assumption of BVM to received 320 merks for redemption of the 7 merklands of Castlecriuk and Kerornanoch according to the letter of reversion by the deceased William McCorde. The warning was made to Robert Gordon son to the deceased Wm Gordon of Craichlaw and to Symon McCulloch and to Schir John Fleming chaplain to the said Wm Gordon. Witnessed by Cuthbert McClerg, John McCon, Donald Douglas, James McDowell, Thomas McMurray, William Kennedy and John McTaggart<sup>12</sup>.

#### **Instrument of Transumpt by John McQuhan of Wigtown**

July 9, 1550: Instrument of Transumpt at the hand of Henry Dun N.P. in presence of Robert Dun vicar of Kirkcormak and Commissary of Kirkcudbright, Desnes and Glenken at the instance of Schir Michael Dun as procurator from John McQuha grandson and heir of the deceased McCoyrd of Skeych. The document wa from the Protocol Book of the deceased Nicolas Mckke N.P. and was between the said John Murquha (sic) on the one part and William Gordon son and heir apparent of Wm Gordon of Craighlaw tutor of Alexander Makclellane of Gelston great grandchild of the deceased Donald McClellane of Gelston, narrating that the said Michael Dun acting as procurator for McQuha and Schir Herbert Anderson for Alexander McClellane, had consigned into the hands of William Dalziel and George McKie burgesses of Wigtown 320 merks for purposes of redeeming the 7 merkland of Castlecriuk and Keranannoch conforming to reversion by the deceased Donald McClellane of Gelston<sup>13</sup> to the said Wm McCoyrd. The date of the consigning was August 15, 1549, and it was witnessed by Archibald McCulloch in Belfarne, James McCulloch in Skeych, Alexander McKie, John Mortoun and Schir Gilbert McGuffok chaplain. William Gordon refused to receipt the money till John Murquha (sic) produced the letter of reversion and his own retour as heir to McCoyrd. Murquha refused production of either by his procurator Schir John

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<sup>12</sup> Extract from the Register of Charters 1459; Mochrum Notes Dunbar Family Vol. 3; R. C. Reid Collection Vol. 12, p. 36

<sup>13</sup> Donald McClellan of Gelston was Steward of Kirkcudbright in 1455.

Moscrops till he was satisfied of William Gordon proven restore the said lands. Done in the Church of St. Andrew at Kirkcudbright. Witnesses: James Kennedy in Larg, George Arstruther, Robert Neilson, John Foster, Schirs John Moffat, Ninian Dalzell and Herbert Anderson<sup>14</sup>.

Neil McCord's name appears in two further documents one of which refers to a Gilbert and Gibbe McCord. On June 6, 1478, the Lords of Council in Edinburgh issued a decree by which 'Neil Makcord', Michael McGilleroy, John MacBertny and Andrew MacMorrow were ordered to pay to Donald and Christine Hart the rents due to them by all four men for the land they rented in Wigtownshire<sup>15</sup>. A few days later on June 10, 1478, in another case brought before the Council, Andrew McCulloch, 'Neil Makcord', Quintin Agnew, 'Gilbert Makcord', 'Gibbe Makcord', 'Duncan Makmakin' in Crukmow, Alan Dickson, James Hart and others were ordained to restore the 'lxvj bolls of clene broddit ait' to Elizabeth Hamilton widow of the deceased Helise or Elias McCulloch of Myrton in the parish of Mochrum<sup>16</sup>. Five years earlier in 1473, Gilbert McCord had been found guilty for the felonious murder of John Keith, possibly of Craighlaw, and at the Justiciar-ayre he was fined £3 6 shillings 8 pence<sup>17</sup>.

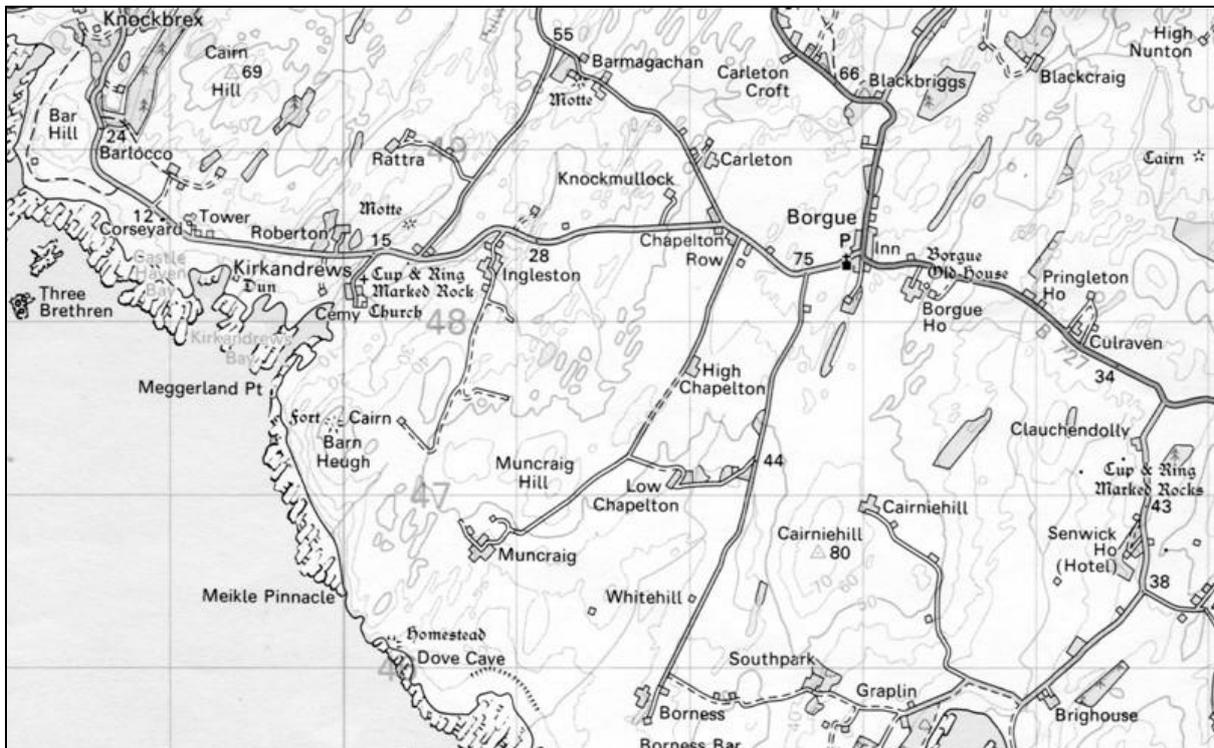


Figure 3 Kirkcudbright

<sup>14</sup> Extract from the Register of Charters 1492; Mochrum Notes Dunbar Family Vol. 3; R. C. Reid Collection Vol. 12, p. 38-39

<sup>15</sup> Acts of the Lords of Council in Civil Causes 1478-1495, p. 61

<sup>16</sup> Ditto, p. 63-64. See also for reference to Elias McCulloch of Myrton in 'Wigtownshire Charters' edited by R. C. Reid, Scottish History Society, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, Vol. LI, p. 57.

<sup>17</sup> Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland 1473-1498, Vol. 1, p. 9.

In the *Calendar of Charters* in the National Archives of Scotland, there is another document recording an even earlier form of McCord. In 1413, William McCorrard resigned into the hands of John de Crawford, lord of 'Kirkandrews of Porton', the 9 merklands called Porton and 40 shilling lands in the Boreland within the barony of 'Kirkandrews of Porton' in Kirkcudbrightshire. McCorrard is a phonetic form of McCord or McCoard. This charter also preserves the names of John McCorrard and 'Nigel son of Malcolm'; Nigel's father Malcolm might have been the son of William McCorrard.

### **Charter by John de Crawford to Gilbert Grierson of Lag**

July 4, 1413: Instrument of Resignation and Sasine taken at the hands of William Scot, vicar of Wauchope (in Eskdale) and notary public, on the resignation by William McCorrard into the hands of John de Crauford, lord of Kyrkandyr's of Purtoun, Superior thereof, of the 9 merklands called Purtoun and 40 shilling lands in the Bordland within the barony of Kyrkanderys of Purtoun, and the sasine given 'propriis manibus' of the said Superior to Gilbert Grierson lord of Lag, and Gilbert Grierson his son and heir, and their heir or heirs, for service aucht and wont. Witnessed by James de Conyngame, lord of Bondyngton, Walter Corbet, Fergus de Crauford, Patrick Fergusson, John Durand, John Underwode, Nigel, son of Malcolm, John McCorrard and Sir Mark, rector of the Upper Kirk of Ewesdale<sup>18</sup>.

In her article *The Northumbrian settlements in Galloway and Carrick*, Daphne Brooke identifies 'Kirkandrews of Porton' with the old village port or haven, where the church and the burial ground of St. Andrews are located at Kirkandrews Bay (figure 3). In the above map, the lands of Kirkandrews and Roberton are visible on the west. She also notes the element 'Porton or Purton' was used to distinguish this Kirkandrews from the Kirkandrews in the parish of Balmaghie<sup>19</sup>. The mote of Roberton, carved out of the natural bank overlooking the left bank of the Pulwhirrin Burn, stands northeast of the church of Kirkandrews, was once the stronghold of the Campania family from Leicestershire in thirteenth century<sup>20</sup>.

There is some evidence to suggest the chief of the McCorrard kindred had already been in possession of the 9 merkland Kirkandrews of Porton and 40 shilling lands in the Boreland since the reign of Robert the Bruce, if it is accepted the name McCorrard is simply a variant

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<sup>18</sup> Calendar of Charters (National Archives of Scotland) RH6 Vol. II, no. 233.

<sup>19</sup> Brooke, Daphne: *The Northumbrian settlements in Galloway and Carrick* in *Proceeding of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (1991), Vol. 121, p. 306.

<sup>20</sup> Oram, Richard: *The Lordship of Galloway* (2000), p. 228-229. See also, Tabraham, C. J.: *Norman Settlement in Galloway; Recent Fieldwork in the Stewartry: Studies in Scottish Antiquity* (1884), p. 96.

form of M'Horrard. It is not uncommon for the letters "H" and "C" to be interchanged in surnames beginning with the Gaelic 'ch'; as in the case of McHarge and McHarry, which in Galloway and South Ayrshire, were often spelt as McCharge and McCharry in the 1500s.

In volume one of the *Registrum Magni Sigillii Regum Scottorum*<sup>21</sup>, Appendix II notes a grant by Robert the Bruce sometime between 1318 and 1329 of the lands of Kirkandrews to Nigel McHorrard, spelt as M'herarde and M'Horrard. The original charter has not survived and our only reference to it is in indexes A and B in Appendix II. Both indexes are known to contain numerous spelling errors and mistakes. Index A is written in Latin and has been ascribed to the work of James Makgill of Rankeilor, who was clerk register from 1554 to 1579. Index B was compiled about 1629 and is written in the Scots vernacular.

Index A, No. 613

Carta Nigelli M'herarde  
de terrie Kirkandris.

Index B

Nigelli M'Horrard, the lands of Kirkander,  
bounding, in vicecomitatu de Drumfresis.

In the early 1300s, the sheriffdom of Dumfries extended as far west as the river Cree in Galloway, where the lands of Kirkandrews are located. Index B notes the charter of the lands of Kirkandrews was "bounding", in other words, it was a bounding charter or title, which defined the land comprised in it by description of the boundaries thus excluding the possibility of expansion or enlargement by possession and prescription<sup>22</sup>. The wording of William McCorrard's charter of resignation may well hold a clue as to the extent of the lands, but not the boundaries described in the original charter. William's lands embraced two properties, the 9 merklands of 'Kirkandrew of Porton' and the 40 shilling lands in the Boreland, which together reflect a division within the barony of 'Kirkandrews of Porton', held in superiority by John de Crawford, lord of the barony of Kirkandrews of Porton in 1413.

George F. Black thought the surname McCord was derived from the Irish name *MacCuarta* and cited Patrick Woulfe's *Irish Names and Surnames*, which gives MacCort as a possible variant and then suggests, MacCuarta is 'not improbably a corruption' of the Gaelic name Mac Mhuirheartaigh<sup>23</sup>. In relation to the Scottish McCords, this should be questioned, as there is an alternative explanation. Watson in *The Celts (British and Gael) in Dumfriesshire and Galloway*, refers to a Nigel McHorrard and has this to say about him<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Thomson, John Maitland (editor): *Registrum Magni Signilli Regum Scotorum*, The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland A.D. 1306-1424 (1984), p. 551.

<sup>22</sup> Duncan, A.G.M.: *Scottish Legal Terms* (1992), p. 13.

<sup>23</sup> Woulfe, Rev. Patrick: *Sloinne Gaedheal is Gall: Irish Names and Surnames* (1923).

<sup>24</sup> Watson, W. J.: *The Celts (British and Gael) in Dumfriesshire and Galloway* in the *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History & Antiquarian Society*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, Vol. 11, page 139.

"In the reign of Robert I, Nigellus M'Herarde or M'Horrard had lands in Kirkandrews. His name is *mac Eraird*, Erard's son, Erard being a compound of *air* and *ard*, meaning "very tall"; in this position, *air* becomes *er, ir, or, ur*."

George F. Black confusingly classified McHorrard under the name MacEard and has the origin of MacEard derived from the Gaelic *Mac Earaird*, Erard's son: he then follows Watson's note on the meaning of the name cited above<sup>25</sup>. As far as I know, this is the only known example of McHorrard in Galloway and in this style, the only difference between *Horrard* and *Corrard*, are the letters 'H' and 'C', hardly a striking linguistic difference. It seems reasonable then to conclude both names are simply variants of the same name.

In the context of Galloway with all its linguistic differences, e.g. Gaelic, Scots and English, and the high probability of misspelling and translation errors especially from Gaelic to Latin, consideration is given here to another *possible* variation of the surname. Appendix II preserves another name, Nigel McGarharald, M'Chorald or M'Thorald, who in the second half Robert's reign was granted certain lands apparently in Ayrshire; see below. The name is listed under a group of charters confirmed by the king from the sheriffdom of Ayr and like McHorrard, it has probably suffered from phonetic and spelling errors.

Index A, No. 345

Carta Nigelli McGarharald [de  
M'Chorald] de terris de Fethernevin  
[Fothien Sceket]<sup>26</sup>.

Index B

To Neill M'Thorald, of Fetherneuin,  
Suketh.

The Harleian MSS in the British Library in London preserves a reference to this charter, which adds several pieces of information not found in Indexes A and B; see next page.

MSS: "Carta Nigelli Makthorald in excambium pro terra de Fortherneuin, de octava de Strekith: Faciendo servitium unius architenentis. Concessimus eidem quod dictas terras habeat in liberam warennam libere quiete de Sorem et Freelache. Quare firmiter prohibemus etc." Also "Carta Nigelli de M'thorald terre de Knokbrek et aliarum. Anno 18."

The Harleian MSS notes 'Nigel Makthorald' exchanged the land of Fethernevin or Forthernevin for the eighth part of Strekith, Sceket or Suketh. The 'Mak' in Makthorald is a

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<sup>25</sup> Black, George F.: *The Surnames of Scotland, Their Origin, Meaning, and History* (republished 1999), p. 490.

<sup>26</sup> Thomson, John Maitland (editor): *Registrum Magni Signilli Regum Scotorum, The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland A.D. 1306-1424* (New Edition, 1984), p. 533.

common form of 'Mac' and is found mainly in the Middle Ages. In Gaelic, "Th" at the beginning of a name has the sound of "h" and is often used as a phonetic device for dividing syllables, as Latharn or Latharna, Lorne. In the Harleian MSS, Makthorald seems nearer to Index B than Index A, and both place the Gaelic "th" at the beginning of the name. Index A has the McGarharald and M'Chorald with the emphasis on the phonetic "ch".

The second element 'Thorald' could be either *thowraldr* an Old Norse name meaning 'Thor ruler' or *harold*, Old Norse *Haraldr*. Black identifies MacHarold in the name of John Makherrald one of the victims of the her ship of Petty by the earl of Huntly in 1502, whose name is also given as Makherrard<sup>27</sup>. The Old Norse name MacThorsteyn appears in an Inquisition held at Girvan in Carrick in 1260, when Alexander MacThorsteyn one of twelve jurors heard the plea of Hector concerning the five pennyland of Auchensoul.<sup>28</sup> The name Makherrard strongly echoes, phonetically, the name MacHorrard and could point to Makthorald and McHorrard sharing a common etymology in the Old Norse *MacHaraldr*.

The name Nigel is the Latin form of Neil or Niall a common name found in Carrick. The earliest example in Carrick - South Ayrshire - appears in the name of 'Nigel MacGilwyn', who witnessed a grant by Duncan, earl of Carrick, of St. Cuthbert's Church of Maybole to the Priory of North Berwick sometime before 1250, when Earl Duncan died<sup>29</sup>. Next, we find Neil, father of Macrath, who might well be Neil or Nigel MacGilwyn. Macrath is mentioned in a list of jurors inquiring into the extent of the lands of Neil, earl of Carrick, in 1260<sup>30</sup>. This Neil was the grandson of Earl Duncan of Carrick and died in 1256.

In the *Registrum Magni Sigillii Regum Scottorum*, Fethernevin is indexed under Finevin, which gives the variations, Fynevin, Fothnevin, Fothnevyn, Fothenevin, Fothien, Futhvenin, Futhenevyn, Futhynevent and Fethernevin, for the land, barony and church of that name, now modern Finavon near Forfar in Angus. It is accepted Finavon was originally Finevin or Fothneven and probably means 'wood-sanctuary'<sup>31</sup>. Fethernevin, however, would appear to have been wrongly categorised under Finevin in Angus and probably, should have been indexed separately under the place-name Fethernevin. Once clarified, it becomes apparent we are dealing here with a very old place-name from Ayrshire.

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<sup>27</sup> Black, George F.: *The Surnames of Scotland, Their Origin, Meaning, and History* (republished 1999), p. 508.

<sup>28</sup> Bain, Joseph: *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland 1108-1272* (1881), Vol. 1, no. 2674.

<sup>29</sup> *Papers of the Maule Family, Earls of Dalhousie*, National Archives of Scotland, GD45/13/282.

<sup>30</sup> Milne, Isobel A.: *An Extant of Carrick in 1260*, in *Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 34, no. 17 (1955), p. 46-49.

<sup>31</sup> Dorward David: *Scotland's Place-names* (1995), p. 101.

The first element of Fethernevin, Fether also appears as Forther, which has a different root meaning from Fether. *Fether* also *Fothair* or *Fathair* (Scottish Gaelic) means a slope or terraced slope<sup>32</sup>. *Fether* is modern *Fetter* and is frequently found prefixed to names in the north-east of Scotland e.g. *Fettercairn*, *Fetteresso* and *Fetterangus*<sup>33</sup>. *Forther* can be compared with *Fortar* an Old Gaelic name found in Forter or Forther in Glenisla, Forfarshire. Watson suggests *Fortar* may be compared to *Ferter*, a term corresponding with the Brittonic *gwethyr*, meaning a fortress<sup>34</sup>. *Ferteir* in the parish of Balmaclellan in Kirkcudbrightshire (1515)<sup>35</sup> and *Ferter* in the parish of Barr in South Ayrshire may represent the same element, with the Gaelicised 'f' for 'w' and 't' for 'th'.

The second element in Fethernevin or Forthernevin, *neuin* or *nevin* is Gaelic *Nemed* an element found in a number of place-names, including the old name Fothneven now Finavon. The 'm' of 'nemed' very often aspirates to a 'v' sound or disappears altogether<sup>36</sup>. It is an Old Irish name and is thought to mean sanctuary or a sacred place. It is also a personal name, and appears in Nevin, also a surname. Black has *Naomhin*, a diminutive of *Naomh*, meaning little saint or saintlet, Latinized *Nevinus*<sup>37</sup>. He remarks, it was formerly a favourite personal name in Galloway and Ayrshire. Early examples include 'Nevinus', parson of Neveth, who witnessed a grant of a saltpan in Rosneath to the monks of Paisley, and Nevyn, father of Patrick (1284), possibly 'Patrick fitz John Nevyn' of Lanarkshire who rendered homage to Edward I in 1296. The name Nevin appears to suggest a personal name and might well refer to Nevin's slope; Feters in Balmaclellan and Barr are both located on hilly terrain.

The location of the land of Strekith, Sceket or Suketh is less apparent. The first part of the name is obscure to me; the second element, 'keth' or 'kith' is similar to Dalketh modern Dalkeith. It is possible, however, Skaith represents a contracted form, a phonetic variation of what might have been an Old Norse or Anglican name Scotticised? John MacQueen has suggested Skaith may represent a Scandinavianized form of *sceat* (Old English), 'strip of land', later a 'piece of land left untilled and over grown with trees or plants'<sup>38</sup>. Perhaps, it is stretching the comparison too far by suggesting the land of Strekith, Sceket or Suketh, represents the land of Skaith held by Nigel McCord in 1471, but if it is, it would add weight to the idea 'Nigel McCorrard' and 'Nigel McChorald' are one and the same person.

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<sup>32</sup> Watson, W. J.: *The Celtic Placenames of Scotland* (edition 1993), p. 509-512. See Ross, David: *Scottish Place-Names* (2001), p. 86-87; Nicolaisen, W. F. H: *Scottish Place-Names* (2001), p. 71.

<sup>33</sup> Ross, David: *Scottish Place-Names* (2001), p. 86-87.

<sup>34</sup> Watson, W. J.: *The Celtic Placenames of Scotland* (edition 1993), p. 69.

<sup>35</sup> Paul, James Balfour & Thomson, John Maitland (editors): *Registrum Magni Signilli Regum Scotorum, The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland A.D. 1513-1546* (1883), no. 51.

<sup>36</sup> Dorward David: *Scotland's Place-names* (1995), p. 101.

<sup>37</sup> Black, George F.: *The Surnames of Scotland, Their Origin, Meaning, and History* (republished 1999), p. 630.

<sup>38</sup> MacQueen, John: *Place-Names of the Wigtownshire Moors and Machars* (2008), p.38-39.

In 1323, 'Nigel McChorald' was also granted the land of 'Knokbrek' modern Knockbex. Southwest of Newtown Stewart are the farms of West and East Knockbex (see figure 3), which may at one time, have formed the whole of the land of Knockbex. If the identification with Skaith and Knockbex is correct, it is probable the 'octava' or 'eighth' formed part of the whole lands of Streketh, Scekeith or Suketh, granted to Nigel for the service of one archer. He was also granted to 'have the said land in free warren', in other words, the right to hunt game within an area usually defined by the granter.

## CONCLUSION

In Wigtownshire, the history of the McCords is difficult to follow in contemporary documents after 1478, when Neil and Gilbert McCord are last recorded. In 1477, the lands of Skaith with Frethride and Merton in the parish of Penninghame were all incorporated into a free burgh and barony called Merton by James III of Scotland for the benefit of John Kennedy of Blairquhan. The main branch appears to have moved north to Barneil perhaps under John Kennedy with others taking the form McCourty in Kirkcudbrightshire. By 1684<sup>39</sup>, the surname had disappeared from Wigtownshire, which leads to the question, how many McCords had migrated to Ulster, a province in the north of Ireland, in the years prior to 1684, when many Scots from Galloway are known to have either migrated or fled due to civil war or persecution? The McCord DNA Project has at least two DNA haplotypes that belong to men who descend from an ancestor who migrated from Ayrshire. One of these includes a descendant of John McCord of the parish of Colmonell<sup>40</sup>.

24<sup>th</sup> February, 2013

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<sup>39</sup> Scot, William (editor): The parish of Wigtownshire and Minnigaff, 1684. There are no references to the surname and variant forms of McCord in the parish lists.

<sup>40</sup> McCord DNA Project kit no. 30896.