Factoid: Macdonald in Gaelic is MacDhomnuill

Dhomnuill is translated as both Donald and Daniel into English.

Christie’s line:

Canadian Census 1881: Christie age 26 residing with Donald (57), Catherine (44), Hugh (18), Maryanne (16), Donald Angus (7) & Catherine (70). Since no birth dates are given and the exact month the information was recorded is not listed, Christie was either born in 1854 or 1855.

Canadian Census 1921: Christie residing in Inverness with Annie May.

Canadian Census 1931: Christie residing in Inverness with Lillian Blair (Annie May’s sister).

Christie’s father, Hugh, came to Cape Breton as a child with his parents in 1790. His wife was Catherine MacInnes (a second marriage). Their daughter was Christy (Christie) Hugh died at River Inhabitants (near Grand Anse), Cape Breton in 1862. Question: Was he Catholic and that’s why there’s no talk of him in the family oral history?

Records suggest that he married Lillian Ross of West Bay b.1807. Lillian was the daughter of Alex Ross, and Lillias who arrived in Pictou in 1774. That would have been a wife prior to Catherine MacInnes.

This Hugh undoubtedly had at least one other name, probably Donald.

Death dates are tricky unless found on a gravestone. It was common for families to declare a family member dead when they left their family’s home (e.g. moved to River Inhabitants). Annie May was in the Inverness Co. records as deceased in 1930—the year she left permanently for Boston.

Hugh (Christie’s husband):

More possibilities for Hugh Macdonald

There was a Hugh Macdonald that lived on West Bay Road and was also a Member of Parliament. The same Hugh Macdonald died at River Inhabitants (near Grand Anse). Perhaps it’s one and the same? Could this be an uncle or cousin of Christie’s husband Hugh?

Christie’s brothers and sisters: MaryAnne (1835), Neil (1838\*-- Grand Anse), Alexander (1842), Donald (1845) , Ann (1848) John (1852).

Hugh (Christie’s husband) Macdonald’s family is hard to trace. In West Bay the oral historian claimed that she was a daughter-in-law of The Honorable James Macdonald and that was why they sold her part of their land after his ship was wrecked off the N.J. shore. (See copy of the deed in this packet). By examining the deeds it is clear to see that Neil (Hugh’s father), not The Honorable James, supported her purchase of the house and land from The Honorable James and Margaret, for $1. It’s possible that young Hugh had spent time in the James Macdonald home, either to help in the stores and warehouse, or simply to have a place to live at some point in his youth. It was common for families to welcome a distant cousin into their home as a boarder.

Annie May History (by Ainslie Armstrong McLees)

Her mother: Christie (Christy)

Annie May Macdonald born in Chelsea, MA. Her mother, Christie had accompanied her father, Hugh Macdonald, to Massachusetts since he was sailing out of Fall River, MA. on the Kate Marquee (1893-1894), as first mate (according to Annie May). It was common for farmers to sign on to a ship during the off-season for farming. The schooner went down off the New Jersey shore carrying a load of stone from MA. To Philadelphia. (Specs. In original Reunion 2022 booklet as is the Coast Guard report of the wreck).

Family Secrets and Questions, and Anecdotes

Did Annie May move to Boston to get married in 1930? Has anyone ever heard of a 2nd husband? Marriage recorded in Boston the same year she permanently immigrated. No name listed for the husband.

Irene told stories of the older men in Inverness giving Glenn whiskey when he was only 8 years old and on, laughing as he tottered and fell over, trying over and over again to try to walk so he could get home. Did he die of alcoholism like his father had (according to Irene).

Glenn immigrated to Boston in 1926 ( he was just 17). He married Betty Norton the same year & they had two children. His second wife, Margaret Luddy, and he lived in Waterbury, CN. Until Glenn died at age 49 of a brain aneurysm. He and Margaret had frequently visited my family in Havertown, PA. I remember him as always having a “get rich fast” scheme—selling this, that or the other thing, which my parents would gently refuse to buy or invest in. He had the Macdonald face—thin with somewhat sunken eyes.

Did Annie May move to the Boston area to be near Glenn or to get married herself? See the marriage record below:

Massachusetts U.S. Town and Vital Records 1620-1988

Entry 7585 Annie May McDonald

Marriage Index 1901-1955



Annie May Macdonald 1930 Marriage in Rowley



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Irene Margaret Macdonald Armstrong (1907-1988). B: Cap Rouge, Quebec.

\*gravesite: Valley Forge Memorial Park, PA

\* taught at age 15-16 at Lake Ainslie’s (CB) Scottsville one room schoolhouse in 1922-1923 after placing#1 on Canadian National Exam. (See poem written about her by some of her older students). She received a full scholarship to university in Halifax following her service.

\*married Maurice Armstrong in 1927. Moved with him to Alberta (he was a missionary). Returned to New Brunswick (St. John ) in 1930. Traveled to Europe in 1932. Moved to Boston (Maurice was in a Ph.D. program at Harvard; Irene was a teaching assistant (to Prof. Matheson) and M.A. student at Radcliffe) specializing in British Renaissance Literature (*The Faerie Queen,* by Spencer). She did not finish her degree before moving to Philadelphia, where Maurice became Dept. Chair of History at Ursinus College. She had to abandon her dreams of becoming a professor herself. After Maurice’s death in 1967, she became very active in politics, becoming the voice of senior citizens in the Havertown section of Delaware County. She had three children: Sheila Macdonald Armstrong Hallowell, Christina Margaret Armstrong Brouse, and Ainslie Irene Armstrong McLees, and one adopted son, John Frances Armstrong.

The Honorable James’ history—member of Parliament representing West Bay/Inverness County.

His father Donald arrived in Cape Breton from N. Uist with his parents c. 1794 and by 1827 had settled in Wycocomagh as a merchant. Another account of Donald has him arriving with 3 brothers in 1827 and going to Wycocomagh where he was a merchant. All details of the two Donalds correspond except for their dates of arrival in Cape Breton. They are probably the same person and very possibly his father was named also named Donald (John).

Donald in Gaelic is Dhomnuill. It was translated as both Donald and Daniel.

Daniel B. Macdonald, son of James and husband of Annie May

Worked for Mining/Railroad Company

Was a civil engineer—designed and supervised construction of Cape Rouge RR Bridge in Quebec

Died at 32 or 33 –official cause of death, heart attack and kidney failure.

Irene always said he was an alcoholic and that he died of cirrhosis of the liver. She remembered seeing him pass out and fall in the gutter along the road in front of their house many times.

Annie May’s husband,Daniel’s, sister: Josephine (“Aunt Jo”) was a teacher in the West Bay Schoolhouse. She was married to Frank Milligan (Milliken), a Presbyterian minister. I remember meeting Aunt Jo when I went to West Bay for the first time in 1953 (I was 5). She held me on her lap and read me a story from a big picture book. As we were leaving she gave me a school bell she had used in her classroom. My sister, Christina, appropriated it for many years, insisting that Aunt Jo had given it to her since she planned to be a teacher. (She was 15 at the time). Many years later, Christina, gave me the bell, admitting that she had always known that Aunt Jo had given it to me. It doesn’t really matter who she gave it to. It remains in the family as an heirloom passed from one teacher to another. I have a crystal clear memory of Aunt Jo standing in the doorway of the West Bay house waving to us as we drove out the driveway heading for West Bay Road and the way to Inverness.

Uncle Alec (a brother of Daniel), had served in the First World War & had a peg leg (wooden) that he used to shake at me to make a point. He had been the merchant at the Marble Mountain Store. His wife, Aunt Bess, lived with Aunt Jo in West Bay at the family house after both their husbands passed. I had always thought they were blood sisters until I did the family research and discovered that Aunt Bess was a MacLachlan.

Property:

On the West Bay map you can see the two Macdonald stores and the Macdonald home. Later a family named Leonard took over the stores and the family home (still standing—historical designation, although the write-up only talks of the Leonard family). During one visit, old Mr. Leonard’s granddaughter was visiting to check on a tenant in the Leonard House. She explained that when The Honorable James went to Parliament, her grandfather had taken responsibility for everything. I have no idea how accurate that account is, but it seems logical.

During our visit to the Leonard House in 1999, the tenant, a very elderly gentleman named Cameron, was perplexed by a sparrow that had come down the chimney and that he could not shoo out of the house. Our son, Angus, went into the house to help. With no trouble at all the bird lit on his hand and allowed him to carry it out. Angus, a great believer in Celtic spiritual connections, believed it was his great-grandfather in a reincarnated form who was reaching out to him. (Angus passed away of a glioblastoma brain tumor in 2003 at age 33)