



# MACAULAYS OF ULLAPOOL AND LOCH BROOM

Source: <https://www.scotweb.co.uk/info/macaulay-of-ullapool-and-loch-broom>

The MacAulays of Ullapool and Loch Broom were a minor sept or clan, located in the area of Loch Broom on the north-western coast of the Scottish Highlands. There is no connection between the MacAulays and the Clan MacAulay who were centred in the Loch Lomond area bordering the Highlands and Scottish Lowlands. Some historians have speculated that the MacAulays may possibly be related to the MacAulays of Lewis who are centred on the Isle of Lewis. These two septs are thought to be related because of the close proximity between the lands they occupied. The MacAulays of Ullapool and Loch Broom were a sept of the Clan MacKenzie, and took an active part in the history of the area.

## Origins

Several historians have claimed the MacAulays of Ullapool and Loch Broom are of Norse descent, due to a possible Norse origin of their surname, and the history and place-names of the lands they inhabited. The surname MacAulay, in the area of the Scottish Hebrides, is thought to be derived from the Gaelic *Mac Amhlaoibh* or *Mac Amhlaidh*, Gaelic patronymic forms of the Old Norse personal name *Áleifr* and *Óláfr*. George Mackenzie, 1st Earl of Cromartie described the MacAulays as being among the ancient inhabitants of Kintail, of these the *MacIvors*, *MacAulas*, *MacBollans*, and *Clan Tarlach* were thought to have descended from Norwegian families. The MacAulays, according to the *First (Old) Statistical Account of Scotland*, were also noted to having inhabited the lands of Kintail before the MacRaes entered what are now regarded as *their* ancestral lands.

## History

### Duncan MacAulay, Commander of Eilean Donan

According to the MacKenzie's version of history for their clan, during the early 1300s the chiefs of the MacKenzies were at odds with the Earls of Ross. Coinneach na Sroine (*Kenneth of the Nose*), regarded as the third chief of the MacKenzies, was to have been executed by Uilleam III, Earl of Rossin 1350. One of Coinneach's trusted men was **Duncan MacAulay** of Lochbroom, who commanded the castle of Eilean Donan against the Earl of Ross. After Coinneach's death, MacAulay sent his own son to MacDougall of Lorn, and his master's heir, Murchadh Dubh (*Black Murdoch*), to Macleod of Lewis. Though MacAulay's son was then seized and murdered by a follower of the Earl of Ross, Leod MacGilleandreis, who held the lands of Kenlochewe. Murchadh Dubh later grew to manhood was to have lurked in the caves of Kenlochewe and Torridon, and was known since as Murchadh Dubh nan Uamhag (*Black Murdoch of the Cave*). In time Murchadh Dubh nan Uamhag had his revenge on MacGilleandreis and later married Isabel, daughter and heir of Duncan MacAulay of Lochbroom. Through this marriage the lands of MacAulay of Lochbroom passed to the MacKenzies, and from then on the MacAulays followed the MacKenzie's of Kintail.

### Battle of Bealach na Broige

The Battle of Bealach na Broige was a battle fought between various north-western highland clans from the lands of Ross, against the followers of the Earl of Ross, which consisted largely of Dingwalls and Munros. Though the date of the battle is obscure, with historians giving various dates, what is known is that the rising consisted of the "*Clan-juer*" (Clan Iver), "*Clantalvigh*" (Clan-t-aluigh, ie. Clan Aulay), and "*Clan-leajwe*" (Clan-leaive, ie. Clan Leay).

The Munros and Dingwalls pursued and overtook the rising clans at Bealach na Broige, where a bitter battle ensued, fed by old feuds and animosities. In the end the MacIvors, MacAulays and MacLeays were almost utterly extinguished and the Munros and Dingwalls won a hollow victory, having lost a great number of men including their chiefs.

### Post 1600s

From the end of the middle-ages, the history of the MacAulays of Loch Broom is entwined with that of the MacKenzies of Kintail. On August 16, 1725 George Wade, who was "Commander in Chief of His Majesty's forces, castles, forts and barracks in North Britain", by power of the Disarming Act, ordered the disarmament of all highlanders who lived within the lands of the former Earl of Seaforth. William Mackenzie, 5th Earl of Seaforth had forfeited his lands by joining the Jacobite rebellion of 1715. Included among the men within MacKenzie lands were the MacAulays of Ullapool and Lochbroom.

To all and every the Clans of the M'Kenzies, M'Ras, Murchiessons, M'Lays, M'Lennans, Mathewsons, M'Aulays, Morrisons, M'Leods, and all other Clans and persons liable by Act of Parliament to be disarmed within the limits of that part of the Estate formerly belonging- to the late Earl of Seaforth, in the parishes of Dingwell, Urquhart, Collyrindden, Rosemarky, Avoch, Suddy, Kilmure Wester, Killurnon, Luggy Wester, Urray, Contan, Totterery, Kintail, Loch Caron, Garloch, Loch Breyn, and Assint, and to all other persons inhabiting or being within the parishes, lands, limits, and boundings above-mentioned ... George Wade, *Summons sent to the Estate of the former Earl of Seaforth, August 16, 1725*

The highlanders, listed in the Summons above, were ordered to turn in their "Broad Swords, Targets, Poynarids, Whingars, or Durks, Side-pistol, or Pistols, Guns, or any other warlike weapons" at Brahan Castle by August 28, 1725.

