

A PRIMER ON THE HISTORY OF CLAN LOGAN



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Introduction

Society imbues us with the idea that who we come from dictates who we are.

Syllogistically, then, you must come from greatness to be great. And so, we hope that our ancestors had a place among the ancient monarchs, or the aristocracy and the elites.

However, a title does not define character. To be great, you need only exhibit the qualities of greatness. Logans throughout history exhibited such qualities. They may not have been kings or queens; neither did they always hold prestigious titles. But they regularly proved themselves as active members of the community, working as cooks, fishmongers, ironsmiths, bakers, clerks, ministers, notaries, burgesses, and even knights.

Scotland needed people like the Logans to keep it going. That is, the fabric of society cannot exist without the threads. And the Logans gave many threads.

Early Logans

Some trace the Logans to 1166, the rough date of the Logan Charter. This document recorded a transfer of land by Uchtred, son of the famed Fergus, Lord of Galloway.¹ However, the “Logan” lands referenced by the charter’s name are those of the M’Dowall family, the charter’s possessors. These lands, long held by the M’Dowalls and located in county Wigtown, are **not** the lands of Logan in Ayrshire from whence come the Logans of that ilk. The Logan name still today remains in Wigtownshire in the parish of Kirkmaiden: Port Logan. But the M’Dowalls of Logan have nothing to do with Clan Logan, and the claim of Logans having descended from Fergus, Lord of Galloway, lacks historical backing.

Instead, the Logans first appear in the thirteenth century in charters during the reign of King Alexander II (reigned 1214–

¹ 4 Ayrshire & Wigtonshire Archæological Ass’n, *Archæological and Historical Collections Relating to the Counties of Ayr and Wigton* 55–56 (1884).

1249).² The early Logans had some power, for Andrew de Logan of Wigtownshire, Walter Logan of Lanarkshire, Thurbrand de Logan of Dumfriesshire, and Phillip de Logyn, bourgeois of the Burgh of Monros, all signed the Ragman's Roll in 1296, a bond of fealty that King Edward I of England demanded of the Scottish leaders. Walter Logan's arms are detailed as *three piles in point*, with the shield between the antlers of a *stag head cabossed*,³ and he thus serves as the earliest known Logan armiger. Assuming the metals and tinctures (the colors) match later Logan arms, the seal likely resembles that on the following page.

Of course, the Andrew named in the Roll may not have been a Logan given his hailing from Wigtownshire, but rumor has it that the descendants of Walter Logan became the well-

² See 2 Alexander Nisbet, *A System of Heraldry: Historical & Critical Remarks on Prynn's History, So Far as Concerns the Ragman-Roll* 46 (new ed. 1816).

³ William Rae MacDonald, *Scottish Armorial Seals* 221 (1904).



Figure 1 - Likely arms of Walter Logan (1296).

known Logans of Restalrig.⁴ This line may also have descended from Adame de Logan, mentioned in a 1235 charter of King Alexander II.⁵

The Ragman's Roll does not demand the conclusion that the Logans favored the English in the First War of Scottish Independence. In 1297, though, Edward I left for France and sent supportive Scottish

⁴ 2 Nisbet, *supra* note 2, at 18.

⁵ George Frederick Russell Colt, *History & Genealogy of the Colts of That Ilk and Gartsherrie and of the English & American Branches of That Family* 110 (1887).

nobility to England in his absence. These nobles included one Allan Logan, “a brave, intelligent, and active soldier.”⁶ Events did not go well for Edward while away, for William Wallace soon became a great force and defeated the English at Stirling Bridge on 13 September 1297.⁷

The Logans definitively supported Robert the Bruce, who picked up the fight to free Scotland after Wallace’s death. After his coronation in April 1306, the Bruce sought to rally support but met some resistance because he had previously helped the English. The opposition of Clan Cumin (Comyn), a family with greater power than any before or after, did not help. Robert had, of course, killed John “the Red” Comyn two months earlier.⁸ The Red Comyn’s son, John Comyn IV, later met the Bruce’s troops at Glenesk but did not engage because Comyn had inferior

⁶ 1 James Aikman, *The History of Scotland, Translated from the Latin of George Buchanan; with Notes & A Continuation to the Union in the Reign of Queen Anne* 402 (1827).

⁷ *Id.* at 402-03.

⁸ *Id.* at 415, 417.

forces. Robert soon began tirelessly following the English to take their weaker garrisons. Around this time, Comyn's forces captured knights Simon Fraser and Walter Logan.⁹ Both were brought to England and hanged.¹⁰

The Logan family in fact has a unique connection to the Bruce, with Sirs Robert and Walter Logan going with James Douglas to take the Bruce's heart to Jerusalem in 1330.¹¹ Unfortunately, Douglas decided to attack the Muslim Saracens while traveling through Spain. Much of the Scottish contingent died in battle, including the two Logans.¹² For the Logans' singular efforts, however, the Clan added Robert the Bruce's heart to its crest.¹³ Only Clan Douglas shares in this honor.

⁹ *Id.* at 417.

¹⁰ *Id.*; James Logan, *Mclan's Costumes of the Clans of Scotland: Seventy-Four Coloured Illustrations with Descriptive Letterpress* 323 (1899) [hereinafter *Mclan's Costumes*].

¹¹ Aikman, *supra* note 6, at 445-46; *Mclan's Costumes*, *supra* note 10, at 323.

¹² Aikman, *supra* note 6, at 446; *Mclan's Costumes*, *supra* note 10, at 323.

¹³ 1 Alexander Nisbet, *A System of Heraldry, Speculative & Practical* 201 (new ed. 1816); see also *Mclan's Costumes*, *supra* note 10, at 329.

The Logans of that Ilk

“Of that ilk” removes the redundancy of calling someone a Logan of Logan. The lands known as Logan are in the historical parish of Old Cumnock, Ayrshire. This parish occupies roughly ten by two miles of land in the valley where the Lugar and Glaisnock Waters meet.¹⁴



Figure 2 - Map of Parish Boundaries from the National Library of Scotland.

¹⁴ 1 pt. 2 James Paterson, *History of the Counties of Ayr & Wigton: Kyle* 301 (1863).

The name likely comes from the British words “Cwm” (a hollow) and “Cnoc” (a hill) or the corresponding Celtic words “Com” and “Cnoc,” thus meaning the hollow, i.e., valley, of the hill.¹⁵ This interpretation appears especially likely since the name Logan comes from the Scottish Gaelic word “lagan,” which means “little hollow.” New Cumnock, the parish to the south of Old Cumnock, did not exist until 1650.¹⁶

When the Logans of that Ilk arose, however, is much less definitive. They at least existed by the sixteenth century, for an instrument dated 11 January 1516 references Alexander Logan of that Ilk.¹⁷ In 1595, George Logan of that Ilk became a security in the amount of £500 (a huge sum back then) that a tenant in Garloff, George Murdoch, would not physically hurt a neighbor, John Broune.¹⁸

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Id.* at 308.

¹⁷ See *Protocol Book of Gavin Ros, N.P.* 27 (John Anderson & Francis J. Grant eds., 1908).

¹⁸ Rev. John Warrick, *The History of Old Cumnock* 47 (1899).

The line continued throughout the centuries with several notable Logans cropping up. Perhaps the most notable, George Logan, was elected to head the Church of Scotland in 1740 as Moderator of the General Assembly.¹⁹ He staunchly supported the Presbyterian election of ministers, coming after the time of the Covenanters' battle against the Episcopal practice of king-appointed bishops.²⁰ Also, he by no means supported the Jacobites, who forced him to flee when Prince Charlie's forces occupied Edinburgh in 1745.²¹ When the troops left, he ironically wrote newspaper advertisements for the return of articles stolen from his formerly soldier-occupied home.²²

Then, in 1746, George published *A Treatise on Government*, in which he argued that the right to the Scottish throne had not always been hereditary. This sparked a debate with Thomas Ruddiman, who at times

¹⁹ *Id.* at 282.

²⁰ *See id.*

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.* at 283.



Figure 3 - Map of Scotland showing Old Cumnock in Ayrshire. From the National Library of Scotland.

resorted to ad hominem attacks rather than focusing solely on the argument's merits.²³ George never commanded the family lands, but his father, also George, perhaps had connections to the Logans of that Ilk.²⁴

Alas, the line did not last. Hugh Logan of that Ilk, born in 1739, died in 1802 without any legitimate heirs.²⁵ His main legacy is one of wit, and he used to sit by an obelisk near

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.* at 281.

²⁵ *Id.* at 284, 287.

the old Logan house, cracking jokes—the obelisk now goes by the name “Logan’s Pillar.”²⁶

For instance, once a man asked him what disguise he should wear to remain incognito. Because the man was not known for his cleanliness, Hugh replied, “Why, just wash your face and put on a clean shirt, and nobody will know you.” At another time, in 1784, a cult passed through Cumnock on the way to Dumfriesshire. Hugh, alarmed at the crowd, sent a servant to ask about their business. The servant returned and explained, “They came from Irvine, were going to heaven, and had nothing to say to anyone.” Hugh, fears allayed, declared his delight that “Logan stood on the road to that happy region.”²⁷

A true Scotsman, Hugh pronounced the word “reason” as many do “raisin.” He once met another wit by the name of Foote. Upon a remark from Foote, Hugh asked him, “What

²⁶ *Id.* at 285.

²⁷ *Id.* at 285–86.

reason do you give for that?” Foote, reaching into his waistcoat pocket, pulled out a raisin and told Hugh, “There, sir, is what you seek.” Hugh immediately seated himself elsewhere, exclaiming, “I’ll sit no longer beside a fellow that carries his wit in his waistcoat pouch.”²⁸

Not only did Hugh die without an heir, he also lost much of his wealth. The bank Douglas, Heron & Co. was founded in 1769 with shareholders including Hugh and William Logan of Camlarg.²⁹ Both had a £1,000 stake in the company. Of course, the bank’s proprietors lacked limited liability protections. The bank thus issued note after note, believing the shareholders to have the resources to cover it in the event of a default.³⁰ Many wasted the credit they had gotten, though, and could not pay when the time came for collection of the shares. Making matters worse, the employees lived frivolously, and mismanagement and fraud

²⁸ *Id.* at 287.

²⁹ William Robertson, *Old Ayrshire Days* 267, 269 (1905).

³⁰ *Id.* at 270.

pervaded the bank's operations. It consequently fell into bankruptcy.³¹

The bankruptcy ruined many formerly wealthy lairds, who had to sell off their lands to prop up the bank.³² The last laird of Logan thereby lost much of his estate.³³ So too did John Campbell of Wellwood, the grandfather-in-law of Jane Logan, daughter of William Logan of Camlarg.³⁴

Apparently, Hugh still had some land left, at least. The Logans of that Ilk acquired Burnhead sometime after 1700.³⁵ Hugh's will left Burnhead to a relative, George Ranken of Whitehill. Nonetheless, Hugh's nephew and legal heir, Hugh Goodlet Campbell of Auchline, disputed the will and got the House of Lords to set it aside on a technicality.³⁶ Ranken then bought the land anyway at a judicial sale of Hugh Logan's property in

³¹ *Id.* at 271.

³² *Id.* at 272-73.

³³ Warrick, *supra* note 18, at 288.

³⁴ Paterson, *supra* note 14, at 612.

³⁵ *Id.* at 688.

³⁶ *Id.* at 689.

1819.³⁷ In remembrance of Hugh's good intentions, Ranken renamed Burnhead and Nether Hillar to Glenlogan.³⁸

Little is known of the connections between the Logans of that ilk and other Logan branches. However, the same George Ranken of Whitehill who bought Burnhead also married Janet Logan, daughter of James Logan of Knockshinnoch and Margaret Beg of Dornal.³⁹ George and Janet's son, Thomas, then married Jane Logan, daughter of John Logan of Knockshinnoch.

George's successor, James Ranken of Whitehill and Glenlogan, died unmarried on 30 May 1848. The lands thus passed to his nephew, another George Ranken, son of Thomas Ranken and Jane Logan. And so the Logans regained Glenlogan.⁴⁰

³⁷ *Id.* at 689, 707.

³⁸ *Id.* at 689, 707-08.

³⁹ *Id.* at 711.

⁴⁰ *Id.* at 712.

The Logans of Restalrig

The best-known line of Logans lived in Edinburgh, not Logan. The Restalrig Logans are, or came from, the Logans of Grugar. Sources state the Logans held Grugar in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries; however, the sources lack citations.

In fact, these sources likely err—sometime in 1315 to 1321, Robert the Bruce gave the lands of Grugar and Lambroughton to Sir Robert Cunningham, and the charter doing so explains William de Ferrers and Alan la Suche had formerly held the lands.⁴¹ Regardless, the Cunninghams did not hold Grugar for long. On 3 November 1394, King Robert III gave Grugar to Sir Robert Logan, with the latter noted as having formerly resigned the lands.⁴² The charter refers to Logan as Robert III's "beloved brother."⁴³ Therefore, Logan likely had married Robert III's sister, a daughter of

⁴¹ See 1 *The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland* 15 (John Maitland Thomson ed., new ed. 1912).

⁴² See 2 *The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland* 290 (James Balfour Paul ed., 1882).

⁴³ *Id.*

King Robert II and his second wife, Euphemia Ross, sometime in or before 1394.⁴⁴

Some believe the sister of Robert III was named Katherine.⁴⁵ However, her husband's parents were the identically named Robert Logan and *Katherine* Lestalic.⁴⁶ Katherine was the daughter of John de Lestalic, who died in 1382 and thus passed the Lestalic (Restalrig) lands to the Logans.⁴⁷ As such, the attributed name could easily be another error.⁴⁸

Name issues aside, Robert Logan wasted no time making enemies. The Restalrig lands included Leith, and Robert gave Edinburgh rights the Harbor of Leith in 1398.⁴⁹ Yet Robert also seems to have had some role in

⁴⁴ See Colt, *supra* note 5, at 110; 1 *The Scots Peerage Founded on Wood's Edition of Sir Robert Douglas's Peerage of Scotland* 16 n.6 (Sir James Balfour Paul ed., 1904) [hereinafter 1 *Scots Peerage*].

⁴⁵ See, e.g., 1 *Scots Peerage*, *supra* note 44, at 16 n.4; 4 *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, Appendix to Preface* clxvi (George Burnett ed., 1880) (noting a Katherine Logane).

⁴⁶ See James Scott Marshall, *The Life & Times of Leith* 4 (1986).

⁴⁷ *Id.*

⁴⁸ See also Duncan Stewart, *A Short & Genealogical Account of the Royal Family of Scotland & of the Surname of Stewart* 58 (1739) (listing an unknown daughter as married to Robert Logan of Restalrig).

⁴⁹ *McLan's Costumes*, *supra* note 10, at 324-35.

making Leith a burgh of barony, a privileged designation that made such burghs trading hubs.⁵⁰ This enraged Edinburgh, which could not understand why another burgh would exist in Leith, “only a mile and a half away.”⁵¹



Figure 4 - Map of Leith and Restalrig from the National Library of Scotland.

⁵⁰ Marshall, *supra* note 46, at 4-5.

⁵¹ *Id.* at 5-6.

The anger simmered constantly. Indeed, one laird went to jail for the rather vague crime of being “a turbulent and implacable neighbour” who “had put certain indignities upon the Edinburghers.”⁵² (The greater crime is that demonym.) Then came the Gowrie Conspiracy and with it, a chance to unseat the Logan superiors.

The Conspiracy involved the attempted murder of King James VI. Sources differ on some dates, but the facts remain simple. The Conspiracy came to a head in 1600.⁵³ One Robert Logan of Restalrig died between 1601 and 1604.⁵⁴ In 1608 or 1609, a notary, George Sprott, suddenly produced letters allegedly written by Robert to the Earl of Gowrie about the plot.⁵⁵ With these damning letters, Robert was quickly put on trial—clearly a fair process since they exhumed his bones so he could

⁵² *McLan's Costumes*, *supra* note 10, at 325.

⁵³ William Rae MacDonald, *Scottish Armorial Seals* at 222.

⁵⁴ Compare 1 Nisbet, *supra* note 13, at 202 (giving a 1601 death) with 2 Nisbet, *supra* note 2, at 19 (placing his death in 1604).

⁵⁵ *McLan's Costumes*, *supra* note 10, at 325; *Calendar of the Laing Charters* 354 (Rev. John Anderson ed., 1899).

appear in person to defend himself.⁵⁶ (Coincidentally, Scotland unofficially stopped bringing corpses into court in treason cases after Robert's trial; however, Scotland did not formerly abolish the practice until 1708. The practice originated in Roman law.)⁵⁷

The Lords of the Articles planned to acquit Robert even with Sprott's false testimony.⁵⁸ However, the Earl of Dunbar, who stood to receive the Logans' forfeited lands upon a conviction, could not have that, so he travelled around and convinced them to convict.⁵⁹ Sprott later confessed that the authorities bribed him to lie about the letters.⁶⁰

The Logans were not always innocent. For example, on 14 August 1526, David and Thomas Logan were convicted with others of piracy for stealing goods from a Norwegian

⁵⁶ See *Calendar of the Laing Charters*, *supra* note 55, at 354.

⁵⁷ 2 Acts of the Lords of Council in Civil Causes (George Neilson, LL.D. & Henry Paton, M.A. eds., 1918).

⁵⁸ *McLan's Costumes*, *supra* note 10, at 326.

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ *Id.* at 325-26.

ship in Leith Harbor.⁶¹ But alas, sometimes politics overcome the facts—not only those of Leith and Edinburgh, but also perhaps the Logans' loyalty to Mary Queen of Scots.⁶² Thus ended the Logans of Restalrig.

⁶¹ 1 Robert Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials in Scotland* 131 (1833).

⁶² See Capt. John Logan, *Analogia Honorum: Or, A Treatise of Honour & Nobility* 153 (1677) (naming this loyalty as the cause of the Logans' downfall).

The Logans of Idbury

After the fall of the Logans of Restalrig, some of the line may have left for England and lived in Idbury, Oxfordshire.⁶³ The first such Logan of Idbury, John Logan, was the son of Scotsman Robert Logan of the nearby Little Tew.⁶⁴ However, this Robert Logan was born in Kettlebridge, Fife and died aged eighty on 8 June 1580.⁶⁵ Therefore, the Idbury line of Logans left Scotland before the Gowrie Conspiracy and its aftermath. They may, of course, still have some connection to the Restalrig Logans.

Also, for whatever reason, the Idbury line pronounced their last name as “Loggin.”⁶⁶ Oddities aside, John Logan (at that time of Little Tew) bought the Idbury manor from

⁶³ See *id.* (noting John Logan of Idbury as part of the Restalrig line); John Guillim, *A Display of Heraldry* 170 (1724) (describing the Logans of Restalrig as “now of Idbury, Oxfordshire and Bassetsbury, Buckinghamshire”).

⁶⁴ Mrs. Bryan Stapleton, *History of the Post-Reformation Catholic Missions in Oxfordshire with an Account of the Families Connected with Them* 158 (1906).

⁶⁵ *Articles of Agreement*, The Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland, Reference No. DG39/363 (1 May 1656).

⁶⁶ Stapleton, *supra* note 63, at 157.

John Gainsforde and Gainsforde's mother, Margaret, in 1620.⁶⁷ John died on 16 December 1637, aged seventy-five, but what happened to subsequent generations is unclear.⁶⁸ The lands of Idbury seem to have passed to John's eldest son, Robert of Idbury, who became High Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1651 but died unmarried in 1654.⁶⁹

Then, John Loggan of Idbury, perhaps Robert's brother, took over and began selling parts of the manor in 1656 and 1677.⁷⁰ Eventually, the land passed to a widow, Mary Loggan, and her likely relative, Elizabeth Loggan.⁷¹ Although Elizabeth gave the estate

⁶⁷ *Deed to Lead to the Uses of a Fine, with Counterpart*, The Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland, Reference No. DG39/440 (4 July 1622).

⁶⁸ Stapleton, *supra* note 63, at 158–59.

⁶⁹ *See id.* at 158.

⁷⁰ *See Deed to Lead to the Uses of a Recovery*, The Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland, Reference No. DG39/450 (18 Nov. 1656); *Final Agreement*, The Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland, Reference No. DG39/440 (11 Nov. 1677).

⁷¹ *See Lease for Six Years*, The Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland, Reference No. DG39/466 (13 Apr. 1710) (referencing Mary Loggan of Idbury); *Final Agreement*, The Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland, Reference No. DG39/455 (1700) (referencing sale of part of the manor made by Elizabeth Loggan and her husband, Charles Fortescue).

to her son when she died around 1735, both of her children died without heirs.⁷² The land thus passed to their cousins, the Turvilles, and the Logans of Idbury were no more.⁷³



*Figure 5 - Arms of the Idbury Logans, per 2
Thomas Robson, The British Herald 174 (1830).*

⁷² Stapleton, *supra* note 63, at 160.

⁷³ *Id.*

