



Clan Morrison is of ancient origin, tracing their ancestry back to Ghille Mhuire, the natural son of King Olav. Ghille Mhuire, which means "the servant of the Virgin Mary" in the Gaelic tongue, is said to have washed onto Scottish shores clinging to a piece of driftwood, the tenacious survivor of a shipwreck. Once ashore, Ghille Mhuire soon established himself as a powerful figure in the Western Isles, marrying a Gow heiress who possessed the lands of Pabbay in the Sound of Harris. Their descendants were known as Mac Ghille Mhuire, which became anglicised to Morrison over the course of time.

The infant Clan put its roots down in Pabbay, and soon other Morrisons settled in the Isle of Lewis. The Morrisons mixed their royal blood with that of the great island Clans, and in 1346 Cedhain, a descendent of the mighty King Somerled, married the heiress of the Morrisons of Lewis. This brought the Morrisons into a closer alliance with the Lord of the Isles, for whom they acted as hereditary brehons, or judges on Lewis. This relationship provided the Clan Morrison with an enviable position of strength and influence in the Western Isles, until the Lord of the Isles' power was finally broken by the Scottish Crown in 1493.

The conflict between the Crown and the Lord of the Isles left the Lord's strength shattered and his control of the Isles little more than a memory. The Crown, however, could not effectively enforce royal justice in this distant region of the kingdom, and without the Lord's rule lawlessness reigned supreme. This left the Morrisons in a troubled position, the wisdom of the hereditary judges doing little to allay the bloodthirst of their many turbulent neighbours. While the Morrisons attempted to live a peaceful existence, they could not ignore the aggression of the bordering Clans, and were forced to battle with the Macaulays and the Macleods.

After a fight with the Macleods at the Caws of Tarbet, the chief was taken and imprisoned at Rodil. The Macleods underestimated the cunning of the proud Morrison, who soon escaped from the clutches of his captors. In fury, the

Macleods convinced the King to have the Morrison chief outlawed, and the fugitive soon found himself with the ire of a nation rising against him. Desperate times calling for desperate measures, the Morrison kidnapped a Macleod heiress and forced the Macleods to submit to his terms, obtaining a royal pardon in return for the maiden, who was returned unharmed to her Clan.

The Macleods suffered the ultimate humiliation at the hands of the Morrisons, when a later Morrison chief, Hucheon, made a surprising confession upon his deathbed in 1566. Hutcheon finally let it be known that he was the natural father of Torquil, who until that time had been considered the son and heir of the Macleod chief, Roderick Macleod of Lewis. This led to further warring as Torquil was disinherited and his mother dismissed as an adulteror. The Morrisons sided with Torquil in his fight for his birthright, but lived to regret their alliance when he betrayed their loyalty, and invaded the Morrison lands.

By the 17th Century, many Morrisons had moved to Caithness and Sutherland on the mainland, although an 1861 Census listed over 1400 Morrisons left on Lewis to continue the tradition of their ancestors.

The Clan Morrison crest is a castle rising from the sea and the motto reads "Dun Eistein", meaning "Castle Eistein". The Chief is Ian Morrison, a physician who resides in Sussex, England.

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