



Clan Ross takes its name from the Clan's lands in the beautiful County of Ross. Originally known to the Highlanders as Clann Andreas, "the sons of Andrew", patron saint of Scotland, the Clan has a bloodline dating back to the original Celtic people of Scotland. Their origins are closely tied with the old Celtic church, the Clan descending from an ecclesiastical family who held an hereditary priesthood. The founder of the Clan Ross was Fearchar Mac-an-T-Saigart (Farquhar, the Son of the Priest), abbot of Applecross in Wester Ross, who inherited the abbacy early in the 13th century. Fearchar's loyalty to King Alexander II was rewarded in 1215 when he received a knighthood, and in 1226 he was created Earl of Ross.

The clan crest is a hand holding a laurel wreath, and the Ross' noble motto is *Spem succussus alit* - "Success nourishes hope". Scotland's highlanders have long been renowned for their fierce fighting spirit and the Rosses have well proven their highland blood.

Following in the tradition of Fearchar's early support for the Crown of Scotland, his grandson, William, the 3rd Chief and Earl, supported the great King Robert the Bruce by leading the Clan Ross against the English at the glorious Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. Hugh, the 5th Chief and Earl, was killed at the Battle of Halidon Hill in 1333, and his son, William, died without male heir in 1372 and so the Earldom passed through the female side into the Clan Leslie. The chieftainship was granted to William's brother, Hugh Ross of Rariches, who was granted a charter to the lands of

Balnagowan in 1374. Not all Rosses totally supported the Crown. A descendant of Hugh, the 9th Chief, was Colonel George Ross, an officer in the American Patriot Army which fought the British in the War of Independence. His signature appears on the American Declaration of Independence. Betsy Ross made the first example of the present U.S. flag at the request of George Washington.

Another of the many of the Clan to rise to prominence in the U.S.A. was John Ross, who was born in 1790 of a Scottish father and part Cherokee mother. Fair haired and blue eyed, John rose to be principal chief of the Cherokee Nation and vigorously opposed the westward migrations onto Cherokee lands. During the Creek war he led the Cherokees against the Creeks, - who were led by their Chief, William Mackintosh, also of Scottish descent.

For over three centuries the chiefship rested with the Rosses of Balnagowan, until the death of the 13th Chief of the Clan, David Ross of Balnagowan, in 1711. The chiefship then passed to another family of Rosses, and the Chief became the Hon. Charles Ross, son of Lord Ross of Hawkhead in Renfrewshire. The chiefship now rests with the family of Ross of Pitcalnie, heir of the line of David, last of the old family of Balnagowan.

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