

SIR JOHN MACDONALD'S
BIRTHPLACE.

The place of Sir John Macdonald's birth has always been shrouded in mystery. A correspondent of the Toronto Empire has been engaged in clearing up this mystery. The date of January 11th, 1815, and the place 11 George Street, Glasgow, have been accepted by most biographers as correct, but there are those who claim that Sir John was born in Sutherlandshire prior to his father's removal to Glasgow. A search in the Glasgow records, now kept in the registry office at Edinburgh, shows an entry for January 10th, 1815, of the birth of John Alexander Macdonald, the names of the parents being Hugh Macdonald and Helen Shaw Macdonald. The Glasgow directories of 1814-1815-1816 show that Hugh Macdonald, agent, resided at 18 Brunswick Place. Brunswick Street is a narrow one running from Irongate. At present there is no No. 18 on the street, the original number having been bricked up. The investigation makes it fairly that the commonly accepted statement of Sir John's birthplace is an error. He was born January 10th, 1815, at 18 Brunswick Place, Glasgow.

The correspondent of the Empire visited Rogart and Dornoch, Sutherlandshire, the birthplace of Hugh Macdonald. His investigations there showed that Major John Macdonald of His Majesty's army, who published an autobiography of his adventures by field and flood, was not Sir John's grandfather, as has often been stated, though he may have been related to him. Sir John's grandfather was known as "Merchant" Macdonald, and he sleeps in Rogart cemetery; the inscription on his weather-beaten monument is undecipherable. The correspondent says:—

"He had a store near Dornoch, and for many years was a successful merchant. He was wealthy. Even now the old people have a story that he threw a peck of silver into his wife's lap at their marriage. They had four sons and a daughter. Sir John's father and Uncle Donald went to Glasgow and carried on business as agents. Donald died, and shortly afterwards (1826) Sir John's father emigrated to Canada. Another son, Alexander, was a farmer, and went to Canada in 1838. But of the many other people interviewed none of

them appeared to know what became of him. The daughter married Mr. H. Murray. For reasons, which none of my informants could recollect, the old merchant gave up business, and went to live at Kinauld, not far from Dalmore. It is likely that he met with many reverses, for he died a poor man. From there he went to Rovie, another farm near by, and thence to the place where he spent the remainder of his days. Although I made every enquiry I could find no family records or even relics of any sort. 'The Camnach Doolach' as he called him was a man among men, remarkable for his integrity among most honorable people, respected and loved by every one. He was well read and being 'a very intelligent and sensible man' was looked up to for advice by his neighbors. His personal qualities resembled those of his illustrious grandson and he was also apparently a prominent man in his day."

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