

The Keltic tribes, north of the Dornoch Firth, were known to the Norwegians as Cataich or Cattians. It is not to be assumed that the whole of these tribes called themselves by that name; it is certain, however, that their leading tribe must have called themselves by it. The meaning of the word seems to be cat men, or the men who used the wild cat as an emblem on their standard. The Cattians called the Norwegians Gallaich or foreigners. In course of time the term Gallaich came to be applied to all the people north of the Ord of Caithness, whether they were Norwegians or Kelts. Thus, the old name Cataich became restricted to the people of Sutherland proper.

Caithness or Gallaibh contains ten parishes; Dunnet, Cannishay, Olrick, Thurso, Bower, Watten, Wick, Reay, Halkirk and Latheron. The parish of Reay was originally partly in Caithness and partly in Strathnaver. About the year 1895, the Strathnaver portion of it, or Strath halladale, was united to the parish of Farr. Sutherland proper includes the parishes of Dornoch, Creich, Lairg, Golspie, Rogart, Clyne, Loth and Kildonan. Duthaich Mhic-Aoidh, or Lord Reay's country, embraces the parishes of Edderachilis, Durness, Tongue, and Farr. It was for a long time known in English as Strathnaver. Assynt is a parish by itself, and belonged for over 330 years to the Macleods. In 1601, Sutherland proper and Strathnaver were separated from the Sherifdom of Inverness and formed into the county of Sutherland. To this new shire the district of Assynt was added in 1631.

Caithness contains 455,708 acres, or 712 square miles. Its extreme length is fifty-three miles and its extreme breadth thirty-three miles. The coast is bold and rocky. The interior, except the south-western portion of Latheron is generally low and flat, full of barren moors, and destitute of trees. South-western Latheron abounds in mountains, hills, and vales. Morven rises to a height of 2313 feet, and Scaraben to a height of 2054 feet. Caithness contains a large number of lakes, but there are only three of them which are more than one mile in length. The principal rivers are the Thurso, the Berriedale, and the Wick. The