

The principal clans which really belonged to the land of the Cattians were the Mackays, the Gunns, the Hendersons, the Sutherlands and the Sinclairs. The Keiths, the Murrays, the Gordons, the Macleods and the Campbells were numerous in the country, but their chiefs by blood belonged to other parts of Scotland.

Hugh Mackay of Farr, chief of the Mackays, had four sons—Donald of Scourie, John Beag, Hugh, and William of Bighouse. Hugh, his third son, succeeded him in the chiefship and also in his estates. Hugh had two sons; Sir Donald, his successor, and John of Dilred and Strathy. In 1614 Sir Donald purchased Reay, Downreay, Borlum and Brubster. He was created Lord Reay in 1628. Owing to pecuniary difficulties, he had some time afterwards to part with his estates in Caithness. He was succeeded by his son John, who was succeeded by his son George. George, third Lord Reay, had four sons, Donald, Hugh of Bighouse, and George of Skibo. Eric, son of George of Skibo, was the seventh Lord Reay, and the last Lord Reay who ruled over Mackay's country.

William Mackay, first of Bighouse, had five children: Angus, second of Bighouse, Hugh of Golval, Donald, Ann and Marion. William, third of Bighouse, married Agnes, daughter of John of Dilred and Strathy, and grand-daughter of James Sinclair of Murkle. Angus, fourth of Bighouse, married Jane, daughter of Patrick Sinclair of Ulbster. George, sixth of Bighouse, married Catherine Ross, by whom he had Elizabeth and other daughters. Col. Hugh Mackay, son of the third Lord Reay, married Elizabeth Mackay, and got the lands of Bighouse with her. Janet, their only daughter, was married in 1749 to Colin Campbell of Glenure, and had by him Louisa and other daughters. George Mackay of Handa married Louisa Campbell in 1768, and obtained the Bighouse estate with her. He was colonel of the Reay Fencibles, and was a very popular man. He died in September, 1798, and was succeeded by his son, Colin Campbell. The Mackays of Bighouse held the lands of Strath-hallade under their chiefs.

It is said that Guin or Gunn, the progenitor of the