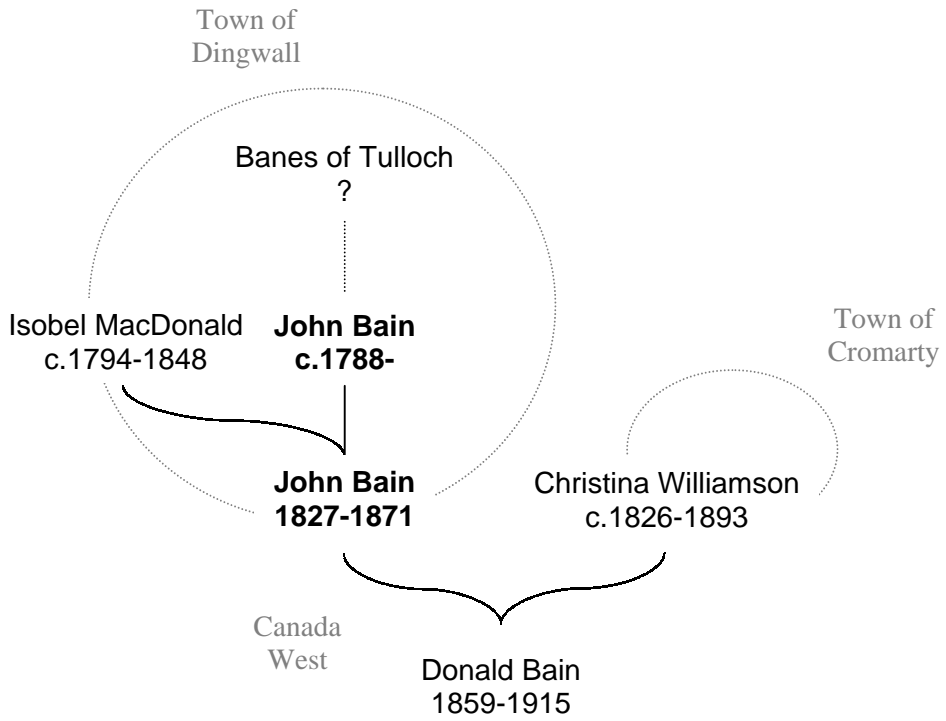


# **Bains of Dingwall**

The story of the family of John Bain.



## The Oldest Bains

John Bain, our oldest known Bain ancestor, was born in the late 1780's in Dingwall, the capital town of the Scottish county of Ross-shire in the eastern highlands. Bain (also spelled Bayne, Bayn and Bane) was a common name in Scotland, and especially associated with Dingwall; John's predecessors were among the most prolific, and for a time, the most powerful family in Dingwall since the Bains arrived three centuries earlier.

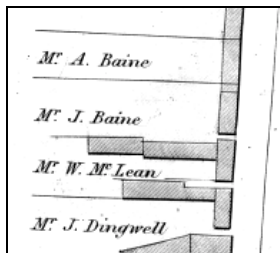
The surname of the Bains of Dingwall derives from the nick-name given to Iain Bàn MacAoidh or John "the fair" Mackay. He was born early in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, a great-grandson of the MacKay clan chief. His third son Alexander Bane moved his family to Dingwall from Olrig in far northern Caithness around 1482. Alexander's grandson Duncan Bane became the Laird of Tulloch manor, which comprised the lands of the parish of Dingwall, and whose seat was Tulloch Castle on the hill north of town. The Bane Lairds and their descendants were "one of the most illustrious families of Northern Scotland, having formed matrimonial alliances with many of the leading families there". The 9<sup>th</sup> Laird Kenneth sold the estate to Henry Davidson in 1762, and though many descendants of the family remained after the Bane lairdship ended, the true connection between our ancestor John Bain (c.1788-1866) and "The Baynes of Tulloch" remains undiscovered. – Alfred John Lawrence's "The clan Bain with its ancestral and related Scottish clans"

## Dingwall in the 1790's

Dingwall is a small town in the valley of the river Peffery, between mountains and sea in the Highlands of Scotland. During the time of John Bain's childhood, most of the parish was cultivated. There were a few merchants, trades people, lawyers and clerks, and burgesses holding tenured land, but the majority were servants, journeymen and farmers. They belonged to the established church which was Presbyterian. They spoke Scots Gaelic and most also spoke English.



Clark's coloured postcard of Dingwall 1824. Looking north across Dingwall and the Peffery River valley, Tulloch Castle appears mid-way up the far hill.

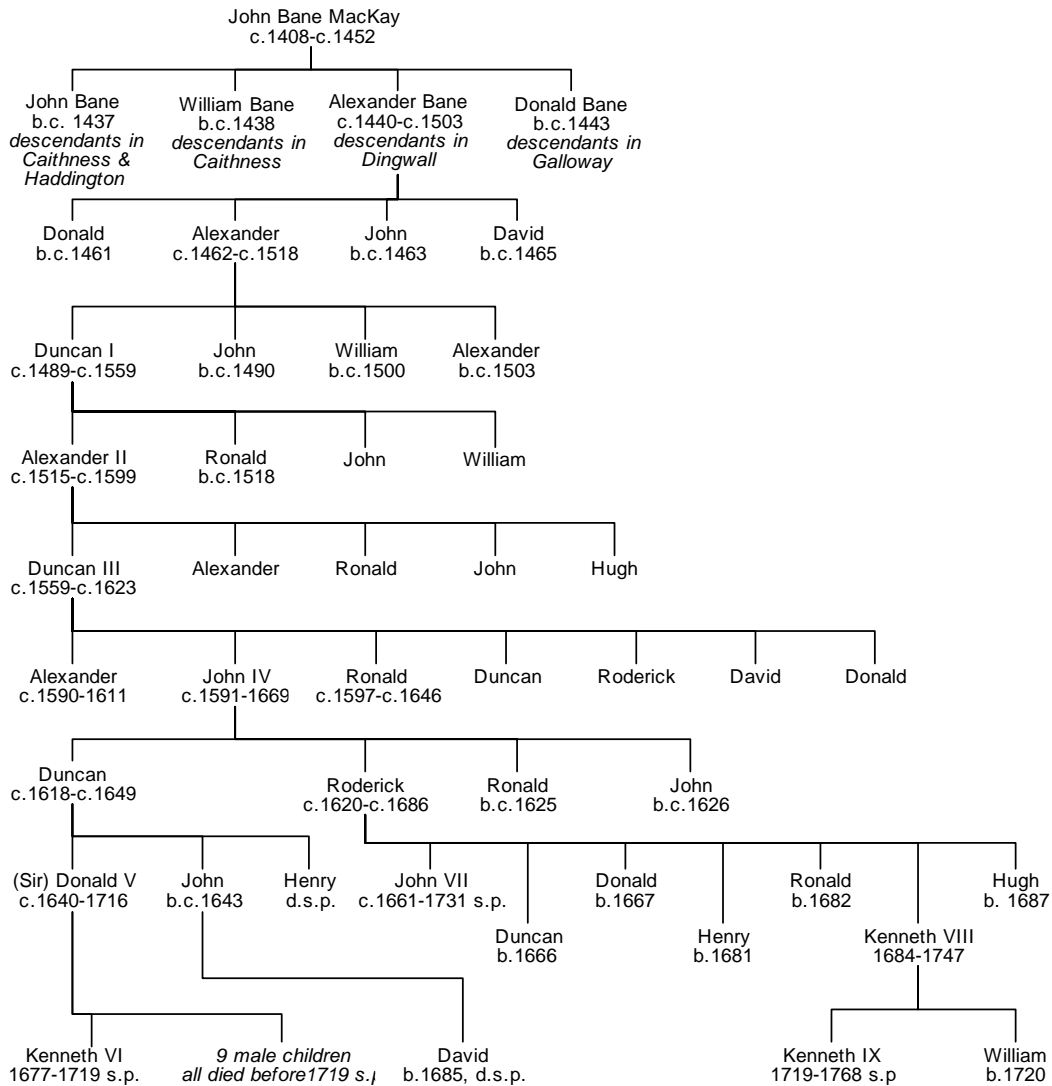


Detail : John Wood's 1821 Plan of the Town of Dingwall

A child's life was precarious in 1790's Dingwall. Only 60% reached the age of 10 years, and less than one quarter attended school. The lack of manufactories, however, provided no opportunity for child labour except as servants, or on the farm. Parish of Dingwall, Statistical Account of Scotland for 1791-99. For more, see appendix.

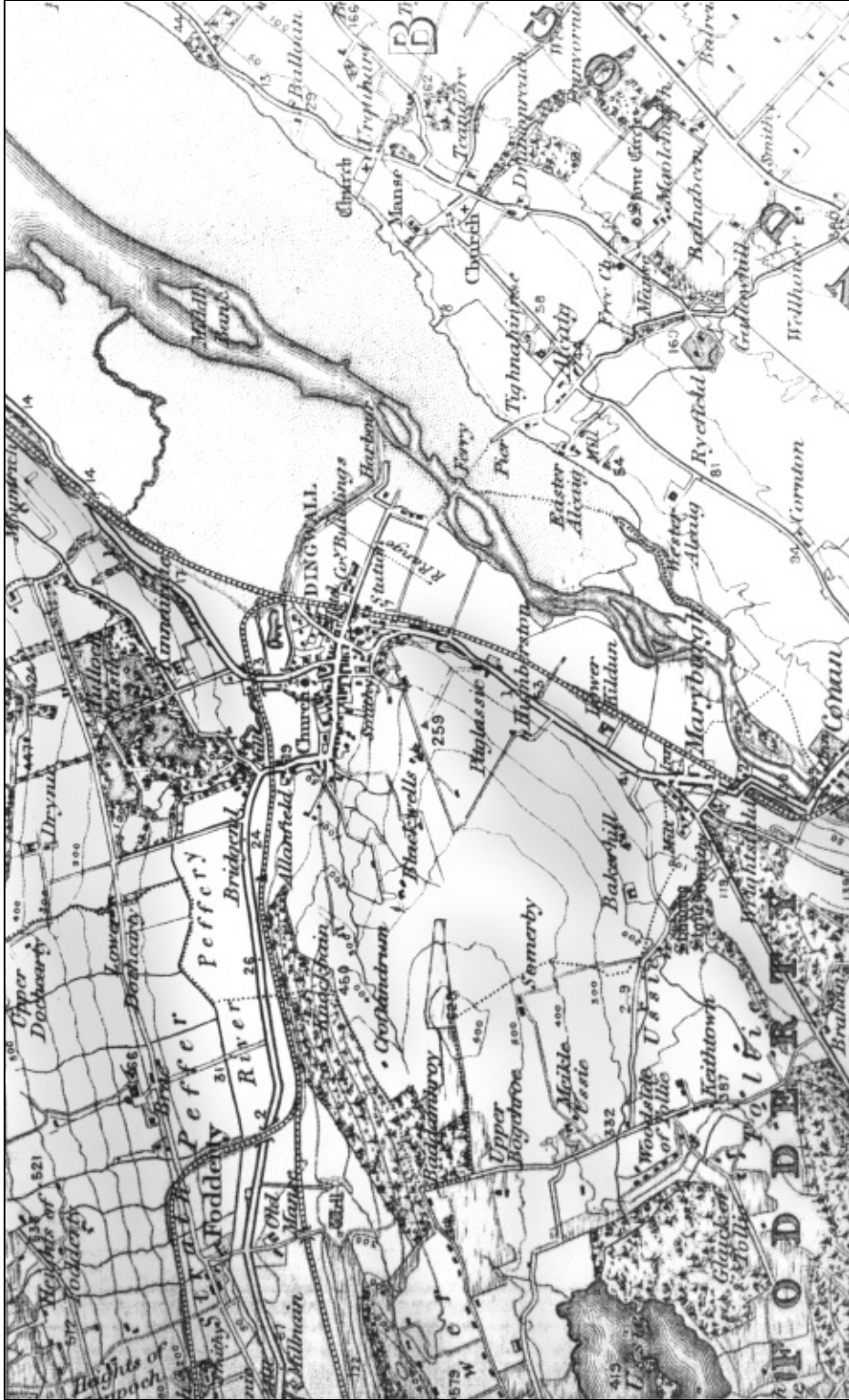
We know nothing specific to John Bain's youth. His parents and siblings are unknown, and even the date and place of birth is only assumed from his declarations at later censuses. No record of his baptism is extant. There were four couples who baptised a son named John Bain in Dingwall Parish around the time appropriate

## Descendants of John Bane MacKay (Iain Bàn MacAoidh) in Dingwall

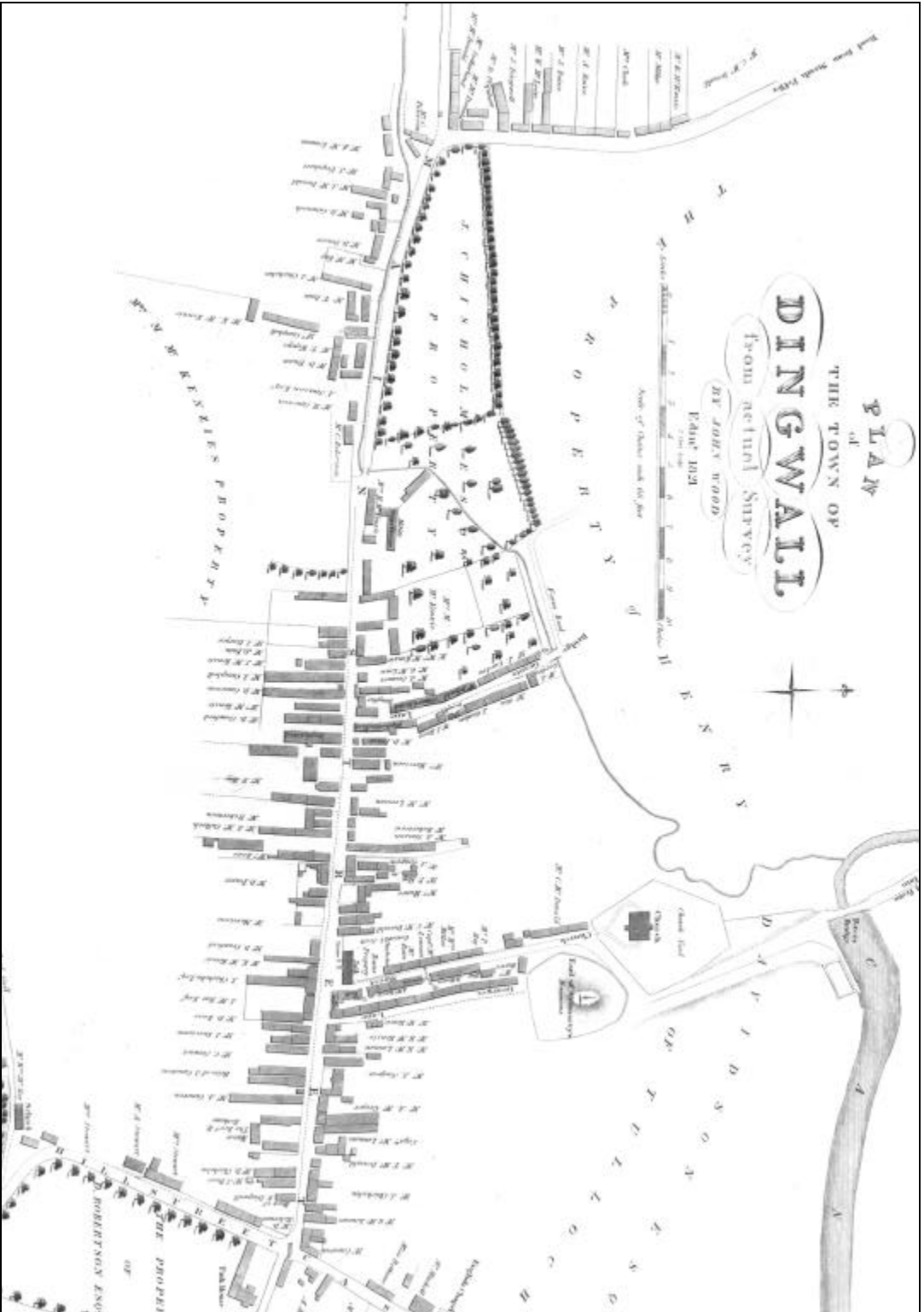


c. = circa    b.c. = born circa    s.p. = sine prole (L: "without children")    d.s.p. = "died without children"

The Bane Lairdship of Tulloch counted in Roman numerals. e.g. John VII was the 7<sup>th</sup> Bain Laird.  
From Alfred John Lawrence's "The clan Bain with its ancestral and related Scottish clans", 1963.



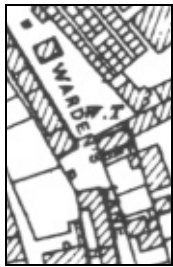
From Ordnance Survey of Scotland, Inverness & Dingwall 1896, with contour shading added by M. Bone 2004  
Note, spreading out from Dingwall Harbour the large tidal zone on which ferries may travel during high tide.



John Wood's Plan of the Town of Dingwall. T. Brown, Edinburgh, 1821. © National Library of Scotland  
 Plan features (left to right) Messrs. A Baine, J. Baine, T. Bain, D. Bain, and Bain.

for our ancestor's: Donald Baine & Margaret Chisolm (1781), Roderic Baine & Isabel McLea (1791), Hugh Baine & Anne McLennan (1793), and Donald Baine & Jannet Munro (1796). And there were five Bain residences in Dingwall in 1821: that of Messrs. A Baine, J. Baine, T. Bain, D. Bain, and Bain. These names are found on a town plan made five years before John's marriage when he was about 33 years old.

Our John Bain makes his entry into the public record with his marriage to Isobel MacDonald in 1826. John was a cloth dyer and a roof thatcher during the decade of the births of their five children: John, James, Janet, Donald and Neil. Since his own childhood, Dingwall grew dramatically in population, size and quality. Universal use of vaccination reduced mortality, and improvements in roads and especially bridges south of town, banking, the cutting of a canal and improved harbour all increased trade, and made Dingwall more attractive to strangers. Yet, by the late 1830's the population boom had slackened, due mostly to emigration; "the average number of persons who have left this parish for the Canadas, during that period, being not much below twenty, annually. A considerable number also of young men leave this parish yearly, in quest of employment in the south." *Statistical Account of Scotland*, 1837.



Detail: 1906  
Ordnance Survey

As Dingwall became more commercial, John found his fortunes in other employ. The High Street shops multiplied and brought more goods to the people, and new housing slowed, possibly limiting the need for dyers and thatchers. By the first personal census in 1841, John's family was living on Warden's Close and his occupation was carrier, a conveyor of freight and/or people. "Another important change, in the benefits of which this parish has participated in common with the district around, is the facility of communication with all parts of the country. Roads of the very best description intersect it in all directions, along which coaches and carriers are continually passing, affording means of conveyance to the places around." *ibid.* John's children also benefited from the greater number of schools, yet at age 14, John junior worked as a servant in a local home.



Dingwall's High Street, looking East, 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Note the carts with their attendant carriers.

By 1851, John lived on Dingwall's High Street. Isobel had passed away at age 54, and John Jr., recently married and with two young children, also lived on High Street and also worked as a carrier. James studied for the priesthood, Neil was a young scholar, and no more of Janet is known.

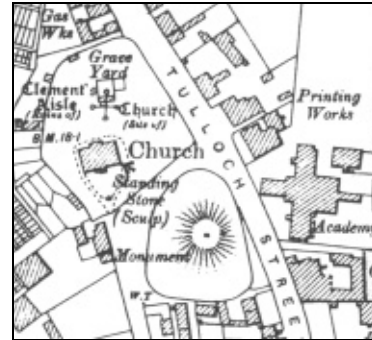
By the end of the decade, all of John's children had left Dingwall. Donald emigrated to Canada, possibly with Neil in 1851, and settled on the frontier of Canada West. John Jr. and his family followed soon after. James became a Presbyterian minister, primarily serving at Duthil parish, Carrbridge, south-east of Inverness.



John Bain's table gravestone, St. Clement's churchyard, Dingwall. Photo M. Bone 2003.

John Sr. died in 1866, having gained the title of heritor, a proprietor or landholder within the parish. He was buried in the churchyard behind the ancient ruins of St. Clement's Aisle, in the place where his wife Isabella lay. In later years, James' family also made John's plot their final resting place.

ERECTED  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
JOHN BAIN, HERITOR IN DINGWALL  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY 1866  
AGED 81 YEARS  
AND HIS WIFE ISABELLA MACDONALD  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 1848  
AGED 54 YEARS  
ALSO IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
ELLA MACDONALD ELDER DAUGHTER OF  
JAMES BAIN, MINISTER OF DUTHIL  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON 11 FEB<sup>V</sup> 1890  
AGED 22 YEARS  
ALSO  
REV. JAMES BAIN, MINISTER OF DUTHIL  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON 13 NOV<sup>R</sup> 1911  
IN THE 82<sup>ND</sup> YEAR OF HIS AGE  
AND THE 53<sup>RD</sup> OF HIS MINISTRY  
HIS WIFE JESSIE WATSON PATERSON  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON 10 NOV<sup>R</sup> 1917  
AGED 74 YEARS



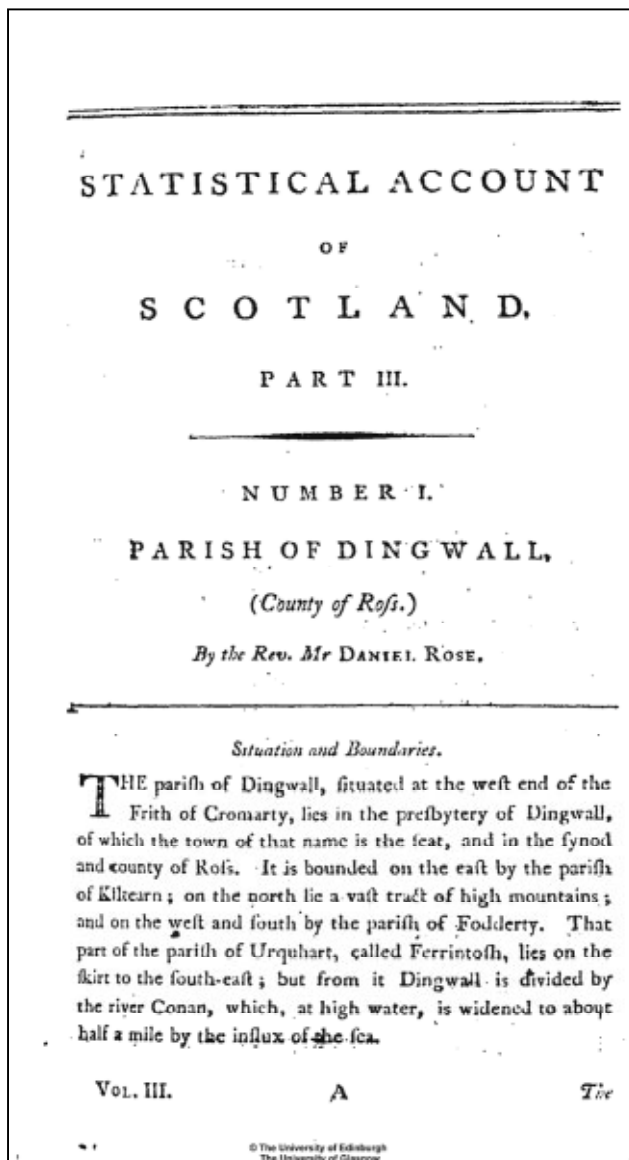
Detail: 1906 Ordnance Survey  
The church was named St. Clement's in 1929. John's table grave stone is behind (north) of a ruined mausoleum on the site of St. Clement's Aisle.



## Appendix: Parish of Dingwall, Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-1799

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The first of two great statistical inquiries was conducted in Scotland by Sir John Sinclair, in which he invited every minister in the country to describe in detail the particulars of his parish. Our knowledge of John Bain's Dingwall comes from the reply given by the Rev. Mr. Daniel Rose.



**Situation and Boundaries** – The parish of Dingwall, situated at the west end of the Frith of Cromarty, lies in the presbytery of Dingwall, of which the town of that name is the seat, and in the synod and county of Ross. It is bounded on the east by the parish of Kiltierny; on the north lie a vast tract of high mountains; and on the west and south by the parish of Fodderty. That part of the parish of Urquhart, called Ferrintosh, lies on the skirt to the southeast; but from it Dingwall is divided by the river Conan, which, at high water, is widened to about half a mile by the influx of the sea.

**General Appearance** – Excluding a small district, peopled by few inhabitants, and divided from the rest by a high hill, this parish forms nearly an oblong of one and a half by two miles. It consists partly of a pretty extensive valley, and partly of the sloping sides of hills, a great portion of which is in a high state of cultivation. The waste ground is not very considerable, and there are no commons in the parish; the great bulk of the land is in culture; and the whole forms a beautiful interchange of hill and valley, wood and water, corn-fields and meadows.

**Climate** – The climate of this part of the country is upon the whole tolerably good. It is not subject to any destructive inundations, nor has it more frequent rains than most other parts of the kingdom; but

it is exposed to high winds, which, though never rising to any signally pernicious violence, are often inconvenient to the inhabitants, and sometimes hurtful to the growing corn. The winter is not attended with any peculiar degree of severity.

**Sea** – The sea, at high water washes a considerable part of the parish, running in apparent canals, in several directions, along the side of the town, and forms a beautiful variety of islets and peninsulas. But, even in this state, it is very shallow for several miles down the frith; and, at low

water, it recedes to the distance of near four miles, leaving nothing but a slimy strand, which makes it unfit for the navigation of any large vessels, adverse to the production of fish of almost any kind, flounders excepted and barren of all objects which merit the attention of the naturalist, the farmer, or the politician.

The goods imported to this place from London, Glasgow, Leith, and other manufacturing and trading towns are carried in the London and Leith smacks, which maintain a constant communication every three weeks or month at most between the southern and northern parts of the kingdom. There are in this parish only two boats; one of which is very small, plies at high water, between Dingwall and Ferrintosh, the other serves for the carriage of bulky articles from place to place.

**Trees.** – The vegetable productions of the parish are such as are common to the whole country. There are few trees indeed of spontaneous growth, except alders, which abounded much some years ago, but are now rapidly giving place to corn and grass fields.

#### Population Table of the Parish of Dingwall, Anno 1791

Males in the parish	617
Females	762
Total inhabitants	1379
The return to Dr Webster in 1750	997
The town contains	745
The country part of the parish	634
Annual average of births *	38
Farmers i.e. those whose sole dependence is on the produce of the ground they cultivate	33
Mechanics [journeymen] of different kinds	60
Their apprentices about	21
Merchants or tradesmen	7
Men servants of different kinds	117
Women servants of different kinds	132
Clergyman	1
Physician	1
Writers or attorneys, beside other inferior practitioners of the law	6

\* The following circumstances are somewhat curious. The year 1783 was a year of great scarcity, and the births of the succeeding year were 16 below the average, and 14 below the lowest number of any of the other late years. The year 1787, on the contrary, was a year of plenty, and the following year the births increased in a similar proportion. They were 17 above the average, and 11 above the number of any of the other years.



Scotland, 1804.  
 Inset: Dingwall is North of the Connan River (top left)  
 at the end of the Cromarty Firth, an inlet of the larger Murray Firth.

**Houses and their Inhabitants.** – The inhabited houses of every description in the parish amount to 239, but of such as are well built, and have two stories, to about 40. Of the smaller and middling kinds, a good number has been built within these ten years past; but as many others of the same sort have been removed by the converting of several small into three larger. There is no uninhabited house or cottage in the town or neighbourhood. The demand, on the contrary, for houses, particularly for the middling sort, is very great. At an average the number of inhabitants to each house is 5.

**Agriculture, Produce, etc.** – The greater part of the parish is arable, and produces corn of different kinds, chiefly oats, next barley, then pease, then wheat, a few beans, and occasionally a very little rye. The quantity of ground sown with oats is about 500 acres, with barley 200, with pease 50, and with wheat 10. About 100 acres are annually employed in the production of sown

grasses for hay, and about double that quantity is pasture ground. Potatoes form a part of the food of all, and the greater part of most, of the parishioners. Plantations of trees of different kinds cover at least 900 acres of ground. They consist chiefly of Scotch pines, oak, ash, beech, elm, plain, and larch. In all those plantations there is excellent shelter, and in many parts of them very good pasture.

**Church, etc.** – The present minister is a bachelor, and has been settled in the parish upwards of 10 years. The King is patron. Within these two years, a commodious good manse was built. The church is nearly a ruin. It had connected with it, by wide arches, one large chapel, and several small ones, which were probably used both as cemeteries and places of devotion. They have long been shut out from the church, and used only as burying places. The heritors have it in contemplation to build a new church soon, which will be both convenient for the parishioners, and ornamental to the town.

The heritors, including proprietors of burgage tenements, amount to 39. But, strictly speaking, there are only two, for there are only two separate valuations in the parish; viz. the valuation of the estate of Tulloch, and the magistracy of Dingwall.

**Prisoners.** – In the course of the year 1790, there were 18 persons confined in the jail of this town. Of these there were imprisoned for debt 11, for petty theft 5, for horse and sheep stealing one; and one woman, from a distant part of the country, has lain here under sentence of transportation, since the autumn circuit 1789. But in this parish no murder has been committed for these last 40 years; nor has an individual been banished.

**Labour, etc.** – The wages of a common labourer are 6 d. a day., and of masons and house-carpenters, from 1s. to 1s. 6 d. Supposing a labourer to have constant employment the whole year, he will earn £ 7: 16. His wife, though she should have the charge of a moderate family, will gain by spinning, with tolerable diligence, 1.5d. a day, which is near £2 a year. There is no room for children to exert industry, as there are no manufactures. The whole earnings of the family, therefore, making no allowance for sickness, idle days, avocations, or any other exigences, cannot exceed £ 9:16. Large families are, however, on such reared, and often on smaller incomes, with the assistance of a small field for potatoes, and perhaps a little patch of ground for greens, cultivated after hours of labour, or when other employment is not to be got. How this wretched pittance is distributed among the variety of objects which are necessary to human life in a very simple state, and how it is made sufficient for the subsistence of a family, is inconceivable. But habits of frugal management, taught by poverty to the indigent, are found to effect what the affluent do not imagine, and cannot easily believe.

The town of Dingwall is the centre of the county of Ross, with respect to local situation, to the value of the property on all sides, and to the residence of the inhabitants. Nature, therefore, and common sense, both point it out as the most proper place for the transaction of all the most public business of the shire. The convenience of gentlemen, and the interest of the people, both require that it should have this privilege.

**Miscellaneous Observations** – Gaelic is still the language of the common people, in which, therefore, the greater part of public worship is performed. But most of the parishioners now understand and speak English. There are comparatively few of the younger people who were not early sent to school, and taught both to read and to write.

In this parish there are two inns, and nineteen ale or whisky houses. The former are kept by well behaving respectable people; they are frequented by travellers, and used for public meetings. Of the ale houses only seven are regularly licensed. Most of this description, indeed, whether licensed or not, are the worst of nuisances. They not only endanger the morals of the people, by furnishing secret opportunities of indulging a propensity to drunkenness, but by encouraging theft

in servants, and by diverting the earnings of mechanics and labourers, and the productions of farmers, from the support of their families. It is, therefore, a false and pernicious lenity, which, under the pretext of charity, is sometimes shewn to such traders; for indulgence to them, often proves ruin to the innocence and welfare of thousands.

The lower order of people is not remarkable for any extraordinary degree of hospitality. Living in a country well inhabited, and much resorted to by strangers, and not enjoying those means of wealth which arise from extensive commerce, or regular manufactures; this virtue cannot have much room to exert itself among this class. According to their situation, however, they are by no means unwilling to share what they possess, either in the way of hospitality or charity. The more wealthy are noted for their hospitality and attention to strangers. Luxury is a vice with which the people cannot be charged. I with truth permitted me to say that they always had abundance of the necessaries of life. Indeed, total want is a thing little known in this part of the country; but between that and any approach to luxury, the distance is very great, and the intermediate stages are extremely numerous.

In general, the people are sober and industrious, decent in their behaviour, and submissive to the laws. Every country furnishes some exceptions to the good character of its inhabitants. There are no temptations to any extraordinary expences; neither commerce nor manufactures have yet given scope for dangerous speculations; and the people still retain that fond attachment to patrimonial inheritances, however trifling, which the feudal institutions inspired. The lands, however, sometimes change their proprietors, and when sold, the price is high, perhaps 30 years purchase; and it is still daily advancing.

### Topographical appearances

Parish of Dingwall, Statistical Account of Scotland, 1837, Rev. Hector Bethone

The general aspect of the parish is exceedingly beautiful. The character of the surface, diversified by hill and valley; the appearance of high culture which it presents; the abundance and luxuriance of the wood with which it is everywhere clothed; and the frith, which at flood-tide appears a beautiful sheet of water completely enclosed by land, stretching eastward for about fourteen miles; together with the rugged outline of the mountains in the back-ground combine in producing an effect which excites the admiration of strangers. The road from Inverness enters the parish at the east end of the village of Maryburgh, about a mile and three-fourths from the town. From this it passes eastward along the southern slope of the ridge, which runs between the town and the Conan. This ridge is crested by plantations of fir, its acclivity being lined out into fields intersected by hedge-rows with trees. On approaching the town it terminates abruptly, forming a steep bank called the green hill, which is covered by a plantation of hard wood. Along the base of this, the road runs, and enters the town flanked by a row of fine old trees. With the exception of its situation, which is beautiful, and its rows of tall poplar trees, which give it rather an uncommon air, the town itself presents little of interest.