

# Argyll Clan and Iroquois tribe - DNA blood brothers

**A THREE-PART series by writer and researcher Gerry Burke explores the extraordinary double life of a Campbell chief, the loyal wife at home and his American-Indian family - and discovers that the latest science has solved an ancient heritage mystery.**

He may have been inspired by King Arthur and Hiawatha but 'redcoat' army commander John McArthur Campbell's plan for a grand new clan power base was no peacepipe dream.

His stately home took shape as planned but his ancient Campbell dynasty was side-tracked when a fabled native-American bloodline entered the Argyll aristocracy. A 'thrilled' descendant has now emerged with positive DNA-test results after a two-year search through history for the missing links.

Kate Tobin can now track her roots from battlefield Culloden to the American civil war and back - but the legacy of MacArthur Campbell of Strachur still poses questions.

His role in the scandal of the sacred tombstones and artefacts looted by someone from pilgrim island Iona and dumped on his doorstep is an enigma - perhaps with a spiritual answer.

But his exploits provide a new dimension to the infamous Appin murder aftermath when he helped restore justice for a sworn clan enemy. That payoff involving an overseas jailbreak will feature in a new volume of the historic Dewar Manuscripts we featured recently. Few are aware he escaped tarring and feathering in Boston to flee Britain's defeat in America's war of independence.

There, he secured state care for 'displaced' children in battlefield New York and at home he was a paternal laird and a generous employer, paying top wages to an army of skilled tradesmen who put Strachur on the map.

## Campaign fortune

The escaped 'spy' brought a war hero's campaign



General John Campbell



Strachur House

fortune home - and imported his Native American daughter Catherine and her unique tribal genes into his bloodline.

His childless wife Helen in Strachur provided support in more ways than one. She helped tutor several children, including Catherine and possibly two brothers, and stood up for two alleged lesbian teachers in a sensational society court case. She also created a refuge for local religious outcasts when their preacher was hounded out of the county and kidnapped by the navy press gang.

The general's crucial role in world affairs began when, as 17th heir to the Strachur chiefship, he was commissioned into the earl of Loudon's Highlanders at the age of 17. A junior 'redcoat' with King George's forces against the Jacobites, Culloden was the bloodiest baptism, the last pitched battle fought on British soil. He was wounded in action but became hooked on a war career.

He quit the family homes at Ardgartan and Succoth and took musket and claymore overseas as a professional British soldier with various regiments in different countries.

By 1783 he was commander-in-chief of the British forces in America and, on his return home at the age of 60, had married Helen, 20-year-old daughter of another wealthy exiled Campbell with sugar plantations in Grenada.

While she supervised domestic affairs with servants and estate and farmworkers, he continued



Artist's impression of Queen Catherine

with overseas postings coining in huge war prizes and bonuses.

Prior to his Argyll marriage, during the French-Indian War in America, he was bayoneted in the infamous Black Watch siege defeat at Ticonderoga in 1758, where two pipers famously played on after losing their lower limbs.

Later sparse action detail almost certainly conceals a period in 'secret service' action - a coincidental forerunner, perhaps, of the '007'-type role attributed to Sir Fitzroy Maclean who later bought his Strachur estate.

Promoted further, behind a desk or otherwise, he would have colluded with the almost mythical





Highland attack at Ticonderoga

Montours, an extraordinary, close hierarchy of mixed Native Indian and European descent. They were professional mediators and fixers in the mould of a legendary Hiawatha ancestor who preached peace with the early settlers through compromise. They traded furs, land, alcohol - and, crucially, information - throughout their territories in the Canadian borderlands.

They were inter-related through several generations with dual Anglo-native Christian names and titles like Madame Montour, Queen Catharine and Queen Esther with power among the six-nation tribes including the Mohawk and Cayuga. Madame Montour was a matriarch but it was her granddaughter 'Queen Esther' who infamously avenged an alleged betrayal by two dozen captured warriors. She had them stand blindfold in a circle facing outwards and tomahawked their scalps from behind. No mercy on that occasion.

The Gaelic-speaking 'redcoat' army shared an almost-brotherly relationship with the natives and may be responsible for the 'red' description attached to the allied Indians. Andrew Montour was in the vanguard and was even awarded a military captain's rank before he took to heavy drinking.

#### Diplomatic envoys

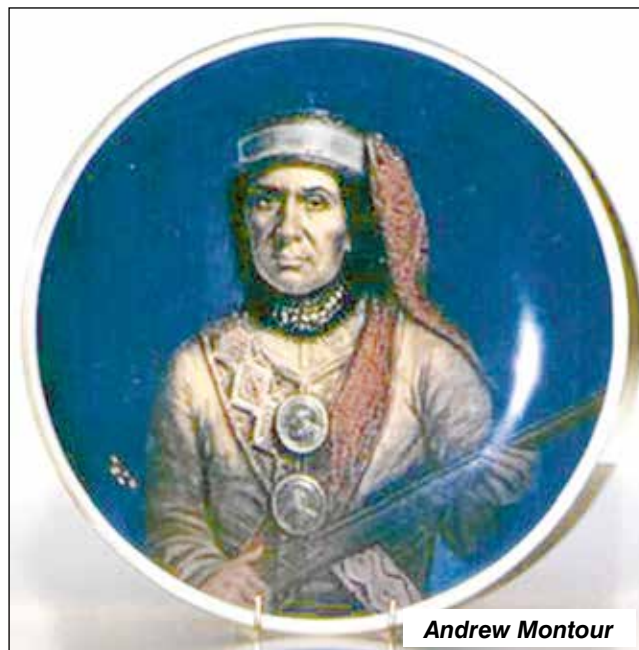
His wife, 'Oneida' Sally (nee Ainse), was no backwoods tepee wife. She understudied his role and joined John Campbell's corps of diplomatic envoys in her own right - frontline fixer, translator, diplomat dealer - before she left the marriage with the children to Andrew.

The young mother went into frontier business on her own account. She might even have traded land for the expansion of British Fort Stanwix with John Campbell while he was still a captain in face-to-face negotiation. The title was in her former husband's name but, under Iroquois code and practice, important tribal status roles were reversed, particularly in relation to land and legal affairs.

Around this time it seems John Campbell, a single man far from home, took fraternisation with the natives personally and the women, it's said, were 'strikingly attractive'.

Catherine was probably the third of his children when she was born in 1764 after Nicholas in 1756 and son Christian, six years later. Probably named after 'aunt', Queen Catherine, she arrived after he was despatched to Cuba for a period where he was promoted to lieutenant. But as Sally expanded her civilian and military-brokering she appears to have sacrificed care, willingly or otherwise, for both sets of children.

There is no clear estimate of when John Campbell brought the children, including Catherine and a young John, to Scotland nor if he brought their brothers as personal and domestic records are sparse. She was introduced to Argyll society and private education and appears to



Andrew Montour

have become executive housekeeper for her uncle at the family mansion in Ardgartan, at the foot of the Rest and be Thankful.

The clarion Montour surname was logged at Lochgoilhead in the summer of 1785 when she became Mrs John Campbell (a kinsman of Campbell of Strachur) of the Ormidale estate at the head of Loch Riddon. The couple eventually moved there and they had several children of whom, apparently, only two survived into adulthood.

#### Sleeping Beauty

So little is recorded locally, detail is mainly from interactions on the other side of the Atlantic.

The couple lost several children before Robert and Catherine junior, who might be thinly disguised in an uncanny, John Dewar tale of its time. A local Campbell laird consulted a woman with the 'sight' about an injury to his hand. She forecast the premature deaths of his living sons and yet-to-be-born heir which he angrily disbelieved. The prophecy was fulfilled.

In adulthood, unexpected heir Robert Campbell of Ormidale, an overseas professional soldier in the Indian army, died in at the age of 57.

His older sister Catherine outlasted him by 26 years, dying in London at the age of 83.

Mother, Catherine of the Montours, died in 1843 the year after husband. They are buried under white memorial tablets in a secluded, padlocked burial enclosure near Ormidale house.

A local author some years ago said the mausoleum was inaccessible. It is hedged behind "a screen of bramble, gorse and small trees that would do justice to Sleeping Beauty," she wrote.

The Montours are prominently commemorated today in New York and Pennsylvania place names - and even a modern high school is named after them.

The Gaelic place name Succoth, signifying an arable holding, exists to this day as a Campbell family farm in the hills above Strachur and also on the outskirts of Arrochar.

It is also the name of an 820-acre holding in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, over 3,000 miles away. It was registered in the name of Montour in 1767 the year before Fort Stanwix in the same county was abandoned.

Catherine's grandfather, general John, reposes beneath an expansive marble slab under the central aisle of Kilmaglash Parish Church in Strachur with a "do not disturb" warning. It was lowered for convenience by a later generation.

The real-life King Arthur, the fabled famous ancestor of these Campbells, reputedly awaits a call to arms at his resting place in the rock of Dumbuck opposite the ancient Dalriadan fortress of Dumbarton.

**NEXT WEEK Kate Tobin will give an account of her search for links with the Native Americans and the Campbells - and local history society member Agnes MacPhillimy will outline Helen's tale.**

Gerry Burke will update the general's concern for sacred stones, the connection with the Iona looting scandal - and the Strachur preacher press-ganged in front of his flock.