[MacDonald](file:///C:\Users\Rod\Dropbox\GIS\Antigonish\Texts\Eigg\MacDonald_Family.doc), John (Blacksmith) ([Eigg Mountain Settlement History](file:///C:\Users\Rod\Dropbox\GIS\Antigonish\Texts\Eigg\Introduction.docx))

John MacDonald was born about 1827 to Donald and Mary MacDonald and married Margaret MacAdam on January 24, 1861 at St. Margaret’s Church in Arisaig. Margaret was the daughter of Ronald and Mary (MacGillivray) MacAdam. (Rankin pp 164-165). By the 1871 census (page 7 line 11 division 2) John and Margaret had six children – Angus, Catherine, Mary Elizabeth, John Allan, Dougald and Mary Isabella – ranging in age from 9 years to one month. Two more children – John and Allan were born after 1871 bringing the total children to eight. John owned 100 acres at Moidart - 42 acres were improved and 20 acres in pasture. His farm also had 2 horses, 6 milk cows, 12 horned cattle, 30 sheep and 4 pigs. He grew spring wheat, barley, oats, potatoes and turnips which were not common in the area. John also owned a Blacksmith forge which he operated for six months of the year. Besides a house and 2 barns he also owned a shop. On February 18, 1876 John died at the age of 49 years from cancer. He left a will (page 398 will book 1824-1881) and a probate file A-554. The will stated:

“I give and bequeath to my son Angus McDonald two acres of my land below the main road adjoining Joseph McDonald’s lot but not to sell to any person or persons except to one of his brothers that occupy the place – neither to rent the same”.

Sons John and Dougald are to receive one half of the land owned by John. The three girls are to receive one cow and six sheep each and boys Allan and John Allan are to receive a “common education”.

Margaret his widow was given “the right to hold possession of one third of my real estate and all my personal property that I now possess.”

In the 1881 census Margaret now a widow was living with her eight children on the farm – no indication the blacksmith shop was in operation.

Margaret’s father Ronald was living close by in 1871 – a widower age 70 living with his adult children including son Hector who was one of the witnesses to John MacDonald’s will.

What is remarkable about John MacDonald’s probate file is the 5 page list of almost 200 names of clients in the local area who owed him money for his work as a blacksmith. The list not only has the names but also where they lived and sometimes their father’s name to distinguish them from others.

The inventory of John MacDonald’s estate included:

Real estate 90 acres of land $800

??? real property $500

Cattle: 6 cows @ $13; 1 heifer @ $10; 3 ??? @ $8; 4 yearlings @ $4

2 horses @ $50 $100

Sheep @ $2 $44

Farming implements $60

Blacksmith tools $24

Household furniture $12