

District SUTHERLAND

Gaelic Name

Cataibh

Tartan Designer Unknown

Date Early eighteenth-century origin

Sutherland, though reaching to the northernmost coast of mainland Scotland, is the 'south land' from the perspective of Norway, Orkney and Caithes--lands under Norse rule. Much of this barren region is a 'wet' desert, flat plains with low sub-arctic vegetation and high, barren, rocky mountains. Only along the coasts and in sheltered glens could man settle, living a hunting, fishing and small farming life from prehistory until a century ago. Many of the local population suffered greatly from their sudden removal during the 'Clearances' that thrust them unprepared into a rapidly industrializing nineteenth century.

The Sutherland tartan is of early eighteenth century origin and is distinct from the clan Sutherland tartan. It has the same sett as the Government tartan, and is woven in lighter shades, however, azure replacing the dark blue of the government pattern. It is worn by the Princess Louise's Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, whose regiment was formed in 1881 when the 93rd Sutherland Regiment was combined with the 91st Argyllshire Regiment. When worn by the military, the Sutherland tartan is usually work kilten to the green in contrast to the darker Black Watch which usually kilten to the blue. The Sutherland sett is now firmly established as a district tartan for the county of Sutherland.

Taken from "District Tartans of Scotland", by Gordon Teall & Philip Smith, Shephard-Walwyn (Publishers) Ltd.

This clan information sheet has been prepared by
The Scottish Society of Louisville, Inc.
PO Box 32248
Louisville, KY 40232-2248

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