

**SULLIVAN ROSS VOLUME 1**  
**Violin and Bagpipe Music**

**A Restored Edition**

With notes by  
**John Donald Cameron**

Edited by  
**Colin Blyth**

Copyright © Canadian Museum of Civilization  
All rights reserved

ISBN 0 - 9641804 - 4 - 8

Iolair Publishing  
138 Albert Street  
Kingston Ontario K7L 3V2

Phone (613) 544-1450 Fax (613) 544-0072  
Website: [www.iolairpublishing.com](http://www.iolairpublishing.com)

Printed and bound in Canada by  
Friesens Corporation

## CONTENTS

Page i :	Preface.
Pages ii to iii :	The Sullivan Ross Collection in the Canadian Museum of Civilization.
Page iv :	The restoring of Volume 1 and the inclusion of additional Sullivan Ross violin music.
Pages v to vii :	"Sullivan Ross (1828 - 1904) - Zorra's Piper". A biography by Alexander M. Ross.
Page viii :	Preservation of the Collection by Sullivan's son and grandsons.
Pages ix to xii :	Pictures
Page xiii :	The front cover of Sullivan Ross Volume 1.
Page xiv :	The title page of Sullivan Ross Volume 1.
Pages 1 to 92 :	The pages of Sullivan Ross Volume 1, restored to their original legibility.
Pages 93 to 106 :	The pages of a small manuscript book of violin music collected by Sullivan Ross, restored to their original legibility.
Pages 107 to 111 :	Additional pages of violin music in Sullivan's handwriting.
Pages 112 to 128 :	A combined index of the tunes on pages 1 to 111, with notes and commentary and references by John Donald Cameron.

## PREFACE

Many thanks to Sullivan's grandsons Alex and Burns Ross - it is because of them that this edition is being published. I first met Burns as a fellow piper in the Queen's University Pipe Band, in the Fall of 1940. During the years from 1974 until his death in 2005 Burns wrote to me often about the collection and his work in preserving it. He sent me photocopies of the four volumes, and the indexes. In 1980, when I was learning to play piobaireachd, he sent me better photocopies of all the piobaireachd in the collection. I have also had much help from Alex, who showed me Sullivan's copy of the 1831 Donald Macdonald book and the small book of violin music and the loose pages of violin music - and loaned them for photocopying. Alex has kept me informed about his researches into Sullivan's life, and has written an account "Sullivan Ross (1828 - 1904) - Zorra's Piper" for inclusion in this edition. He has also provided all the pictures on pages ix to xii. Thanks also to Burns's son David Ross for permission to include the small book of violin music (pages 93 - 106) and for his help in settling legibility problems by comparing my restored pages with the originals.

Thanks to native-speaking Gaelic friends Archie Macdonald (Skye) and Rhoda MacRitchie (Harris) for help with the Gaelic titles.

Thanks to the Canadian Museum of Civilization for permission to publish this edition, and many thanks for all their help and encouragement. Among many other things, they made high quality color photographs of the pages and loaned these to me for years while I scanned them and worked on restoring them.

Many thanks to John Donald Cameron for his participation. His notes on the tunes and on Sullivan's musicianship are the most important part of this edition.

Most of all, I am indebted to my son Donald M. Blyth. It is only recently that I have learned enough from him about computers and Photoshop to make this edition. When Donald upgrades, he passes his old (two or three years) computer down to me - with my previous one this book would not have been possible. When I get stuck on something, I phone Donald and he tells me how to do it, seemingly offhand, and with the infinite patience of a born teacher. He is an artist as well as a computer expert, and has contributed much to the book design; and finally, has assembled it all in the format needed by Friesens.

Queen's University, January 2010

*Colin Blyth*

## THE SULLIVAN ROSS COLLECTION

This collection, now in the Canadian Museum of Civilization, includes, most importantly, four volumes of handwritten music for violin and highland bagpipe from southern Ontario, 1850-1900. This music was collected by Sullivan Ross (1828 - 1904), who was born in Scotland, came to Canada with his parents about 1833, and who farmed at Harrington, about 9 miles south of Stratford.

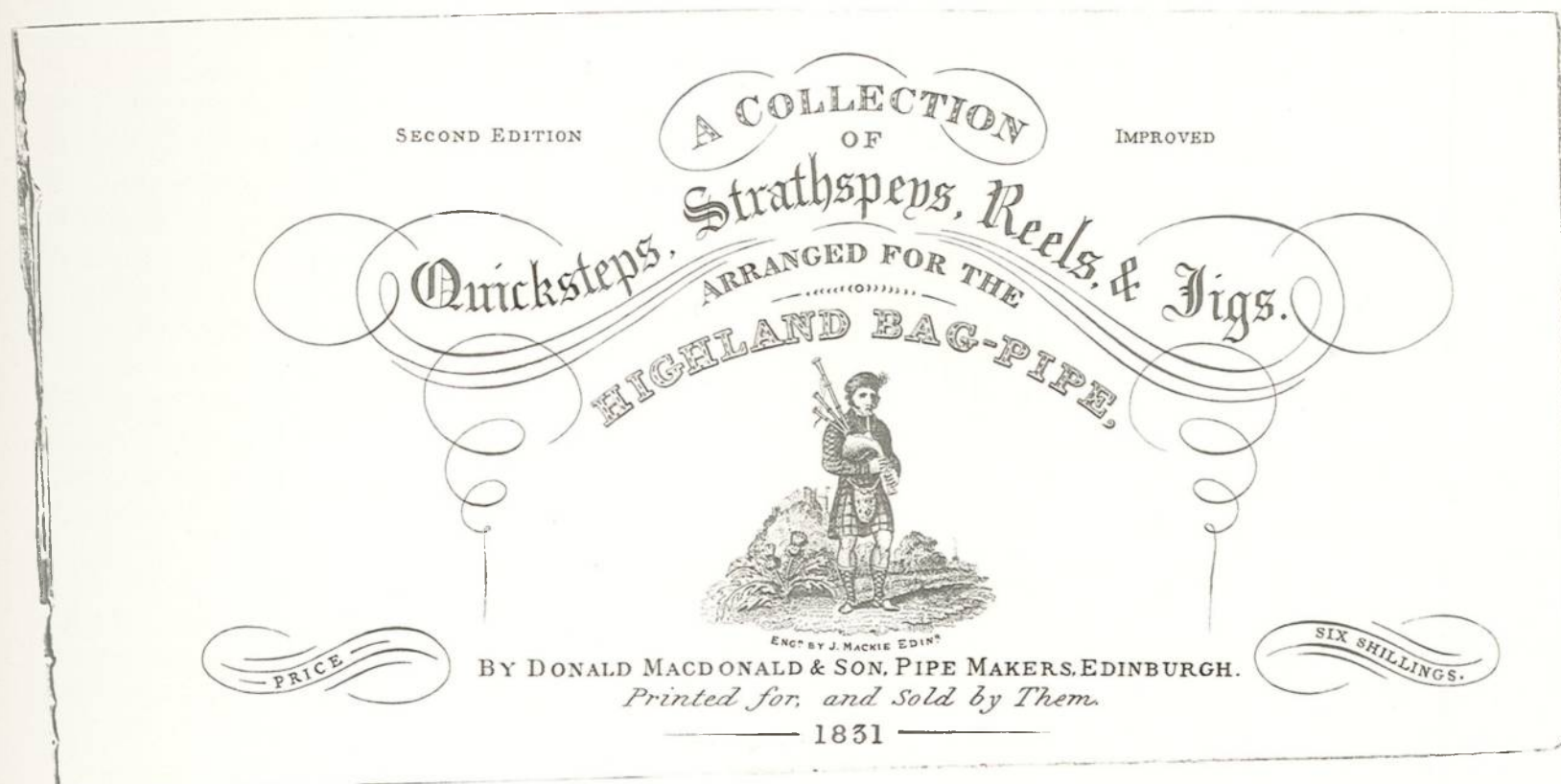
**Volume 1** has 92 pages, 11 inches wide x 13 inches high. Pages 1 - 44 are violin music; pages 45-77 are bagpipe music; pages 78-92 are violin music except for a bagpipe tune on page 78, a bagpipe tune on page 79, two bagpipe tunes on page 82, and a page of bagpipe exercises on page 83. Many of the tunes appear to have been arranged by Sullivan rather than copied from available sources. On page 49 there is a bagpipe tune that he composed: "Sullivan's Celebrated Highland Reel (1872)".

**Volume 2** has 234 pages, 11 inches wide x 13 inches high, of bagpipe music, most of it arranged to some extent by Sullivan to fit his own playing. For "The Whimsical" on page 155 we can see exactly what he did. He clearly got this tune from his copy of Donald Macdonald collection (2nd ed. 1831). [Macdonald chose the title arbitrarily, to replace a vulgar title in his first edition; the title and the tune appear in no other collection.] Sullivan copied every note and its time exactly, but made extensive changes to the grace noting: At the beginning of the 1st and 3rd bars he has a grace note instead of a doubling (more suitable going into the short note of a Scots snap?); in addition, he added 9 grace notes, deleted 12, and changed 13. [For other tunes that he may have taken from this Donald Macdonald collection, there are usually a few different notes, as well as differences in timing and in grace noting.] There are tunes labeled as arranged by Sullivan on page 59 "Hoddam Castle. Irish. arranged for the Pipe by Sullivan Ross." ; page 193 "Beanntan mór na h-alba. the great mountains of Scotland - Arranged for the pipe by Sullivan Ross", and "The North Inch. a Strathspey. Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross."; page 223 "Bhuals - a Waltz - Arranged by Sullivan Ross". There are tunes composed by Sullivan on page 56 "Sullivan Ross's Farewell to Lucknow Ont. (By Sullivan Ross. Sept. 13th 1876." ; page 159 "The Beauty of Caledonia, a Strathspey Composed by Sullivan Ross - March 28th 1873." On page 56 there is a tune "Sgt. Wm. Gunn Pipe Major 93rd 's Compliment to Sullivan Ross".

**Volume 3** has 182 pages, 11 inches wide x 13 inches high, of bagpipe music, most of it arranged to some extent by Sullivan to fit his own playing. There are tunes labeled as arranged by Sullivan on page 23 "Tir Mhàiri Pipadhire. Maryland Hornpipe. Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross" ; page 47 "Paddy Miles Reel. Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross." ; page 48 "An Cupan Tàe. The Cup of Tay. (Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross ) an Irish Reel." and "Pride of the Ball. an Irish Reel. Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross" and "an Irish Reel. Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross." ; page 49 "Ruidhle Baintearn Ghleann Urachidh. Lady Glenorchy's Reel. Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross", and "The Yetts of Muckart. a Reel. Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross", and ""Ruidhle Ann Stiubhart. Miss Ann Stewart's Reel. Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross.", and "Mr. Compton of Compton Hall's Reel. Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross." ; page 50 "Master Andrew Grant (Balmoral) Reel by A. F. Skinner. Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross." ; page 50 "Forfar Hunt. a Reel by A. Allan. Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross.", and "Miss Johnston's Reel. by James Scott Skinner. Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross." ; page 54 "The McGregor's Strathspey. Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross." and "Gleann an èisge. Glen Fishie. Arranged for the Pipe by S. Ross." ' page 60 "Whistle O'er the Lave O't - Arranged by S. Ross.", and "The Sound of Mull. a Strathspey - Arranged by S. Ross." ; page 61 "Nighan an Tuadhnich. (The Farmer's Daughter) a Reel - Arranged by S. Ross". There are tunes composed by Sullivan on a front page ""Sullivan Ross's March. by S. Ross 1883." [This tune also appears on page 69.] ; page 32 "Mrs. Ross's Strathspey" [This may be a Sullivan Ross composition. It has not been found elsewhere] ; page 69 "My old Highland home I love. by S. Ross 1901"[This tune appears at the front of the Volume 3, titled "Sullivan Ross's March, by S. Ross 1883. The superfluous "E" in the second bar has been removed, the first bar of line 3 is different, and there are a few differences in grace notes.]

**Volume 4** has 82 pages, 9 inches wide x 6 inches high, of bagpipe music. Three tunes in this volume are Sullivan Ross compositions: on page 4 "Farewell to Lucknow Canada west. By Sullivan Ross. Sept. 13th 1876" [This same tune, almost identical, appears in Volume 2, page 56, with Ontario instead of Canada West in the title.]; page 7 "The Caledonia Quickstep. by Sullivan Ross. Dec. 10th 1879." ; pages 63 - 64 ""The London (Canada) Caledonia Society's Quickstep. by Sullivan Ross - September 1883". On page 6 there is a salute to Sullivan Ross: "Sergt. Wm. Gun Pipe-Major 93rd 's Compliment to Sullivan Ross. a March." [This same tune, with a few notes different, appears on page 56 of Volume 2.]

The Sullivan Ross Collection also includes Sullivan's copy of a printed book of bagpipe music, whose title page is reproduced below in its original size, with slight discolorations of the background removed.



This book is 8.75 inches wide x 4.13 to 4.19 inches high. It has been rebound in a heavy paper outer cover by stabbing a row of holes through the book, about 5/16 inch from the left edge and 1/4 inch apart, and passing a heavy thread through them. The pale yellowish-green original cover has the same text as the title page; on a page pasted inside this cover Sullivan has written "Sullivan Ross is the right owner of this book. July 26th 1864. Price \$1.50 cts". Following the title page, whose verso side is blank, there is a two-page preface dated Edinburgh, 1831, then a three-page index, and then pages numbered 1, 2, ... , 78 , with pages 37, 38 missing: these were lost before the rebinding. Pasted to the inside of the original back cover is the music for "Captain McKenzie's Strathspey", in Sullivan's writing. On the outside of this cover Sullivan has written "Sullivan Ross West Zorra".

**This book is the only known surviving copy of the edition.** In his definitive book *A Bibliography of Bagpipe Music*, Edinburgh, John Donald Publishers, 1980, page 126, Roderick Cannon described a book in the Dundee City library that measures 9.6 inches wide x 3.9 inches high. This book has the same title page as Sullivan's copy, but its preface is dated Edinburgh 1835, so Cannon suggested that "Perhaps this is really the third edition." Cannon now reports (personal communication, 2008) that Sullivan's copy confirms this.

The Sullivan Ross Collection also includes a violin labeled " Sullivan Ross, Maker, Harrington, Ont. 1896" and "Graduated by W. J. Galbraith, Toronto Ontario May17, 1933". There is a case with this violin.

**A print edition** of a selection of bagpipe tunes from this collection Sullivan Ross Collection of Pipe Music by Iain G. Millington is available from David A. Ross, 8022 Big Buck Lane, Klamath Falls Oregon 97601. Email:rossschu@q.com. Price Postpaid \$15.US (Canadian orders send postal order for \$20.US)

## THIS RESTORED EDITIONAL OF VOLUME 1

This edition is an attempt to make a facsimile edition of Sullivan Ross's Volume 1 as it was when it was written. Many pages of Sullivan's four volumes are difficult to read, some very difficult, because over the years the ink has bled through the paper, adding to the content of each page a mirror image, of varying strength, of the writing on the reverse side of the page. There is also some age discoloration, and some physical damage, but very little transfer of ink between facing pages.

The Museum of Civilization made full-size high quality color photographs of the pages and loaned these for more than a year. These were scanned at 300 dots per inch in Adobe Photoshop, Grayscale. Brightness was increased about +15 and contrast increased about +60. Then the remaining discolorations were erased, using the Rectangular Marquee Tool or the Polygonal Lasso Tool and the Delete key for larger areas, and then the Eraser Tool for smaller areas.

This left the staff lines too washed-out, and they were restored using the Single Row Marquee Tool and the Brush Tool. Some of the thinnest strokes in the titles were also washed out, and these were restored either using the Polygonal Lasso Tool and the Brush Tool or else just the brush tool.

The titles and the music have been left exactly as Sullivan wrote them, to show his writing style - except that, in the pipe music, the legibility of the doublings has been improved; these were almost too small for the size of the pen that Sullivan was using, and its ink flow. A few other changes have been made, to remove unnecessary distractions: A few ink blots have been removed. In a few places where Sullivan has struck something out and made a correction, the strikeout has been removed. Where Sullivan has written the name of a note for clarity, this has been removed and the head of the note trimmed to make it unambiguous - as Sullivan would have done but for the unforgiving medium of ink on paper. On page 54 and again on page 77 Sullivan has forgotten to write in the title of a tune, and this has been supplied. The wallpaper pattern on the original front cover is much damaged by wear and tear. This was restored by choosing a piece of the pattern that is well preserved, and replicating it to fill the page. It appears, followed by the restored title page, just before the 92 pages of Sullivan Ross Volume 1 with their original numbers.

Additions: A small book of violin tunes, written out by Sullivan Ross, is now in the keeping of his great-grandson David A. Ross of Klamath Falls Oregon. The pages of this book are reproduced here on pages 93 to 106. Also with the Ross family are three loose sheets of violin music. Two of them are the same size and quality as the pages of Sullivan Ross Volume 1; their four sides are reproduced here on pages 107 - 108, and 110 - 111. The third is one sided and contains a draft in pencil of variations that Sullivan was working on for the country dance "The East Neuk o' Fife" of page 108. A rewritten version of this is shown on page 109, with the notes more regularly spaced and with clear heads and straight vertical stems for easier legibility.

Index: A combined index of Sullivan Ross Volume 1 and the additions is given on pages 112 to 128, with notes on the tunes and on Sullivan's arrangements, by John Donald Cameron of Judique, Nova Scotia. Translations of the Gaelic titles are given where needed. Sullivan's first language was Gaelic, and all his life he was more fluent in Gaelic than in English. He was also very literate, at a time when most Gaelic speakers used it as their daily language but had little contact with the written word - through much of his life his use of Gaelic was mostly through reading and through the wide correspondence that he kept up.

Biography: A biography of Sullivan Ross, giving all that is known about his life, written by his grandson Alexander M Ross. This is followed by short accounts of Alexander M. Ross and his brother R. Burns Ross, and their activities in preserving the Sullivan Ross Collection and passing it on to the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

## Sullivan Ross (1828 - 1904) - Zorra's Piper

by Alexander M. Ross

Sullivan Ross of Harrington (in Oxford County, 9 miles south of Stratford, Ontario) was born May 9th 1828 at Badninish in Sutherland, Scotland on Achavandra Muir just south of Skelbo Wood, three miles north of Dornoch. When he was five years old, his father Alexander with his wife and four children left the croft at Bridgend where they lived. Nothing more is known of them until August 15th 1838, when a daughter Christena was born to Alexander and his wife Margaret in Nissouri in Oxford County Ontario. Alexander next appears in an Inspection Report for the Brock District Clergy Reserve (1844 - 1845). He was then living on a four acre clearing on Lot 32 (W ½), Concession 3, West Zorra township. He continued to clear his 75 acre lot and remained there until his death in 1880.

Until he was ten years old, Sullivan may have attended school in Scotland, which would account for his fine flowing handwriting and his literacy in both English and Gaelic. Once the family were on their land in Canada, schooling for Sullivan ended and his status became that of laborer as he worked alongside his father to clear bush.

The census report of 1851 notes that the family - father, mother, and six children - lived in a one-story log house just west and below the crest of a hill where a frame house was built that year to replace the log house. Even the new house must have offered cramped accommodation when Sullivan brought his bride Margaret Matheson (1838-1916) to live there in 1857. The 1861 census listed ten members of the household.

No family records of those early years survive. Sullivan's own letters and mementos disappeared in 1913 when his widow consigned them to a bonfire in Embro. What fortunately does survive is a set of four manuscript volumes of music that Sullivan compiled. The first, dated 1864, contains both violin and bagpipe music; the other three, dated 1872, 1881, and the third some time after 1883, contain bagpipe music only. These volumes are held in the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Quebec. Two photographs escaped the flames in 1913, one of Sullivan in kilt and plaid with his pipes under his arm, and the other, taken about the year 1900, shows him seated with his wife and two nephews in front of his home - a handsome, confident elderly man.

In his History of Zorra and Embro [4] Sullivan's son William tells of an itinerant piper, Little Johnny McKenzie, who spent a night with Sullivan's parents some time in the mid-1850's. A boy William Sutherland, the local miller's son, who was present that evening reported that Sullivan was greatly taken with the music of the pipes and said that he would very much like to learn to play the instrument. It is probable that he already played the violin at that time, because the first 44 pages of the 1864 manuscript book contain only pieces for the violin.

This same William Sutherland remembered Sullivan teaching him to dance Highland strathspeys and reels by whistling the tunes for him. It may well have been Sullivan who encouraged William to take up the violin, on which his playing of Scottish music, especially strathspeys, was greatly admired.

The reference to Little Johnny McKenzie, who was made welcome for a week in the Harrington area at this time suggests that instrumental music was seldom heard along the concessions and side roads of the Zorras in the 1840's and 1850's. But folk tunes from the Highland glens did survive among the pioneers, who whistled them at their work in the fields and sang them over household chores. Such music was of necessity purely local, existing in isolation, effectively cut off from its source in far-away Scotland.

A change, however, came in the Zorras in 1856 with the creation of Embro's Highland Society, dedicated among other things to preserving the dress, music and literature of the ancient Caledonians. At that Society's annual games Sullivan, after walking or riding the nine miles from his home, could hear celebrated pipers play.

Carrying the music home in his head, he could try out tunes on his violin and later on his pipes. To preserve what pleased him, he transferred the notes to paper. When he began this process cannot be accurately established, but the title page of his 1864 manuscript volume reads "Second Edition - A Collection - Improved - Strathspeys.

Reels. Jigs. Hornpipes. Polkas. Schottisches. Waltzes. Cotillions. Songs. &c. Arranged For The Violin By Sullivan Ross West Zorra". Later on he enlarged the volume by adding selections for the bagpipe. No trace remains of the first edition, but obviously the process of transcription predates 1864.

Printed music for the bagpipe appeared first in 1803. For "the ensuing half century and more, the few books of bagpipe music that were published were produced in very small numbers. ... and it was not until the [twentieth] century that printed music came to be purchased in quantities and commonly owned by pipers themselves" [2]. Hugh Cheape also observes that whereas printed music had "a tendency to standardization and compromise", music in manuscript "reflects personal style, teaching, and knowledge" - which makes the importance of Sullivan Ross's manuscript compilations more easily understood and appreciated.

Sullivan's 1864 volume indicates how wide-ranging his tastes in music were. The number of American songs appearing in this volume bring to mind the slaves in the southern states and the soldiers of the American Civil War. Some American tunes like "Old Zip Coon" and "Turkey in the Straw", brought in by escaped slaves, were in the Zorras by the mid-1850's [4].

From 1864 on, Sullivan's interest in Scottish music, especially pipe music, becomes ever more noticeable. Although the Free Church of Scotland to which he belonged disapproved of much secular music and dancing, its manse in Harrington in 1870 received as a tenant the Reverend Daniel Gordon, who remained as minister in the Harrington Church for the next twenty years. His was a musical family: He himself played the bagpipe, and his daughter Gretta played the piano. His six sons had good voices. Two of them, Charles and Gilbert, were members of quintets at both the Universities of Toronto and Edinburgh. Evenings in the manse were often filled with song and the sound of pibrochs on the chanter. Using some discretion, Daniel often slipped away from the glebe in the evening, up the hill with his pipes to play with his neighbor Sullivan.

Daniel's son Charles (the novelist Ralph Connor) gave us the only detailed account we have of Sullivan. After praising the violin musicianship of William Sutherland, he wrote:

Our nearest neighbor, Sullivan Ross, was a musical genius too. He made his own violins great and small, and fine instruments they were, and he played them, not with the finish and delicacy of William Sutherland, but with deeper, fuller, tones. His master instrument, however, was the bagpipes. Far into the night we could hear Sullivan playing up the hill, and often I have sat on the doorstep listening in the moonlight with an ache in my heart and tears not far away. Sullivan Ross was a great music lover. Any day in the middle of harvest he could easily be beguiled at the noon rest to take his violin or tune up his pipes and regale us boys for an hour or two while the harvest waited in the field. Like Billy Sutherland, he was a "quiet" man of few words, but such was the eloquence of his fiddle or his pipes that we never missed his speech."[3]

So, throughout the 1870's a visitor to Harrington would be agreeably surprised by both the variety and quality of the local music: choral, piano, violin, and bagpipes. It was an auspicious decade for Sullivan Ross, who was becoming widely known as a piper. One of his surviving brief notes records that on May 18th 1870 he got his "new bagpipe as a present, \$50.00". In that year his mother died, and ten years later, his father. Sullivan inherited the farm and the need to provide for his wife and four children. The work may have been easier by 1880 because his older son was now 20 and still at home.

As pioneer conditions of travel and communications improved, Sullivan's musicology could break free of the limits of his farm and even the boundaries of West Zorra. One item that escaped the widow's bonfire was a copy of *The Highlander* (Inverness, June 3rd 1876) which contained advertisements for music books such as *Am Filidh Gaidhealach* "The best and cheapest Gaelic Song Book ever published ... price 1 shilling". These advertisements must have interested Sullivan, for he had carefully cut one of them out from the paper. He was also able to get



printed books of pipe music. His copy of the Donald Macdonald collection (Second Edition. Improved. 1831) bears Sullivan's name and the date July 6th 1864, and is now in the Museum. This book, with its preface also dated 1831, is the only known copy of the true second edition - see page 126 of Roderick Cannon [1]. Sullivan also had a manuscript book dated 1851 that had belonged to a pipe major of the 72nd Highlanders. His son William often spoke of the considerable correspondence that his father kept up both in English and Gaelic, extending far beyond the boundaries of west Zorra.

Throughout the late 1870's and into the 1880's he was able to leave the farm to take part in Highland Games. At the 1876 Lucknow Ontario Games, sponsored by the Caledonian Societies of Toronto, Hamilton, and Kincardine, Sullivan captured awards in the categories of Pibroch and March and Strathspey and Reel, and "won the bagpipe championship of America against a very large class - having more than ordinary skill in playing the bagpipes"[ Woodstock Daily Sentinel Review, August 10, 1904, page 1, column 3]. In 1883 he served as a judge of "piping, dress, and dancing" at the Caledonian games in London. A year later he was a judge at United St. Andrew's Society's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Games in the same city. Events like these away from the farm and in the midst of his piping peers must have pleased him greatly.

Over the years he continued to add selections to his manuscript holdings, many of which bear the imprint of his own arranging. His choices always revealed his breadth of taste. Volume II, for example, has the title "Marches, Strathspeys, Reels, Laments, Pibrochs arranged and collected by Sullivan Ross". Again and again he mentions the composer of particular pieces and even gives a brief history of some selections. Altogether more than 1300 pieces of violin and bagpipe music appear in his collections, all neatly notated and, where relevant, bearing both Gaelic and English titles. The Gaelic is excellent.

Among the tunes in the four volumes there are seven that are labeled as composed by Sullivan Ross, and 21 tunes labeled as arranged by him. Many other tunes show his workmanship: comparing his versions with possible printed sources, there are usually many small changes, in timing, choice of grace notes and doublings, changing a note or a phrase, the way a highly skilled performer deviates from a printed score for better expression.

Sullivan's music was a time-consuming artistic activity that interfered with the success of his farming. Mortgages taken out in 1888 and 1890 were probably the result of his giving pride of place to music rather than to husbandry. It was a splendid, daring choice he made, that the years belatedly may yet approve.

Some time after 1880 Sullivan included among his activities the making of violins. Four of them can be traced, and these bear the dates 1888, 1892, 1893, and 1896. The 1896 instrument with its bow and case is held in the Canadian Museum of Civilization, and the 1888 one is owned by his great granddaughter Celia Ross. His violins had a fine finish, and musicians today praise them for their tone, as Charles Gordon did. It was, however, scarcely a profitable venture - the 1888 instrument was sold for twenty dollars.

In 1904, Sullivan died on the same farm that he had inherited from his father. One of his five children, William, continued for a time to work on the same 75-acre farm and also shared his gift as a fiddler with community friends. How Sullivan Ross, the West Zorra farmer, acquired his musicianship and his skill with fine tools - some of which he made himself - may never be known. What remains, the four manuscript volumes of music and the four violins, stand as witness to his remarkable talents, giving him unquestionably a place among Canada's early makers of music.

### **Bha fear-ciùil òirdheirc air - He was a splendid musician**

[1] Cannon, Roderick. *A Bibliography of Bagpipe Music*. Edinburgh, John Donald Publishers, 1980.

[2] Cheape, Hugh. "Piper Finnie's Manuscript Book" , *Scottish Book Collector*, Feb/Mar 1989, pages 22 - 23.

[3] Gordon, Charles. *Postscript to Adventure*. New York, Farrar & Rinehart 1938, page 31.

[4] Ross, William A. *History of Zorra and Embro*. Embro Courier Office 1909, pages 61 - 67.

Sullivan Ross's music books passed to his son William Alexander Ross (1872 - 1957). William inherited Sullivan's farm at Harrington - and the mortgage on it. William was also a violin player, a popular provider of music for country dances, with his wife Mary Gilligan (1886 - 1977) accompanying him on the piano. Their sons Alexander Murdock Ross (1916 - ) and Ronald Burns Ross (1917 - 2005) grew to manhood during the worst years of the great depression. William had sold the Harrington farm and bought a farm at Lakeside, about seven miles northwest of Harrington, but lost it through foreclosure. The family was down but not out - they stuck together and supported each other by whatever jobs they could find.

Alex tells of those hard times in his book *Slow March to a Regiment, Saint Catharines, Vanwell, 1993*. During high school he worked summers as a farm laborer, and after graduation in 1935 worked as a farm laborer, factory worker, postal carrier - and took Queen's University correspondence courses. He enrolled at Queen's in 1937 and graduated in 1940. From 1942 to 1946 he served with the 17th Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery, through heavy fighting in Italy and the Netherlands. He attained the rank of Captain and was awarded the Military Cross. After an M.A. at Queen's he taught at Lakehead Technical Institute and then at the University of Guelph where he served as Professor of English and Chairman of the department from 1965 to 1974. His publications include many scholarly articles and seven books. In 1950 he married Joan Porteous (1921 - 1994). Their daughter Celia (1956 - ) is a pianist, with a doctorate in French Literature from Université de Bordeaux (1982). She has been teaching at Algoma University College since then, and has been its president since 1998. She is married to Michael Bennett, and their son Alasdair (1999 - ) is the latest violin player in the family.

Burns graduated from high school in 1936 and worked for the next three years as a drug store apprentice in Woodstock. He enrolled at Queen's University in 1939 and while there worked in the summers as a drugstore clerk, explosives technician and Frontier College laborer. He received an M.A. in Chemistry at Queen's in 1944. After two years working at the Dominion Rubber Research Laboratory in Guelph, he enrolled at Yale University in 1946 and received his doctorate there in 1949. After two years working at Dupont in Niagara Falls, NY he joined the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda MD in 1951 where he worked in cancer research and then research administration until his retirement in 1977. During his retirement he taught bookbinding techniques at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland. He married Willa Jane Miller (1923 - 2008) - their children Barbara Anne (1960 - ) and David Alexander (1956 - ).

While at Queen's, Burns learned to play the bagpipes, beginning in 1940. He played with Canadian Officers Training Corps pipe band on long winter route marches at Queen's, and at a summer training camp at Petawawa in 1943. I was his pipe-major during 1943 and 1944, and remember him as an exceptionally reliable bandsman - enthusiastic, always there for practices and parades, diligent at learning and memorizing new tunes. The set of pipes he had been able to buy was the most decrepit I have ever seen - it had a home-made look and was a constant effort to keep working and in tune. We used to joke that it was the set that Noah played on the Ark. He and I both played in the Guelph pipe band in the summer of 1946. Burns was interested in piping and in Gaelic from at least as early as 1940, and was active in pipe bands all the rest of his life.

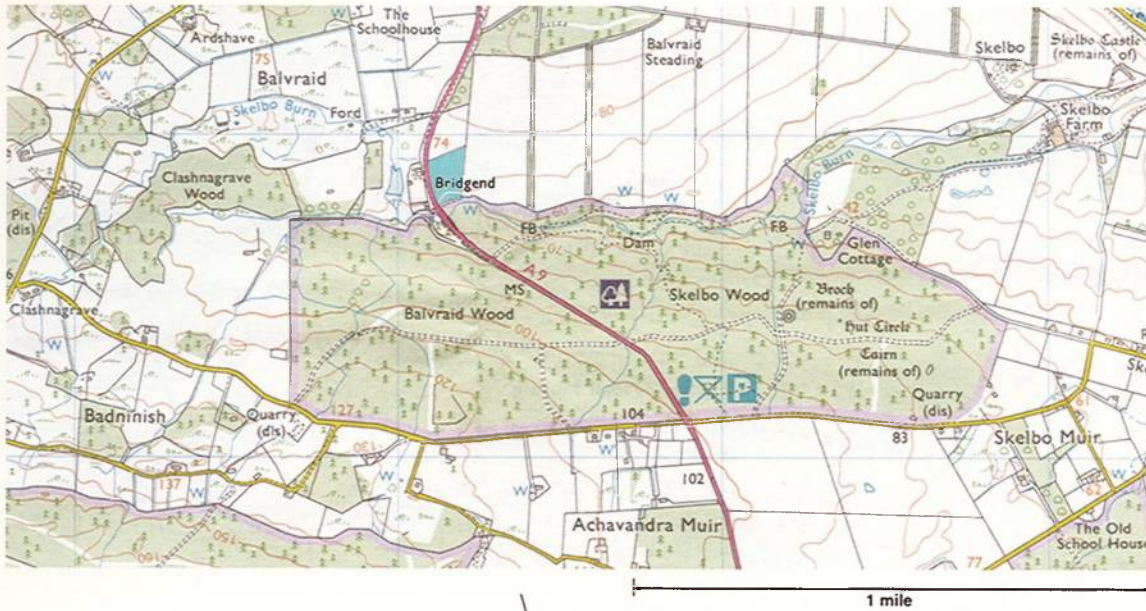
The Sullivan Ross Collection passed from William to his sons Alex and Burns. They preserved it carefully over many years, and from them it came to the Museum of Civilization. Alex worked extensively at finding information about Sullivan from family records, census and other public records, newspaper accounts, books, genealogical records. He identified the croft in Scotland where Sullivan was born, and visited it. He located and identified some of the violins that Sullivan had made, and added two of them to the collection. During his retirement years Burns worked constantly preserving and organizing Sullivan's music books. He rebound the four volumes and his brother Alex made indexes for them - very laboriously, in the days before computer indexing programs.



Sullivan Ross with his pipes ca. 1875

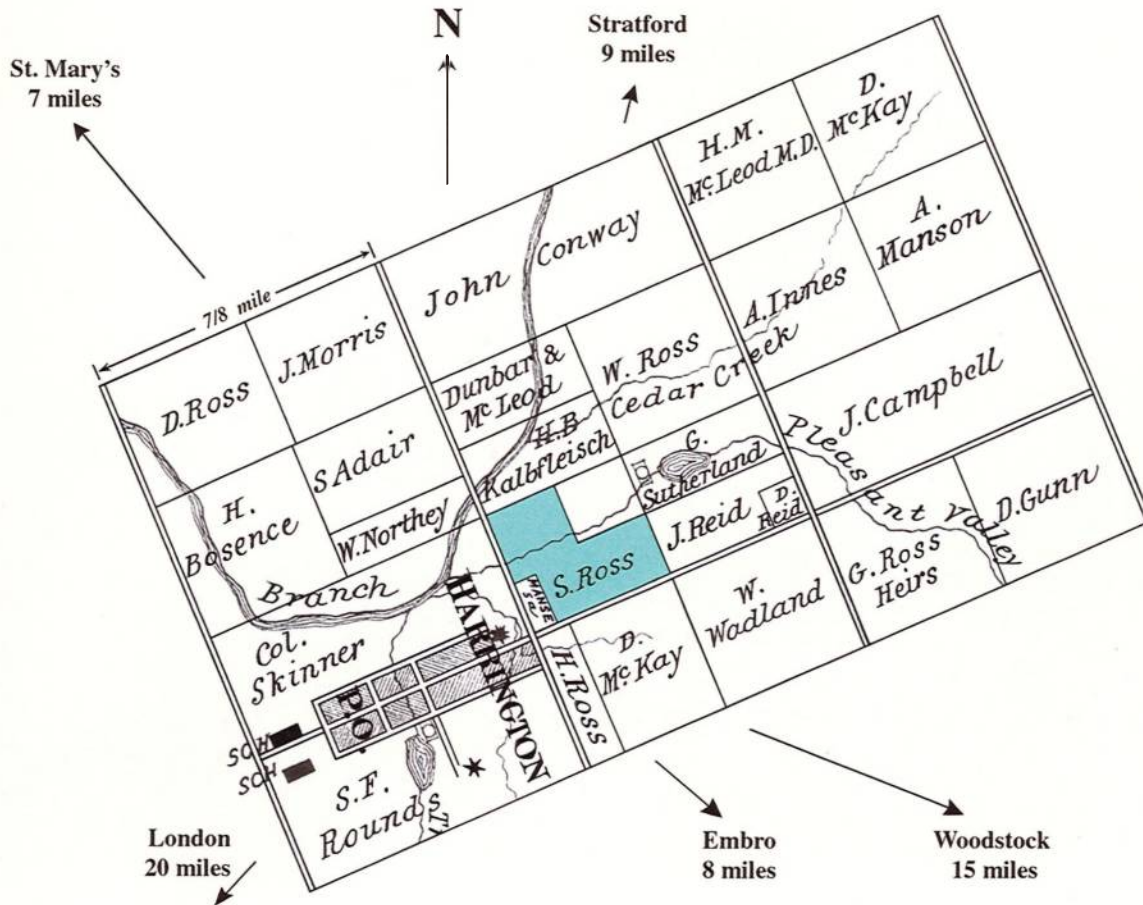


**Sullivan Ross in front of his farmhouse at Harrington ca. 1900  
with his wife Margaret Matheson and two nephews**



Dornoch 3 miles

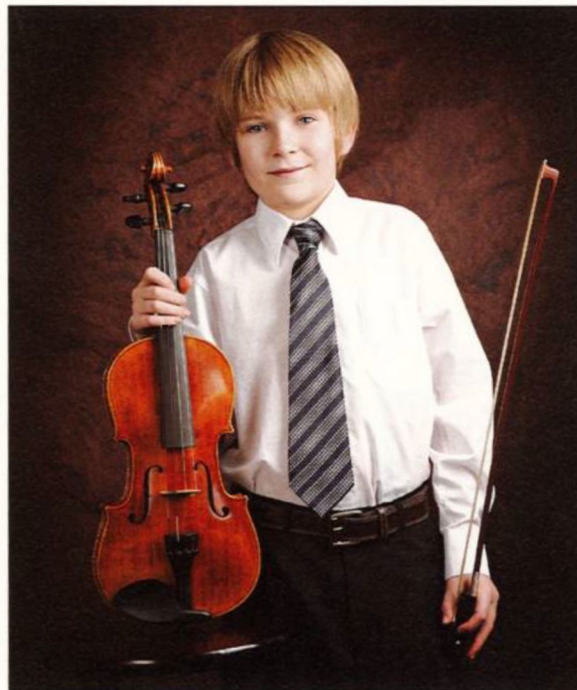
From: Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 411 - Lairg, Bonar Bridge and Golspie. Detail showing Sullivan Ross's birthplace at Bridgend near Dornoch on the northeast coast of Scotland



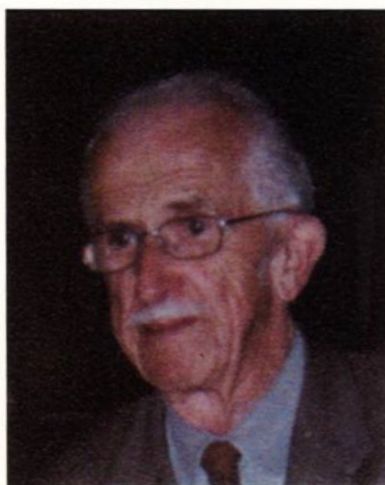
From: Historical Atlas of Oxford County Ontario Illustrated. Toronto, Walker & Miles 1876 (Belleville, Mika 1972), detail from page 38 showing the Sullivan Ross farm at Harrington



"Sullivan Ross, Maker, June 1886, Harrington, Ont." is inscribed in this violin.  
It is now in the keeping of Celia Ross of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario



Celia Ross's son Alasdair Bennett with this violin, 2009



Alexander M. Ross 2007



R. Burns Ross 2001