

# Clan Macpherson, 1550 - 1800

## How Clan Macpherson responded to the Reformation and Bonnie Prince Charlie

Reynold Macpherson, 20 January 2011



Prince Charles Edward Stuart, oil on canvas, 1738-1745

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#### Introduction

In this chapter I trace Clan Macpherson's place in Scottish history from the Reformation in the 1550s through until the late 1700s when the Battle of Culloden and the Highland Clearances finally destroyed the clan system in Scotland. In the next chapter, the McPhersons of Portsoy, the story will continue based on the lives of our known ancestors.

'The Reformation' refers to events around Scotland's break with the Roman Catholic Church and French political affiliations in favour of Protestantism and links with the English (Burleigh, 1988; Mackie, 1964). In brief, the 'Reformation Parliament' in Scotland rejected the authority of the Pope in 1560, outlawed the Mass, and approved a Protestant Confession of Faith for the Reformed Church of Scotland, 'the Kirk'. The Presbyterian theology approved for the Kirk reflected the thinking of John Calvin of Geneva, Switzerland, which stressed the sovereignty of God, the authority of the Scriptures, and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. John Knox brought Calvinism from Geneva to Scotland.

In greater detail, the Presbyterians challenged the Roman Catholic regime of the regent, Mary of Guise, who ruled on behalf of her absent daughter Mary, Queen of Scots (then also Queen of France to King Francois II, see right). The success of the Presbyterians was, in turn, challenged by the Jacobites, the Catholic supporters of the exiled Stuart Royal family, which set up the conditions for an English intervention, the Battle of Culloden and the Highland Clearances.

Clan Macpherson was largely uninvolved in these national events until, as I will show, Sir Aeneas Macpherson played an underhand role for the Jacobite Movement, and the Clan leader (known as Cluny) in 1745, Ewen Macpherson, was persuaded against his initial judgement to support the disastrous campaign of Bonnie Prince Charlie.



#### The Renaissance

Pressures for change in Scotland had been building steadily from about 1400 when the Renaissance began to sweep the capitals of Europe. Printing presses began spreading knowledge throughout society. It raised questions about the tribal and feudal world determined by hereditary clan chiefs and their masters, the earls, and Scotland's two main institutions, the Royal Court and the Roman Catholic Church. A social and religious revolution swept the medieval order away and, by about 1600, was ushering in a world of science, art and enlightenment. Humanism began putting man at the centre of the world instead of God, and valuing practical knowledge and problem solving skills over the divine and mysterious. The Renaissance came gradually to Badenoch.

Some of the early ideas were about being Scottish. King David II (1329-1371), King Robert II Stewart (1371-1390), King Robert III (1390-1406) and King James I (1406-1437) had all promoted a sense of Scottish identity and the infrastructure of the nation state of Scotland; a Scots' Parliament, taxation, professional armed forces and the role of law in society, rather than relying on clans to sustain order (Oram, 2006). New patterns of behaviour and thinking emerged under the Stuart dynasty of kings and queens, which succeeded the Bruces after the Wars of Independence. Some saw Scotland as emerging from a 'barbaric' Gaelic past to become enlightened Europeans.

Fresh thinking about religious faith changed everything. The Roman Catholic Church had been very influential in day-to-day life throughout the Highlands since the Gaels arrived from Ireland about 400 AD. The Bible and Mass were both in Latin, requiring interpretation by priests, and were reinforced by a doctrine of Papal infallibility.

Martin Luther (2010) (see right) contradicted Pope Leo X and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in 1520. He argued that exoneration from God's punishment for sin could be not purchased through the Church. He was excommunicated and outlawed. Nevertheless, he translated the Bible into German so that the faithful could have direct access to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ as the redeemer of sin. He introduced a married priesthood and the singing of hymns. His ideas were a huge challenge to the power of the Catholic Church.



Martin Luther's ideas became influential in Scotland from about 1525. The then Catholic Scottish Parliament attempted to suppress them by burning Protestant preachers from 1528, starting with Patrick Hamilton, with more executed in the 1530s and 1540s. Private religious meetings were banned, dissent was suppressed by spying, and Protestants were barred from royal office. But the ideas spread through the Highlands and internal attempts to reform the Catholic Church proved futile (Kirk, 1989).

The English King Henry VIII tried to entice Scotland away from its 'Auld Alliance' with France and its religious ties with Rome. He tried to marry his infant son Edward to the infant Mary (by then Queen of Scots). There a negative reaction against this proposed marriage in Scotland, followed by a punitive English military occupation (1547–1549) that enabled Bibles in English to circulate freely. This led to several Scottish earls 'to cause the word of God to be taught and preached'. Mary Queen of Scots was then betrothed to the French Dauphin (boy King) and left for France in 1548.

Mary's mother, Mary of Guise (see right), was appointed regent from 1554 to 1559. Key roles in government were given to trusted Frenchmen. By the time Mary Queen of Scots married King Francis II of France in 1558, many feared that Scotland would become a province of France. Catholic Highlanders, like Clan Macpherson at the time, would probably have been less concerned, distrusting the French less than the English. In 1559, however, the Protestant Elizabeth became Queen of England. Fearing disorder in Scotland, the Regent Mary of Guise directed that all Protestant preachers account directly to her. This provoked an armed rebellion in the Lowlands. Mary of Guise further undermined her standing by deploying French troops in Scotland. When she died of dropsy or oedema in 1560, England and France agreed to withdraw their troops. This left most power in the hands of the Lords of the Congregation and their Protestant Scottish Parliament.



### **The Reformation Parliament**

The Calvinist John Knox (see right) was highly influential in having Roman Catholic doctrines scrapped in Scotland. Baptism and Communion were the only two sacraments retained and then only to be offered by 'reformed preachers.' The celebration of the Mass was made punishable by a series of penalties up to and including death. Papal jurisdiction was ended. Church lands and revenues stayed in the hands of the Reformed Church of Scotland until 1562 when five sixths were redirected to the nobility (Lamont, 1991). These edicts would have penetrated into the Highlands and would have been very controversial, while they lasted.

King Francois II of France died suddenly in 1561, and the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots returned to her Scottish throne. This drew the Lords of Congregation and all other nobles, Catholic and Protestant, into her court and threatened the role of



Parliament and the Protestant cause. She cleverly tolerated the Kirk and granted it revenues, while refusing to abolish the Mass and continuing to celebrate it in private. This strategy split the Protestant cause and revealed a wide spectrum of opinions on Church reform; suggesting the need for compromise, greater tolerance (as promoted by Queen Elizabeth I in England) and for Catholicism and Protestantism to be better defined.

John Knox, however, led the Protestant militants who wanted to root out all things Catholic. He led a mob of Presbyterians to Holyrood Abbey to disrupt Mary's private Mass. Their way was barred by James Stewart, Earl of Moray (see right), a half-brother and advisor in religious matters to Mary. James Stewart was a well educated Augustinian Canon who had led the Lords of the Congregation in rebellion in 1559. He had negotiated the agreement which allowed Mary to celebrate a private Mass after it had been banned, and to retain her claim to the throne of England without compromising the Scottish Reformation settlement.



Holyrood was also then a monastery managed by Moray's brother, and together they forced Knox and his mob to withdraw. This undermined Knox and his mob's political credibility and reinforced the role of the Lords of the Congregation as the directors of the Reformation in Scotland, led by Moray.

Power then slipped from Mary's hands. Lord Darnley, her second husband and father of King James VI, was murdered. She then married James Hepburn, the Earl of Bothwell. Many Scottish nobles believed that he was one of Darnley's assassins. They mounted a *coup d'etat* to 'save her' from Bothwell's influence, imprisoning her in Lochleven Castle in 1567 where she gave birth to twins. A second *coup d'etat* by Protestant radicals then forced Mary to abdicate in favour of her first but still infant child, James VI. Factions took sides and the six-year Civil War followed.

The Catholic Clan Macpherson successfully held Ruthven Castle (see right) for Mary against the Earl of Argyll when he invaded Badenoch. About 600 Macphersons marched with Mary's general Montrose. However, Mary's forces were finally defeated by her brother Moray at the Battle of Langside 1568.

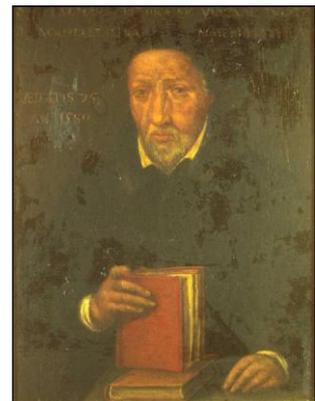


She fled to England and sought the protection of her cousin, Queen Elizabeth I of England. Her intrigues, however, suggested that she was supportive of a Catholic uprising in England and Elizabeth had her imprisoned and eventually beheaded for treason.

## The Covenanters

Back in Scotland, George Buchanan, one of Scotland's and Europe's most brilliant scholars (see below), invented a justification for the overthrow of Mary Queen of Scots. His premise, something of a stretch, was that the ancient Gaelic Kings of Scotland had been elected and not divinely appointed. He argued that they were subject to the law of Scotland and not above it. He concluded that if a monarch broke his or her contract or covenant with the people and became a tyrant, then in law, the people (i.e. the Scots nobility) were entitled to depose that monarch.

This 'covenant' logic was very influential and led to a revolution in the 1600s. In case this logic failed to convince the people at the time, Buchanan also started the myth of Mary's promiscuity. And while Buchanan tutored the young King James VI of Scotland to become 'a godly prince', who would obey the congregation and serve the Protestant church, his protégé took the view that only God could depose him and that the Kirk needed to be reformed in order to help create 'a godly society'.



By the 1590s, when Catholics were being martyred in England and Protestants were being burned in France, the Protestants had captured the state of Scotland and yet remained worried that they would only achieve token compliance rather than genuine conversion of the people. About one-third of the Scottish barons were still Roman Catholics (Mackintosh, 1898, Section XI).

Various strategies were devised by King James VI (see right) to encourage full-hearted conversion, including state propaganda and progressive co-optation of the earls. He had the Kirk propagate the catechism to embed beliefs and sponsored the conversion of popular ballads into Protestant songs. He introduced governance of the church by bishops appointed by the king - episcopacy. He made cheap Bibles available to all in English by his death in 1620. He founded Edinburgh University to supply professionally trained and paid ministers.



He also encouraged each Parish to hold Kirk Sessions where respected elders and ministers held their parishioners to account for their behavior, using fines to exert social control and support the needy. This discipline appears to have been accepted, and by the 1630s, a new Presbyterian society had developed in Scotland led by ministers and lairds sharing in local governance. The Macphersons in Badenoch, like most once-Catholic Highland clans, were full participants in the creation of this new society, as described by Alexander Macpherson (1893, p. 10).

Knox's system of Church discipline has been described as a theocracy of such an almost perfect character, that under it the kirk-sessions of the Church looked after the life and conduct of the parishioners so carefully that in 1650 Kirkton the historian was able to say, "No scandalous person could live, no scandal could be concealed in all Scotland, so strict the correspondence was there between the ministers and their congregations." The old church annals of Badenoch contain in this respect much evidence of the extent to which the ministers and elders of bygone times in Scotland acted as ecclesiastical detectives in the way of discovering and discouraging "the works of darkness," and the gleanings which follow give some indication of the remarkable powers exercised for such a long time by the courts of the Church.

The power of local Kirks was also intensified by the Scottish monarchy and his court moving south to London in 1603. King James VI's Protestantism and diplomacy was rewarded by an invitation to succeed Elizabeth I as King James I of England and Ireland. The King and his court had been the hub of Scottish society and patronage, and when they moved south many Scots nobles were angered by the evaporation of their influence, offices of state and titles.

Their sense of grievance deepened when James visited Scotland only once during the remainder of his reign, in 1617. In a context where one king ruled two parliaments, this was taken to mean that he favoured English interests over Scottish. The Scots nobles' growing hostility led King James to abandon his plan for the Union of Great Britain.

### **The Chattan Confederation's Band of Union, 1690**

Faced with political marginalization, the Scottish earls and clan leaders moved to consolidate their traditional regional alliances. One example involving the Macphersons was the Chattan Confederation's 'Band of Union' signed 4<sup>th</sup> April 1609 at Termit House on Petty Ridge, now Morayston Farm, near Inverness. As noted by Allan Maclean of Dochgarroch (2010), it was technically a 'Contract of Friendship' or a 'Contract of Perpetual Amity' between two groups; Clan Mackintosh and the other Clans in the Chattan Confederation. It committed members to supporting each other and having twelve leading men, including the Mackintosh Captain, settling future disagreements.

The Band was signed by 30 leaders of seven different clans; the Mackintoshes, the Macphersons, the Macqueens, the Macbeans, the Macleans of the North, the Magillivrays and the Shaws of Strathnairn. The Macpherson

signatories included “Andrew McPherson of Cluny for himself and takand the full burden in and upon him of Ewin McPherson in Bryne, Johne McPherson in Breckachie, with their own consents, and remanant of that name descended of that race.” (Maclean, 2010, p. 4) The Band was formally witnessed by the Provost of Inverness.

The Band of Union 1609 was formally reaffirmed in 2009 by four clan chiefs (see right, the nearest is our Cluny, the Hon. Sir William Macpherson).

One reason why the Macphersons signed the Band of Union in 1609 was that they were changing their political affiliations. King James VI had been backing the Earls of Huntly and Moray as the keepers of law and order in the region. Nearly all the members of the Chattan Confederation were vassals to one or other of them. The Mackintoshes were subordinate to the Protestant Earl of Moray.

The Macphersons, however, had independently negotiated a ‘Bond of Friendship’ in 1591 with the Catholic George Gordon, then 6<sup>th</sup> Earl and later 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess of Huntly (see Castle Huntly right). This Bond of Friendship became strained when Huntly’s feud with the Grants and the Mackintoshes escalated into a private war with their backers, the Earls of Moray and Athole and Lord Lovat. It became unstable when Huntly set fire to the Earl of Moray’s castle in 1592 and personally stabbed him to death. It became unsustainable when Huntly exploited King James’ leniency in September 1593 and killed 60 Macintoshes, citing their attack on Strathbogie, and then again in April 1594 when he "made a raid against the Mackintoshes; burned their houses, slaughtered many people, and captured an immense booty." (Mackintosh, 1898, Section X)

Another reason for the Macphersons signing was that recent Acts of Parliament had made clan chiefs personally responsible for the behavior of their clansfolk, and even more threatening, required them to produce legal evidence of their right to their lands. The Mackintoshes, for example, had been forced to forfeit some of their lands when they could not produce title deeds. Deemed to be the Captains of Clan Chattan, the Mackintoshes were also held responsible for member clans producing property titles and managing law and order.

The position of the Mackintoshes was, however, weakened when their chief died in 1606, leaving a grandson to succeed who was a minor. His uncle, William Mackintosh of Benchar, was appointed his guardian and interim Captain of Clan Chattan. A group of ‘leading men’ of Clan Chattan were charged by the Council of Inverness to guarantee ‘the good rule of the Clan Chattan’ during the young chief’s minority. These ‘cautioners’ were required to negotiate a ‘Band of Union’ between 28 March and 12 April 1609. A key factor realised by Captain William Mackintosh was that “the Chief of the Macphersons, who often took an independent line, was also in the firing line, having fallen out with their normal protectors, the Huntly family.” (Maclean, 2010, p. 2) Put simply, the Macphersons were switching earls, a dangerous process that required the mobilisation of all possible allies.

It was noted above that King James abandoned his plan for a Union of Great Britain due to the hostility of the Scots nobles. His son, King Charles I (see right), who saw himself as a divinely appointed leader of society, attempted to revitalise his father’s plan by having the Scots bishops to bring the Kirk into conformity with English systems. In doing so he alienated two powerful groups in Scotland, the Presbyterians and the Scots nobility.



The Presbyterians believed that Jesus Christ was the head of the Kirk, not the King, and that spiritual power and political legitimacy should flow from the Elders upwards and not from the King down. In a context where politics was essentially about advancing religious interests, Charles had given the Presbyterians political credibility which they then used.

By deploying bishops into government, Charles had further undermined the role of the Scots nobility who then closed ranks with the Presbyterian radicals. The flashpoint came in 1637 when Charles introduced an English-style prayer book into Scotland without consultation. Many recalled Buchanan's logic and decided that Charles had violated his covenant with the people.

### **The Covenanters provoke an Invasion by Cromwell**

A revolutionary National Covenant was drafted by Archibald Johnston of Wariston and Alexander Henderson to end the medieval order of divinely appointed Kings in Scotland. It demanded a Scottish Parliament and a General Assembly free from interference by the King. It demanded the abolition of bishops, who had been serving the King in matters of Kirk and State, and the expansion of the role of Scotland's nobles and Kirk. The 'Covenanters,' who signed at Greyfriar's Kirk in Edinburgh in 1638, included nobles, ministers and thousands of ordinary Scots.

Their viewpoint was then preached widely at 'conventicles' throughout the Highlands (see right), with 'covenanters' pledging to defend 'Scotland's rights' regarding Kirk and State. Badenoch would have joined in the religious uproar.

The National Covenant split Scottish society. Most of the Scots nobility turned against the Kirk and agreed to 'the Engagement' and supported Charles I against the English Parliament. The Kirk preached against the Engager's Army which invaded England in 1648. It was under strength and soon routed by Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army.

This briefly propelled the radical Presbyterians into power. Their 'Rule of the Saints' imposed tight social discipline, punished adultery with death, humiliated Scots nobles in Kirk Sessions, and barred Engagers from public office, parliament and the army.

When Cromwell had Charles I executed in 1649 in London, the Scottish Parliament promptly appointed his son, Charles II (see right), as King of Scotland, England and Ireland, once he had agreed to uphold the National Covenant.

This agreement incensed Cromwell who quickly conquered Scotland in 1651, abolishing its parliament and incorporating the country into England. The Parliamentary Union of 1652 led to the birth of the Commonwealth of Scotland, England and Ireland, a republic.

Most of the Scottish representatives, however, were officers in Cromwell's occupying army. Most Scots also bitterly resented the fortifications he built at Ayr, Inverlochy, Inverness, Leith, and Perth. Cromwell's republic fell apart when he died in 1659.

Charles II and Scotland's Parliament were suddenly restored to power causing a major switch in patronage. This should have advantaged the Royalist Andrew Macpherson of Cluny (see right) (Waitt, 1722) who succeeded his grandfather as 15th Chief of Clan Macpherson around 1660 but dying unmarried aged 26 in 1666.

Royal power was reasserted with a brutal purge of the Kirk and State. Many radical Presbyterians who had been obliged to co-operate with Cromwell's regime were executed. The Presbyterian governance of the Church was abolished. Bishops were imposed on a largely Protestant Lowland population. The Scottish Parliament was brought under royal direction. Ministers who refused to renounce the National Covenant were dismissed. Conventicles were declared illegal and covenanting ministers were hunted down by the Government and killed. A Presbyterian rebellion



across the South and West of Scotland ended in 1679 at the Battle of Bothwell Bridge. About 1200 covenanters were taken prisoner, many transported to the West Indies. While moderate Presbyterian ministers were allowed to preach if they accepted the King's authority, other radical Presbyterians were imprisoned, transported or executed on the spot during these 'Killing Times'.

Resistance stiffened in 1685 when Charles II died and was succeeded by his Catholic brother James VII of Scotland and James II of England (see right). Many Scots hated taking an oath recognizing a Catholic as the head of their Protestant Kirk. The Presbyterians were relieved of the contradiction in 1688 when King William of Orange, Holland, invaded England with many Scots exiles. King James fled to France.



When a Scottish convention demanded a free Parliament and a Presbyterian Kirk of him, James misread the situation badly and ordered them to 'obey their rightful king.' The Scottish Parliament proclaimed William of Orange as King of Scots and were duly rewarded with the restoration of their political power.

### The Jacobites

The exiled supporters of the Stuart dynasty believed that the natural order of Scottish society was being destroyed by the Presbyterians. Known as Jacobites, after the Latin form *Jacobus* of the name of the exiled King James VII and II, they revered in turn his son James Francis Edward Stuart 'The Old Pretender', and his grandson Charles Edward Stuart 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' or 'The Young Pretender'.

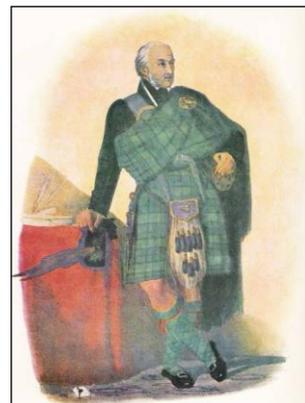
John Graham of Claverhouse 'Bonnie Dundee' led the first Jacobite rebellion in 1689 with most support coming from the Highland clans such as the Macphersons that were beyond government control. Although Claverhouse won the Battle of Killiecrankie, he was killed at the moment of victory and about a third of his Highlanders were killed. The rising collapsed and the Jacobites agreed to a truce while the clan chiefs sent requests to the exiled King James for permission to submit to King William. The Jacobite clans formally surrendered to the government in January 1692, although the detail is rather nasty.

King William of Orange was disinterested in Scotland. He focused on trying to defeat King Louis XIV of France. He left the government of Scotland to his Secretary of State, John Dalrymple, Master of Stair (see right). Dalrymple, a Protestant Campbell from the Lowlands, hated Catholics, the McDonalds and the Highland way of life. He decided to make an example of the MacDonalds of Glencoe.



Captain Robert Campbell of Glenlyon was ordered by Dalrymple, whose orders were counter-signed twice by King William, to lead Government soldiers, mostly Campbells, into Glencoe. After living with the MacDonalds for two weeks they suddenly turned on the hosts and massacred 38 of the clan. The Massacre of Glencoe so shocked Scotland that the Jacobites were able to raise rebellions for the next 50 years. The details will shock Macphersons even more.

Sir Aeneas Macpherson was a double agent for the English and partly to blame for the Massacre. He forged 'Private Articles' as part of a conspiracy intended to abort the Agreement of Achallader (Roberts, 2000, p. 218). This agreement had been reached on 30 June 1691 and proposed that King William settle claims by Jacobite chiefs worth £12,000. The agreement was negotiated by the King's envoy appointed in the spring of 1691; Sir John Campbell, 11<sup>th</sup> Laird of Glenorchy and 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Breadalbane and Holland (known as Breadalbane, 'Grey John' or 'Slippery John') (see right from McIan, 1983, p. 33). In return the chiefs agreed to submit to King William and thus end the Highland War. William agreed to the terms conveyed by Breadalbane and set a deadline for formal submission; 1 January 1692.



Delays in communications gave the conspirators time to contrive stories of Breadalbane's duplicity, treason and theft of settlement monies. Sir Aeneas Macpherson persuaded the Jacobite chiefs to demand even more generous terms, all the while collecting evidence of their 'treason' against King William (see right) in order to earn his pay as a spy. The chiefs' new demands angered the King. Failure to swear an oath of allegiance by the first day of 1692, he directed, would be "on pain of punishment to the utmost extremity of the law" (Prebble, 1966, p. 145).



As noted above, many of the Highland chiefs, such as Alasdair MacDonald of Glencoe, known as MacIain, were also bound by an oath to James Stuart, the deposed King residing in France. It was 12 December 1691 before James released the clans from their oath and 28 December 1691 before the news arrived in the Highlands. MacIain was delayed by extreme weather, by the bureaucratic actions of local Campbell officials and by being repeatedly humiliated and deliberately impeded by the Campbells. The elderly MacIain was finally allowed to make and sign his oath of submission on 6 January 1692. Worse, when the list of those who had taken the oath of submission reached the Privy Council of Scotland, three Campbells in the Office of the Privy Council put lines through his name (p. 172). It was his death warrant.

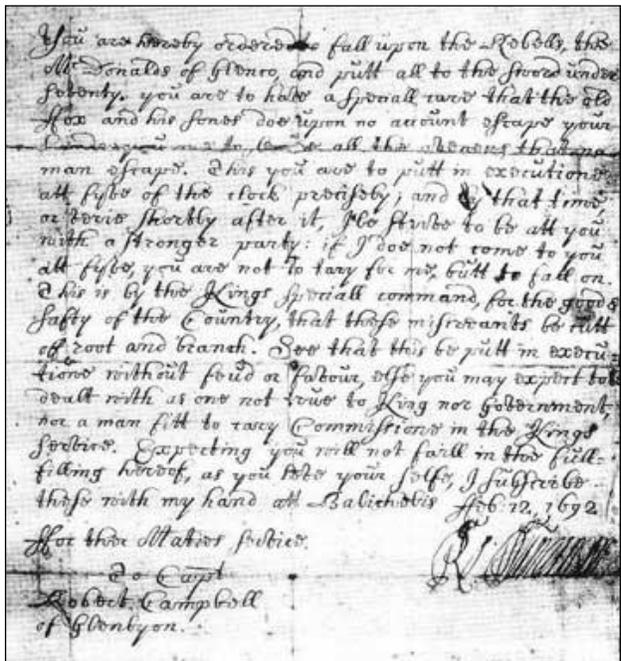


When news that MacIain of Glencoe had not met the deadline reached King William in London he ordered "We do consider it indispensable for the well of our kingdom to apply the necessary severities of the law" (p. 177). The conspirators were therefore directly implicated in undermining the Agreement of Achallader, having Breadalbane sidelined and enabling the King's Secretary of State for Scotland to exploit MacIain's late signing.

On 11 January 1682 Dalrymple he ordered Sir Thomas Livingstone, Commander in Chief, Scotland, to act "by fire and sword and all manner of hostility; to burn their houses, seize or destroy their goods or cattle, plenshing or clothes, and cut off the men" (p. 177). On 20 January Livingstone ordered Lt. Col. James Hamilton, officer in command of Lord Argyll's Regiment at Fort William, to "begin with Glencoe, and spare nothing which belongs to him, but do not trouble the Government with prisoners." (p. 184). Hamilton and Major Robert Duncanson of Fassokie, an adherent of the Campbells, then planned the Massacre of Glencoe.

Two companies of Lord Argyll's Regiment led by Captain Robert Campbell of Glenlyon (see second right) were marched into Glencoe. They comprised three officers, five non-commissioned officers, two drummers and 57 sentinels. Glenlyon requested home billets for his 77 troops on the pretext that Fort William was full. When some of the MacDonalds were reluctant to take them in, Glenlyon appealed to the hospitality code of the Highlands. Glenlyon was a deeply indebted 60-year-old and wholly compliant officer.

On 12 February, when other companies had been deployed into blocking positions, he received written orders from Duncanson; (see right for the full text) "You are hereby ordered to fall upon the rebels, the Macdonalds of Glencoe, and putt all to the sword under seventy. You are to have a special care that the old fox and his sons do upon no account escape your hands.



You are to secure all avenues that no man escape ... This is by the King's special command, for the good and safety of the country, that these miscreants be cut off root and branch ..." (p. 203).

There was a blizzard on the night of 12 February 1692. As the host clan members settled for the night, their house guests gathered for dinner and received their orders. Accordingly, at five o'clock precisely on the morning of 13 February 1692, they proceeded to murder all MacDonald men they could find. By the full light of day, they counted 38 dead, including the old chief MacIain. Some had escaped over the frozen passes, including MacIain's sons and a grandson who later led the Clan. Another 40 women and children, including MacIain's elderly wife, were not so fortunate. They were burned out of their homes and died of hypothermia. There were stories after the massacre of soldiers who warned their hosts to slip away out over the high passes out of Glencoe (see below).



There were also stories of extreme treachery and cruel brutality. On the other hand, Lt. Francis Farquhar and Lt. Gilbert Kennedy broke their swords rather than follow their orders. They were arrested and imprisoned, but later exonerated, released and gave evidence for the prosecution against their superior officers. James Hamilton's famous depiction below painted in 1884 helped keep memory of the massacre alive.



The political repercussions in Scotland were immediate but contained. Scotland was outraged by the viciousness of the massacre, its violation of the Highland code of hospitality and the horrific abuse of military power in the feud between the Lowland Protestant Campbells and the Highland Catholic MacDonalds. For the Jacobites in Edinburgh, such as Sir Aeneas Macpherson, it served well as powerful anti-government propaganda; they hated the alien southern government and redoubled their efforts to restore the exiled Stuarts living in France.

The Scottish Parliament held an inquiry. It exonerated the King, blamed Dalrymple and recommended that the perpetrators of the massacre be brought home from the Flanders battlefield in Holland to stand trial for ‘murder under trust’. Dalrymple was suspended from his duties as Secretary of State but then the government moved on with other issues. The King promoted Dalrymple to Marquess a few years later and put him to work on the destruction of the Scots Parliament by drafting the Act of Union of 1707 (McDonnell & Campbell, 1997, p. 16). The massacre gradually passed into legend, although odium continued to be associated with the name Campbell in the Highlands. How can the Massacre of Glencoe and Sir Aeneas’ role be interpreted today?

The Massacre was more than a product of the rivalry over the government of Scotland between Clan Campbell and Clan McDonald, distorted by the former’s alliance with the English Government. More broadly it was a clash between two cultures that were utterly intolerant of each other. The tribal, feudal and militaristic people of the Highlands had once comprised the majority of Scotland and had established an independent monarchy. They were most reluctant to adapt to a rapidly changing world where key decisions were made in London.

By 1690, the increasingly populous and prosperous Lowland Scots, as represented by Dalrymple, could see many potential benefits of full union with England. They saw the resistance to change in the Highlands as social, political and cultural obsolescence. Dalrymple’s Lowland Clan Campbell had also suffered more than most from the McDonalds of Glencoe, and took the vengeful view that it would be “of great advantage to the nation that the thieving tribe were rooted out and cut off” (p. 182), that is, subjected to ‘ethnic cleansing’.

John Prebble, a leading Scots historian, reached three conclusions (1966, pp. 9-10). The Massacre of Glencoe was the beginning of the destruction of the Highland people and their way of life. The MacDonalds of Glencoe were early victims of what the Highlanders call the ‘Lowlanders great hatred’ of their culture. The process of cultural imperialism was completed by the brutalities that followed the Battle of Culloden in 1746 and the Highland Clearances fifty years later.

Other conclusions are warranted concerning Sir Aeneas Macpherson. He was a double agent for the English. He was an *agent provocateur* who entrapped Jacobite Highland chiefs in treason for personal reward. He helped undermine a King’s envoy who had already negotiated a peaceful end to the Highland Wars. He helped create the conditions for a highly placed Protestant and Lowland Campbell motivated by hatred to direct the ‘murder under trust’ of a clan enemy; the wild Highland Catholic McDonalds of Glencoe. He helped create the political conditions for the ultimately futile Jacobite Risings of 1708, 1715 and 1745. Sir Aeneas ended his days in 1705 providing a Clan genealogy, *The Posteritie of the Three Brethren*, which stood as an authoritative albeit partial account until systematically displaced by Alan Macpherson’s (1985) *The Posterity of the Three Bretheren: A short history of the Clan Macpherson*.

## The Jacobite Rebellions

The Act of Union 1707 between Scotland and England triggered the First Jacobite Rebellion in 1708. The Act was written to ensure that the German Hanoverian dynasty would succeed the last of the Scottish Stuart dynasty to reign over England, Queen Anne. Although the Act was also intended to deliver economic benefits to landowners in Scotland it failed to do so. When it added taxes to the effects of famine in the east coast burghs, it caused general discontent and food riots. On the other hand, many Lowland Scots were wary of the Jacobites seeking to restore the Stuarts to the throne because they were Catholics and antagonistic to their Presbyterianism.

Nevertheless, in early 1708, James Francis Edward Stuart ‘The Old Pretender’ (see right) arrived off the coast of Fife, Scotland with 6,000 French troops in about 30 ships of the French Navy. His landing in the Firth of Forth was prevented by foul weather and the Royal Navy which forced the French fleet to retreat round the north of Scotland with huge losses of men and ships.



The Second Jacobite Rebellion against the Union occurred in 1715. It was triggered by Queen Anne's death in 1714 and her succession by King George I of Hanover. Many nobles and Tories in England considered the Union hostile to their interests and demanded the restoration of the Stuart dynasty.

In Scotland, the Jacobite rebellion was raised by John Erskine, Earl of Mar (see right). He attracted most support from in the north-east and Highland clans, including the Macphersons, especially in areas where landowners had not benefited from the Union and where Episcopalians (a form of Anglicanism) regarded the Stuarts as head of their church.

Mar proved inept at military strategy and tactics. A strategic foray as far south as Preston in England failed to attract local support and ended in a humiliating surrender. Mar also failed to win a decisive victory at the Battle of at Sherriffmuir on 13<sup>th</sup> November 1715, even though his Jacobite forces were twice the number of the Hanoverian forces under John Campbell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Argyll. Mar's royal sponsor, the Old Pretender, arrived on 22 December 1715 but suffered from bouts of fever and depression, lost heart and departed again on 4 February 1716. The 1715 Rising finally collapsed when 6,000 Dutch troops landed in support of the Hanoverian government with no prospect of further aid coming from France.

The Duke of Argyll (see right) then accurately advised his masters in London that Jacobitism was a political problem best resolved by giving Jacobite nobles access to the benefits of government in London. They disagreed and took the view that Jacobitism was a military problem and decided on a Cromwellian solution; build a system of roads and bridges to enable the rapid deployment of garrisons between strong forts and so prevent any further rebellions. By 1740, General Wade's troops had constructed over 250 miles of road through Scotland, numerous bridges and impregnable forts, like Ruthven Barracks near Kingussie. This military infrastructure, however, did not prevent the Third Jacobite Rebellion against the Union in 1745. It actually helped the '45 Rising with fast all-weather access routes to strategic objectives.

Charles Edward Stuart 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' became impatient at his French host's unwillingness to invade Scotland. In 1744 he decided to finance an internal insurrection. Like Mar, he found ready support in the north-east and Highland clans. He raised his Jacobite Highland Army quickly, and then used Wade's roads to invade the Lowlands and capture Edinburgh. He terrified all of England by invading as far south as Derby, until it became clear that the French would not invade in support.

The Jacobites retreated to their Highlands, followed by the English Army led by the Duke of Cumberland (see right, Reynold (1758) who destroyed them at the Battle of Culloden near Inverness on 16 April 1746. Against expert advice from Lord George Murray, Bonnie Prince Charlie gave battle when Col. Ewan Macpherson and the Macpherson Regiment was still 'a days march to ruin' (A. G.



Macpherson, 1996). Cumberland used his cannon to deplete the exhausted and hungry Highlanders and provoked a Highland charge of Clan Chattan led by the Macintoshes. Others followed. The detail below (Morier, 1746 ) depicts the moment when the Hanoverian front line absorbed the desperate Camerons, Stewarts and Athollmen.



“The Highland attack on the Grenadier Company of Barrell's King's Own Royal Regiment” by David Morier, oil on canvas, painted in 1746 for the Duke of Cumberland, reputedly using members of the regiment and highland prisoners as models.

To eliminate the threat of Jacobitism forever, Cumberland (‘the Butcher’ to Highlanders, ‘Sweet William’ to the English) had all prisoners killed, imprisoned all known Jacobite leaders and confiscated their lands, dismantled all clan culture and banned all military paraphernalia, including weapons, targes, plaids and bagpipes.

The destruction of the Jacobite Army was later consolidated by changes to ownership laws that shifted communal property rights of clans to their chiefs as individuals - who then made ‘business decisions’ to gradually sell the land and replace the Highland’s cattle and mixed crop farming communities with sheep and a few shepherds; the Highland Clearances.

## Summary

The Reformation brought Renaissance values to Highland Scotland and installed Presbyterianism as the religion of the state. While the old Highland way of life is romanticized and celebrated internationally today, as the spirit of Scottish culture, and the brutality of its destruction can’t be justified, there were many besides Dalrymple at the time who were pleased to see it gone. The passing was celebrated in particular by the Lowland Presbyterians because it meant that the British Union, the Presbyterian system of church governance and economic progress through access to trade routes across the Empire were all guaranteed.

Nevertheless, it is customary today in Clan Macpherson to lament the passing of the old Highland way of life and to celebrate the Clan’s ‘fidelity and integrity’ to the Jacobite cause and to the Bonnie Prince Charlie in particular. To illustrate this perspective, the Clan Macpherson’s Jacobean history was eulogized in a broadcast by the Scottish Home Service (BBC, 1953). Extracts from the original script follow:

Situated as they were in Badenoch, astride one of the main pathways from the Lowlands to the Highlands, the Macphersons were in a position of greatest strategic importance, and their services as allies were sought by all the warring factions in the troubles between the Highlands and the Lowlands. They held the Castle of Ruthven for Mary, Queen of Scots, when the Earl of Argyll entered Badenoch and laid siege to it. Six hundred of the Clan were with Montrose. In 1715 they saw the raising of the standard at the Braes of Mar, and they were at Sherriffmuir, too.

With this heritage of loyalty to the Stuart cause, the clan rallied once more to Jacobite cause to serve their Prince. Cluny, the chief who was a Captain in Lord Loudon's Highlanders, threw up his commission [resigned his commission in the Black Watch under pressure from the Camerons against the advice of his wife], raised the Clan and joined Prince Charles' army after Prestonpans.

Under his magnificent leadership, the Clan gave a glorious account themselves throughout the campaign. There is a queer story that before the Battle of Culloden an old witch told the Duke of Cumberland that if he waited until the arrival of the Macphersons and their Green Banner and Black Chanter he would be defeated. He didn't wait. The Macpherson had taken a great part in the Jacobite victory at Falkirk, but arrived too late at Culloden. Perhaps just a tale, but had they been there the ending might have been different! To them had been entrusted the important charge of guarding the Southern approaches through the Grampians. After that fateful battle, Prince Charles was a fugitive with a price on his head. Cluny Macpherson was with him the greater part of the time conducting him to safe retreats in his own beloved Badenoch until the Prince finally escaped to France.

Then for eight years Cluny himself was a fugitive on his own lands. His home, Cluny Castle, was plundered and burnt to the ground. He moved from cave to cave. He had a special cage built on Ben Alder and a large reward was offered for information leading to his arrest. His hiding places were known to over a hundred of his Clansmen, but he was never betrayed.

Many stories are told of Cluny's hair-breadth escapes. The troops surrounded the house where he was sheltering for the night. Escape was impossible. Cluny changed his clothes and went boldly to the door. Out he walked and going over to the officer's horse, took hold of the bridle while the soldiers finished their search. There he waited until they were finished. As the officer made to mount, Cluny handed him the reins and to the officer's question if he knew where Cluny was, he replied, "No, I do not, and if I knew I would not tell you." "I know you would not," said the officer, and with that handed Cluny a shilling for his kindness in holding his horse.

He offered Cluny a shilling and yet all the time Cluny was a hunted fugitive on Ben Alder, he was disbursing hundreds of pounds amongst those other than himself who had suffered for their loyalty.

Ten years after Culloden, Cluny himself won his way to France where he accounted to the Prince for every penny of the £27,000 left in his charge. Lady Cluny joined him two years later with their only son [Duncan of the Kiln, the 19<sup>th</sup> Chief] who had been born in a kiln where his mother had taken refuge. Needless to say the Cluny estates were forfeited, but his Macpherson clansmen paid one rent to the Government and another to Cluny right to the day of his death.

The Prince realized the great service given by Cluny and his clansmen and what they endured in his cause. In a letter dated 18th September, 1746, he wrote:

*To Macpherson of Cluny:*

*As we are sensible of you and your Clan's fidelity and integrity to us during our adventures in Scotland and England in the year 1745 and 1746 in recovering our just rights (from the Elector of Hanover) by which you have sustained very great losses both in your interests and person, I therefore promise when it shall please God to put it in my power, to make a grateful return suitable to your sufferings.*

*CHARLES P.R. (Prince Regent)*

## Conclusion

The Reformation and the Renaissance gradually transformed Scotland's government and the values of the Highlands. The Jacobite cause lacked popular support across Scotland and proved futile. Bonnie Prince Charlie died in exile.

Clan Macpherson ceased to exist as an armed socio-political organization after the Battle of Culloden. Members scattered to survive. Cumberland's ethnic cleansing and the Highland Clearances significantly reduced the number of Macphersons resident in Badenoch.

Refugees found their way to the coast, and as soon as they could raise the fare, to the New World. Some stayed on for a few generations, surviving as agricultural labourers and fishermen in coastal towns, but often with subsequent departures to Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

In the next chapter, the story continues around our known ancestors, the McPhersons of Portsoy.

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