

COLQUHOUN

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The territory of the Colquhouns is in Dumbartonshire, and the principal families of the name are Colquhoun of Colquhoun and Luss, the chief of the clan, a baronet of Scotland and Nova Scotia, created in 1704, and of Great Britain in 1786; Colquhoun of Killermont and Garscadden; Colquhoun of Ardenconnel; and Colquhoun of Glenmillan. There was likewise Colquhoun of Tilliquhoun, a baronet of Scotland and Nova Scotia (1625), but this family is extinct. The origin of the name is territorial. One tradition deduces the descent of the first possessor from a younger son of the old Earls of Lennox, because of the similarity of their armorial bearings. It is certain that they were anciently vassals of that potent house.

The immediate ancestor of the family of Luss was Humphry de Kilpatrick, who, in the reign of Alexander II., not later than 1246, obtained from Malcolm, Earl of Lennox, a grant of the lands and barony of Colquhoun, in the parish of Old or West Kilpatrick, *pro servitio unius militis*, &c., and in consequence assumed the name of Colquhoun, instead of his own.

His grandson, Ingelram, third Colquhoun, lived in the reign of Alexander III.

His son, Humphry de Colquhoun, is witness in a charter of Malcolm, fifth Earl of Lennox, in favour of Sir John de Luss, [239] between the years 1292–1333. The following remarkable reference to the construction of a house *ad opus Culquhanorum*, by order of King Robert Bruce, is extracted from the *Comptum Constabularii de Cardross*, vol. i., in the accounts of the Great Chamberlains of Scotland, under date 30th July 1329, as quoted by Mr Tytler in the appendix to the second volume of his *History of Scotland*: “Item, in construccione cujusdam domus ad opus Culquhanorum Domini Regis ibidem, 10 solidi.” Mr Tytler in a note says that *Culquhanorum* is “an obscure word, which occurs nowhere else—conjectured by a learned friend to be ‘keepers of the dogs,’ from the Gaelic root *Gillen-au-con*—abbreviated, *Gillecon*, *Culquhoun*.”

Sir Robert de Colquhoun, supposed by Mr Fraser, the family historian, to be fifth in descent from the first Humphry, and son of a Humphry, the fourth of Colquhoun, in the reign of David Bruce, married in or previous to the year 1368 the daughter and sole heiress (known in the family tradition as “The Fair Maid of Luss,”) of Godfrey de Luss, lord of Luss, head or chief of an ancient family of that name, and the sixth in a direct male line from Malduin, dean of Lennox, who, in the beginning of the thirteenth century, received from Alwyn, second Earl of Lennox, a charter of the lands of Luss. The Luss territories lie in the mountainous but beautiful and picturesque district on the margin of Loch Lomond. Sir Robert was designed “*dominus de Colquhoun and de Luss*,” in a charter dated in 1368; since which time the family have borne the designation of Colquhoun of Colquhoun and Luss. He is also witness in a charter of the lands of Auchmar by Walter of Faslane, Lord of Lennox, to Walter de Buchanan in 1373. He had four sons, namely—Sir Humphry, his heir; Robert, first of the family of Camstraddan, from whom several other families of the name of Colquhoun in Dumbartonshire are descended; Robert mentioned in the Camstraddan charter as “*frater junior*,” and Patrick, who is mentioned in a charter from his brother Sir Humphry to his other brother Robert.

The eldest son, Sir Humphry, sixth of Colquhoun, and eighth of Luss, is a witness in three charters by Duncan, Earl of Lennox, in the years 1393, 1394, and 1395. He died in 1406, and left three sons and two daughters. Patrick, his youngest son, was ancestor of the Colquhouns of Glennis, from whom the Colquhouns of Barrowfield, Piemont, and others were descended. The second son, John, succeeded his eldest brother. The eldest son, Sir Robert, died in 1408, and was succeeded by his brother. Sir John Colquhoun was appointed governor of the castle of Dumbarton, by King James I., for his fidelity to that king during his imprisonment in England. From his activity in punishing the depredations of the Highlanders, who often committed great outrages in the low country of Dumbartonshire, he rendered himself obnoxious to them, and a plot was formed for his destruction. He received a civil message from some of their chiefs, desiring a friendly conference, in order to accommodate all their differences. Suspecting no treachery, he went out to meet them but slightly attended, and was immediately attacked by a numerous body of Islanders, under two noted robber-chiefs, Lachlan Maclean and Murdoch Gibson, and slain in Inchmurren, on Loch Lomond, in 1439. By his wife, Jean, daughter of Robert, Lord Erskine, he had a son, Malcolm, a youth of great promise. He died before his father, leaving a son, John, who succeeded his grandfather in 1439. This Sir John Colquhoun was one of the most distinguished men of his age in Scotland, and highly esteemed by King James III., from whom he got a charter in 1457 of the lands of Luss, Colquhoun, and Garscube, in Dumbartonshire, and of the lands of Glyn and Sauchie, in Stirlingshire, incorporating the whole into a free barony, to be called the Barony of Luss; and in the following year he obtained from the king a charter erecting into a free forest the lands of Rosdhu and Glenmachome. From 1465 to 1469 he held the high office of comptroller of the Exchequer, and was subsequently appointed sheriff principal of Dumbartonshire. In 1645 he got a grant of the lands of Kilmardinny, and in 1473 and in 1474, [286] of Roseneath, Strone, &c. In 1474 he was appointed lord high chamberlain of Scotland, and immediately thereafter was nominated one of the ambassadors extraordinary to the Court of England, to negotiate a marriage between the Prince Royal of Scotland and the Princess Cicily, daughter

of King Edward IV. By a royal charter dated 17th September 1477, he was constituted governor of the castle of Dumbarton for life. He was killed by a cannon-ball at the siege of Dumbarton Castle, probably in 1478. By his wife, daughter of Thomas, Lord Boyd, he had two sons and one daughter. His second son, Robert, was bred to the church, and was first rector of Kippen and Luss, and afterwards bishop of Argyle from 1473 to 1499. The daughter, Margaret, married Sir William Murray, seventh baron of Tullibardine (ancestor of the Dukes of Athole), and bore to him seventeen sons.

His eldest son, Sir Humphry Colquhoun, died in 1493, and was succeeded by his son, Sir John Colquhoun, who received the honour of knighthood from King James IV., and obtained a charter under the great seal of sundry lands and baronies in Dumbartonshire, dated 4th December 1506. On 11th July 1526 he and Patrick Colquhoun his son received a respite for assisting John, Earl of Lennox, in treasonably besieging, taking, and holding the castle of Dumbarton. He died before 16th August 1536. By his first wife, Elizabeth Stewart, daughter of John, Earl of Lennox, Sir John Colquhoun had four sons and four daughters; and by his second wife, Margaret, daughter of William Cunningham of Craigends, he had two sons and two daughters. His eldest son, Sir Humphry Colquhoun, married Lady Catherine Graham, daughter of William, first Earl of Montrose, and died in 1537. By her he had three sons and two daughters. His son James, designated of Garscube, ancestor of the Colquhouns of Garscube, Adam, and Patrick.[240] His eldest son, Sir John Colquhoun, married, first, Christian Erskine, daughter of Robert, Lord Erskine; and secondly, Agnes, daughter of the fourth Lord Boyd, ancestor of the Earls of Kilmarnock. He died in 1575.

His eldest son, Humphry, acquired the heritable coronership of the county of Dumbarton, from Robert Graham of Knockdolian, which was ratified and confirmed by a charter under the great seal in 1583.

In July 1592, some of the Macgregors and Macfarlanes came down upon the low country of Dumbartonshire, and committed vast ravages, especially upon the territory of the Colquhouns. At the head of his vassals, and accompanied by several of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, Sir Humphry Colquhoun attacked the invaders, and after a bloody conflict, which was only put an end to at nightfall, he was overpowered by his assailants, and forced to retreat. To quote from Mr Fraser's *Chiefs of the Colquhouns*—"He betook himself to the castle of Bannachra, a stronghold which had been erected by the Colquhouns at the foot of the north side of the hill of Bennibuie, in the parish of Luss. A party of the Macfarlanes and Macgregors pursued him, and laid siege to his castle. One of the servants who attended the knight was of the same surname as himself. He had been tampered with by the assailants of his master, and treacherously made him their victim. The servant, while conducting his master to his room up a winding stair of the castle, made him by preconcert a mark for the arrows of the clan who pursued him by throwing the glare of a paper torch upon his person when opposite a loophole. A winged arrow, darted from its string with a steady aim, pierced the unhappy knight to the heart, and he fell dead on the spot. The fatal loophole is still pointed out, but the stair, like its unfortunate lord, has crumbled into dust." Sir Humphry married, first, Lady Jean Cunningham, daughter of Alexander, fifth Earl of Glencairn, widow of the Earl of Argyll, by whom he had no children, and secondly, Jean, daughter of John, Lord Hamilton, by whom he had a daughter. Having no male issue, he was succeeded by his younger brother, Alexander.

In Sir Alexander's time occurred the raid of Glenfinlas, and the bloody clan conflict of Glenfruin, between the Colquhouns and Macgregors, in December 1602 and February 1603, regarding which the popular accounts are much at variance with the historical facts. The Colquhouns[287] had taken part in the execution of the letters of fire and sword issued by the crown against the Macgregors some years before, and the feud between them had been greatly aggravated by various acts of violence and aggression on both sides.

In 1602, the Macgregors made a regular raid on the laird of Luss's lands in Glenfinlas, and carried off a number of sheep and cattle, as well as slew several of the tenants. Alexander Colquhoun, who had before complained to the privy council against the Earl of Argyll for not repressing the clan Gregor, but who had failed in obtaining any redress, now adopted a tragic method in order to excite the sympathy of the king. He appeared before his majesty at Stirling, accompanied by a number of females, the relatives of those who had been killed or wounded at Glenfinlas, each carrying the bloody shirt of her killed or wounded relative, to implore his majesty to avenge the wrongs done them. The ruse had the desired effect upon the king, who, from a sensitiveness of constitutional temperament, which made him shudder even at the sight of blood, was extremely susceptible to impressions from scenes of this description, and he immediately granted a commission of lieutenancy to the laird of Luss, investing him with power to repress similar crimes, and to apprehend the perpetrators.

"This commission granted to their enemy appears to have roused the lawless rage of the Macgregors, who rose in strong force to defy the laird of Luss; and Glenfruin, with its disasters and sanguinary defeat of the Colquhouns, and its ultimate terrible consequences to the victorious clan themselves, was the result."

In the beginning of the year 1603, Allaster Macgregor of Glenstrae, followed by four hundred men chiefly of his own clan, but

including also some of the clans Cameron and Anverich, armed with "halberschois, powaixes, twa-handit swordis, bowis and arrowis, and with hagbutis and pistoletis," advanced into the territory of Luss. Colquhoun, acting under his royal commission, had raised a force which has been stated by some writers as having amounted to 300 horse and 500 foot. This is probably an exaggeration, but even if it is not, the disasters which befell them may be explained from the trap into which they fell, and from the nature of the ground on which they encountered the enemy. This divested them of all the advantages which they might have derived from superiority of numbers and from their horse.

On the 7th February 1603, the Macgregors were in Glenfruin "in two divisions," writes Mr Fraser—"One of them at the head of the glen, and the other in ambuscade near the farm of Strone, at a hollow or ravine called the Crate. The Colquhouns came into Glenfruin from the Luss side, which is opposite Strone—probably by Glen Luss and Glen Mackern. Alexander Colquhoun pushed on his forces in order to get through the glen before encountering the Macgregors; but, aware of his approach, Allaster Macgregor also pushed forward one division of his forces and entered at the head of the glen in time to prevent his enemy from emerging from the upper end of the glen, whilst his brother, John Macgregor, with the division of his clan, which lay in ambuscade, by a detour, took the rear of the Colquhouns, which prevented their retreat down the glen without fighting their way through that section of the Macgregors who had got in their rear. The success of the stratagem by which the Colquhouns were thus placed between two fires seems to be the only way of accounting for the terrible slaughter of the Colquhouns and the much less loss of the Macgregors.

"The Colquhouns soon became unable to maintain their ground, and, falling into a moss at the farm of Auchingaich, they were thrown into disorder, and made a hasty and disorderly retreat, which proved even more disastrous than the conflict, for they had to force their way through the men led by John Macgregor, whilst they were pressed behind by Allaster, who, reuniting the two divisions of his army, continued the pursuit."

All who fell into the hands of the victors were at once put to death, and the chief of the Colquhouns barely escaped with his life after his horse had been killed under him. One hundred and forty of the Colquhouns were slaughtered, and many more were wounded, among whom were several women and children. When the pursuit ended, the work of spoliation[288] and devastation commenced. Large numbers of horses, cattle, sheep, and goats were carried off, and many of the houses and steadings of the tenantry were burned to the ground. Their triumph the Macgregors were not allowed long to enjoy. The government took instant and severe measures against them. A price was put upon the heads of seventy or eighty of them by name, and upon a number of their confederates of other clans:—"Before any judicial inquiry was made," says Mr Fraser, "on 3d April 1603, only two days before James VI. left Scotland for England to take possession of the English throne, an Act of Privy Council was passed, by which the name of Gregor or Macgregor was for ever abolished. All of this surname were commanded, under the penalty of death, to change it for another; and the same penalty was denounced against those who should give food or shelter to any of the clan. All who had been at the conflict of Glenfruin, and at the spoliation and burning of the lands of the Laird of Luss, were prohibited, under the penalty of death, from carrying any weapon except a pointless knife to eat their meat." Thirty-five of the clan Gregor were executed after trial between the 20th May 1603 and the 2d March 1604. Amongst these was Allaster Macgregor, who surrendered himself to the Earl of Argyll.

By his wife Helen, daughter of Sir George Buchanan of that ilk, Alexander had one son and five daughters. He died in 1617.

The eldest son, Sir John, in his father's lifetime, got a charter under the great seal of the ten pound land of Dunnerbuck, dated 20th February 1602, was created a baronet of Nova Scotia by patent dated the last day of August 1625. He married Lady Lillias Graham, daughter of the fourth Earl of Montrose, brother of the great Marquis, by whom he had three sons and three daughters. His two eldest sons succeeded to the baronetcy. From Alexander, the third son, the Colquhouns of Tillyquhoun were descended. He died in 1647.

Sir John, the second baronet of Luss, married Margaret, daughter and sole heiress of Sir Gideon Baillie of Lochend, in the county of Haddington, and had two sons, and seven daughters. He adhered firmly to the royal cause during all the time of the civil wars, on which account he suffered many hardships, and, in 1654, was by Cromwell fined two thousand pounds sterling. He was succeeded in 1676 by his younger son, Sir James—the elder having predeceased him—third baronet of Luss, who held the estates only four years, and being a minor, unmarried, left no issue. He was succeeded in 1680 by his uncle, Sir James, who married Penuel, daughter of William Cunningham of Balleichan, in Ireland. He had, with one daughter, two sons, Sir Humphry, fifth baronet, and James. The former was a member of the last Scottish Parliament, and strenuously opposed and voted against every article of the treaty of union. By his wife Margaret, daughter of Sir Patrick Houston of that ilk, baronet, he had an only daughter, Anne Colquhoun, his sole heiress, who, in 1702, married James Grant of Pluscardine, second son of Ludovick Grant of Grant, immediate younger brother of Brigadier Alexander Grant, heir apparent of the said Ludovick.

Having no male issue, Sir Humphry, with the design that his daughter and her husband should succeed him in his whole estate and honours, in 1704 resigned his baronetcy into the hands of her majesty Queen Anne, for a new patent to himself in life, and his son-in-law and his heirs therein named in fee, but with this express limitation that he and his heirs so succeeding to that estate and title should be obliged to bear the name and arms of Colquhoun of Luss, &c. It was also specially provided that the estates of Grant and Luss should not be conjoined.

Sir Humphry died in 1718, and was succeeded in his estate and honours by James Grant, his son-in-law, under the name and designation of Sir James Colquhoun of Luss. He enjoyed that estate and title till the death of his elder brother, Brigadier Alexander Grant, in 1719, when, succeeding to the estate of Grant, he relinquished the name and title of Colquhoun of Luss, and resumed his own, retaining the baronetcy, it being by the last patent vested in his person. He died in 1747.

By the said Anne, his wife, he had a[289] numerous family. His eldest son, Humphry Colquhoun, subsequently Humphry Grant of Grant, died unmarried in 1732. The second son, Ludovick, became Sir Ludovick Grant of Grant, baronet, while the fourth son James succeeded as Sir James Colquhoun of Luss, the third son having died in infancy. He is the amiable and very polite gentleman described by Smollett in his novel of *Humphry Clinker*, under the name of "Sir George Colquhoun, a colonel in the Dutch service." He married Lady Helen Sutherland, daughter of William Lord Strathnaver, son of the Earl of Sutherland, and by her he had three sons and five daughters. In 1777 he founded the town of Helensburgh on the frith of Clyde, and named it after his wife. To put an end to some disputes which had arisen with regard to the destination of the old patent of the Nova Scotia baronetcy, (John Colquhoun of Tillyquhoun, as the eldest cadet, having, on the death of his cousin-german, Sir Humphry Colquhoun, in 1718, assumed the title as heir male of his grandfather, the patentee), Sir James was, in 1786, created a baronet of Great Britain. His second youngest daughter, Margaret, married William Baillie, a lord of session, under the title of Lord Polkemmet, and was the mother of Sir William Baillie, baronet. Sir James died in November 1786.

His eldest son, Sir James Colquhoun, second baronet under the new patent, sheriff-depute of Dumbartonshire, was one of the principal clerks of session. By his wife, Mary, daughter and co-heir of James Falconer, Esq. of Monkton, he had seven sons and four daughters. He died in 1805. His eldest son, Sir James, third baronet, was for some time M.P. for Dumbartonshire. He married, on 13th June 1799, his cousin Janet, daughter of Sir John Sinclair, baronet, and had three sons and two daughters. Of this lady, who died October 21, 1846, and who was distinguished for her piety and benevolence, a memoir exists by the late Rev. James Hamilton, D.D., London.

"Some time after Sir James' succession," says Mr Fraser, to whose book on the Colquhouns we have been much indebted in this account, "significant testimony was given that the ancient feud between his family and that of the Macgregors, which had frequently led to such disastrous results to both, had given place to feelings of hearty goodwill and friendship.[290] On an invitation from Sir James and Lady Colquhoun, Sir John Murray Macgregor and Lady Macgregor came on a visit to Rosdhu. The two baronets visited Glenfruin. They were accompanied by Lady Colquhoun and Misses Helen and Catherine Colquhoun. After the battlefield had been carefully inspected by the descendants of the combatants, Sir J. M. Macgregor insisted on shaking hands with Sir James Colquhoun and the whole party on the spot where it was supposed that the battle had been hottest. On the occasion of the same visit to Rosdhu, the party ascended Ben Lomond, which dominates so grandly over Loch Lomond. On the summit of this lofty mountain, Sir John M. Macgregor danced a Highland reel with Miss Catherine Colquhoun, afterwards Mrs Millar of Earnoch. Sir John was then fully eighty years of age."

His eldest son, Sir James Colquhoun, the fourth baronet of the new creation, and the eighth of the old patent, succeeded on his father's death, 3d Feb. 1836; chief of the Colquhouns of Luss; Lord-lieutenant of Dumbartonshire, and M.P. for that county from 1837 to 1841. He married in June 1843, Jane, daughter of Sir Robert Abercromby of Birkenbog. She died 3d May 1844, leaving one son, James, born in 1844.

The family mansion, Rosdhu, is situated on a beautiful peninsula. To the possessions of the family of Colquhoun was added in 1852 the estate of Ardincaple, purchased from the Duchess Dowager of Argyll. According to Mr Fraser, the three baronets of Luss, before Sir James, purchased up no less than fourteen lairdships.

Robert, a younger son of Sir Robert Colquhoun of that ilk, who married the heiress of Luss, was the first of the Colquhouns of Camstradden, which estate, with the lands of Achirgahan, he obtained by charter, dated 4th July 1395, from his brother Sir Humphry. Sir James Colquhoun, third baronet, purchased in 1826 that estate from the hereditary proprietor, and re-annexed it to the estate of Luss.

The Killermont line, originally of Garscadden, is a scion of the Camstrodden branch.