

MACLEAN

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The clan Gillean or the Macleans is another clan included by Mr Skene under the head of Moray. The origin of the clan has been very much disputed; according to Buchanan and other authorities it is of Norman or Italian origin, descended from the Fitzgeralds of Ireland. "Speed and other English historians derive the genealogy of the Fitzgeralds from Seignior Giraldo, a principal officer under William the Conqueror." Their progenitor, however, according to Celtic[223] tradition, was one Gillean or Gill-còin, a name signifying the young man, or the servant or follower of John, who lived so early as the beginning of the 5th century. He was called Gillean-na-Tuaidhe, i.e. Gillean with the axe, from the dexterous manner in which he wielded that weapon in battle, and his descendants bear a battle-axe in their crest. According to a history of the clan Maclean published in 1838 by "a Sennachie," the clan is traced up to Fergus I. of Scotland, and from him back to an Aonghus Turmhi Teamhrach, "an ancient monarch of Ireland." As to which of these accounts of the origin of the clan is correct, we shall not pretend to decide. The clan can have no reason to be ashamed of either.

The Macleans have been located in Mull since the 14th century. According to Mr Skene, they appear originally to have belonged to Moray. He says,—"The two oldest genealogies of the Macleans, of which one is the production of the Beatons, who were hereditary sennachies of the family, concur in deriving the clan Gille-eon from the same race from whom the clans belonging to the great Moray tribe are brought by the MS. of 1450. Of this clan the oldest seat seems to have been the district of Lorn, as they first appear in subjection to the lords of Lorn; and their situation being thus between the Camerons and Macnachtans, who were undisputed branches of the Moray tribe, there can be little doubt that the Macleans belonged to that tribe also. As their oldest seat was thus in Argyle, while they are unquestionably a part of the tribe of Moray, we may infer that they were one of those clans transplanted from North Moray by Malcolm IV., and it is not unlikely that Glen Urquhart was their original residence, as that district is said to have been in the possession of the Macleans when the Bissets came in."

The first of the name on record, Gillean, lived in the reign of Alexander III. (1249–1286), and fought against the Norsemen at the battle of Largs. In the Ragman's Roll we find Gillimore Macilean described as del Counte de Perth, among those who swore fealty to Edward I. in 1296. As the county of Perth at that period included Lorn, it is probable that he was the son of the above Gillean. In the reign of Robert the Bruce mention is made of three brothers, John, Nigel, and Dofuall, termed Macgillean or filii Gillean, who appear to have been sons of Gillimore, for we find John afterwards designated Macgillimore. The latter fought under Bruce at Bannockburn. A dispute having arisen with the Lord of Lorn, the brothers left him and took refuge in the Isles. Between them and the Mackinnons, upon whose lands they appear to have encroached, a bitter feud took place, which led to a most daring act on the part of the chief of the Macleans. When following, with the chief of the Mackinnons, the galley of the Lord of the Isles, he attacked the former and slew him, and immediately after, afraid of his vengeance, he seized the Macdonald himself, and carried him prisoner to Icolmkill, where Maclean detained him until he agreed to vow friendship to the Macleans, "upon certain stones where men were used to make solemn vows in those superstitious times," and granted them the lands in Mull which they have ever since possessed. John Gillimore, surnamed Dhu from his dark complexion, appears to have settled in Mull about the year 1330. He died in the reign of Robert II., leaving two sons, Lachlan Lubanach, ancestor of the Macleans of Dowart, and Eachann or Hector Reganach, of the Macleans of Lochbuy.

Lachlan, the elder son, married in 1366, Margaret, daughter of John I., Lord of the Isles, by his wife, the princess Margaret Stewart,[224] and had a son Hector, which became a favourite name among the Macleans, as Kenneth was among the Mackenzies, Evan among the Camerons, and Hugh among the Mackays. Both Lachlan and his son, Hector, received extensive grants of land from John, the father-in-law of the former, and his successor, Donald. Altogether, their possession consisted of the Isles of Mull, Tiree, and Coll, with Morvern on the mainland, Kingerloch and Ardgour; and the clan Gillean became one of the most important and powerful of the vassal tribes of the lords of the Isles.

Lachlan's son, Hector, called Eachann Ruadh nan Cath, that is, Red Hector of the Battles, commanded as lieutenant-general under his uncle, Donald, at the battle of Harlaw in 1411, when he and Sir Alexander Irving of Drum, seeking out each other by their armorial bearings, encountered hand to hand and slew each other; in commemoration of which circumstance, we are told, the Dowart and Drum families were long accustomed to exchange swords. Red Hector of the Battles married a daughter of the Earl of Douglas. His eldest son was taken prisoner at the battle of Harlaw, and detained in captivity a long time by the Earl of Mar. His brother, John, at the head of the Macleans, was in the expedition of Donald Balloch, cousin of the Lord of the Isles, in 1431, when the Islesmen ravaged Lochaber, and were encountered at Inverlochy, near Fortwilliam, by the royal forces under the Earls of Caithness and Mar, whom they defeated. In the dissensions which arose between John, the last Lord of the Isles, and his turbulent son, Angus, who, with

the island chiefs descended from the original family, complained that his father had made improvident grants of lands to the Macleans and other tribes, Hector Maclean, chief of the clan, and great-grandson of Red Hector of the Battles, took part with the former, and commanded his fleet at the battle of Bloody Bay in 1480, where he was taken prisoner. This Hector was chief of his tribe at the date of the forfeiture of the lordship of the Isles in 1493, when the clan Gillean, or ClanLean as it came to be called, was divided into four independent branches, viz., the Macleans of Dowart, the Macleans of Lochbuy, the Macleans of Coll, and the Macleans of Ardgour. Lachlan Maclean was chief of Dowart in 1502, and he and his kinsman, Maclean of Lochbuy, were among the leading men of the Western Isles whom that energetic monarch, James IV., entered into correspondence with, for the purpose of breaking up the confederacy of the Islanders. Nevertheless, on the breaking out of the insurrection under Donald Dubh, in 1503, they were both implicated in it. Lachlan Maclean was forfeited with Cameron of Lochiel, while Maclean of Lochbuy and several others were summoned before the parliament, to answer for their treasonable support given to the rebels. In 1505 Maclean of Dowart abandoned the cause of Donald Dubh and submitted to the government; his example was followed by Maclean of Lochbuy and other chiefs; and this had the effect, soon after, of putting an end to the rebellion.

Lachlan Maclean of Dowart was killed at Flodden. His successor, of the same name, was one of the principal supporters of Sir Donald Macdonald of Lochalsh, when, in November 1513, he brought forward his claims to the lordship of the Isles. In 1523 a feud of a most implacable character broke out between the Macleans and the Campbells, arising out of an occurrence connected with the "lady's cock," mentioned in our account of the Campbells. In 1529, however, the Macleans joined the Clandonald of Isla against the Earl of Argyll, and ravaged with fire and sword the lands of Roseneath, Craignish, and others belonging to the Campbells, killing many of the inhabitants. The Campbells, on their part, retaliated by laying waste great portion of the isles of Mull and Tiree and the lands of Morvern, belonging to the Macleans. In May 1530, Maclean of Dowart and Alexander of Isla made their personal submission to the sovereign at Stirling, and, with the other rebel island chiefs who followed their example, were pardoned, upon giving security for their after obedience.

In 1545, Maclean of Dowart acted a very prominent part in the intrigues with England, in furtherance of the project of Henry VIII., to force the Scottish nation to consent to a marriage between Prince Edward and the young Queen Mary. He and Maclean of Lochbuy[225] were among the barons of the Isles who accompanied Donald Dubh to Ireland, and at the command of the Earl of Lennox, claiming to be regent of Scotland, swore allegiance to the king of England.

The subsequent clan history consists chiefly of a record of feuds in which the Dowart Macleans were engaged with the Macleans of Coll, and the Macdonalds of Kintyre. The dispute with the former arose from Dowart, who was generally recognised as the head of the ClanLean, insisting on being followed as chief by Maclean of Coll, and the latter, who held his lands direct from the crown, declining to acknowledge him as such, on the ground that being a free baron, he owed no service but to his sovereign as his feudal superior. In consequence of this refusal, Dowart, in the year 1561, caused Coll's lands to be ravaged, and his tenants to be imprisoned. With some difficulty, and after the lapse of several years, Coll succeeded in bringing his case before the privy council, who ordered Dowart to make reparation to him for the injury done to his property and tenants, and likewise to refrain from molesting him in future. But on a renewal of the feud some years after, the Macleans of Coll were expelled from that island by the young laird of Dowart.

The quarrel between the Macleans and the Macdonalds of Isla and Kintyre was, at the outset, merely a dispute as to the right of occupancy of the crown lands called the Rhinns of Isla, but it soon involved these tribes in a long and bloody feud, and eventually led to the destruction nearly of them both. The Macleans, who were in possession, claimed to hold the lands in dispute as tenants of the crown, but the privy council decided that Macdonald of Isla was really the crown tenant. Lachlan Maclean of Dowart, called Lachlan Mor, was chief of the Macleans in 1578. Under him the feud with the Macdonalds assumed a most sanguinary and relentless character. Full details of this feud will be found in the former part of this work.

The mutual ravages committed by the hostile clans, in which the kindred and vassal tribes on both sides were involved, and the effects of which were felt throughout the whole of the Hebrides, attracted, in 1589, the serious attention of the king and council, and for the purpose of putting an end to them, the rival chiefs, with Macdonald of Sleat, on receiving remission, under the privy seal, for all the crimes committed by them, were induced to proceed to Edinburgh. On their arrival, they were committed prisoners to the castle, and, after some time, Maclean and Angus Macdonald were brought to trial, in spite of the remissions granted to them; one of the principal charges against them being their treasonable hiring of Spanish and English soldiers to fight in their private quarrels. Both chiefs submitted themselves to the king's mercy, and placed their lives and lands at his disposal. On payment each of a small fine they were allowed to return to the Isles, Macdonald of Sleat being released at the same time. Besides certain conditions being imposed upon them, they were taken bound to return to their confinement in the castle of Edinburgh, whenever they should be summoned, on twenty days' warning. Not fulfilling the conditions, they were, on 14th July 1593, cited to appear before the privy

council, and as they disobeyed the summons, both Lachlan Mòr and Angus Macdonald were, in 1594, forfeited by parliament.

At the battle of Glenlivet, in that year, fought between the Catholic Earls of Huntly, Angus, and Errol, on the one side, and the king's forces, under the Earl of Argyll, on the other, Lachlan Mòr, at the head of the Macleans, particularly distinguished himself. Argyll lost the battle, but, says Mr Gregory,[209] "the conduct of Lachlan Maclean of Dowart, who was one of Argyll's officers, in this action, would, if imitated by the other leaders, have converted the defeat into a victory."

In 1596 Lachlan Mòr repaired to court, and on making his submission to the king, the act of forfeiture was removed. He also received from the crown a lease of the Rhinns of Isla, so long in dispute between him and Macdonald of Dunyveg. While thus at the head of favour, however, his unjust and oppressive conduct to the family of the Macleans of Coll, whose castle and island he had seized some years before, on the death of Hector Maclean, proprietor thereof, was brought before the privy council by Lachlan Maclean, then of Coll, Hector's son,[226] and the same year he was ordered to deliver up not only the castle of Coll, but all his own castles and strongholds, to the lieutenant of the Isles, on twenty-four hours' warning, also, to restore to Coll, within thirty days, all the lands of which he had deprived him, under a penalty of 10,000 merks. In 1598, Lachlan Mòr, with the view of expelling the Macdonalds from Isla, levied his vassals and proceeded to that island, and after an ineffectual attempt at an adjustment of their differences, was encountered, on 5th August, at the head of Lochgreinord, by Sir James Macdonald, son of Angus, at the head of his clan, when the Macleans were defeated, and their chief killed, with 80 of his principal men and 200 common soldiers. Lachlan Barrach Maclean, a son of Sir Lachlan, was dangerously wounded, but escaped.

Hector Maclean, the son and successor of Sir Lachlan, at the head of a numerous force, afterwards invaded Isla, and attacked and defeated the Macdonalds at a place called Bern Bige, and then ravaged the whole island. In the conditions imposed upon the chiefs for the pacification of the Isles in 1616, we find that Maclean of Dowart was not to use in his house more than four tun of wine, and Coll and Lochbuy one tun each.

Sir Lachlan Maclean of Morvern, a younger brother of Hector Maclean of Dowart, was in 1631 created a baronet of Nova Scotia by Charles I., and on the death of his elder brother he succeeded to the estate of Dowart. In the civil wars the Macleans took arms under Montrose, and fought valiantly for the royal cause. At the battle of Inverlochy, 2d February 1615, Sir Lachlan commanded his clan. He engaged in the subsequent battles of the royalist general. Sir Hector Maclean, his son, with 800 of his followers, was at the battle of Inverkeithing, 20th July 1651, when the royalists were opposed to the troops of Oliver Cromwell. On this occasion an instance of devoted attachment to the chief was shown on the part of the Macleans. In the heat of the battle, Sir Hector was covered from the enemy's attacks by seven brothers of his clan, all whom successively sacrificed their lives in his defence. Each brother, as he fell, exclaimed, "Fear eile air son Eachainn," 'Another for Eachann,' or Hector, and a fresh one stepping in, answered, "Bàs air son Eachainn," 'Death for Eachann.' The former phrase, says General Stewart, has continued ever since to be a proverb or watchword, when a man encounters any sudden danger that requires instant succour. Sir Hector, however, was left among the slain, with about 500 of his followers.

The Dowart estates had become deeply involved in debt, and the Marquis of Argyll, by purchasing them up, had acquired a claim against the lands of Maclean, which ultimately led to the greater portion of them becoming the property of that accumulating family. In 1674, after the execution of the marquis, payment was insisted upon by his son, the earl. The tutor of Maclean, the chief, his nephew, being a minor, evaded the demand for a considerable time, and at length showed a disposition to resist it by force. Argyll had recourse to legal proceedings, and supported by a body of 2,000 Campbells, he crossed into Mull, where he took possession of the castle of Dowart, and placed a garrison in it. The Macleans, however, refused to pay their rents to the earl, and in consequence he prepared for a second invasion of Mull. To resist it, the Macdonalds came to the aid of the Macleans, but Argyll's ships were driven back by a storm, when he applied to government, and even went to London, to ask assistance from the king. Lord Macdonald and other friends of the Macleans followed him, and laid a statement of the dispute before Charles, who, in February 1676, remitted the matter to three lords of the Scottish privy council. No decision, however, was come to by them, and Argyll was allowed to take possession of the island of Mull without resistance in 1680. At the battle of Killiecrankie, Sir John Maclean, with his regiment, was placed on Dundee's right, and among the troops on his left was a battalion under Sir Alexander Maclean. The Macleans were amongst the Highlanders surprised and defeated at Cromdale in 1690. In the rebellion of 1715, the Macleans ranged themselves under the standard of the Earl of Mar, and were present at the battle of Sheriffmuir. For his share in the insurrection Sir John Maclean, the chief, was forfeited, but the estates were afterwards restored to the family. On the breaking out of the rebellion of 1745,[227] Sir John's son, Sir Hector Maclean, the fifth baronet, was apprehended, with his servant, at Edinburgh, and conveyed to London. He was set at liberty in June 1747. At Culloden, however, 500 of his clan fought for Prince Charles, under Maclean of Drimnin, who was slain while leading them on. Sir Hector died, unmarried, at Paris, in 1750, when the title devolved upon his third cousin, the remainder being to heirs male whatsoever. This third cousin, Sir Allan Maclean, was great-grandson of Donald Maclean of Brolas, eldest son, by his second marriage, of Hector Maclean of Dowart, the father of the first baronet. Sir Allan married Anne,

daughter of Hector Maclean of Coll, and had three daughters, the eldest of whom, Maria, became the wife of Maclean of Kinlochaline, and the second, Sibella, of Maclean of Inverscadell. In 1773, when Johnson and Boswell visited the Hebrides, Sir Allan was chief of the clan. He resided at that time on Inchkenneth, one of his smaller islands, in the district of Mull, where he entertained his visitors very hospitably. From the following anecdote told by Boswell, it would appear that the feeling of devotion to the chief had survived the abolition act of 1747. "The MacInnises are said to be a branch of the clan of Maclean. Sir Allan had been told that one of the name had refused to send him some rum, at which the knight was in great indignation. 'You rascal!' said he, 'don't you know that I can hang you, if I please? Refuse to send rum to me, you rascal! Don't you know that if I order you to go and cut a man's throat, you are to do it?' 'Yes, an't please your honour, and my own too, and hang myself too!' The poor fellow denied that he had refused to send the rum. His making these professions was not merely a pretence in presence of his chief, for, after he and I were out of Sir Allan's hearing, he told me, 'Had he sent his dog for the rum, I would have given it: I would cut my bones for him.' Sir Allan, by the way of upbraiding the fellow, said, 'I believe you are a Campbell!'"

Dying without male issue in 1783, Sir Allan was succeeded by his kinsman, Sir Hector, 7th baronet; on whose death, Nov. 2, 1818, his brother, Lieut.-General Sir Fitzroy Jefferies Grafton Maclean, became the 8th baronet. He died July 5, 1847, leaving two sons, Sir Charles Fitzroy Grafton Maclean of Morvern, and Donald Maclean, of the chancery bar. Sir Charles, 9th baronet, married a daughter of the Hon. and Rev. Jacob Marsham, uncle of the Earl of Romney, and has issue, a son, Fitzroy Donald, major 13th dragoons, and four daughters, one of whom, Louisa, became the wife of Hon. Ralph Pelham Neville, son of the Earl of Abergavenny.

The first of the Lochbuy branch of the Macleans was Hector Reganach, brother of Lachlan Lubanach above mentioned. He had a son named John, or Murchard, whose great-grandson, John Og Maclean of Lochbuy, received from King James IV. several charters of the lands and baronies which had been held by his progenitors. He was killed, with his two elder[228] sons, in a family feud with the Macleans of Dowart. His only surviving son, Murdoch, was obliged, in consequence of the same feud, to retire to Ireland, where he married a daughter of the Earl of Antrim. By the mediation of his father-in-law, his differences with Dowart were satisfactorily adjusted, and he returned to the isles, where he spent his latter years in peace. The house of Lochbuy has always maintained that of the two brothers, Lachlan Lubanach and Hector Reganach, the latter was the senior, and that, consequently, the chiefship of the Macleans is vested in its head; "but this," says Mr Gregory, "is a point on which there is no certain evidence." The whole clan, at different periods, have followed the head of both families to the field, and fought under their command. The Lochbuy family now spells its name MacLaine.

The Coll branch of the Macleans, like that of Dowart, descended from Lachlan Lubanach, said to have been grandfather of the fourth laird of Dowart and first laird of Coll, who were brothers. John Maclean, surnamed Garbh, son of Lachlan of Dowart, obtained the isle of Coll and the lands of Quinish in Mull from Alexander, Earl of Ross and Lord of the Isles, and afterwards, on the forfeiture of Cameron, the lands of Lochiel. The latter grant engendered, as we have seen, a deadly feud between the Camerons and the Macleans. At one time the son and successor of John Garbh occupied Lochiel by force, but was killed in a conflict with the Camerons at Corpach, in the reign of James III. His infant son would also have been put to death, had the boy not been saved by the Macgillionies or Macalonichs, a tribe of Lochaber that generally followed the clan Cameron. This youth, subsequently known as John Abrach Maclean of Coll, was the representative of the family in 1493, and from him was adopted the patronymic appellation of Maclean Abrach, by which the lairds of Coll were ever after distinguished.

The tradition concerning this heir of Coll is thus related by Dr Johnson, in his Tour to the Hebrides:—"On the wall of old Coll Castle was, not long ago, a stone with an inscription, importing, 'That if any man of the clan of Macalonich shall appear before this castle, though he come at midnight with a man's head in his hand, he shall there find safety and protection against all but the king.' This is an old Highland treaty made upon a memorable occasion. Maclean, the son of John Garbh, had obtained, it is said, from James II., a grant of the lands of Lochiel. Forfeited estates were not in those days quietly resigned: Maclean, therefore, went with an armed force to seize his new possessions, and, I know not for what reason, took his wife with him. The Camerons rose in defence of their chief, and a battle was fought at the head of Lochness, near the place where Fort Augustus now stands, in which Lochiel obtained the victory, and Maclean, with his followers, was defeated and destroyed. The lady fell into the hands of the conquerors, and being pregnant, was placed in the custody of Macalonich, one of a tribe or family branched from Cameron, with orders, if she brought a boy, to destroy him, if a girl, to spare her. Macalonich's wife had a girl about the same time at which Lady M'Lean brought a boy; and Macalonich, with more generosity to his captive than fidelity to his trust, contrived that the children should be changed. Maclean in time recovered his original patrimony, and in gratitude to his friend, made his castle a place of refuge to any of the clan that should think himself in danger; and Maclean took upon himself and his posterity the care of educating the heir of Macalonich. The power of protection subsists no longer; but Maclean of Coll now educates the heir of Macalonich."

The account of the conversion of the simple islanders of Coll from Popery to Protestantism is curious. The laird had imbibed the principles of the Reformation, but found his people reluctant to abandon the religion of their fathers. To compel them to do so, he

took his station one Sunday in the path which led to the Roman Catholic church, and as his clansmen approached he drove them back with his cane. They at once made their way to the Protestant place of worship, and from this persuasive mode of conversion his vassals ever after called it the religion of the gold-headed stick. Lachlan, the seventh proprietor of Coll, went over to Holland with some of his own men, in the reign of Charles II., and obtained the command of a company in General Mackay's regiment, in the service of the Prince of Orange. He[229] afterwards returned to Scotland, and was drowned in the water of Lochy, in Lochaber, in 1687.

Colonel Hugh Maclean, London, the last laird of Coll, of that name, was the 15th in regular descent from John Garbh, son of Lauchlan Lubanach.

The Ardgour branch of the Macleans, which held its lands directly from the Lord of the Isles, is descended from Donald, another son of Lachlan, third laird of Dowart. The estate of Ardgour, which is in Argyleshire, had previously belonged to a different tribe (the Macmasters), but it was conferred upon Donald, either by Alexander, Earl of Ross, or by his son and successor, John. In 1463, Ewen or Eugene, son of Donald, held the office of seneschal of the household to the latter earl; and in 1493, Lachlan Macewen Maclean was laird of Ardgour. Alexander Maclean, Esq., the present laird of Ardgour, is the 14th from father to son.

During the 17th and 18th centuries the Macleans of Lochbuy, Coll, and Ardgour, more fortunate than the Dowart branch of the clan, contrived to preserve their estates nearly entire, although compelled by the Marquis of Argyll to renounce their holdings in capite of the crown, and to become vassals of that nobleman. They continued zealous partizans of the Stuarts, in whose cause they suffered severely.

From Lachlan Og Maclean, a younger son of Lachlan Mòr of Dowart, sprung the family of Torloisk in Mull.

Of the numerous flourishing cadets of the different branches, the principal were the Macleans of Kinlochaline, Ardtornish, and Drimnin, descended from the family of Dowart; of Tapul and Scallasdale, in the island of Mull, from that of Lochbuy; of Isle of Muck, from that of Coll; and of Borrera, in North Uist and Treshinish, from that of Ardgour. The family of Borrera are represented by Donald Maclean, Esq., and General Archibald Maclean. From the Isle of Muck and Treshinish Macleans is descended A. C. Maclean, Esq. of Haremere Hall, Sussex.

The Macleans of Pennycross, island of Mull, represented by Alexander Maclean, Esq., derives from John Dubh, the first Maclean of Morvern. General Allan Maclean of Pennycross, colonel of the 13th light dragoons, charged with them at Waterloo.

The force of the Macleans was at one time 800; in 1745 it was 500.