



Clan Gregor Society

Great Lakes Chapter

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Patrick McGregor, Newsletter Editor

Susie McGregorHuyer, Steward, Minnesota & Wisconsin

NEW WEBSITE (more info on page 8): clangregorsocietyglc.org

The MacGregor Monitor SUMMER 2020

Please send any questions or comments about this newsletter to patmcgregor777@gmail.com.

Due to COVID-19, most area 2020 Scottish Festivals and Games have been cancelled. Let's hope for better times in 2021.

Special thanks to Keith MacGregor, US Council Representative of Clan Gregor Society, for two major contributions to this issue of *The MacGregor Monitor*. The first is "The Kings Jaunt - 1822" which will be celebrated in Scotland on its 200th anniversary in 2022. The second is "Prestonpans Reviewed"; the Battle of Prestonpans is a shining hour in our Clan history.



King George IV, in 1822

The King's Jaunt, as it was christened in August of 1822 also had another name – the "21 Daft Days", during which time over 10,000 spectators, many in kilts, turned out on the Royal Mile for the first visit of a British king to Scotland in 140 years. George IV attended receptions, dinners, award ceremonies and threw a few banquets of his own. By all accounts Edinburgh was delirious! Behind the scenes, the whole affair was planned, and largely paid for, by two men - Sir Walter Scott and Sir John MacGregor-Murray, with further military support mustered by General David Stewart of Garth.



Abbotsford House

A few years before, in 1817, Scott had written his much-acclaimed novel Rob Roy, which quickly became a best-seller throughout Europe, and as a result, Sir Walter went on a spending spree, building himself a splendid home in Scott country. In fact, upon entering Abbotsford, replete with weapons

collections, paintings, Scott's writing desk and relics of bygone eras, a guide was heard to say, "Welcome to the house that Rob Roy built!" Hence the connection we will celebrate in 2022. The novel and the celebration had the effect of propelling Clan Gregor from out of the shadows of lawlessness (Proscription had been lifted in 1774), and into the realm of martial fame and glory – all in a mere 50 years! With our name restored, some 822 gentlemen of the clan stepped forward to reclaim the name, although it is estimated that half of those who took other aliases did not take the name back.

Fueled by the fervor of the day, the first clan Societies were established, with Clan Gregor third among all clans, in 1822. 2022 will mark the 200th anniversary of our founding.

There is a story, likely true, that Scott went on to see King George in London, and by telling him something like "You descend from ancient Scottish kings!" (quite a stretch!), he got George to put on a kilt! George loved the whole thing! So why were the MacGregors the Guard of Honor, guarding the King's crown and jewels? John MacGregor-Murrays influence derived from the colonial era in India, where MacGregor-Murray had served with the Bengal Army (a private enterprise supported by the British government – a system that worked out quite profitably for most parties involved, unless you were a Caliph!) His title was Comptroller of the Bengal Army, which put him in charge of the money! If you haven't read about the escapades which accompanied colonizing "the jewel in the Empire's crown", google Lord Clive sometime. The rest I'll leave to your imagination for the moment.



Sir Evan MacGregor and the MacGregor Guard of Honor escort the King's regalia (crown and scepter) to Edinburgh Castle 1822

John's son Evan MacGregor also served in India, following his father and commanding a MacGregor regiment at the beginning of the 19th century. He looks quite good in the painting above (which hangs in the British Museum), but in fact he was badly wounded a few years earlier in taking the surrender (supposed) of Fort Talneir, an Indian stronghold in the Punjab. Cut fourteen times in the face and arms before his troops could reach him, it marked his retirement into more gentrified pursuits. His cousin Peter, also a ranking member of the Glencarnoch family, was killed defending him. The MacGregors did not hesitate to hang the Caliph over the outside wall and destroy the entire garrison, taking no prisoners. On his return to Scotland, Sir Evan was made Governor of the Windward Isles (Caribbean), and therein lies another story! Still, it was Evan who led 150 MacGregors, resplendent as the Guard of Honor in their new red kilts, who bore the king's regalia (crown and scepter) up to Edinburgh castle, where they are on display today.

Sadly, his father, John MacGregor-Murray died two months before the King arrived in Scotland.



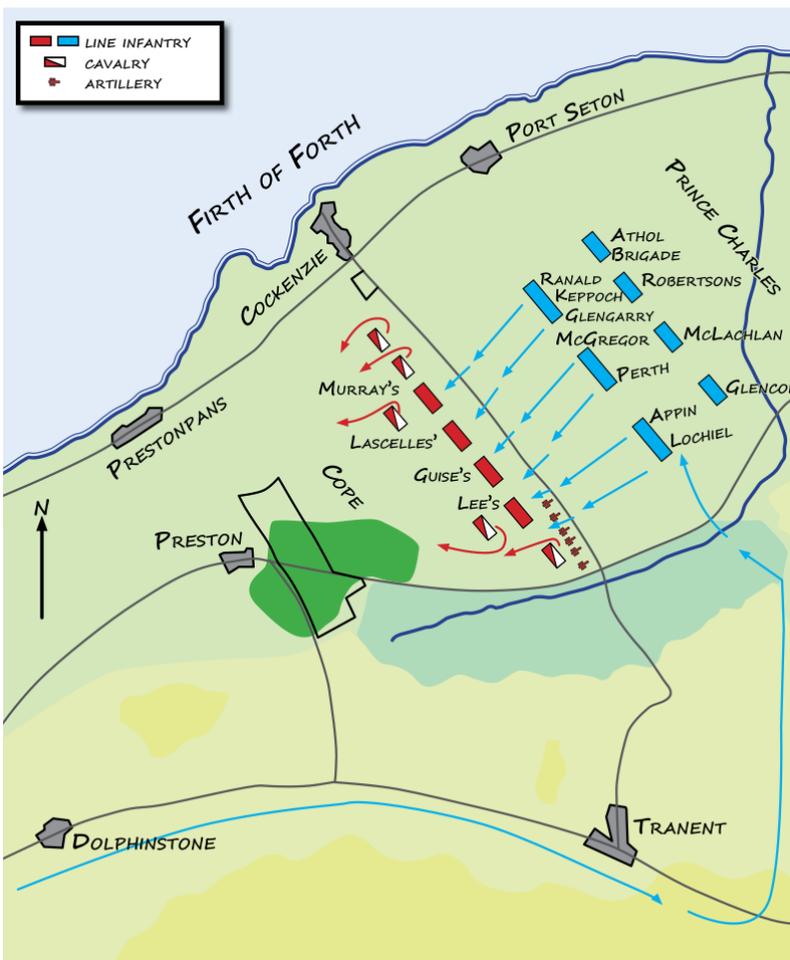
The Royal McGregor, Whiskey Bar & Restaurant. Edinburgh, Scotland

To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Celtic Revival (yet another title for the event), and the founding of the Clan Gregor Society of Scotland in 2022, Keith and Richard MacGregor will be putting on a Clan Gregor International Gathering for the Scott country, featuring Abbotsford and other castles, Rosslyn Chapel of *DaVinci Code* fame, as well as visits to the Royal Mile for highlights of the 1822 pageant (will the king come again?), Edinburgh castle, Holyrood, the tolbooth prison and St Giles, and numerous related historic sites in Edinburgh, explaining the feats and exploits of the clan there over centuries. The famous Tattoo will be on (tickets in advance), and Edinburgh will offer free admission to all museums. And of course, our own James MacGregor will have the doors of the Royal McGregor pub open to welcome us. I sincerely hope you can make it. For details, contact me at kmac1@optonline.net. -Keith MacGregor

Looking Deeper into Prestonpans, 1745

"He came down to the Stirling plain in September, and eastward on the Firth of Forth at Prestonpans his terrible swordsmen scattered the only government army in Scotland..."

So writes John Prebble in his historic novel The Lion in the North, introducing what would turn out to be the high-water mark of the last Jacobite Rebellion on British soil. The stunning victory would highlight the fighting reputation of Clan Gregor in the front line. But as the Highlanders emerged from the fog of Trannet Moor on September 17, 1745 to the horror and dismay of General John Cope's redcoats, it must have been a source of wonder to the 25-year old Charles Edward Stuart who had never seen the preferred tactic of the Jacobites - their terrifying Highland charge.



Battle of Prestonpans.

Clan Gregor front center, leading the Highland Charge

Barely a week before, the MacGregors had taken the West Port in Edinburgh. We actually tried to storm the castle – quite audacious, since no one had ever succeeded before or since, but it was not to be. These actions opened the city to Charlie as a signal initial victory and the city rejoiced. Less than a week later, his army was to face Cope's in a more serious contest at Prestonpans, some eight miles east, which some writers now believe led Bonnie Prince Charlie to believe his Highlanders were invincible. It may also have been the driving thought behind Charles' fatal order to march on London despite two major English armies hunting for him.

Led by Robert MacGregor of Glencarnock and James Mhor, eldest son of Rob Roy, the MacGregors numbered about 200 – smaller than the regiments of MacDonalds, Camerons, and other rebel clans who had not suffered the many years of deprivation and outlawry which depleted our ranks.

Given pride of place at the center of the front rank, we would be facing Col. Gardiner's cavalry, who sadly was defending his own estate in Scotland, having everything to lose – which he did.

The MacGregors are reported to have lashed scythe blades to long poles, hard-won lessons from previous battles where they had faced a head-on charge. It would shortly prove to be the stuff of legend.

While there are several eye-witness accounts of the battle, one stands out, which is written by one Duncan MacPharrie, a MacGregor who was active in the fight. The letter itself runs on a bit, but when we separate the statements an incredible picture emerges of our clan's heroism. It appears that, at the same moment the ranks formed to charge Cope, a large gap was noticed in the line, possibly due to some desertion from the Duke of Perth's division. Gardiner immediately ordered his horsemen to charge the gap, which would have a crippling effect on the Highland army. Seeing this, the MacGregors ran to close the gap directly across the field of fire, as James Mhor shouted loudly to the others to close ranks, and was immediately wounded by grapeshot, breaking his thigh. At that moment the cavalry was on them.

The famous oil painting (below) in the War Museum is said to memorialize the MacGregors actions in turning the charge, still celebrated in songs today.



Here is the letter MacPharrie later sent to the new chief, John MacGregor Murray, whose father was in the vanguard. If the account is accurate, Prince Charles was so impressed with the victory that, immediately following the battle, he set a table in the middle of the battlefield, and toasted the MacGregors. That evening he again invited the clan leadership to sit with him at dinner, an honor which can scarcely be believed. You the reader can draw your own conclusions.

(text is verbatim) -

“Captain Duncan MacGregor was wounded through the thigh, Captain James Mhor MacGregor was wounded thro’ the thigh, Captain Malcolm MacGregor got his two legs broken, twenty-one private men were wounded and one shot dead upon the spot. We pursued the retreating army a mile and a half....The Prince came and took (Col. Robert) MacGregor of Glencarnock in his arms, and Captain Evan, and told them to gather the whole Clan MacGregor upon the middle of the Field of Battle. There was a table covered and the MacGregors guarding him at dinner, every man got a glass of wine and a little bread. Your Father and Uncle sat down with him, the rest of the Chieftains took it amiss that the MacGregors got this honour, but it was dear bought”.

Nor would it be our last memorable contribution to the fateful cause of Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Stewart monarchy. Though one battle in the '45, Prestonpans stands out as a shining hour for Clan Gregor. In a sense it represented the last chance to regain our lands by royal decree. And as in most of our history, it was paid for it with our lives-a grim trademark of the clan. By 1746 the Cause was lost and Jacobite persecution was carried out on an unprecedented level. But a new era was about to dawn for Scotland – one which could not have been foreseen at the time, but which would bring even greater fame to the Highland clans!

The 1745 Jacobite Rebellion was as the old saying says, “the end of an old song”.

But it seems for every battle in Scottish history a song is sung and Prestonpans was no exception. The rousing “Hey Johnny Cope” by the Corries is recommended for immortalizing the fate of this English commander who had to report his own defeat to his superiors. And perhaps more endearing, of course we have Lady Nairne’s “Will Ye No Come Back Again?”

For more information about our history, contact me at kmac1@optonline.net. -Keith MacGregor

Introducing Our New Web Site



The Great Lakes Chapter of the Clan Gregor Society has built a web site! It is at clangregorsocietyglc.org on the web. Previously, we had no presence and few methods to communicate with our current and prospective members. Please go check it out!

Our main objective was to provide Clan Gregor and local chapter information to our region. There are extensive resources provided including: short history articles on Clan Gregor and Rob Roy, pictures of our tartans, related surnames, maps of Scotland and the Great Lakes, and a list of highland games in the region. We have a blog containing a couple of book reviews, a photo gallery and art gallery, and a collection of our recent newsletters. For members only, we have a contact directory and various chapter documents for download (e.g., how to run a highland games tent). When we host events in the future, people will be able to register online, and the system automatically maintains registration lists.

The second objective was to make it easier for prospective members to join the organization and for current members to renew. We can now use credit cards and maintain our own profile information. Anyone can donate to a new scholarship we created or to the chapter in general, also via credit card. The system maintains a history over time. We have short biographies of our chapter leaders as well.

Finally, we have a small online store for Clan Gregor apparel and souvenirs. Plus, there are links to other useful web sites including our other Clan Gregor Society chapters in North America and to Clan Gregor in Scotland. It is easy to maintain the site without being a rocket scientist. – Joe Greer Jgreer121@yahoo.com