

2009 AGM at Stone Mountain

I know, you are sweltering in the heat, dreaming of swimming pools and cold beer, but in no time it will be fall and the smell of haggis will be in the air and the sound of bagpipes echoing through the trees. It's Stone Mountain, Georgia and the highland games are underway. The Macleans will gather for food, fun and just a little business. Our turnout for the last few years has been fantastic and there is no reason to think this year will be different.

If you have not experienced the phenomenon of Scottish Highland Games, you are in for a treat. For the two days of the games the park will be filled with men in kilts, some of the largest men you have ever laid eyes on. The piping and highland dance competitions continue for the entire weekend. Noon on Sunday is the time for the Parade of Tartans, all of the clans marching together with matching tartan.

Friday night, the clan is invited to the home of Gene and Nancy Hendreschke for Bar-b-que. If you will be in town and plan to attend, please call Nancy and Gene at (678) 455-6445 or E-mail newsong54321@bellsouth.net. They will give you directions or send you a map. If you desire adult beverages, the word is BYOB.

Continuing the hospitality, Jane and Ephraim Mclean will once again host the clan with dinner at their beautiful home in dunwoody. Maps and/or directions will be available at the tent on Saturday.

Don't come to Georgia with any thoughts of sleeping. We will have something happening all of the time. It takes time to get the latest gossip about your old friends and learn about all of the new ones

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Macleans are Honored Clan at Memphis, Clanjamfry

Memphis, Tennessee, the bluff city is the site of "Clanjamfry" each September. This is a celebration of Scottish heritage and a big party with the major emphasis on the clans and the Kirking of the Tartans at the Sunday morning church service.

Clan Maclean is the honored clan this year and we need to show up in large numbers to show our support. The dates are September 25-27 and everyone is treated to a reception on Friday night and picnic on Sunday.

SCOTTISH THRUSTING SPEARS

A **spear** is a weapon with a sharp point on a pole, or shaft. Its primary use is in penetration of shields, armor, and ultimately, the enemy, or animal. There are some spears which can be used in a slashing attack, but this is less common than the thrust. Spearheads are much simpler and cheaper to make than swords, so we might expect them to be more common. Indeed, in a country such as Scotland, poorer than its neighbors, it would be the predominant arm in its armies. The schiltrons, the massed regiments of the Scottish armies, were composed primarily of spearmen.

Thrusting spears date back far into the past, well beyond recorded history, but we can see the beginnings of modern spearheads by the time of the Bronze Age. Continental Celtic smiths created a variety of spearheads, but some of the gaudiest had elaborate piercings on the blade part, or wavy blade forms. This style, with broad heads, continued on into the Iron Age, and was still found as part of the panoply when the Greeks and Romans came up against the Celtic tribes. Two generic words for spear in later Gaelic are *sleagh* (var., *sleigh*) and *gae*.

Celtic warfare in those early times was often a clash of individuals. Heroes would challenge each other between the armies, and fight each other. Spear and shield would be the common weapon combination. The length of the spear for this type of combat would seem to be idealized between 6' – 9'. Longer spears, of pike length, would be at a disadvantage, since the shorter one would be more deadly once inside the reach of the longer.

However, the Romans disabused the Celtic tribes of this practice, and their disciplined legions eventually triumphed over the warrior spirit. Still, in the unconquered parts of Europe, the old war spear lived on.

Our Clan, and others in the Western Highlands and Hebrides, and our Irish cousins, would have clung to this heritage, although the Viking influence on these areas was enormous. Sword blades can be seen to share Viking shapes well into the 13th Century. Broad bladed spears persisted over the centuries, with the intrusion of the **lugged/winged sockets** brought up to Scandinavia from the Rhineland smiths of the Frankish domains, then back down to the Gaelic lands through temporary conquest, or settlement, or trade. Except for times of war, when the longer shafts could be used in the masses of spearmen, the old style of spear would be the usual weapon of the Gael during the ubiquitous intertribal “disagreements,” or when hunting for pork chops “on the hoof.”

The broad war spear would have served as the prototype for the **boar spear**, which was still used as a weapon in northern European armies.

The techniques of that day live on in modern armies. Any of you who served in the US Army, or Marine Corps, will remember your bayonet training. The old shield is no longer used, and anyway, my old M-1 was a bit heavy for one hand - it might be different for you youngsters with your M-16s. Still, two-handed spear play is the basis of bayonet work. Pick up my 6-footer next October at Stone Mountain, and see how natural it feels.

Wee Archie rushed home from school to tell his mother he had been given a part in the school play.

"Whit part have ye got" she says.

"I play the part of a husband" says Archie, proudly.

"Well she says, just get right back there and tell that teacher you want a speaking part!"





From the President

Greetings from your President!

2009 is more than halfway over. However, there are still highland games scheduled until the end of the year. Please support your clan by taking time to visit your fellow clansmen and clanswomen at the remaining games. You will meet old friends and make new ones! Check our web site at clangilleanusa.org for a listing of dates and locations of these games.

October 16th through 18th will find us at the Stone Mountain Games in Stone Mountain, Georgia. These games are always well attended and are a joy to attend. This year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held at Stone Mountain on Saturday, October 17th. Come by the tent to find out the time of this meeting. At the meeting, we will have reports on the year's activities from members of the Executive Committee, and, importantly, we will elect a new president and a director for Region 2. We also look forward to getting together Saturday night at Region 4 Director Eph McLean's house where we always have a great time.

Look forward to seeing you at the AGM at Stone Mountain!

Your Aye,

Claude Hicks

President, Clan Gillean USA

WE'RE ON FACEBOOK!!!

**Try it. Log on to facebook and look at the group:
Clan Maclean / Clan Gillean USA**

What's Coming Up For the Clan?

EVENT	LOCATION	DATE
Maine Highland Games	Brunswick, ME	August 15, 2009
Virginia Scottish Games & Festival	The Plains, VA	Sept 5-6, 2009
Ligonier Highland Games	Bethel Park, PA	Sept 11-13, 2009
Sycamore Shoals Celtic Festival	Elizabethton, TN	Sept 11-13, 2009
Evergreen Clanjamfry & Scottish Heritage Celebration	Memphis, TN	Sept 25-27, 2009
McPherson Scottish Festival	McPherson, KS	Sept 26-27, 2009
Williamsburg Scottish Festival	Williamsburg, VA	Oct 2-4, 2009
Scotland County Highland Games	Laurensburg, NC	Oct 3, 2009
West Kentucky Highland Festival	Murray, Kentucky	Oct 17, 2009
Stone Mountain Highland Games & Scottish Festival	Atlanta, GA	Oct 16-18, 2009



Macleans on the Mountain

The daily rain atop Grandfather Mountain failed to dampen the high spirits of Clan Gillean at this year's Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. Old friends and curious newcomers filled the tent and the pages of the visitor's log filled rapidly as Macleans from around the world signed in their attendance. Well over a hundred people with some claim to Maclean heritage visited during this popular four day event. Many others with questions about Scotland and Scottish heritage made inquiries and read the many books available. The great turn out was a welcomed surprise.

The Macleans made a grand showing in a couple of competitions as well. Caitlin McLean, the Clan's talented Highland dancer, walked off the stage with a second runner up trophy, an impressive feat considering the quality of the competition. Many dancers from across the country were competing leading up to the National Highland Dance Championship in Nashville the following weekend. In a different musical arena, Cameron Gabriel, a great young piper, took home a third place trophy in the "Piobaireachd" competition. Both of these young competitors represented their clan well and proud.



All Macleans were invited to a barbeque on Saturday evening at the home of Gary and Cindi McClain. Gary's sister Diane Sweat and her husband Larry were there to lend a helping hand. Everyone enjoyed great food, great friends and some beautiful mountain scenery. What more could anyone ask for? Well how about some bagpipes. Cameron brought his award-winning piping skills to the barbeque and entertained the crowd. He even stood outside the clan tent on Sunday and played for all of the clan and passers-by after the Parade of Tartans. And speaking of the parade, what a wonderful way to end a wonderful gathering. Clan Gillean marched strong and proud, with 46 clansmen and women in attendance.

These games are truly special, though the allure is a bit of a mystery to behold. Is it the cool mountain air or the height of these "highlands" that draws people to this rather remote location? Maybe the draw is more simple. Maybe it's just the sense of belonging to a family bound not necessarily by blood but by a common history and a common love of heritage. Scots are a rather deep people after all. So join us on the mountain next year. After all. It's where you belong, is it not?

MUSIC AND THE MACLEANS

Claude Hicks FSA Scot

One of the best known Scottish songs is not about Macleans but was written by a Maclean— Jim McLean. It tells the story of one of the most familiar incidents in Scottish history, the Massacre of Glencoe which occurred in the winter of 1692. In Gaelic, the event is called “Mort Ghlinne Comhann” (murder of Glen Coe). Although the history of the highlands is filled with numerous killings and “massacres” among the clans, the Massacre at Glencoe stands out because of the betrayal of the time honored tradition of highland hospitality and because of its genocidal intent. The massacre has been described as the foulest deed in Scottish history. To be sure, it left its mark on the MacDonalds and the Campbells.

In August of 1691, King William decreed that all highland clans swear an oath of allegiance to him and Queen Mary by New Years Day, 1692. Any clan refusing to do so would be dealt with harshly. Although the MacIans of Glencoe, a branch of Clan Donald, intended to do so, they failed to meet the deadline set by the government for taking the oath. By some accounts, King William decided to make an example of them. Ultimately, a Royalist force was sent to Glencoe under the command of Captain Robert Campbell of Glenlyon. This force included a number of Campbells, as well as soldiers from other clans, in its company of some 128.

Campbell arrived at GlenCoe and asked quarters for his two companies. He called on Alastair MacIan, 12th Chief of Glencoe, said they were in the area to collect taxes, and asked his hospitality. For almost two weeks, Campbell’s men enjoyed the hospitality of the MacDonalds, eating their winter food supply and drinking to each other's health. Though it is

unclear exactly when Captain Campbell received his orders to kill the MacDonalds, he was ordered specifically to "root out the old fox and his cubs" and to put everyone under seventy "to the sword." Early in the morning, thirty eight of MacIans’ clan were killed by the guests who had accepted their hospitality on the grounds that they had not pledged allegiance to the new monarchs, William and Mary. It is said that another forty women and children died of exposure after their homes were burned.

Jim
McLean’s
song, written
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Many claim that the massacre had roots in the feud between the Campbells and the MacDonalds which dated back to 1500. The Campbells had been particularly prosperous and had nearly always managed to be on the winning side in disputes between the government and other clans. On the other hand, the MacDonalds were notorious for raiding Campbell lands and stealing their cattle. News of the massacre spread over Scotland within two weeks. The action of the government forces was particularly offensive because it violated the strict code of hospitality in the Highlands and because of the government's complicity carrying out what amounted to “ethnic cleansing.”

Jim McLean’s song, written in 1963 and often mistaken for an old “folk song,” has been performed and recorded over the years by many. It certainly captures the essence of the trickery employed by the government force and the suffering imposed on the highlanders.

THE MASSACRE OF GLENCOE

Jim McLean

**Chorus: O cruel is the snow that sweeps Glencoe
And covers the grave of Donald
And cruel was the foe that raped Glencoe
And murdered the house o' Macdonald.**

**They came in a blizzard, we offered them heat,
A roof o'er their heads, dry shoes for their feet.
We wined them, dined them, they ate of our meat,
And slept in the house o' Macdonald.**

Chorus .

**They came from Fort William with murder in mind,
The Campbells had orders, King William had signed.
Put all to the sword, these words underlined,
And leave none alive called Macdonald.**

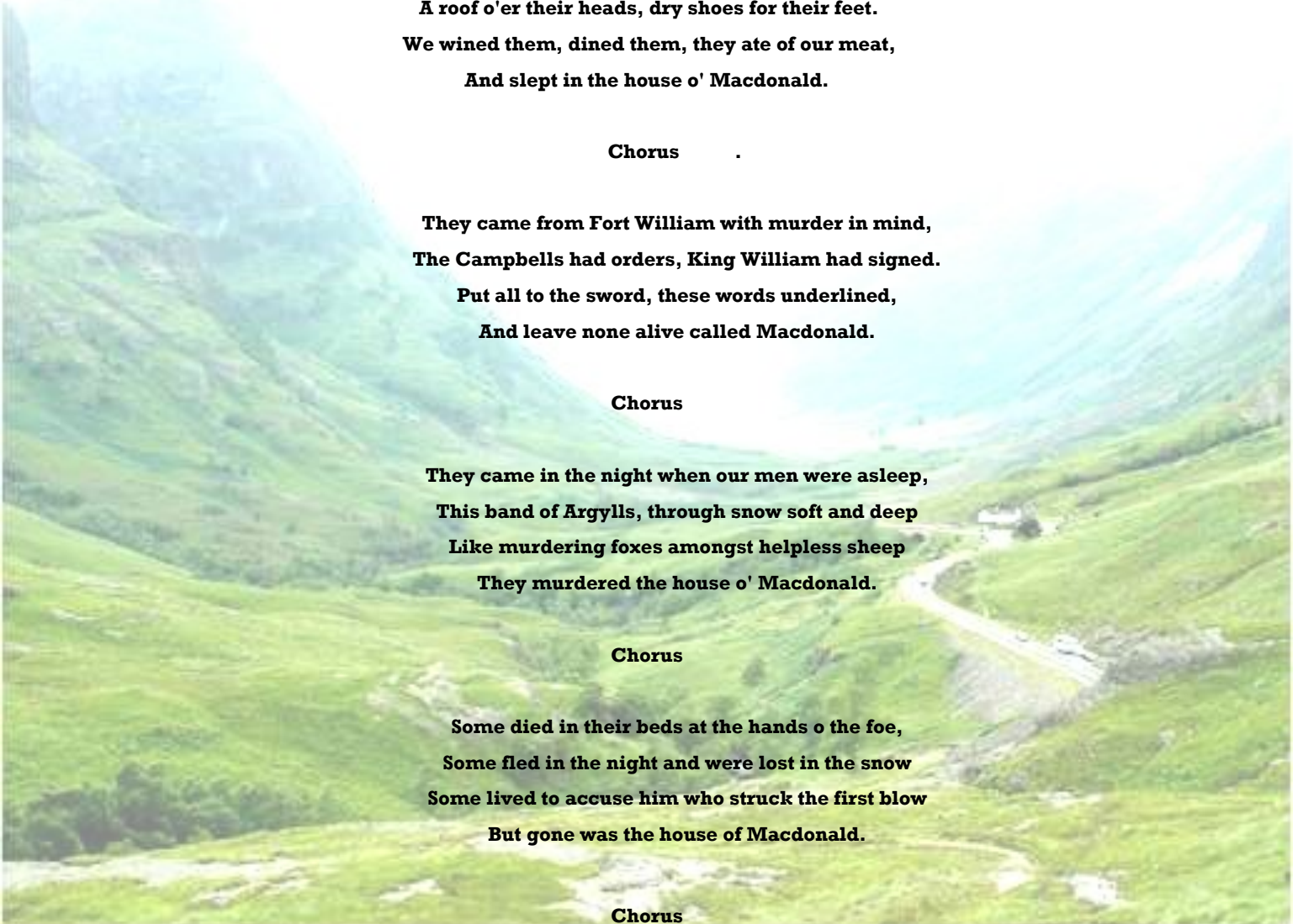
Chorus

**They came in the night when our men were asleep,
This band of Argylls, through snow soft and deep
Like murdering foxes amongst helpless sheep
They murdered the house o' Macdonald.**

Chorus

**Some died in their beds at the hands o the foe,
Some fled in the night and were lost in the snow
Some lived to accuse him who struck the first blow
But gone was the house of Macdonald.**

Chorus



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We're on the WEB
www.maclean.org
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Editor (temporary) Bob McLean
E-mail: robertsmclean@gmail.com
 Language Consultant Alison List
 Graphics Consultant Marla Baswell



Executive Committee (as of 3/15/2009)

President (2009)

Claude W. Hicks, Jr.
 P.O. Box 48
 Macon, GA 31202
 (478)752-8125 (Day)
 (478) 745-3270 (Night)
 Email: claudenhicks@cox.net

Vice President (2011)

Robert S. McLean
 1333 Pine Trail
 Clayton, NC 27520-9345
 (919) 553-0191
 Email: robertsmclean@gmail.com

Secretary (2010)

Nancy Hendreschke
 1005 Julius Dr.
 Suwanee, GA 30024
 (678) 455-6445
 Email: newsong54321@bellsouth.net

Treasurer (2011)

Mark A. Lane
 P.O. Box 1280
 Lenoir City, TN 37771-1280
 (865) 680-6720
 Email: deepbluediver99@aol.com

Past President

Owen Kirk Lane
 P.O. Box 613
 Walhalla, SC 29691
 (864) 247-8687
 Email: okl5000@yahoo.com

President Emeritus

Clarence Norman Greek
 2519 Regency Park Dr.
 Murfreesboro, TN 37129
 (615) 895-7635
 Email: cngreek@aol.com

Board of Directors (as of 11/10/2008)

Region 1 (2010)

AZ MT NM CO UT WY
 Charles Daniel McLane
 P.O. Box 6942
 Phoenix, AZ 85005
 (602) 326-1338 (Day)
 (602) 457-9764 (Night)
 Email: cdmclane@hotmail.com

Region 2 (2009)

AR KS LA NE MO MS OK TX
 James C. McLane III
 9318 Willow Meadow Drive
 Houston, TX 77031
 (713) 774-6339
 Email: themclane@hotmail.com

Region 3 (2012)

IA IL IN MI MN ND OH SD WI
 Rev. Colleen C. McLain
 10 Bay St.
 Tonka Bay, MN 55331
 (612)-868-0693
 Email: rev.mclain@cmclain.com

Region 4 (2011)

AL DC FL GA KY NC SC TN VA WV
 Dr. Ephraim R. McLean 3rd
 2257 Old Brooke Point
 Dunwoody, GA 30338
 (770) 396-5280
 Email: emclean@gsu.edu

Region 5 (2013)

CT DE MA MD NH NJ NY PA RI VT
 Gregory MacLean
 44 Townsend St.
 Fitchburg, MA 01420
 (978) 348-2416
 Email: gmacqilean@yahoo.com



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