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HISTORY**

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The Highland Clearances, and their causes, effects, and results

Chapter Two: The "Harrying of the Glens" at its Peak

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When it became clear to the "Butcher" Cumberland the Jacobites were giving ground at Culloden, he gave the "no quarter" order. Now, the most hated phrase in the Highlands. Hundreds of fallen soldiers, not dead, were shot where they lay, others were burned alive in human fire pits. Many were taken prisoner only to be summarily shot, one after the other.

Memorial Cairn at Culloden



According to authors Somerst Fry. "Over 100 were taken across the Border to England, tried and executed in defiance of the 1707 act of Union. Those not killed were jailed in the Tolbooth (a gaol {jail} or prison), many with their wives and children and left to suffer from starvation and disease, some to the point of death. Over 1,000 were SOLD outright as slaves to the American Colony plantations. Cattle, sheep and deer were butchered, crops ravaged and

burned. More cattle were driven into Inverness and given away or offered at ludicrously low prices to Lowland farmers, some were even given to English farmers in the Northern counties." Cottages, farms and houses were burned down in every district of the Highlands. Some Scots, who were not Jacobites, protested their treatment and that of their Highland neighbours -- but they were ignored, dismissed or insulted. The provost of Inverness was kicked down a flight of stairs for questioning the cruelties.

Later, the Duke of Cumberland, (the son of Britains King, Geroge II), would complain that he'd actually been asked to show no humanity. He did a good job of following those orders, as the "*harrying of the Glens*", as it came to be known, was carried out with Teutonic brutality and thoroughness by the Hanoverian Regime.

The atrocities that occurred immediately after Culloden in the "Pacification" -- such a horrifying devastation of the Highlands -- was backed by the London Government and applauded by many Lowland and Presbyterian Scots who hated the Highlanders as much for their stubborn adherence to the Roman Catholic Faith as much as their loyalty to the Stewarts. Not all Highlanders were Catholics at this time, some being Episcopalian and some recently turned to the Lowland Presbyterian Faith. But enough were still of the Catholic belief to cause much religious hatred. In the Government zeal to root out once and for all time the Highland clans power, they not only took powers away from the Clan Chiefs but also hereditary sherriff-doms and other jurisdictions were abolished - in doing so the Government bracketed the jurisdictions of clans who had not supported the Jacobites. This infuriated everyone. With all its faults, the clan relationship of its Barons courts and clan councils, "*formed the whole basis of Scottish law and order as well as local government*", the act of Union had validated the integrity of that Scottish law. Or so it was assumed. But now that the British Government had removed it's power, nothing was put in its place, and this led to near anarchy in the Highlands. Not only were the clan chiefs now without powers, they no longer commanded the respect they once did, or so they imagined, and were without pride or purpose. The ban of tartan, wearing of kilts and Highland dress, weapons and even the writing of Gaelic was a systematic attempt to "obliterate the Celtic mode of life", a policy also followed by England in Ireland and Wales. The lands of the fallen chiefs were eventually turned over to factors, special managers, who although efficient, were ruthless in their running of the lands and farms.

Scottish Highlander



As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the clan chiefs had leased much of their land to middlemen, called tacksmen, because tack meant lease. Some tacksmen worked the land, others sublet to tenants, often getting more rent than the chiefs received from the tacksmen. One of the roles of the tacksmen had been to call up the clansmen into military service when the need arose. But by the 1740's and especially after Culloden (1746), some chiefs had stopped leasing to tacksmen and began to collect rents and dues through their agents (often factors) who only earned commission.

Many chiefs also began to see that more money was needed to support their ever increasingly lavish life-style, and subsequently began to sell the land to sheep-farming, as the Lowland and Border lairds had already begun.

But Lowland and Border folk were not subjected to the same degree of evictions and brutalisation that their Highland counterparts were about to receive. Yes, many Lowland and Border folk were removed from the land too, but it was not generally enforced by press gangs and police swinging truncheons and clubs as occurred in the Highlands later on.

The Lowlanders and Borderers moved into other areas of Scotland or England and many willingly emigrated to the colonies.

The chief no longer protected the clansmen and had no idea what to do -- what they did do was appalling. Accustomed to loyalty and power, they were now drawn to the 'good living' in Edinburgh, fine homes, expensive and lavish life-styles. They became a new class of wealthy merchants and bankers, investors and gamblers, and left their clansmen to fend for themselves.

Post Culloden -- The Highland Regiments

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After Culloden there was no immediate danger from the clans, who were leaderless. The great dream of Gaeldom was shattered and many clansmen found themselves bewildered and broken in spirit. However, on the Continent, Bonnie Prince Charlie was still alive and the Government was well aware that the Prince was still a rightful heir to the throne of Britain on grounds of primogeniture and that the Highlands still contained many thousands of fit men who still held Jacobite sympathies.

#### Prince Charles



Although the threat posed by the Prince after Culloden was changed, and the political climate of Europe had helped to diminish his chances of ever being a threat, it was not a situation the British Government wanted to allow to remain static for long.

In truth, the Scots and the English were still not the best of friends and the "Butcher" Cumberland had left behind a bitter legacy which disgusted many Scots, even those who had no

love of Jacobites. Cumberland, of course, didn't like any Scotsman and he didn't care who knew it.

In 1738, (prior to Culloden), Lord President Forbes of Culloden had put up the proposal to the Government for the raising of Highland regiments to be officered by 'loyal Englishmen'. His aim was to channel the energies of possible Jacobite supporters into activities of working hard for the government, leaving them with little time for plotting. The scheme was vetoed by the Cabinet, but out of it came into being the Black Watch Regiment in 1739. Initially filled with Lowland Scots and some Highlanders of unquestionable Government loyalty, such as the Campbells and Munros, it was led by English officers to "watch" or police the Highlands secretly -- thus "Black Watch". It really had little to do with colour of their tartan.

Just prior to Culloden, in 1745, the Blackwatch had fought with Cumberland at Fontenoy, and he'd been impressed -- he was not easily impressed.

The Black Watch experiment had been successful enough to warrant raising another regiment in 1745, Loudoun's Highlanders who also formed part of the Government army during the "45". They were routed at Moy by the Highland Macintoshes who frightened them into believing a great force was lying in wait for them. The Loudoun's Highlanders ran. They were disbanded in 1748.

But a man named William Pitt proposed the raising of regiments (after Culloden) from the 'disaffected' clans, to serve British armies overseas. What better use could they put to the strong, proud and determined enemy than to convince him that fighting, in full Highland garb (currently it was only allowed if you joined the regiment), for the British government was in his best service to 'his' country? They were sent directly to the front lines of every British foreign war and took the brunt of almost all initial combat in the British army.

Regiments served in North America against the rebellious colonists, and in the West Indies. Between 1757 and 1761 ten Highland regiments were raised and disbanded: the Fraser Highlanders; Montgomery's Highlanders; the Duke of Gordons Highlanders; The 100th Regiment; The Queens Highlanders; the Royal Highland volunteers; Johnstone's Highlanders and the Maclean's Highlanders.

After such a resounding success, in 1766 William Pitt gave a rousing speech to parliament about the quality and gallantry of "his" Highland Regiments. It was stirring stuff indeed. What he left out of that 1766 speech was what he said back in 1757 about

the Scots Highlanders. He, when he first commanded his scheme in 1757, had been at pains to point out the obvious advantage that, in sending these Highlanders off to war for Britain, "Not many" of the troublesome Gaels would return. But by 1766 the Highland regiments had indeed proven themselves in combat, and with their blood, to be among Britain's best units.

One wonders why such hated enemies would, considering the atrocities after Culloden, want to fight for the British army? There were several reasons.

One factor was the Monarchy itself. The new House of Hanover was a protestant branch of the old House of Stuart, and, supposedly, ruled by virtue of its Stuart blood rather than its Hanoverian connection. Of course one can make a strong dissenting argument here, but the thinking goes that since Dutch William (William of Orange) married a Stuart (Mary Stuart) they ruled co-jointly as William and Mary. A more realistic view might actually show that it was all William who ruled and Mary stayed very much behind the Royal scenes. But accepting the Stuart bloodline theory, it was one factor.

Another, more tangible reason, was that the Highland Chiefs, who might have opposed the regiment idea, were either in exile or dead, and those who remained on their clan lands had no desire to repeat the futile performance of 1745 and its savage repercussions. Then again, the power of the Campbells no longer threatened the other clans. The days of feuding and fighting amongst themselves were now over.

#### Scottish Highland Officer



But the largest reason played directly to the warrior heart of the Gaelic Highlander. The only way he could gain honour in battle, legally wear his Highland dress, carry weapons as his forefathers had done for over 1,000 years and play his beloved bagpipes was to join a Highland regiment. This was a subtle but powerful incentive to the Gael, who had for centuries been a warrior and had his kilt, bagpipes and weapons at all times. All these things were 'proscribed' by the Hanoverian Regime after Culloden and only by joining the regiments and fighting in British wars could he

obtain these long cherished cultural practises and traditions.

The Government in London wanted to extinguish everything that made the Gaels different and distinctive. In the "Proscription Act, or the 'Black Act' of 1746, as it was known to the Highlanders and Islanders, Scottish Highlanders were forbidden to own arms, which might be reasonable so soon after a war, but also to wear the kilt or any garments of tartan cloth. Offenders could and were transported to Botany Bay or imprisoned.

So the Highlander joined. And since many of the new Regiments were officered by men he knew and included men from his own glens, it must have seemed like the old clan days all over again -- except that now the British Government fed and clothed and paid them money, instead of a chief, and they had no retribution to fear. And, of course, mostly now they were not Catholics, (or no longer Catholics); they had no religious loyalty to the Stewarts.

All these considerations added together to make the prospect of army service attractive to fit men -- the very men, left to their own devices, might just conceivably become the spearhead for another Jacobite attempt. Unlikely as it was, the government preferred to pre-empt the possibility. It worked remarkably well. Highland men flocked to the Union Jack standard to fight for the Hanoverian king, so long as they could wear the garb and be among their own kind. It was a brilliant masterstroke of English thinking -- and the Regiments, as much as any other reason -- put the final seal of the fate of the Stewarts.

Not only did these Highlanders do good service, but they provided good hardy settlers for America and Canada with a strong loyalty to Britain. In the Clearances soon to come, however, they were joined by tens of thousands more who had no such British allegiance.

Scottish Regimental Soldiers (later)

The Highland regiment went on to fame and glory and have a proud and undisputed valorous record, but it is too extensive to cover in this work on the Clearances, so that must be another story.

The Highland Clearances Begin



There is something typically British about the fact that the misery of the Highland Clearances was in full swing whilst the much needed restoration of Scottish national pride was being achieved.

This began with the prowess on the battlefield of the first Highland Regiments; it was sustained, at least in Lowland and English eyes, by the prevailing Romantic Movement with a growing worship of all things 'Scotch', (under the guiding pen of Sir Walter Scott). Please let me make a personal note here regarding Sir Walter: I think he is one of the most important and influential authors ever to put ink on paper. But, like Shakespeare, he intentionally or not, has created a myth of Scottish Highlanders, as did Shakespeare with MacBeth, that although wonderful literature, is not good history. That being said, Sir Walter Scott, despite his terrific works, his 'Highland' writings have given a false image of the Highlander that prevails to this day.

All the while the Romance with the Scottish Highlands were in full bloom, the people whom they professed to adore, the Gaels, were being killed, beaten, imprisoned or sent to the New World in the most cruel and extreme conditions imaginable. What follows in the next chapter (and the end of this one) will shock, surprise and horrify most who are unaware of this injustice.

After about 1746, the Highlander, due to the Regiments, becomes for possibly the first time a Scotsman rather than a Highlander, no longer one of a different race to be hated, feared and consequentially despised, in turn hating and despising others.

It is therefore even more the great tragedy the Highlanders (except in the regiments) should have fallen prey to the greatest

savagery, the most humiliating indignities that has ever been inflicted upon them -- and this in their present times by their fellow Scots, even by their own erstwhile chiefs.

Highlanders soon found oppression among them in the shape of their own chieftains or sometimes landlords to whom the chieftains sold out. There were edicts in some areas actually forbidding marriages among estate tenants! In the parish of Clyne in Sutherlandshire a few years later, there were 75 bachelors aged 35 to 75.

Had the Highland story truly ended on the fields of Culloden in 1746, to be followed by the stirring history of the Highland Regiments over the next two and one-half centuries, it might be easy to overlook much of the hypocrisy that lurks menacingly behind the tartan smoke screen raised by Sir Walter Scott, fanned by King George IV and finally given Royal Warrant by Queen Victoria. But it did not end then.

Evictions in the Highlands prior to 1745 were rare, In 1739, both MacDonal of Sleat and MacLeod of Dunvegan, the principle Skye chiefs, SOLD some of their clansmen and women as indentured servants in the Carolina's. But these extremes were rare and have no connection to the cruelty known as the Highland Clearances.

Perhaps the final blow to Scottish land ownership, thus the clan system itself, ended with the "Heritable Jurisdictions Act" of 1747, which stated, essentially, that those who did not accede to English jurisdiction (British Government) were to have their lands forfeited and given over to the government. This may have been the final straw that broke the clan systems back.

Two Main Eras of Highland Clearances.

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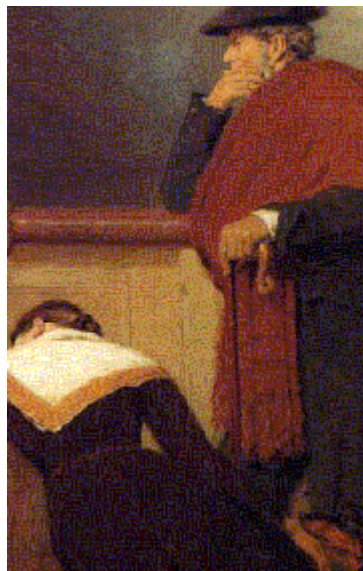
The Clearances proper fall into two main periods: A long period from 1785 to 1820, and a shorter one from 1842 to 1854.

Ironically during the entire period covered by the Clearances from 1785-1854, Highland military Regiments were serving with distinction in foreign wars.

Also during the late stages of this shameful period, Queen Victorian and Prince Albert, from 1848 onwards, were living in a Highland sentimental dream at Balmoral Castle, talking about their beloved Highlanders, covering the floors, walls, windows and even a few ceilings with tartan in some bizarre type of 'tartan hell' that seems Graceland-like in its obsession and indulgencies. This genuine but perhaps misplaced love for the Highlanders

continues in the Monarchy to this day.

Highland Despair



Yet not a hundred miles away, these same Highlanders were being evicted, reduced to poverty and cruelly beaten and murdered by police constables acting for the factors of landlords who placed the value of sheep, especially the 'Cheviot' sheep, over men.

In the next, and perhaps most shocking chapter, we shall look directly at the crimes and injustices committed against the Highlanders, as the evictions become greater and the landless and destitute are subjected to the most unimaginable inhumanity ever experienced by the Gael of the Scottish Highlands.

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