

Achnacarry and Crieff

- Life at the eastern end of Loch Arkaig in the 1700s

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www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com

How to use these notes

- Too much detail?: Read the summary first, to get the essence of what this is all about - rather than getting lost in the details in the body of these notes.
- Research: These notes are not in a narrative style because it is not intended for the general public. This is for serious researchers. There are standardized headings and dot-points which are a framework into which extra discoveries can be placed so that the notes can be undated from time to time. These research notes might inspire you to create a more readable story.
- Sources: References are identified throughout and footnotes. This is mainly from what is available on the internet - we have not yet directly researched original physical records.
- Our other docs: This is one of a series of notes which are interconnected. These can be found in the SMALL PRINT directory on the left of the homepage. The stories that are most relevant to Achnacarry and Crieff:-
 - D50 – Christina McLean , nee McPhee
 - D57 - Donald Cameron & Jane Robertson
 - D55 - John Oag McPhee & Christ'n Cameron
 - D56 – John Macleod's memoirs (& family tree)
 - D54 – Cameron chiefs (in the Library directory)
- Authors: These notes were compiled by Don Gordon, in collaboration with Lorna McLean. Don is a great-great-grandchild of Allan & Catherine who are 3 x great uncle and aunt of Lorna.
- Feedback: Your corrections and comments will be welcomed - via 'Contact us' on the homepage.

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Introduction

Everyone's life is intertwined with the big events swirling them. These research notes provide background information for understanding the lifetimes of:-

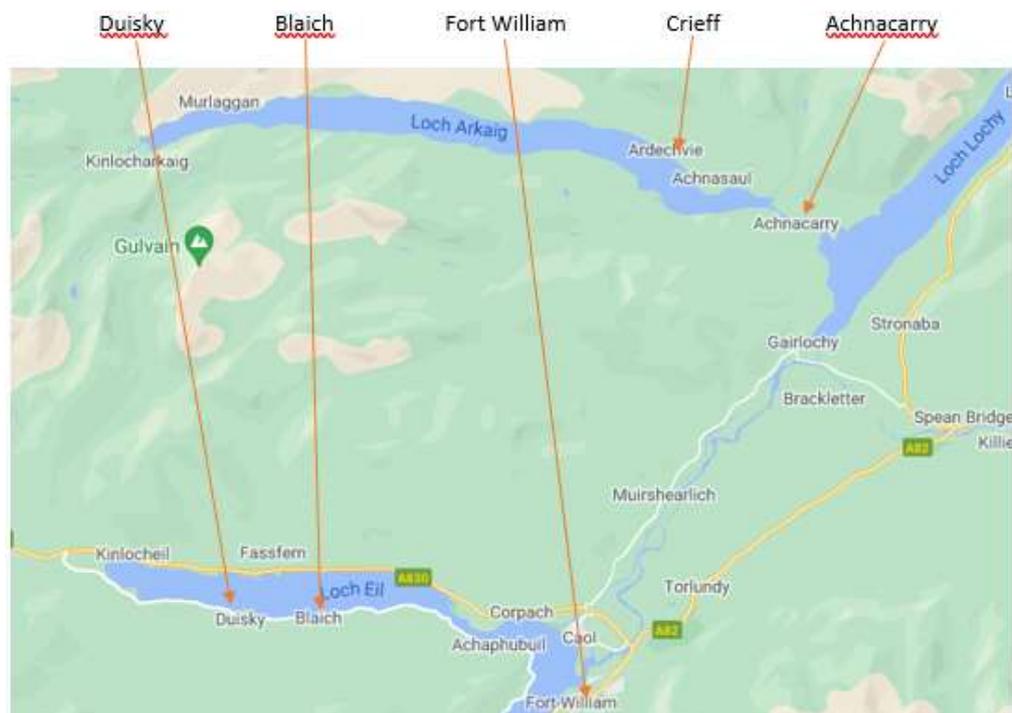
- Donald Cameron and Jane Robertson who settled in Achnacarry in the 1760s (and their daughter, Christ'n)
- John Oag McPhee and his predecessors on Crieff

There were dramatic changes sweeping across the Highlands, especially around Loch Arkaig. There are at least two stories being told at the same time – the big picture and the family history. We must show how the personal is impacted by the macro, but we must not let the macro obscure what we are primarily interested in – our own family history. Another perspective is that the lives of ordinary people influence the macro because the broad sweeps of history are partly determined by how individuals take small steps in reaction to the big events. It is a two-way process, the macro and the micro are always affecting each other. In order to keep these two together as well as separate, we have laid it out in several documents:-

- Context: In this present document, [E27](#), we have collated all the general information we could find about life on the Lochiel estate, particularly Crieff and Achnacarry. This is in the context of events, social structures, economic changes, agricultural transformation, cultural destruction and power struggles between Clan Cameron, the chiefs and the English government.
- Family histories: The biographies, [D50](#), [D53](#), [D55](#), [D56](#) & [D57](#) have the details specifically connected to the lives of Donald, Jane, Christ'n and John

Localities around Loch Arkaig

- [Achnacarry](#) – see [D57](#)
- Achnasaul or Auchnasaul: This is next to Crieff, towards the eastern end of the loch, on the northern side.
- Ardechvie : See Crieff - Ardechvie is roughly where the original Crieff was located. It is modern-day holiday accommodation described as a 'traditional crofters cottage'.
- Arkavie or Arcabhi: Between Callich and Caonich.
- Callich or Caellich: Towards the western end of Loch Arkaig, on the northern shore of the loch.
- Coul farm: Near Glendessary. This is not to be confused with the suburb of Caol near Fort William.
- [Crieff](#) – see [D55](#)
- Glendessary: This is at the western end of Loch Arkaig.
- Glenpean: This is near Glendessary.
- Muick, Mock or Muckerel: This is towards the eastern end of Loch Arkaig, on the northern side.
- Sallachan: This is between Muick and Crieff. By coincidence, the present MacLean Laird of Ardgour lives at a different farm, near Loch Linnhe, which happens to be called Sallachan also.



Localities near Loch Eil and Fort William

- Around 1804, many of the Loch Arkaig families moved to localities about 5 kms north of Fort William – north of the junction of the Loch Linnhe and Loch Eil.
- Banavie: It is 5 kilometres from Fort William. This was a farm in Christ'n's and John's time and is now a suburb.
- Camaghael: North of Banavie, on the shore of the River Lochy.
- Corpach Moss: Next to Banavie and Camaghael.
- Muirshearlich: Half-way between Crieff/Achnacarry and Fort William. John might have lived here in his old age.
- Blaich
- Duiskey

Clans

- The Camerons were the dominant family throughout the Lochaber region. In the whole Kilmallie parish in the 1770s, there were 44% Cameron families. This compares with 11% McLean, 7% McMillan and 3% McPhee¹ An indication of the social dominance and comparative prosperity of the Camerons is that they were 11 of 13 wadsetters on Locheil farms in 1748².
- None-the-less, in the mid-1700s, there were 23 families of MacPhees in the Glendessary glen³ and *"in the Lochiel rentals for 1788 we find that there were ten MacPhees in Glendessary, but most of them were evicted in 1804 at the time of the Lochaber clearances"*⁴. Of course, apart from these ten renters, other McPhee non-renters would have been living on the farms.

Hierarchy

- Sources:
 - Some details about the Cameron Chiefs in the 1700s decade by decade, are in this current document.
 - Detailed descriptions of the Cameron Chiefs since the 1400s can be found as item L007 in the Library directory on the left of the homepage of www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com
- Chiefs: Achnacarry had been the centre of clan authority with the Cameron Chief at times living there in his castle. The chief, known as Lochiel, had authority and military strength. It had been thought, rightly or wrongly, that the chief was traditionally much more than the landlord - that he had a broad responsibility for the general well-being of all his clan, particularly those living on his properties. However, everything changed after Culloden in 1746. The chief went into exile and he became a remote figure – remotely located in France and not-remotely concerned about fate of the members of his clan. Tenants had to pay dues to the chief but none of the chiefs took a personal role in improving conditions on their Locheil farms. The people at Achnacarry would have have barely been aware of what their chief was doing.
- 21st chief, Charles: About two decades before Donald and Jane settled there, the Achnacarry castle was destroyed, and the Cameron chief escaped and did not return. Charles died in 1776 after being the chief for 14 years. It is not known how significant this event was felt by the people at Achnacarry
- 22nd chief, Donald: The new chief in 1776 was a grandson of 21st. He was only 7 years old and so his duties were performed by his tutors who had no interest in clan matters affecting the people on the Lochiel farms.
- Factors: After 1746, the English took control of the Lochiel farms and placed 'factors' to deal with the tenants. They gained great formal power over farm operations and many aspects of local activity.
- Wadsetters: The people were not accepting of the many of the demands of the factors. Marianne McLean describes how this gap was partly filled by the wadsetters who were more relevant to daily life on the Lochiel farms.
- Some authority was still retained by traditional kinsmen who controlled some tenancies and collected some rents.

1 [Page 11 in D55.](#)

2 [Glengarry p224.](#)

3 [Memoirs p225](#)

4 [MacMillan p97 – appendix C in D55](#)

Castle – When was the chief living there?

- For the structure and history of the castle, see D57.
- Which chiefs lived in the castle?
 - This was the official residence or ‘seat’ of the chiefs of Clan Cameron, but the various chiefs have rarely lived there. [Research: Who lived in the castle when the chief was not there?]
 - The castle was initially built around 1655 by the 17th Chief – Sir Ewen. It is probable that Ewen lived at the castle for periods until his death, 64 years later, in 1719. But he was in London for part this time. [Research: Check this]
 - It is not clear how long Sir Ewen’s son, Lord John, the 18th Chief lived at Achnacarry because he was eventually exiled and died in Flanders.
 - The 19th, Donald, ‘The Gentle Lochiel’, might have lived at the castle for a while, but he was also exiled, to France, after Culloden in 1746.
 - The original castle was destroyed in 1746 and remained in ruins for 56 years.
 - The 20th Chief John lived in exile in France.
 - The 21st Chief Charles lived in exile – probably France. Charles was the Chief when our Donald took over the sawmill.
 - The 22nd Chief Donald became the new chief in 1776 and he was the chief for the rest of time that Jane and our Donald were living there. Chief Donald did not live in Achnacarry except for a year or so around 1790. At this time, the old castle was still in ruins.
 - The Camerons eventually recovered the property in 1784, but the chief remained in exile.
 - The 23rd chief might have lived at the castle at some times between when the castle was completed in 1832 and when he died in 1858.
 - The 24th chief, who was born in 1835, is said to have been *“the first chief to make Achnacarry his permanent home since that day in September [sic] 1746 when ‘The Gentle Lochiel’ took his last look at the burnt out ruins of old Achnacarry, over 100 years before”*⁵.
 - The 25th chief was buried at Achnacarry in 1951⁶. It is not known whether any other chiefs were buried there.

Population

- Population of all of Kilmallie parish - xxxxxx
- Population on the Lochiel Estate/Lochaber
 - Marianne McLean estimated that, in 1755, there were possibly 1500 people in 260 families in the 38 farms that comprised the Lochiel estate. And in 1801, there were 2300, just before the clearances⁷.
- What families were in Achnacarry? - xxxxx
- What families were in Crieff? - xxxxx

Tenancies

Preliminary notes about tenancies:-

- Terms: We must be careful to make relevant distinctions between the meanings of various terms that describe how someone might be connected to a particular property – as an owner, factor, laird, sword-service, landlord, tenant, subtenant, cottar, crofter, wadsetter, tacksman, renter, liferenter, manrenter, leasee, possessor, grantee, holder, progenitor, laird, ‘of xxx’, ‘at xxx’, ‘in xxx’, or resident. There are important differences between an estate, farm and croft.
- Power: What sort of hierarchies were there? Who had the real power in various aspects of people’s lives. The respective authority, at various times, between the English government, factors, clan chiefs, wadsetters, tenants etc. Marianne McLean describes a hierarchy of economic and social influence from wadsetter, then prosperous tenant, poor tenants and then down to sub-tenants, cottars, and servants as the very poor (Glengarry p44).
- Succession: Were tenancies hereditary in any sense. Were they ‘owned’ and inherited? Did a wadset continue after someone had died? Did the tenancy of Crieff pass from father to son, or was there some other process for changing tenants.

5 Page 2 in 5-Celtic ibid

6 Page 14 in 5-Celtic ibid

7 Glengarry p43.

- There was not just one tenant renting the whole farm. It is not appropriate to refer to John McPhee as ‘the’ tenant of Crieff, because, for example, in 1804, there were four tenants at Crieff. Other examples are two John McPhees holding Muick and 12 men and women renting Moy⁸.
- For Crieff (as with Duiskey) were there written leases which expired on a Whitsunday after 19 years?
- What is the practical effect of holding a lease? What entitlements and obligations does this entail?

Farming of all of Kilmallie parish

- Statistical accountsxxxxxx
-

Farming on the Lochiel Estate/Lochaber

- The Lochiel Estate covers most of the Lochaber area. The estate was extensive - 107,500 acres or 43,500 hectares (Glengarry p46).
- Of the 38 farms in the estate. *“Only two farms, Kinlocharkaig and Invermallie, were located on the south shore of Loch Arkaig, but the north shore was more heavily settled, with eight farms: Murlaggan, Callich, Coanich, Kenmore, Muik, Sallachan, Crieff and Achansaul. Each farm in this group extended north to the parish boundary and Glengarry’s property, with farmhouses and buildings located in small communities along the loch. Five farms were found near the southern end of Loch Lochy; these included the chief’s residence at Achnacarry”* (Glengarry p46).
- There were extensive stands of timber (4,600 acres).
- In the 1700s, black cattle were the main source of farm income.
- At the beginning of the 1800s there was a rapid change from cattle to sheep which required more fencing and less man-power. These were the ‘enclosures’ or ‘clearances’ which resulted in many tenants being evicted from around Loch Arkaig.
- These tables are details extracted from tables on page xxx in Maryanne McLean’s ‘People of Glengarry’.
- Details of productivity of the Crieff and Achancarry farms is in our D55 & D57.

Buildings

- For structures in Achnacarry, see D57 for descriptions of:
 - Castles (old and new)
 - Sawmill
 - Museum
 - Other farm buildings
 - Burial grounds

Schooling

- For education around Loch Arkaig, see Christ’n’s education in D55

Chronology of events

Featuring the chiefs and other context

Before 1700

- Chiefs
 - Clan: The Camerons were dominant around Loch Arkaig.
 - The chiefs of Clan Cameron were known as Lochiel.
 - They controlled the vast Lochiel estate comprising 38 farms.
 - 16th Chief: Allan, was the son of 15th chief's younger brother. He became the chief in 1565 when he was 3 years old. As a 29 year old, he led the clan at the Battle of Glenlivet in 1594. He observed the Battle of Inverlochy in 1645, when he was aged 83. He died in 1647 after being chief for 82 years.
 - 17th Chief:
 - ✧ Sir Ewen Ewen Cameron was the grandson of 16th chief.
 - ✧ He *was born in 1629 and died in 1719.*
 - ✧ He was known as 'Eoghain Dubh',
 - ✧ He was the most famous chief in Clan Cameron history.
 - ✧ *"As a young man, his education was overseen by the Marquess of Argyll, but his allegiances were altered after a trip to Edinburgh, where he witnessed the execution of Montrose and heard of his exploits. He became an implacable enemy of the Parliamentary forces and fought many battles to preserve the independence of his clan. In 1682 he was knighted by the Duke of York in Edinburgh, and he took part with Dundee in the Battle of Killiecrankie in 1689 in support of James VII. As a soldier, he was fearless and as a chief, he was loved, trusted and admired by his clansmen."* This quote is from the website Celtic Radio, MacMillan, branch Cameron (5-Celtic p7) – where more details of his life are recorded.
 - ✧ He became chief in 1647 when he was 18 years old.
 - ✧ He arranged for the building of the original Achnacarry Castle. This was in 1655, early in his reign.
 - ✧ He was away in London when Clan Cameron fought at the Battle of Mulroy in 1668.
 - ✧ He had authority and military strength.
 - ✧ He died in 1719 after being the chief for 72 years [Research: Check this]

1700 to 1745

- Chiefs
 - This was a time when the Cameron Chief was a powerful presence and clan traditions were strong.
 - Sir Ewen, the 17th Chief, died in 1719.
 - The 18th Chief was Lord John MacEwen Cameron who was Sir Ewen's son.
 - ✧ He was born in 1663.
 - ✧ Created Lord Lochiel in the Jacobite peerage on 27 January 1717.
 - ✧ He fought at the Battle of Glenshiel in 1719.
 - ✧ His father, died in that year and Lord John became chief when he was 56 years old.
 - ✧ He was exiled and so his brother, Donald effectively became the 19th chief. Lord John died in exile at Nieupoort in Flanders in 1748.
 - The 19th Chief, Donald, 'The Gentle Lochiel'
 - ✧ He was the son or brother of the 18th chief [Research: Check this]
 - ✧ Born 1695 and at 24 years, in 1719, he became the effective chief when the 18th was exiled.
 - ✧ He was *"an enlightened chief who tried to improve the lot of his clansmen. When Bonnie Prince Charlie landed in Scotland in August 1745, the chief, as a staunch Jacobite, felt duty bound to meet him, and was eventually won over by the prince to support his cause with all his clan. The history of the Forty-five is well known, but if Lochiel had not come out with his clan, the rising might never have taken place"*. This quote is from the website Celtic Radio, MacMillan branch Cameron (5-Celtic p10) – where more details of his life are recorded.
 - ✧ He was exiled after Culloden.
 - ✧ Died in France in 1748.

Culloden in 1746

- Chiefs
 - The 19th Lochiel Donald, who was known as 'The Gentle Lochiel', led the Camerons as one of the main clans in support of Bonnie Prince Charlie when the Jacobian cause was regathering strength in 1745. It all ended in the bloodied fields of Culloden where Donald was badly wounded but escaped.
 - Lochiel went into hiding. After five months, in the company of the Prince, Lochiel fled to France. He died there a few years later, after being the effective chief for 29 years. His son, John became the 20th chief.
 - Bonnie Prince Charlie – extracts from 'John Inverary McPhee -1797 to 1867 – pages 8 & 27

Pursuing the Prince

There is one other thing to mention about those days after Culloden and that is how Prince Charles crossed the Great Glen, fled along the Dark Mile, and along the North shore of Loch Arkaig, making his race for the obscurity of the Island of Skye. The English troops came after, burning, looting and destroying lands and crofts and effectively ending the lives and livelihood of McPhee and Cameron. They scorched the earth in searching for Prince Charles and the defeated soldiers and dependents of Cameron of Locheil. The Glen Dessary and Loch Arkaig region was nigh on emptied of McPhee.

North shore of Loch Arkaig, and Glen Dessary

I took my children on a couple of trips to see places like Loch Arkaig and Glen Dessary not long before we left Scotland. As we drove the horse and cart along the so called 'Dark Mile' after Bunarkaig, the older boys calculated that it would have been a little over a hundred years since Prince Charles was here.

How different the circumstances were from 1746 until early 1853 when we took that path of memory. At one much earlier period of time these had all been MacIntosh lands. But by the time of Culloden these were all Cameron lands, with only some residual dispute over particular rentals with the Duke of Argyll. The whole area North of Loch Arkaig was once thickly populated, Camerons, MacMillans, MacPhees.

In 1746 quite a few of the tenants were McPhees. Following Culloden their homes were destroyed, and their beasts killed or driven off, but ten McPhee tenants somehow managed to survive, and were given a pitiful reimbursement later for assessed losses suffered under Cumberland's soldiers. Most of these McPhees never returned to the North side of Loch Arkaig. Other landless McPhees managed to survive in the area, a few arrested and imprisoned. Most drifted away, content to be alive, heading towards Fort William area, some away to Glasgow and beyond. Later on a few McPhee crofters and the remaining tenants were driven off the land by our own Cameron Chief, some as recent as 1804, in my own early lifetime. Those place names and the property names are only memories for people now. Who knows of Achnasaul, Crieff, Muick, Ark, or Sallachan, any more?

Somehow, he must have doubled back because later he passed later passed on the southern side of Loch Arkaig

the final escape route comes to an end

o, still travelling westward, the Prince made his final crossing to the Western side of the Great Glen, the third crossing he had made at this point. But this time his flight took him along the South side of Loch Arkaig. On a visit to this area earlier, I had taken the path along the *North* side of the Loch Arkaig. So this time my family and I could pick up his path again as the Prince continued eastward from Loch Lochy in the Great Glen. Prince Charles would have to wulk past the burnt-out wreckage and ruins of Cameron of Locheil's 'ohnacarry' on his left. On his right soon after, he had time to have a last look, and perhaps say a devout prayer at, Saint Columba's Isle, nesting in its beauty on Loch Arkaig. Remember how I mentioned earlier how this place, this little Island, is precious to the McPhee families, as the place where some ancestors were taken to their last resting place, and precious also on account of the many McPhees who had lived and farmed nearby until the disruption and dispersal which followed Culloden.

1746 to 1750

- Chiefs
 - The new Chief was John, the 20th who became chief when his father died in 1748.
 - ✧ He was born in 1732 and so was 16 years old when he became the chief.
 - ✧ He had to remain in exile.
- Context
 - Aftermath: After the battle, the Duke of Cumberland's troops swept through the highlands pursuing anyone involved with the failed rebellion, as well as many who were just innocent highlanders. In their rage, the troops destroyed everything they could lay their hands on, and took live-stock. "*Crops were completely destroyed, houses and furnishings burned or removed, and stock taken away*" (Glengarry p20).
 - All but three of the 37 farms on the Lochiel estate were subject to the military reprisals.
 - Sequestration: The Lochiel farms were taken over and they were referred to as being under the Commissioners of Forfeited Estates.
 - Authority: The English government was determined to exert power over the highlands and to annihilate the clan structures. The chief had to live in exile.
 - Factors: The government established control by appointing factors – the first was Robert Livingston from 1746 to 1755⁹.

- Traditions: Many highland traditions were outlawed - such as the wearing of kilts and speaking Gaelic.
- Rent: *“After the establishment of civil rule, the people were allowed to return to their former places of abode, to rebuild their huts, and to replant their desolated patches of crop-land. The Government received them as their own tenants, exacting rent from them – in justice let it be said – a moderate and reasonable rent. They cheerfully paid it; but impoverished as they were by the spoliation of the soldiery, they remitted a second rent regularly and faithfully to Lochiel in France”¹⁰.*
- Hierarchy: *“The wadsetters were next to the chief at the top of the local social and economic ladder”¹¹.* In 1748, a quarter of the families were wadsetters and tenants while the remaining three quarters of the population were subtenants, cottars and servants¹².

1750 to 1760

- Chiefs
 - 20th Chief John remained away in exile.
 - Chief John *“lent his influence to the raising of the Lochiel men for the service of the government”¹³.* Could this mean that he cooperated with the English government – against the wellbeing of the clan he should have been leading?
 - 1759: Chief John, was allowed ‘home’, but it is not clear whether he lived in Achnacarry, which was still in ruins – or lived elsewhere in Scotland.
- Context
 - Population: Marianne McLean estimated that there were possibly 1500 people in 260 families in the Lochiel estate in 1755¹⁴. There were probably somewhat more than this prior to the retributions following Culloden.
 - Factors: The first government factor was Robert Livingston, who was followed by Alexander Campbell in 1755, then by Mungo Campbell and in 1758, by Henry Butter¹⁵.
 - With the chief away in France, the people of Lochiel turned to the main tenants and wadsetters for leadership in providing for their families (Glengarry p56)
 - *“The people who lived in Lochiel in the mid-eighteenth century formed a close-knit, hierarchical community. Lochiel was characterized by a complex social organization with every social and economic level of traditional society. Lochiel included tenants, subtenants, and cottars. The very poor mentioned on several Lochiel farms and the bigger tenants and wadsetters who were so prominent in Lochaber”.* (Glengarry p43). It is interesting that Marianne McLean does not mention crofts which were a key feature around Blaich at that time.
 - *“In 1748, 25% of the 260 odd families in Lochiel were wadsetters and tenants, while the remaining three-quarters of the population were subtenants, cottars, and servants”* (Glengarry p44).
 - *“The thirteen men who had acquired their farms through wadsetts were next to the chief at the top of the local social and economic ladder. In the years before the rebellion, these men had lent Lochiel a total of 2355 pounds sterling and were given the use of a farm in lieu of interest. The wadsetters collected the annual rent of their farms, keeping a part proportional to the value of their wadsett for their own use and paying the balance to the chief”¹⁶.* By this means the wadsetters accumulated considerable wealth and local influence, especially in the absence of the chief.
 - *“The socio-economic level below the 13 wadsetters were the tenants of the other 21 farms.The tenants who possessed the other 21 Lochiel farms formed the next major social group on the estate. These men and women all held their land directly from the landlord and were people of some consequence in the community There were differences, however, both in the size and quality of the farms they rented and in the tenant’s social and economic status. Eleven farms were each rented by only one tenant”¹⁷.* Marianne McLean gave examples of the number of tenants and rents for some of the 11 farms (but not Crieff) – John McLachlan on Achintore, John Cameron on Fessfern, Evan McPhee on Kenmore, two John McPhees on Muick, 12 who rented Moy, and there were

10 Clerk p17
 11 Glengarry p44
 12 Glengarry p44.
 13 Wikipedia
 14 Glengarry p43
 15 MacMillan p246
 16 Glengarry p43&44
 17 Glengarry p44

multiple tenancies for Annat¹⁸. [Research: Get the details for Crieff]. So, some tenants were almost as well off as wadsetters, whereas other tenants were poor. The very poor included some tenants, but mainly subtenants, cottars and servants.

- Tilling: *"The form of spade best suited to such rocky ground was the 'cas chrom', or 'crooked foot' – a wooden shaft some five feet long with a curved end fitted to a flat piece of wood with a pointed iron sock, and a projecting peg which the worker used to thrust the point into the earth with his foot and so with a jerk turned over the clod. Some people could delve an acre a day with it"*¹⁹.
- Factors: For the greater part of each year, the factor had to live on the estates he was responsible for. For a while, Mungo Campbell lived at Achnacarry because it was the *"most central for the discharging the duty of factor over the whole"*²⁰. This would have been around 1757.

1760 to 1770

- Chiefs
 - Chief John died in 1762. He had been chief for 14 years.
 - 21st Chief: Charles became the chief after Chief John died. Charles was John's brother (ie both were sons of the 19th Lochiel). Charles was about 26 years old when he became the new chief.
 - Charles was not living in Achnacarry and probably had little to do with clan affairs. The people at Achnacarry and Crieff and other farms were barely aware of what their chief was doing even though they probably had to pay his dues.
- Context
 - Farm improvements: In December 1758 Henry Butter was appointed factor to act on behalf of the English government. He wanted the tenants to build stone houses (to do away with the creel huts and *'timber wattled huts covered with turf'*), make dykes (fences) along farm boundaries, enclose a few acres for winter hay and other fencing, crop rotation, extend arable land by planting potatoes in rough ground, drain or clear wet and stony fields. Tenants were assured that, when they left, they would be compensated for such improvements²¹.
 - Rather than Achnacarry, Butter used Corpach, near Fort William as his base of operations²² (
 - Butter's responsibilities and influence was extensive - it included the Barnsdale area as well as the Locheil farms, and also three other annexed and forfeited or estates²³. *"By 1767, Henry Butler was able to introduce a plan, with the approval of the Barnsdale tenants, which emphasised the orderly use of the land. The small amount of arable was strictly regulated; one-third was to be tilled each year in rotation. Between each crop of oats, a crop of pease or other green vegetables was to be grown and potatoes were to be planted on uncultivated land so as to increase the amount of arable land. The soil was to be manured with seaweed, if available, or with dung from nearby pastures"*²⁴. Marianne McLean implies that the Barnsdale tenants adopted Butler's vision for improving farm practices more so than the Locheil farmers. *"In spite of Butter's enthusiasm and authority, agricultural improvements proceeded slowly in Lochiel"*²⁵
 - *"Until 1770, the Barons of the Exchequer, and then the Annexed Estates commissioners 'improved' and 'civilized' the Lochiel estate without substantially changing community life or the clansmen's world view. Much of the success that officials enjoyed lay with the gentlemen tenants, who were more easily convinced of the benefits of stone houses, English schooling or commercial agriculture. In general, the people of Lochiel preserved the essential elements of traditional life over this period, while adapting to new social and economic conditions"*²⁶. 'Gentlemen tenants' was probably referring to outsiders rather than locals like John McPhee.

1770 to 1780

- Chiefs
 - Chief Charles died in 1776 after being Lochiel for 14 years.

18 [Glengarry pp44&45](#)

19 [Munro p19](#)

20 [Munro p10](#)

21 [Glengarry p51&52](#)

22 [Munro p12](#)

23 [Glengarry p225](#)

24 [Glengarry p34.](#)

25 [Glengarry p53](#)

26 [Glengarry p42](#)

- 22nd Chief: The new chief was Donald, a son of 21st. Donald was born in 1769 and became the chief in 1776, when he was 7 years old. The young chief did not live in Achnacarry and his 'tutors' probably had little interest in clan matters affecting the people on the Lochiel farms.
- *"With Donald Cameron away in France, the people of Lochiel turned to the chief tenants and wadsetters for leadership in providing for their families"*²⁷.
- Context
 - Population: In the Kilmallie parish (which includes Ardgour as well as all of Lochaber), in the years 1773,74 & 75, there were 206 births - 44% had a Cameron father and/or mother, 11% McLean, 7% McMillan and 3% McPhees. These figures are just indicative – they were for the whole parish and probably underestimate the number of Camerons around Loch Arkaig. It should be noted that there are different boundaries for the Lochiel estate, Lochaber and Kilmallie parish - and Loch Arkaig is just a small part of these entities.
 - Law & order: *"By 1770 cattle rustling had ended and deserters were no longer given refuge"*²⁸.
 - Life: These research notes have drawn from Marianne McLean's description of life mainly around Loch Arkaig (also Barrisdale) in the second half of the 1700s. It is worth looking at another detailed account of the physical and social circumstances of people, for the same period, close by - RW Munro's focussed on life in Knoydart (including Barrisdale) about 25 kms to the west of Loch Arkaig.
 - In 1770, the farms on the Lochiel estates were officially forfeited²⁹.
 - Housing: By 1772, only 11 of the 37 Lochiel farms had a stone house³⁰—Most probably, there were many living in a creel timber, wattled hut covered with turf. Cottages were in clusters, not far from the shores of the loch [Research: Get detailed map of locations of structures/dwellings]

1780 to 1790

- Chiefs
 - The years of neglect continued with the next chief – the 22nd Chief Donald.
 - The young chief did not live in Achnacarry and his 'tutors' probably had little interest in clan matters affecting the people on the Lochiel farms.
 - The Lochiel estate was returned to Lochiel in 1784. Donald, the 22nd Chief was 15 years old at the time and had never been to the estate.
 - Rather than chiefs, maybe the wadsetters were more relevant to daily life on Achnacarry, Crieff and neighbouring properties.
 - Although the chief (and trustees) were again owning the farms of the Lochiel estate, including Achnacarry, none of the chiefs after Culloden took a personal role in improving conditions on the farms. It had been thought, rightly or wrongly, that the chief was traditionally much more than the landlord - that he had should have had a broad responsibility for the general well-being of all his clan, particularly those living on his properties. After Culloden and the exile of the chief, he became a remote figure – remotely located in France and not-remotely concerned about fate of the members of his clan. Marianne McLean describes how this gap was partly filled by the wadsetters who were more relevant to daily life on the Lochiel farms. However, by English design, the formal authority was taken by the factors.

1790 to 1800

- Chiefs
 - The chief's presence: Chief Donald did not visit Achnacarry until 1790, when he was 21 years old. He came with his wife. This might have been the first time that any chief had been at Achnacarry since his grandfather was exiled 44 years before. The castle was still in ruins and maybe chief Donald began to think about rebuilding the castle and to re-establish it as the official residence of the chief – a project which was commenced 12 years later.
 - When the young chief was there for that short period in 1790.
 - Trustees: In the meantime, the chief had unwisely borrowed against the assets of the Lochiel estate, and he was found to be unfit to run it. So trustees managed the estate. This must have been a source of tension between Donald and the trustees for many years.
- Context

27 [Glengarry p56](#)

28 [Glengarry p58.](#)

29 [Glengarry p21](#)

30 [Glengarry p52 & p225](#)

- Population: In 1793, the population of the whole parish of Kilmallie was 4225 and Maryanne McLean indicated that half of these might have been living on the Lochiel farms³¹. - ie about 2112 people.
- Cattle & sheep: On the Lochiel estate, *“several of the Cameron tacksmen tried the new method of [sheep] farming in order to pay the increased rents set by Donald Cameron of Lochiel in 1793. The statistical account of Kilmallie parish, prepared in that year, indicated that three quarters of the parish was laid out in sheep farms, while the other quarter still raised black cattle. In all there were 6000 cattle, 500 horses, 1000 goats and 60,000 sheep stocked in Kilmallie. The relatively low rental of Lochiel suggests that much of the black cattle farming carried out in the parish in 1793 was concentrated on the Lochiel estate. The change to sheep farming seems to have occurred on a farm-by-farm basis there, as successive tenants adapted to the new economy. The removal of small tenants was spread over a number of years, of which the 1804 clearance of Glendessary and Locharkaigside was the most notable”*³².

1800 to 1810

- Population
 - Marianne McLean (Glengarry p43) estimated that there were 1500 people in all the Lochiel estates in 1755, 2112 in 1793 and 2300 in 1801. Maryanne commented that the 1801 figure might have been an underestimate. It seems however, that the population was steadily increasing by an average of 1% per year over the half century regardless of considerable emigration to Canada and America. But the clearances would have had an impact – with numbers being forced from their farms and moving nearer to Fort William, if not migrating.
- Chiefs
 - The 22nd Chief Donald Cameron was born in 1769 and had been the Lochiel since 1776. He might have been in Achnacarry for a years or so in the 1790s but then left and never live there again. Because of early concerns that Donald was unfit (he borrowed against the Lochiel assets) the Lochiel estate was managed by trustees until 1819.
 - Chief Donald continued with the evictions while he was still living in France. *“It is perfectly clear that Donald Cameron 9th [sic – otherwise designated 22nd p185] of Lochiel, was largely responsible for the changes which took place on this own estates that led to the Glendessary and Loch Arkaig clearances These cruel evictions were entirely his own doing, as can be judged by the legal processes drawn up in his name. Lochiel was thirty-five years of age when the Glendessary and Loch Arkaig clearances took place. He is far from being ignorant or blind to what was happening on his estate, so it is both wrong and futile to try and cover up his misdeeds or to put the onus upon his trustees, as if they were entirely to blame”*³³.
 - The chief was a remote figure, disengaged and living elsewhere. According to a letter in 1803 from Allan Cameron *“He is in the country himself at present, but doesn’t trouble his friends”*³⁴.
- New castle
 - In 1802, the trustees and the 22nd Chief, Donald, commenced the construction on a new castle.
 - This is described in D57.
- Sales (for enclosures)
 - In 1804, the trustees, with the support of chief Donald, sold the Lochiel farms. Only Achnacarry remained the property of the chief of clan Cameron because the new castle was beginning to take shape there.
 - This was to facilitate the enclosing/fencing of grazing areas to enable to transition from cattle to sheep.
 - Duncan Cameron of Fassiefern wrote *“Lochiel has had sett [sold] lately, and great are the changes that have taken place on both sides of Loch Arkaig, every single tenant is dispossessed”*³⁵. Duncan listed following properties sold³⁶.
 - ✧ Crieff, Sallachan, dech, Stradden , the shealings of Moy, Barr as a hog fence, Achinellan - all purchased by John Glenevis. He was John MacSorlie Cameron, second son of Alexander 12th of Glen Nevis.
 - ✧ Kenmore , Muick & Canoch (Coinich) - sold later.

31 [Glengarry p43](#)

32 [Glengarry p68 & 69](#)

33 [Macmillan p182](#)

34 [Macmillan p181](#)

35 [Macmillan p182](#)

36 [Macmillan p172-](#)

- ✧ Murlagan & Callich , with shealings – to Duncan Cameron and his sons - 515 pounds.
- ✧ Glenpean & Corrychassie, Lundallie & Meoble – 360 pounds -
- ✧ Glaickferna – 230 pounds
- ✧ Mundachuach, south side of Glendessary, Inverskillivuline – to Sandy Roy - 610 pounds
- ✧ Kenlocharkaig, Lagganferna & Glenscamagarie – to the Collector’s son – 360 pounds
- ✧ Invermalley -quite dispossessed
- ✧ Corpach – to be crofted
- ✧ Stroneahunshean (Duncan Campbell’s farm) – to Angus the piper
- Evictions (for clearances)
 - All the tenants were evicted. (except, presumably, Achnacarry).
- Moving
 - *“The people evicted from Loch Arkaig had nowhere to go, so they went down to Corpach Moss, and eventually moved in with relatives on the farms of Corpach, Banavie and Muirshirlich. When the Caledonian Canal was built 1802-1820, some of them had to move again”³⁷.*
- Impact
 - It was a time of contradictions. On one hand, the Cameron clan was being strengthened by the rebuilding of their castle. Yet on the other hand, clan members had been forced off their traditional lands.
 - For farming families, this eviction in 1804 was one of a series of shocks which had resulted in the decline of clan hierarchy, agriculture, traditional Scottish highland culture, and population after the reprisals in 1746.
 - They were bring forced away from the land the families had held for generations.
 - On the other hand, the move to the different kind of living nearer to Fort William, might have had some attractions.
 - And these were times when many were excited about the prospects of migrating to the colonies.
- Although, for many the forced evictions was upheaval, other locals were able to remain and might have done quite well. And others (outsiders) seize the opportunities for themselves:-
 - *“That year three McPhee brothers at Coull farm, Glendessary, bought it and the other quarter of Glendessary for £610,, when certain parts of the Lochiel’s estates were up for sale. Those brothers were probably the grandsons of John, Wadsetter of Glendessary in 1717”³⁸.*
 - ✧ MacMillan did not name these brothers, but even if one was named John, it was probably not ‘our’ John because Coull and Crieff were some distance apart, at opposite ends of the long Loch Arkaig. Coull farm is towards the western end of Loch Arkaig. It is not Cuil (sounds like Coull) which is where the McLean Sallachan farm is located. Also, it³⁹ is not Caol, a village near Fort William, next to Banavie and Camaghael. Denis Roxson named it as A’Chuil and described it as a ½ merk property located at NM 9492 which is mapped in 1761 on RHP 11608 “Coule & sheilings of Braidukingie & Glackbrettan = part of Glendessary Coull (1796)”.

After 1810

- Chiefs
 - The 22nd Chief Donald Cameron regained full control from the Trustees in 1819, when he was 50 years old. None-the-less Donald had some powers as can be seen (above) in his role in the evictions.
 - Donald died in France in 1832 after being the Lochiel for 56 years.
- Context
 - Caledonian canal: This major project was commenced in 1810 and was completed in 1822.

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37 [Cedric McPhee - appendix A in D55](#)

38 [Macmillan p97](#)

39 [Appendix D in D55](#)

References

Shortcut How it is referred to in this document	Full details Author, title, year and place of publication etc	Access Where anyone can view the original source. If you have difficulty in accessing any of these, contact us via www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com
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