

Much thanks to Alexander Doyle Gregg for his outstanding work on The Gregg Family History Project

Note: This document is a PDF of what appears in the introduction Alexander D. Gregg's site The Gregg Family History. Visit the link above to go to the full site.

THE GREGG FAMILY HISTORY PROJECT - INTRODUCTION - BY ALEXANDER D. GREGG

Introduction. *A great deal of documentation can be accumulated in the course of researching a family history, and one wonders what best to do with all this information. In the hope that it might be of interest to others, I decided to amass the details and records into one source, concluding that the obvious answer was to write a book. Not so obvious was how to do it. Wishing to present something other than a list of endless genealogical statistics, I decided to research a little further into the lives and the times in which our ancestors lived.*

The results of my studies to date allow us to take a brief look at each generation of our family spanning from the 1600's to date. The historic and personal details have been checked and re-checked from as many sources as possible. The facts of course, remain open to question, correction, or revision at any time, and I would welcome any communication in that respect. To the best of my knowledge the details and stories presented are true, having been determined from such information as could currently be found.

My special thanks go to cousin Matthew Greig[P833] of Giffnock Scotland. A Sherlock 'MacHolmes' if ever I met one. Having lived most of my life in the South-East of England, I had for one reason and another practically lost contact with our relatives north of the border, and assumed therefore that I would be unable to acquire information from that direction. Then in 1994 I was informed that Matt had recently made contact with my sister Margaret[P532], and I was delighted to receive a 'phone call from him shortly after. It had been nearly 40 years since we last met - being the day of my Father's funeral in 1955.

Matt informed me that he had been gathering information relating to our family history for a number of years, and details from his investigations in Ayrshire solved many of my outstanding queries. It also provided me with a new impetus to further pursue my project studies.

Then, in 1995 we eventually met again in Scotland, where we discussed and swapped ideas and theories that led both of us to new discoveries. Matt also introduced me to new sources of information from which I have been able to acquire a great deal of new material. Since that time we have shared many hours enthusiastically retracing the footsteps of our Gregg forebears. It has been a fascinating experience visiting the towns, villages, libraries, and churchyards associated with our family history. This presentation would be comparatively scant, were it not for Matt's tremendous help, and for the contributions from his own research and family records.

From another direction, I also learned that our cousins Betty Walters[P531] [formerly Perry] and her sister Rose had been working on a history of the Doyle branch of our family - descended from one Michael Doyle[P521] born 1797 in County Down Ireland.

*Rose and Betty's maternal Grandfather John Dale[P851](My Great Uncle), and My paternal Grandmother Margaret Gregg(maiden name **Doyle**)[P513] were brother and sister. **Dale** is a variation of the name Doyle, and was adopted by John Dale [alias Doyle] around 1900.*

*Through their Mother, Gertrude Perry[P524] - formerly Dale, and daughter to the above John Dale, Betty and Rose link up with the Gregg family from both their Doyle and **Perry** roots. Gertrude, a first cousin to my Father, was married to uncle James Perry[P525], brother to my Mother. Hence, through my Father, Gertrude was my **first cousin once removed**, Betty and Rose therefore, **my second cousins**.*

*Through my Mother, Gertrude also became my aunt because of her marriage to Uncle James, and Betty and Rose - **my first cousins**!*

*Additionally, to compound the whole issue, not only was Gertrude my Father's **first cousin**,, but also his **sister-in-law** through her marriage to my **Mother's Brother**! Complicated but quite legitimate. Work it out for yourself from the details contained herein.*

It has been somewhat harder to trace my mother's forebears because they moved around between England and Scotland. However, following some 'lucky breaks' and 'gut-feelings' I was able to trace the Perry's, Fletcher's, Dundas's and Duncan's back to about 1780 from both sides of the border, from Birmingham Warwick and Worcester in England to Edinburgh Mid-Lothian and Dunfermline Fife in Scotland. This work is still of course in progress as their other locations are slowly revealed.

Introduction to The Gregg Family History Project

Our recorded family history currently extends back to 16th Century Ayrshire in Scotland, just south of the old Dalriadic Kingdom on the West Coast of Scotland. We know that during the early 1600's descendants of the branch of MacGregors at Balquihidder, under the adopted name of Gregg, moved location from their birthplace and settled in Greenock, south of Glasgow Scotland. Following an Irish rebellion which was put down by Oliver Cromwell's armies[1649/1650], and the dispossessed lands granted to thousands of English and Scottish families, some of these Gregg's then relocated to Ulster in Northern Ireland. Ironically, many Scots who settled in Ireland were returning to the land of their distant ancestors.

I have heard it said that those Gregg's who settled and remained in the Clyde and Glasgow region might well be the source of our Ayrshire Gregg's. Early Parochial Records in Ayrshire show such names as John, David and Andrew Gregg much in alignment with those Gregg's who settled in Greenock. This being so, would indicate our connection with the Dalriadic Alpin/MacGregor line who settled in the west of Scotland, and so recorded in ancient legends and chronicles ranging back to about 600 A.D.

To venture any further back would be more conjecture, and take us on a journey through Celtic Ireland to the ancient European and Asian immigrants from the mists of time. Meanwhile, we will content ourselves with proven research that presently takes our line back to the early 1700's.

Survival is not a straightforward business. Life has always been a struggle against war, want and disease; and perpetuity of lineage is a precarious matter. In each of the four generations preceding my Grandfather, only one son from each generation produced boys to continue the family name. Although the odds improved slightly in the next two generations, the trend now appears to be reverting to its former state.

Of three brothers born to my parents, we each in turn produced only one boy. Future survival of our branch of Gregg's therefore depends greatly upon the volume and gender of their children. It will be their prerogative to perpetuate the genes of our forebears. Currently[2009] there are five boys in our youngest generation named Gregg. Bradley, Spencer, Connor, James Paton Joseph Gregg[P1867], and Harry Davis Gregg [P1993]born in Ipswich England - on Nov 29 2011. See for Example: [Ancestral Tree based on James Joseph Paton Gregg](#).

The sequence of events that follows is arranged in 'reverse order', because from the time I first embarked on this project, this is precisely the way in which my investigations progressed. The only information in my possession was my birth certificate, a few oddments collected over the years and a handful of memories from childhood. Subsequent investigations then led me back to papers and effects relating to my Parents and Grandparents, and for me, that is where the fascination of family history and genealogical research began.

Copies of Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates obtained from Register Offices then provided further links to the names of other relatives, their addresses, age, causes of death, and places of interment.

National Census Records dating back to 1841 have provided information on family structures, occupations, places of residence, and living conditions prevailing at the time. However, civil records for births, deaths and marriages only began in Scotland in 1855, and to delve beyond that we must rely mostly on Old Parish Registers kept by the local parish churches.

From early times until the 19th century, everyone was required by law to attend church regularly and the priests were required to keep a register of all baptisms, marriages, and burials. Unfortunately, many of these early records were lost due to deterioration of the paper on which they were written, and in 1598 it was decreed that all new registers must be kept on parchment. In the 17th century the registration requirements were amended to include births and deaths also. During those times when few people could read or write, misnomers were often created by the parish priests and clerks who would simply write down their own interpretations of the spoken name.

A substantial amount of information relating to dates of baptisms, marriage and burials in the early days has been obtained from the International Genealogical Index, otherwise known as the IGI Registers. This vast library of statistics, is compiled worldwide by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of The Latter Day Saints and is accessible through most libraries and Family History Centres.

Note: In 1999 The Church of Jesus Christ of The Latter Day Saints launched a genealogy Internet site. It currently provides free information from their International IGI Registers - covering USA and Great Britain with other countries being added as the site progresses. I found the search facilities most helpful in that I was able to find details of my Mother's Grandparents, Charles Perry and Charlotte Dundas. I was under the impression they were from either the Birmingham or Newcastle areas of England. Until this time they had alluded me in my searches because I had been searching for them in English Parishes. By searching the IGI web site I was able to find records of their marriage, and the births of their children, in Edinburgh Parish, Midlothian, Scotland. Then I traced their movements back and forth between Scotland and England. Perhaps I would never have found these details without the aid of the computerised search facilities offered at this web site. The Internet page address is: Family Search - International Genealogy Service. <http://www.familysearch.org/Search/searchigi.asp>

Another good source has been the Old Parish Registers in Scotland(OPR's), and the Scottish Church Records(SCR's) which often provide additional information such a person's occupation and address.

Armed with all these details, and reference to books concerned with the places and times in which they lived, we can gradually determine a reasonably accurate portrayal of our ancestors lives; like building a picture of our past from a fascinating jigsaw puzzle - one piece at a time.

It would take volumes to tell the life story of any particular character portrayed, and that was not the aim of this project. However, in each chapter I have included some details of personal or historical interest from which we can glean an insight into their lives and their era. As an alternative to writing pages and pages of overwhelming statistics, a **TIMELINE** of events has been included at the end of each chapter to indicate a clearer picture of the period concerned.

All persons and families in the following records have been allocated computerised suffixes 'P' and 'F', and can be identified as **Person** [P123], etc. or **Family** [F123], etc.

Our recorded family story takes us on a journey through Ayrshire Scotland, the earliest years leading us from Ayr on the west coast, encompassing en-route such locations as Ochiltree, St Quivox, Tarbolton, Kilmarnock and Mauchline, to Darvel in the east of Ayrshire.

Our **earliest recorded and traceable Gregg ancestor** is known to be one William Gregg[P439] born circa 1766 in Ayrshire Scotland.

The **longest recorded life span in our family tree** is that of Agnes Currie[P440], William Gregg's wife, also born about 1766. Agnes survived 90 years and died from old age in 1855, an outstanding achievement for the period in which she lived.

Our **earliest recorded-'assumed' ancestor** is presently thought to be John Henderson[P151] born about 1683. His Granddaughter Janet Henderson[P438] married into the Greg family[F142] at Ayr in 1752. There is good reason to connect Janet and her husband James Greg[P437] to the afore mentioned William[P439]. It is likely they were his parents, (our missing link), but alternative possibilities exist and must be pursued.

Our **largest recorded family** is that of Matthew Gregg[P512] and his wife Margaret Doyle[P513], born 1857 and 1859 respectively. They were my Grandparents, and produced 13 children.

We have evidence of Gregg's living in the Ochiltree area of Ayrshire in the early 1600's, i.e. Another William Gregg[P283] born there in 1609. If we could but find and prove our missing link, it would no doubt lead us back to him, and perhaps beyond.

To date[Jan 2009], I have researched over 2600 individuals, in more than 662 families. (Who appear in our [Scottish Gregg and Related Listing](#)). Of those, about 450 persons, representing more than 100 families have been proven to be the descendants of my earliest recorded forebears. About 230 males and 220 females make up eleven generations. Each name, with their known details, appears in our [Family Alphanumerical listing](#), and although not a flawless account of all William's descendants, they are sufficient to give an overall indication of the family tree, its branches, and roots. See: [Interactive Family Tree Block Diagram](#).

One interesting, but sobering statistic to emerge from this research, is that five generations of fathers and sons preceding my own, lived only to the ages of 67, 42, 63, 52 and 56. (An average of 56 years). Their respective wives, however, lived to 90, 77, 75, 75 and 89 (An average of 81 years). One wonders just what secret these women shared!

A sample taken from my family database listing of the first-names which occur more than once

TOP 10 MALE NAMES a SAMPLE OF
700

1. **JOHN** = 152 = 22%
2. **JAMES** = 135 = 19%
3. **WILLIAM** = 125 = 18%
4. **ROBERT** = 65 = 9%
5. **ALEXANDER** = 49 = 7%
6. **THOMAS** = 36 = 7%
7. **DAVID** = 33 = 5%
8. **ANDREW** = 25 = 3.5%
9. **GEORGE** = 24 = 3.5%

TOP 10 FEMALE NAMES
from a SAMPLE OF 700

1. **JEAN(70) / JANE (85)** = 155 = 22%
2. **MARGARET** = 93 = 13%
3. **MARY** = 84 = 12%
4. **AGNES** = 72 = 10%
5. **JANET** = 55 = 8%
6. **ELIZABETH/ELSPETH** = 46 = 6.5%
7. **ANN** = 30 = 5%
8. **MARION** = 24 = 3.5%
9. **HELEN/ELLEN** = 22 = 3%

10. **IVIE** = 21 = 3%

10. **SARAH** = 20 = 2%

63 OTHERS(9%). MATTHEW=14, HUGH=11, SAMUEL=8, PATRICK=3, ARTHUR=2, DOUGLAS=2, CHARLES=9, HENRY=4, EBENEZER=3, DANIEL=2, 100 OTHERS (14%). ISOBEL = 12, MARTHA=10, CATHERINE=10, CHRISTIAN/CHRISTINE=9, RACHAEL=8, SUSAN=7, LEWIS=6, JESSIE=6, BARBARA = 6, GRACE=5, LILLIAS/LILIA=5, JEMIMA=4, CHARLOTTE=4, AMELIA = 2, MITCHEL=2, ALICE=2, ESTHER=2.

The listing was compiled from 1400 names in 1999 and subject to change as research progresses.

THE HISTORY OF NAMES

For many generations, names have served us like a fingerprint, a basic clue to our personality and past. Awareness of naming practices can help us trace our families back to a village or a place. It can tell us their likely occupation, or even give an idea about what our ancestors looked like.

The story of surnames dates back thousands of years and is called the study of onomastics.

The first known people to introduce surnames were the Chinese. It is said that the Emperor Fushi decreed the use of surnames, or family names, about 2852 BC

In early times, the Romans had only one name, then later changed to using three names. The given name stood first and was called a "praenomen." This was followed by the "nomen" which designates the gens, or clan. The last name designates the family and is known as the "cognomen". As the Roman Empire began to decline, family names became confused and single names again became customary.

During the early Middle Ages, people were referred to by a single given name, but gradually the custom of adding another name as a way to distinguish individuals gained popularity. Certain distinct traits became commonly used as a part of this practice. For instance the place of birth, a descriptive characteristic, the person's occupation, or the use of the Father's name.

In Italy, the Venetian aristocracy developed the use of surnames around the 10th century. Crusaders returning from the Holy Land took note of this custom, and as the need to distinguish individuals became more important, it was soon introduced into the rest of Europe. By the 12th century, the use of a second name had become widespread but did not apply to families, nor were they hereditary. Hereditary names advanced slowly over a period of several hundreds of years.

In the 1370's the word "surname" was beginning to appear in legal documents, and had begun to establish a significant influence. Government became increasingly a matter of written record and required identification of people for the levying of taxation and other civil records.

By about 1450, most people of whatever social rank had a fixed hereditary surname. This surname identified the family, provided a link with the family's past, and would preserve its identity in the future.

Many family names were dependent on the competency and discretion of the writer. The same name can sometimes be spelled in different ways even in the same family group.

Family names have evolved in various ways. They may have originated from a person's surroundings, job, or the name of an ancestor.

The local house builder, food preparer, grain grinder and suit maker, would be named respectively: John Carpenter, John Cook, John Miller and John Taylor. The blacksmith was called Smith. Every village had its share of Smiths, Carpenters and Millers but were not necessarily related to those in the next village.

The John who lived over the hill became known as John Overhill; the one who dwelled near a stream might be dubbed John Brook. Many surnames can be recognised by the termination - son, such as Williamson, Jackson, etc. Some are indicated by prefixes denoting "son" such as the Welsh - Ap, the Scots and Irish - Mac. In Wales, David the son of John tacked "ap" in front of his Father's name, and David ap John was soon being called David Upjohn. In Scotland, Gregors descendants were known as MacGregor and later shortened to Greg, Gregg, Grag, and many other versions.

An unusually small person might be labeled Small, Short, Little or Lythe, and a large man might be named Longfellow, Large, Lang or Long.

Surnames taken from occupations came later, and those of patronymic origin were the last to become hereditary. Even though patronymic names have been in use a long time, they would change with generations: William's son John would be known as John Williamson, while his son William would be William Johnson. The surname Gregg appears to be

patronymical in origin although many surnames have more than one origin.

The spelling in use today may very well have been different hundreds of years ago, and you may even know of someone who has changed his or her family name in recent times. Language variations, carelessness, and illiteracy compounded the number of ways a name might have been spelled. Often the man himself did not know how to spell his own name and the town clerk spelled the name the way it sounded to him.

Although our last names offer substantial clues to our family history, first and middle names can also be valuable in tracing a family tree. Generally we have first, middle and last names. First names are called "given" or "Christian" names, because early Christians changed their pagan first names to Christian names at baptism.

The Hebrews contributed biblical names, which are the earliest personal names on record, and Christians of the first centuries used Old Testament Hebrew names. In time, these were abandoned by many New Testament figures as a way of protesting against Judaism. Today about one-half of the English-speaking population have first names from the New Testament such as Elizabeth, Mary, John and Joseph.

Celtic refers to a family of languages used in the British Isles dating back to 1000 BC including Erse, Scottish, Gaelic, Irish Manx, Breton, Cornish and Welsh. The Celtic languages also gave us names for personal characteristics. Names of Celtic origin are almost poetic, such as Kevin meaning "gentle and beloved" and Morgan meaning "sea dweller."

While today there are many first names in use, it is worthwhile remembering that in 1545 the Catholic Church made the use of a saint's name compulsory for baptism, and so most first names were confined to the John -- and -- Mary tradition. During the Middle Ages, there were only about **twenty common names for infant boys and girls**. And John and Mary were most frequently used. With few exemptions it also became usual to name children after their Parents, Grandparents and close members of the family; hence the repetitions throughout our family tree of such names as James, William, John, Matthew and Robert.

In the 1600s, the Protestants rejected anything associated with Catholicism, and so again, they reintroduced names from the Old Testament, such as Elijah, Priscilla and Joshua.

Middle names were not used until the 15th century when nobility used a second "first" name as a status symbol. But second names in general did not become widespread for many years.

An interesting tradition, particularly in the north of England and Scotland, was to include the maiden surnames of Mothers and Grandmothers as 'second' or 'middle' names, and this can be identified throughout our family history in the names of Denholm, Seaton, Fletcher, Paton, Perry and Doyle.

Often we found record of more than one child in a family having been given the same name, which can be somewhat confusing when trying to identify ones ancestors. Usually it was because an older sibling had died in childhood, and the name was reused either in memory of the first child or in tribute to a prominent family member. Typical was the case in which my Grandparents named three daughters Catherine Seaton Gregg.

In the traditional Scottish naming pattern, used almost religiously until the 19th century, the pattern of naming a child was as follows:

The 1st son was usually named after the father's father
The 2nd son was usually named after the mother's father
The 3rd son was usually named after the father

The 1st daughter was usually named after the mother's mother
The 2nd daughter was usually named after the father's mother
The 3rd daughter was usually named after the mother

SCOTLAND

Roman rule in Britain was nearing an end. Their empire was crumbling, and the legions being withdrawn to defend territories closer to home. They had occupied Britain for nearly four centuries, but throughout that time were unable to subjugate the nation as a whole. Scotland in particular proved difficult to occupy for any length of time. Although some military campaigns penetrated to the far north, the Roman soldiers could not defeat the Pictish tribes, and eventually they resigned to withdraw their northern frontier to Hadrian's Wall.

Following the departure of the Romans around 410 A.D, and left in the hands of native factions, Britain became devoid of central organisation and was vulnerable to attack from all quarters. North of the old Roman frontier, the Argyll region and West Coast islands were invaded by the Scots from Dalriada in Northern Ireland. They later settled there and founded the

new Kingdom of Dalriada; its capital being at Dunnad in central Argyll. The Picts (Meaning: 'The painted ones') dominated the northern and eastern regions known as Pictland, and to the south were the Gaels, Angles, and Saxons.

SCOTLAND takes its name from the SCOTS who arrived there about 600 AD. During the following 200 years, New Dalriada flourished, but pressure to expand eventually brought the Scots into conflict with the opposing kingdoms. There were battles with the native Picts and skirmishes with the Vikings who oft times plundered throughout Scotland and into England. Eventually, and some time after A.D 843, the Scots were able to unite the northern factions into one nation, which became known as Alban.

Britain then entered into a period of history known as the 'Dark Ages', a rather inappropriate term to describe a time during which tribes from diverse backgrounds and cultures were desperately trying to establish and re-establish themselves throughout the land. Eventually from this melting pot emerged the re-organised nations of Scotland, Ireland, England, and Wales. Finally, in the eleventh century under the rule of King Harold, England was conquered by the Normans who were to have a profound effect upon the whole of Britain. Although Scotland stayed virtually an independent nation for a further six centuries, lands were granted to the Norman's by Scottish Kings and Chieftains, and many Clans paid allegiance to the Norman Lords.

The Clan system had developed in Scotland from earliest times, and from historical chronicles we find that throughout the centuries they were in almost continual conflict with one another - in feuds, raiding forays and massacres. It was not until the Battle of Culloden in 1745 that the Clan system began to give way to general law and order throughout Scotland, and in our story we claim allegiance, and pay particular tribute to the fortunes [and should it be said - the misfortunes] of the old and famous **Clan MacGregor**.



The Stone of Destiny and Scone of Scotland

Legends surround the origin and history of the Stone of Destiny. It is supposed to have originated, in biblical times, from the Middle-East where Jacob used it as his pillow. From there, it is said, it arrived in the Old Dalriadic Kingdom in Northern Ireland in the time of King Erc. Future Irish (Scots) Celtic Kings were ceremonially crowned upon it, and when, after the 4th Century, the 'Scots' established their New Kingdom of Dalriada in Western Scotland, it was brought with the settlers to Dunadd and continued to be used for the crowning ceremonies.

The old village of Scone was situated in Perthshire Scotland, just north of Perth and located on the River Tay. It is said that in the early centuries Scone was the capital of the Pictish Kingdom, and that Kenneth MacAlpin, King of the Dalriadic Scots (and later the Picts), brought the legendary sandstone to Scone about 840 - 845 AD. Often referred to as the Stone of Destiny, it would bear witness to the crowning of Scottish Kings for a further four centuries. As an insult to the Scots, Edward I, King of England had the stone removed to London England in 1296, where it was placed under the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey. There it remained until 1996 when John Major, British Prime Minister, announced that it was the 700th anniversary of the removal of the stone, and Queen Elizabeth II gave permission for the chunk of grey sandstone to be returned home to Scotland. After much debate and divergence of public opinion it was decided that the stone was to be placed on public view in Edinburgh Castle.

GREGG

The history of the Gregg name is very colourful

References in Burke's Peerage and Blacks Dictionary of British Names suggests the name Gregg may be a variant of **Gregory**, but their earliest references quote the names of such individuals who lived mainly in **England** during the 12th and 13th centuries. A Gregg coat of arms was developed in the middle ages and is officially documented in Rietstaps Armorial General.

The original design of the arms (shield) is as follows. "Coup d'or sur azur". When translated, the blazon describes the original colours of the Gregg arms as "divided gold over blue". Above the shield and helmet is the crest, which is described as "two elephant trunks also divided gold over blue" (**See Picture opposite - Gregg Arms**).

There is however another explanation to the origin of our surname, and the one to which I am inclined to give full consideration - the **Scottish** version, which precedes both Burke's and Black's references by at least 4 centuries - a derivative of **Griogair**, and more akin to our Scottish ancestral roots. The spelling of the surname has varied considerably throughout the last four centuries. From Grig to



Greg, and Greig to Gregg and to a lesser degree we found Graig, Grege, Griggs, and Greigge. Occasionally, there were even variations of the surname within a close family unit; particularly where different priests or clerks had written up the parish registers, or the family had moved from one parish to another. Throughout the last 250 years, the spelling in my family branch has most frequently been **'Gregg'**, with **Greig** appearing from time to time.

All these spellings however are said to be associated with the ancient Scottish Clan **MacGregor** - *The children of the Mist*. The name MacGregor means son-of-Gregor, or in Gaelic - son of **Griogair**.

The MacGregor motto.



In times past the spoken language in Scotland was Gaelic, and the early MacGregor motto in that tongue - **'S RIOGHAL MO DHREAM'**, means 'Royal is my Race'. The war cry or slogan of the Clan is "Ard Coile" meaning 'High Wood'

MacGregor

According to ancient tradition and writings from the early bards, Griogair or Gregor MacAlpin is said to have been founder of Clan MacGregor. Born about A.D 820, Gregor was the younger son to Alpin, a Dalriadic King of Scotland. His Mother was a native Pict who's name is not recorded.

His elder brother Kenneth MacAlpin[Reign A.D 834 - A.D 860] ascended the throne when Alpin died in A.D 834. He became famous for his conquest of the Picts, and after eventually uniting the tribes into one Kingdom, became the first ruler of all Scotland.

In chronicles relating to Kenneth MacAlpin, his younger brother Gregor is mentioned as a military commander in the Pictish conflicts, and it is from his sons - the MacGregors (sons of Gregor) - that the name is derived. Thus the descendants of Griogair evolved as a branch of Clan Alpine and from whence they claim their Royal descent.

MacGREGOR COAT of ARMS



Argent, an oak tree eradicate in bend sinister proper, surmounted by a sword in bend azure, hilted gules, on its point an

The Ancient Heraldic MacGregor Coat of Arms

Described thus: Described in a manuscript now held at the Lyons Heralds Office in Edinburgh and compiled about 1565, is the Coat-of-arms as assigned to Malcolm MacGregor, known as 'Lord Mak Gregour of Ould'. Examples of this may also be seen on seals of the MacGregor's from the 15th Century.

The legend relates that during a great hunting party held in honour of King Malcolm IV of Scotland[Reign 1153-1165], Malcolm MacGregor did save his sovereigns life. King Malcolm IV, unmounted, was suddenly confronted and threatened by a wild boar, when Malcolm MacGregor offered his assistance.

The King so assented by stating '*E'en do, bait spair nocht*', at which Malcolm with the aid of a small uprooted oak tree held the beast at bay until he was finally able to slay the wild animal with his sword. In return and gratitude King Malcolm IV conferred upon Malcolm MacGregor a

antique crown gules: Crest: a lions head erased proper, langued gules and crowned or: Motto: "E'en do, bait spair nocht."
In more recent times were added these Supporters: Dexter, an unicorn argent, crowned and horned or; sinister, a deer proper, tyned azure.

Coat-of-arms which displayed a sword with a crown on it's point, crossed with an oak tree.

From this circumstance were derived the MacGregor arms, crest and motto.

The MacGregors were one of the largest landholding families in early Scotland. King Alexander II gave them lands on the Perth/Argyll borders after they helped him conquer Argyll in 1221. Their land had once stretched from Loch Rannock to Loch Lomond and from Loch Etive to Taymouth with its centre of power in Glenorchy, Argyllshire.

No tribe was more proud of its ancient name nor suffered more to bear it. The highlanders were wealthy and powerful, particularly in the cattle trade, but the MacGregors troubles began about 1297 when Robert the Bruce ordered some of their lands forfeited, so that he could award it to his own supporters. King David of Scotland (1331-1371) saw the powerful MacGregor Clan's claim to royal honours as a threat to his own security, and so he presented the lands of Glenorchy - the earliest rightful possessions of the MacGregors - to the Campbell Clan (represented by the Duke of Argyll). This established a bloody feud between the MacGregors and their neighbours the Campbells. The Campbells induced a quarrel between the MacGregors and the MacNab Clan, who, in 1435 were nearly exterminated by the MacGregors in a battle at Crainlariach. Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochaw, Lord Lieutenant of Argyllshire, was able to secure a commission from the King to punish both the Clans for breaking the peace. The MacGregors were overwhelmed by military force and Sir Duncan Campbell became overlord of all their lands. By 1442 the MacGregors were without an acre of land, and John MacGregor[1395 - 1461] was the last MacGregor to be Laird of Glenorchy. Several generations of John's son's continued to live at Glenorchy as undertenants to the Earls of Argyll, but the chieftainship of Clan MacGregor eventually moved to the MacGregors of Glenstrae who held it until 1604. Meanwhile, Dougal Clar MacGregor[b.C.1410], the youngest son of John MacGregor settled in Balquihidder in Perthshire, a few miles East of the ancient Glenorchy home of his ancestors. He was able to establish a new branch of the MacGregors who remained in Balquihidder for more than three centuries, and included the famous highland freebooter Rob Roy MacGregor. For a further two centuries the MacGregors of Balquihidder were involved in disputes with their neighbours over mutual cattle raiding which was common amongst the old Scottish Clans.

During the reign of Queen Mary, on 23 September 1563, the name MacGregor was abolished. In April 1603 King James VI issued an edict proclaiming the MacGregors name "*altogidder abolisheed*" - any who bore the name must renounce it or suffer death. He issued letters of fire and sword against the Clan and the Colquhouns were given the task to subdue them, only to be massacred by the MacGregors at Glenfruin. Following this massacre about 25 of the MacGregor leaders were captured tried and executed at Edinburgh in 1604. Remaining Clan members took to the hills around Balquihidder and many became bands of outlaws. They continued to survive by plundering herds of their enemies who held land they once owned.

Rob Roy 1671 - 1734



On May 24, 1611, it was decreed that all wives and children of MacGregors were to be branded on the cheek and sent into virtual slavery. On June 24, 1613 an act was passed which made it a law for any man, woman, or child with the name MacGregor to be put to death if found in a group larger than four. As a result of these injustices most of the Clan opted to change their names to Gregg, Greg, Grigg, Grig, Greer, Grier, Greig, Gragg and so on. Some sought the protection of neighbouring clans, taking on their names whilst others moved away from the highlands, many migrating to Northern Ireland and later to the Americas. The act of suppression was eventually repealed by Act of Parliament in 1774.

In the words of Sir Walter Scott - **"They were famous for their misfortunes and the indomitable courage with which they maintained themselves as a clan."**

Sir Walter Scott's famous novel "Rob Roy" portrays Robert MacGregor as the 18th century Scottish folk hero. Born in 1671, and also known as Robert the Red, he became a leading member of his oppressed and outlawed Clan. Following the confiscation of his lands by James Montrose, 1st Duke of Montrose, Rob led uprisings against the Crown and although a well-educated man, an astute individual, and an able leader of his men, he was caught among the intrigues of more powerful



'Rob Roy' MacGregor's gravesite at
Balquihidder Churchyard.
[CLICK HERE FOR SPECIAL ARTICLE](#) - Over 30
generations of MacGregor/Gregg history

clans. His involvement in the Jacobite rising of 1719 almost led to his transportation to the West Indies and penal servitude.

After release from imprisonment by the English in the 1720's, Rob took on his Mother's name of Campbell and lived for a time under the protection of John Campbell, 2nd Duke of Argyll. Eventually he was pardoned for his 'crimes' and lived out the rest of his life at Balquihidder. In 1734 he died peacefully and was buried there in the local churchyard.

Read the fascinating story - Children of the mist by Nigel Tranter. First published(UK) in 1992 by Hodder and Stoughton also a paperback version published by Coronet in 1998.

'Our race is royal, was the proud claim of the MacGregors. Yet for all their history and fighting prowess, they were a small clan and their lands too close for comfort to the great Clan Campbell.

By the end of the 16th century, the heritage of their new young chieftain, Alistair[Alexander] MacGregor, was a poisoned chalice indeed. Not only was much of the land lost, but their principle threat, Black Duncan of the Cowl, Campbell of Glenorchy - as clever as he was unscrupulous - had the ear of King James the Sixth.'