

## CULLODEN REMEMBERED

The Battle of Culloden was a civil war for the right to the Throne. On one side were the Jacobite's, who supported the reinstatement of the Stuart family to the throne. The name Jacobite, came from the word, Jacobus, which is Latin for James, and originated because they believed that James Edward Stuart was the rightful ruler. The Jacobite rebelled against the existing British government, who wanted to maintain rule as it was. The Government also had the support of numerous Scots who did not support the Jacobite's. Charles was the son of James Francis Edward Stuart. With his father in charge, Prince Charlie and his followers believed that Scotland would be able to maintain its identity without interference from the British. Bonne Prince Charlie had won some earlier battles; however, they were defeated in 1746 in the Battle of Culloden.

The Jacobite's were outnumbered by the Government side and were fighting on battleground that was not suitable to their tactics. The marshy ground was better suited for the heavy artillery of the Government. At the same time, they were all exhausted from the attempted battle from the night before. The Jacobite's still fought bravely. One very important reason to remember this battle and why history in general is studied, is to learn from the past.

After the Battle of Culloden in 1746, and the downfall of the Jacobite, Scotland lost much of its culture and clan system. The way of life had changed significantly after the Battle of Culloden. Tartans were banned, and the Gaelic language was spoken less frequently, resulting in a partial assimilation of Scottish culture. They also lost their land because the landowners wanted the land for their own use. Ultimately, this brought about the end of a way of life, and the end of a meaningful clan system.

Over the next number of decades, the number of Scottish people who were leaving Scotland increased, as many arrived in Nova Scotia by ships, such as the Ship Hector. It was here that their way of life was accepted and where they were allowed to display their traditions by wearing kilts and playing the bagpipes.

Three men who had endured the Battle of Culloden settled in Pictou County. The names of these three men were Angus MacDonald, Hugh MacDonald, and John MacPherson. Along with many others, these men brought their Scottish Heritage, providing a foundation for naming the system.

The Battle of Culloden has truly shaped our Scottish Heritage. We celebrate our Highland Gams, Ship Hector Days, and many other Scottish events in our areas, because of the Highlanders arrival in Nova Scotia. This brings our communities together, uniting all the people who participate, creating a true identity. This shows our great pride in our ancestors. Our annual Culloden event is only a small tribute compared to the great impact that the Battle of Culloden has played in our lives.

To commemorate the historic Battle, and subsequent migration of Scots to the shores of Nova Scotia, residents of Knoydart and area, hold an annual memorial service at the Cairn in Knoydart, Pictou County, each year.

The Cairn was built in 1938, under the direction of Dr. Ronald St. John MacDonald, with help from people from the local area. My grandfather, John Joe MacDonald was one of the men helping. He and Dr. MacDonald were great, great, grandsons of Culloden soldier, Angus MacDonald. The cairn was dedicated to three men fought in the Battle of Culloden, namely Angus & Hugh MacDonald, and John MacPherson who immigrated here, settled here, and eventually died and were buried here. When the

cairn was built in 1938, three stones from the actual Culloden Battlefield in Scotland were obtained and mingled with our local stones to form the Cairn. These three stones were in memory of these three soldiers so inscribed on the Cairn today. The cairn sat idle from 1938, until 1982, when my Uncle Johnny Joe MacDonald and his friend Seamus Taylor, a Celtic Studies student at St. FX University. Just the two of them, marched to the cairn in kilts, with the sound of the pipes, and fighting their way through the alders, to pay their respects on April 16 – the actual day that the Battle was fought in 1746.

In 1983, they opened this to the public with approximately 60 people attending. Thus, starting this local ceremony, our annual Culloden Event. It started with two, and now we have between 250-300 people that march to the cairn each year.

Remember this is yours, mine, and our ceremony, something to be proud of. We take part each year because we all know that it is the right thing to do. To my knowledge, this cairn and event, is the only one of its kind erected to this cause outside of Scotland. Over the past three years, we have had approximately 900 people attend our ceremony at the cairn and an additional 1100 people visit our site between the period of May and the end of October who have signed the guest book. We certainly send a welcome to you all to join us next April.

Submitted by Bill McVicar; Lead organizer and author of *The Battle of Culloden Remembered in Nova Scotia*.