



## THE LESLIE'S OF LAGGAN Inverness-shire Scotland.

By Bonnie MacPherson.

Stony Plain.  
Alberta.  
Canada.

This is the story of our Leslie family and is a collaboration of a number of its members. The information has come in bits and pieces which we each have gleaned over the years. A special thanks to Clan MacPherson of Badenoch, Parish Laggan, Inverness-shire, for filling in so many blanks from their clan history.



Laggan Church and Cemetery.

### The Leslies of Laggan and Clan MacPherson:

Our story actually does begin with Clan MacPherson. In 1739, two brothers, **James and Peter Leslie** were invited into Badenoch by Jacobite Colonel Ewan MacPherson, son of clan chief, Cluny MacPherson. Clan MacPherson history states that the Leslies were from the fertile Rothes district of Morayshire. The reason for the invitation being offered is unclear although there have been two suggestions put forth. One suggestion is that Colonel MacPherson invited these two brothers into Badenoch as they were Country Merchants and it would help to improve the economy. The second suggestion involves the staple food for the area: meal. Apparently, the soil in the Badenoch area was very poor and unable to produce an adequate amount of crop needed for meal; therefore, meal was brought in from Morayshire which proved to be costly for local residents. It is possible that the Leslie brothers and their family were asked to come to Laggan to teach the local people how to enrich the soil in order to

produce an ample supply of meal for themselves. Or possibly, it may have been a combination of both of the above suggestions. A third alternative is that their appearance in Laggan could have been an act of kindness on the part of Cluny Macpherson as alluded to in a letter written by the Earl of Rothes (10th Earl, noble kinsman and head of the Leslie family) to Cluny MacPherson.

The letter to MacPherson Laird of Cluny, 29 July, 1739 from Rothes:

*" Sir, I received the favour of your letter from my kinsmen Mr. Leslies. They are good and clever men, and I am very glad I had this opportunity of knowing them and thank you for the recommendation you have given them, and I shall be very glad of an occasion of making my acquaintance with yourself. They have informed me of the kind offices you have done them and their family and are most grateful for it. I reckon myself obliged to you thereby, and beg the favour of you to continue your goodness to them which I shall acknowledge an obligation done myself. "*

( Scottish Record Office ref GD50/121/31 ).

(Note: The 10<sup>th</sup> Earl was a Major General in the army in 1743.)

### The Uprising of 1745 - 1746:

The next information we have regarding **James and Peter Leslie** is during the Uprising of 1745-46. They served under their benefactor and were among those of Cluny's regiment who surrendered their guns to the Earl of Loudon in 1746.

Another Leslie, **Alexander Leslie of Crathiemore**, surrendered to Sir Andrew Agnew at Castle Blair.

After the Uprising, Cluny MacPherson's estate was forfeited to the government and he went into hiding to escape capture by the government troops who were in pursuit of him. He had numerous hiding places but his favorite was a cave at Nessintully that **James and Peter Leslie** were instrumental in creating as a safe haven for him.

*" But it was at Nessintully he found the greatest quietness and security, until*

*the cave was accidentally discovered by a trifling fellow who divulged the secret. Cluny never afterwards occupied it. This cave was made by **James Dubh Leslie and his brother Peter** in sequestered part of the Nessintully wood. They only wrought at night and all the soil was carefully put into sacks and carried to the river Spey. The inside was carefully lined with deal: the roof was covered over with tanned hides, over which there was some gravel, and the whole covered with green sods. Within there was a comfortable bed, a table, two chairs, and a press with a small pane of glass to give light. The whole was so ingeniously contrived and executed as to make a discovery almost impossible."*

(A Day's March To Ruin by Alan G. Macpherson) .

There were only four persons who knew where Cluny was on all occasions and the Leslie brothers were two of them. On one occasion "**James Leslie** was met by a party of soldiers as he returned from one of Cluny's caves, and as he had a tablecloth and some dishes, they rightly concluded he had been with some victuals to him; they threatened him with instant death if he did not lead them to his hiding place. Leslie declared he knew nothing about him, and had not seen Cluny for twelve months. They desired him to make oath to that effect and he accordingly swore point blank on a drawn sword that he did not know where he was, and that he did not see him for twelve months back. Being asked what he had been doing with the dishes, he declared he had been with the breakfast for people casting peats."

(A Day's March To Ruin by Alan G. Macpherson )

**James and Peter Leslie** were tenants on Cluny MacPherson's forfeited estate, with Peter at Aird of Cluny until 1770. There is nothing definite for him after that. However, there is a mention of a **Patrick ( Peter ) Leslie** being an Elder of the Church of Scotland in Laggan and attending a meeting of the Kirk Session in 1775; nothing more is mentioned of him in the Kirk sessions after that time. **James** remained on the estate until 1757 with nothing more definite after that for him either. A **James Leslie** is mentioned as a tenant at Gaskmore but whether it is one of the brothers or a son, etc., it is hard to tell. ( Gordon Estate Papers ref. GD44/27/5 ) More on this James later.

As for additional information regarding the other members of the Leslie family, we have found some military pension records: there are two records for an **Alexander Leslie**, born in Laggan and both probably refer to the same man This may possibly be my third great grandfather. (KEW Catalogue ). There is also a **James Leslie**, discharged in 1786, age 24, born in Badenoch, Inverness-shire. ( National Archives, Royal Hospital Chelsea ).

## Two descendants of the original Leslie family of Laggan:

At this point I will begin the stories of two of the descendants of this Leslie family. They are **Alexander Leslie** born about 1752 in Badenoch and **Peter Leslie**, birth date unknown, also born in Badenoch.



An unknown Leslie. **Any ideas who he is?**

## Alexander Leslie branch:

**Alexander** was my 3X great grandfather. He fathered a son, **Andrew**, in 1788 with **Jean MacPherson** in Clunie; no marriage has been found for them. In 1792 **Alexander** married **Marjory Leslie**, both of Gaskbeg. They had 8 children: **John** born 1792; **Peter and Margaret** born 1794, ( Margaret died 1794 ); **Margaret** born 1796; **James** born 1798; **Isabella** born 1801; **Barbara** born 1806; **Marjory** born 1807. The places of birth were CroftCroy, Gaskbeg and CroftCarnel. Nothing is known about Alexander's early life but it is definitely possible if not probable, that he was in the military for a time as were most of the men of the area. However, I have obtained from the National Archives of Scotland copies of three letters written by him to the Factor of the Duke of Gordon. At the time the Duke of Gordon was one of two main landowners in the area. . **Alexander** was the representative for a small group of crofters when contacting the Factor for various reasons, one of which was setting the rent for the land they were renting from the Duke. That particular letter was signed by " Dun MacIntyre, **Alex'r Leslie**, Donald MacPherson, **Peter Leslie**, John Tolmie, Alexander McGregor." Another letter refers to his having been asked by the Factor to consider the job of Sheriff or Land Officer; he didn't decline, but simply suggested the most suitable men for the job. **Alexander** was about 59 years of age at that time. The letters which he wrote showed that he possessed a degree of education and that he knew the protocol for approaching someone of status.

In the History of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland I found:

*"10 pounds awarded in 1796 to **Alexander Leslie of Croftcroy**, Laggan, Badenoch, for bringing land into tillage by ploughing and cross-ploughing and planting potatoes in a zigzag way, and manuring".*

In 1823, **Alexander's son, James**, emigrated to Quebec, Canada. Two years later, July 15, 1825, shows **Alexander and five others** plus a child under 12 years, on board the steamer, "Chambly", heading from Quebec City to Montreal. Their destination was Huntingdon County, Quebec - their new home. **Alexander** was 73 at the time. (On the same ship was **Andrew MacPherson** who would 4 years later marry Alexander's youngest daughter, **Marjory**; my 2X gr.grandparents).

All of Alexander's children, including Andrew, his son with **Jean MacPherson**, emigrated to Quebec, although Andrew and his family eventually moved to the next province, Ontario. Alexander died at the age of 88 in 1840; it is assumed that his wife **Marjory**, had died in Scotland as there is no indication that she was in Quebec at any time. Alexander and Marjory's descendants spread throughout Canada and the United States.

One grandson **Alexander Leslie Fortune**, son of **Isabella Leslie** and her husband **Dr. Robert Fortune**, became part of Canadian history when he became a part of the Overlander Party in 1862 travelling to the gold fields of the Cariboo, British Colombia. He was an explorer, adventurer, gold seeker, missionary and farmer.

There is a monument to him in Enderby B.C. which reads

*"In Honor Of **Alexander Leslie Fortune**, A Member of the Cariboo Overlander Party of 1862, The First Settler in the Okanagan, The First Elder of the Presbyterian Church in the valley, A Friend to all Classes and Creeds, Indian and White, A Gracious Gentleman."*



*Alexander Leslie Fortune*

#### **Peter Leslie branch:**

Little is known about **Peter Leslie**. What is known is that he was a tacksman at Gergask; he married **Mary McDonald**, daughter of **Angus and Anne McDonald**, on Aug. 01, 1810; he died at Gaskmore in 1833 and is buried in the church cemetery in Laggan. It is also possible that he may have married an unknown MacPherson of Kingussie Parish in 1796 prior to his marriage to Mary. but this has not been confirmed. Peter and Mary had 12 children, all born at Gergask. They were: **Margaret** born 1811, **James** born 1813, **Ann** born 1815, **Mary** born 1826, **Barbara** born 1818, **Catherine** born 1820, **Janet/Jessie** born 1822, **Alexandrina Helen** born 1823, **Elizabeth ( Betsy )** born 1825, **Marjory** born 1827, **Peter** born 1830, **Helen** born 1833.

The next information we have regarding Peter is found in the Will of **James Leslie of Gaskmore**, mentioned earlier. James was Tacksman at Gaskmore, and when he died Aug. 23, 1821, he named Peter Leslie as "*my nearest of kin*". Their exact relationship is unclear.

At some point, **Mary (McDonald) Leslie** became Postmistress in Laggan and remained in that capacity until she died on July 03, 1871 at the age of 78. Her obituary states:

"Leslie, July 3, 1871, at Laggan, Post Office, Inverness-shire, Scotland, Mary Leslie, widow of the late Peter Leslie, Esq., Tacksman Gargask, Badenoch, at a very advanced age, highly respected by all who knew her.



## Peter Leslie branch - Australia and New Zealand:

It was in 1838 that Peter and Mary's children, **James, Margaret and Mary** boarded the ship "St. George ", and emigrated to Australia as " Free Settlers ". Also, it appears that their daughter **Catherine** left Scotland for New Zealand, via Australia, on board the "Stambouli" on Aug. 24, 1854. Their daughter, **Ann**, emigrated to Australia around the same time as her sister, Catherine, but we have not yet located the exact date; it would have been after the 1851 census for Scotland as both Catherine and Ann were shown living together at that time. **Helen** at some point emigrated to New Zealand as well.

## Peter Leslie branch - Trinidad, West Indies:

Peter and Mary's daughter **Barbara**, married Joseph Brown Payne, a Merchant, and for a time lived in Trinidad before eventually returning to England. Most of the descendants of this branch now live in the United States.



*Barbara Leslie (right) Joseph Brown Payne (Left)  
Back Row , Alexandrina Leslie, Barbara's sister.  
The Family Nanny and not known the children*

## Unknown:

**Peter and Mary's youngest son, Peter**, is shown for the final time on the 1851 census for Scotland; so far we have located no other information for him.

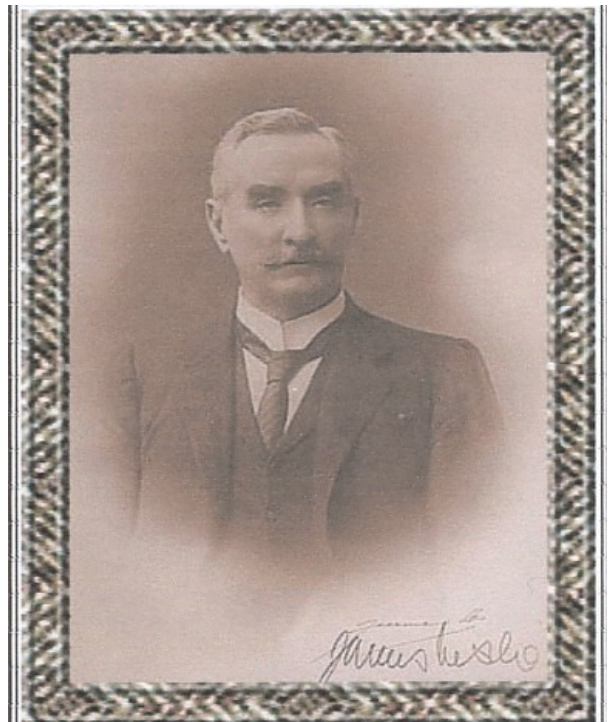
Peter and Mary's descendants today, are found mainly in Australia and New Zealand with a few also in the United States.

Two of their **grandsons, Peter and James Leslie**, through their son James, did very well in Australia.

**Peter** born in 1845 in Paterson River, NSW, was educated at Kings School Parramatta, Sydney, NSW and became a well-known pastoralist in NSW and Queensland. "He had interests in Walla Walla Station near Coonamble in NSW, Amphitheatre Station near Cobar, NSW and later had an interest with his younger brothers, James and Hugh, in Lerida Station near Hughenden in Queensland." As well, "He had been associated with the Commonwealth Wool and Produce Company since its inception in 1897. He rose to Chairman of Directors and upon the death of Mr, John McCaughey, to President of the company."

( Charlotte Leslie )

**James** born in 1848 in Paterson River, NSW, was a younger brother of Peter. "James was also educated at Kings School Parramatta, NSW. When he was about 25 years of age he was appointed manager of Binna Station, the property belonging to his uncle, Duncan McMaster."



*James Leslie. Esquire*

He subsequently purchased a large sheep raising property at Nerida Station near Muttaborra Station, Queensland. After selling this property he took up residence in Sydney, NSW and became a Stock Exchange investor. During the First World War, 1914-1918, he offered his home, Balquhain, at Blackheath in the Blue Mountains NSW, as a convalescent home for Officers. He also donated the money to build the Leslie Memorial Presbyterian Church and Manse at Blackheath, as well as a motor vehicle. Before his death in 1934, he gave his home, Balquhain, to the church as a rest home."



### World Wars:

There have been descendants of both Alexander and Peter Leslie, who have fought in both the world wars and who have paid with their lives. **Alexander's great-grandson, Private Robert Holmes Leslie**, Army-Canadian Labour Corps, was killed during WW1 in Europe on Sept. 01, 1917. He is buried in Belgium. Also, Alexander's 3 times great-grandson, **Flight Lieutenant John Leslie MacLeod**, RCAF pilot in WW2, was killed while flying a mission, on Oct. 18, 1947. Missing In Action.

A New Zealand descendant of Peter, **Lance Sergeant James Leslie MacGregor**, served in Europe in WW1 and was killed on 19 Oct. 1917. He is buried in Belgium. As well, his son,

**Squadron Leader Ronald Bruce Leslie MacGregor** of the Royal New Zealand Air Force, was killed in WW2 on June 05, 1943 while on air operations. Missing In Action.



*Leslie Memorial Church. Blackheath. NSW*



*Balquhain House. Blackheath. NSW*



*Stained Glass, Leslie Memorial Church.*



Lance-Sergeant James Leslie MacGregor  
of Auckland New Zealand.

### Name Repetition:

I must mention something that we have noticed and that is the descendants of both Alexander and Peter have repeated many of the same ancestral first names and the name "Leslie" itself in the naming their offspring.

Thanks to Charlotte ( Leslie ) Mitchell.Sydney. Australia



*Flight Lieutenant John Leslie MacLeod, RCAF.  
Died 18 October 1947.*

#### **DNA testing:**

A few male members of the currently living descendants have undergone DNA testing for genealogical purposes in order to trace paternal Leslie line. These include descendants of both the Canadian and Australian branches of the Leslie family. At the same time that these tests were done, we also included a male donor of the Leslie branch who currently (2013 A.D.) resides in Newtonmore, Parish Laggan. The test results show that the Newtonmore Leslies had a completely different result as compared to the Canadian and Australian donors, and therefore are of a different family line.

#### **A bard's song:**

A little something of interest was passed on to us regarding the **Peter Leslie girls of Laggan**. It came from an interview with an elderly Laggan lady, Bella Millen in 1952. Her father had apparently passed on some old folklore to her and included were a few stories involving the pretty Leslie girls. It seems that in the summer the girls would take their father's cows to the shieling at Corrie Buie and in the evening some of the young men used to go up and "play their fiddles and sing and pass the time with them". There was a man (a bard) around Laggan who composed a song in Gaelic about the girls, "The Maidens of Corrie Buie; I wish that I were with you." Apparently it was a delightful little tune!

This is our story to date and so the research goes on. If anyone who reads this has any suggestions as to who the ancestors of Alexander and Peter Leslie were, it would be much appreciated. Thank you for letting us share our story.

*Regards Bonnie MacPherson.*

## **THE LAURUS LESLÆNA EXPLICATA.**

For some time Tim Leslie, Historian of Clan Leslie Society International have to working on a project to incorporate an English translation of the Laurus plus copies of the corrections made to the Laurus by Col Charles Leslie in his 1869 book "Historical Records of the Family of Leslie" as well a a copy of Notes from the Warthill House Laurus of approx. 1830 and then photographs of all the Latin pages and index of the original Laurus which were supplied by Ian 21<sup>st</sup> Earl of Rothes. We managed to complete this task over Christmas 2013 and now we have this information in one volume. The title page of the Compendium is shown below as well as title pages of the English translation and the Latin book of 1692, which makes it the oldest available history of Clan Leslie.

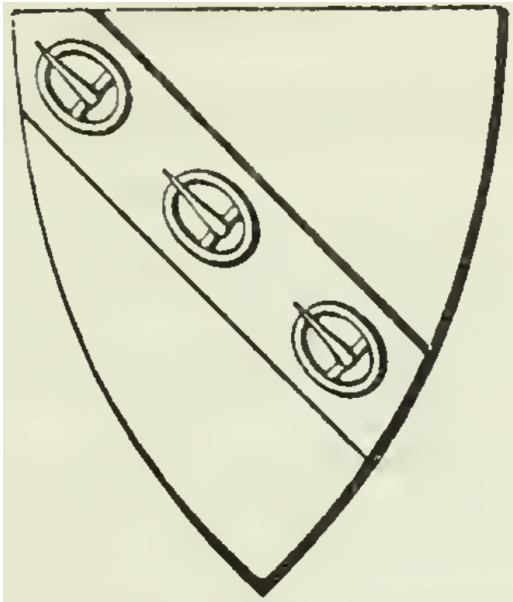
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## *The Laurus Lesleana Compendium*

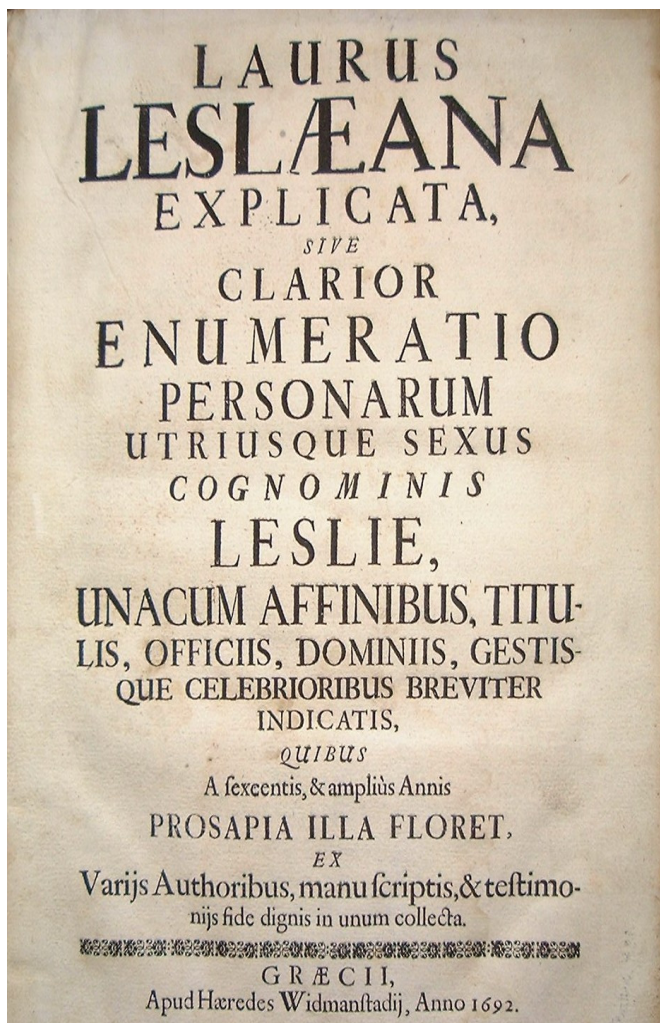
*This work is comprised of the original Laurus Lesleana Explicata in Latin, an English translation, an English index, corrections to the Laurus extracted from the Historical Records of the Family of Leslie by Colonel Charles Joseph Leslie, 26<sup>th</sup> Baron of Balquhain, and a collection of notes from a copy of the Laurus at Warthill House. This compendium is primarily thanks to the generosity of James Barrie Leslie, Commissioner of Clan Leslie in Australia and New Zealand. Barrie first acquired a partial English translation of the Laurus, sought and obtained a copy of the Latin version from Ian Leslie, 21<sup>st</sup> Earl of Rothes, then Barrie had the remainder of the Laurus translated into English as well.*

*The Laurus Lesleana is the oldest known, written history of the family of Leslie. We are very fortunate to have this resource available.*





Above is the Leslie Crest from the title page of the Compendium and below is the title page of the Laurus Leslæna Explicata in Latin with the English translation opposite.



*The*  
**Leslie**  
**LAUREL**  
**EXHIBITED**

*A VERY CLEAR  
ENUMERATION  
OF THE PERSONAGES  
OF BOTH SEXES  
WITH THE SURNAME*

**LESLIE**

*ALONG WITH RELATIVES BY  
MARRIAGE, TITLES,*

*OFFICES, DOMINIONS, AND  
MORE FAMOUS ACHIEVEMENTS BRIEFLY  
MENTIONED,*

*By which  
for six hundred years and more*

**THAT LINEAGE FLOURISHES,**

*Gathered together from Various Authorities,  
manuscripts, and testimonies worthy of confidence .*



**GRÆCTUM,**  
*At the house of Haeredes of Widmanstadium<sup>1</sup>, in the  
year 1692.*

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<sup>1</sup> Graz

## MY HEALTH PROBLEMS.

I am sorry that I have to advise that on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2013 I was admitted to hospital with a Melanoma on the left heel.

The melanoma was excised but when the biopsy came back, it was revealed that the melanoma had not been completely removed. I now have to go in hospital on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2014 for a period of one week to one and a half weeks, depending on what happens and I face a recuperation period of at least two months. I know that it sounds a long time but I will also have a skin graft and with problems with surgery that I have had previously, it is only to be expected.

**I require someone to take over the preparation of the CLANZ newsletter**, please do not ignore this and think that **someone else** will do it. I have been doing it for fifteen years now and with my health problems I cannot keep doing it. It is an ideal opportunity to learn a lot more about your Clans history.

I can give you any information that you may require to prepare the newsletter and it is a very rewarding job.

*Barrie Leslie, Gordon. NSW.*

## CONGRATULATIONS TO SIMON & JOY LESLIE.

I have been advised by Simon Leslie that he and his wife Joy had their first grandchild born on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2013. Their daughter Jess and her husband Bill Gordon had daughter Rose Joy Gordon on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2013 in Melbourne and all are well.

Simon is the younger son of our previous Patron The Rev Ken Leslie, 6<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Bathurst who died on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2010, aged 98 years at Ilumba Gardens, Kelso, Bathurst. NSW.

Simon is the Headmaster of the International School, Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam and used to be based in Thailand.

Rose and her parents reside in Essendon, a suburb of Melbourne. Jess is a mental outreach worker with Neami National. Bill is in a management role with Metal Manufacturers, Electrical Merchandising (MEMM).

I am very pleased for Ken and Joy.

*Barrie Leslie, Gordon. NSW.*

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