

THE HISTORY OF CLACKMANNAN

By the Rev. T. Crowther Gordon, Ph.D. (1936)

“The old Celtic sea-god associated with this district In pre-Christian times, because the area was largely under water, and his name “Manan” was applied to the country around. He was specially associated with a black piece of whetstone, and the stone became an object of worship under the name of Stone of Manan. Despite the arrival of Christianity the name persisted In the Celtic form and gave the name “Clackmannan” not only to the village but to the surrounding country. When the waters of the Forth had receded to the bed of the river, and the old superstition had died, the stone was removed to a more central position In the town, thus symbolizing more dramatically the origin of the name.”

“Clack”--a stone, frequently used of the stones which mark a burial ground. It came to signify the church, and finally the kirkton or village.

“Manannan”--In Celtic mythology was first the sea and then the sea-god, who drives his chariot over the crested waves. (Ex. Isle of Man)

The first evidence of habitation was in the Neolithic or New Stone Age 5,000 years ago. Bronze Age man from Central Europe came across the North Sea. The Picts (of uncertain origin) were pushed Into the Highlands by the Celts from Ireland.

An Anglo-Saxon historian of the 8th century states that the district at the head of the Firth of Forth went by the name of Manan.

Agricola captured Britain in 150 A.D., but Roman influence never passed beyond the Forth and the Clyde. A Roman fort was built at Camelon where a Pictish fort had been.

In 650 A.D. St. Begha, daughter of an Irish prince, who refused to marry the son of the King of Norway, planted a Christian sanctuary known as Kilbagie or the Wood of St. Begha (this is the birthplace of the first threshing mill and the source of the best Scotch whisky).

The Saxons slaughtered the Picts on the plains of Man In 710 A.D.

About 750 A.D. St. Serf established churches.

Kenneth, son of Alpin, was the first royalty Identified with the region (834-854 A.D.)

Feudalism was brought to Britain by William the Conqueror during the Norman conquest in 1066 A.D.

Malcolm IV (1141-1165 A.D.) built a “mote and bailey” (earth and timber) castle In a village for the first time called “Clackmannan.”

In the 1190s William, King of Scots lived in the castle.

Alexander 11 lived in the castle in 1231 A.D.

In 1249 AD. Bishop St. Andrews dedicated a church, probably of stones, to St. Serf.

In 1275 A.D. Alexander HI began using stone in the castle.

Edward I occupied the castle in 1291 A.D.

Robert the Bruce united the Scots and defeated the British at the Battle of Bannockburn in June, 1314. Bannockburn is a short distance across the Firth of Forth from Clackmannanshire.

From 1323 A.D. Robert the Bruce lived in the castle at times. He requested to be buried within sight of the castle, and upon his death in 1327 he was buried in Dunfermline.

On Dec. 9, 1359 King David issued a charter from Perth handing over "the Castle and Baronie of Clackmannan to his kinsman, Robert Bruce." Thus the royal interest in the ancient town and castle ended, and it passed to a collateral line of Bruces.

Also of note is that David Bruce, Laird of Clackmannan, burned the Church Session Records from 30 March 1690 to 3 August 1696 because of adverse statements about him in the records.

(The above history was abridged by Lyman W. Condie and printed in Heather font)

Additional references:

In Clackmannan and Kinross by Day (1915) it states that woollen and worsted manufacturing were practiced as far back as 1550. Brewing began as early as 1359. An Iron works was founded in 1792 and discontinued in 1875.

Woods, Forests and Estates of Perthshire: The land north of Forth and Clyde was at one time a huge impenetrable forest of birch, fir, and oak known as Caledonia, and the people were known as the "People of the Coverts." The Romans under Severus in 209 A.D. began destroying the forests and building roads in order to get to the people. The ancient barons also cleared land for farming. A school was built in Path of Condie in 1663. Condie is described as being in possession of the Oliphants for three centuries. It consisted of 3900 acres of which 336 were woodlands. In 1881 it was broken up into various properties.

The Oliphants of Gask by Graham (1910): "It is said that the House of Condie was built about 1545 by William Oliphant of Newton and was then called Newton House."

Perthshire--Bygone Days by Drummond "For many years the Condie family--father, son and grandson--held the foremost rank as business men and influential citizens of Perth." (Said about James Condie regarding business dealings in 1837).