

Slaughter Under Trust: Glencoe, Scotland

Lead: Glencoe is one of the most beautiful valleys in the Highlands of Scotland. Through it the River Coe flows westward to Loch Leven and the sea. In the winter of 1692 it was witness to one of the saddest events in Scottish history.

Intro: A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts

Content: Four years before, England and Scotland had acquired a new King and Queen. Weary of the rule of James Stuart, Parliament had offered the crown to James' sister Mary and her husband William, the rulers of Holland.

Remaining loyal to James were the Highlands of Scotland. Only gradually and fitfully did the Clans swear allegiance to the new King. William, irritated at the progress of pacification, set a deadline, December 31, 1691, as the last chance to swear the oath. After that the rebels would be rooted out and destroyed. Among those still holding out were the MacDonalds of Glencoe and for their leader, MacIain MacDonald it was a matter of honor. He had sworn allegiance to James and needed release from that oath before he could swear a new one. On December 29th he received word from France. James released him and he quickly made his way to Fort William where to his shock he was told the oath had to be made to the Sheriff 60 miles across the mountains at Inveraray.

When MacIain arrived there two days later the Sheriff was gone and did not return until January 5th. On that day, MacIain swore allegiance to King William and went home to his family thinking all was well.

Unknown to him, in London a fateful decision had been made to make an example of his Clan. Since MacIain had not made the oath in time, the government determined to make an example of the MacDonalds. Orders came to Fort William and troops were dispatched into the valley under the pretense that the Fort was crowded. The Clan received and housed them with full hospitality. For two weeks the Kings' troops lived and slept with the MacDonalds. Then at five o'clock on the morning of February 13, 1692, the royal troops rose and began systematically killing off their hosts. By mid-day those who had not fled into the hills had been murdered. In all thirty-eight men, women and children lay rotting in the winter sun. Slaughtered under trust.

"A Moment in Time" is produced at the University of Richmond. This is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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MacDonald, Donald. *Slaughter Under Trust: Glencoe - 1692*. Greenville, DE: Delaware Free Press, 1965.

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Charleston, SC: BiblioBazaar, 2008.**

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