

## EVANTON ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

### CULCAIRN

**George Munro**, born 1685, second son of Sir Robert Munro (23rd Baron of Foulis) was the first of Culcairn (*Cul-cháirn*, behind the cairn). He became a Captain before the 1715 Rising and took an active part on the part of the Hanoverian crown. He was a church elder, a JP and elected Provost of Dingwall in 1713, 1719 and 1720. In 1721 and 1739 he was involved with Colonel Robert Munro of Foulis in election incidents in Dingwall. In the first they assembled with 200 foot in the early hours of the morning and carried away prisoners out of the house of John Tuach, wryter in Dingwall. Tuach was then replaced as clerk and Foulis unanimously elected Provost. In 1739 the Munro brother's actions resulted in the death of Anable Bayne, wife of merchant Alexander Mackenzie. (See *Sir Robert Munro*).

Captain George Munro married the "**Heiress of the Creel**", eldest daughter of John Munro of Tearivan, a small Munro Estate. As a young girl she narrowly escaped abduction by some Mackenzies, wishing to inherit her father's estate. Her nurse put her in a creel, covered her with cabbage leaves and carrying the creel on her back cleared out in a different way. She reached Foulis Castle where the Chief gave them shelter. By the marriage of George and Christian, Culcairn and Tearivan "Old Tarevan" were amalgamated.

In 1751 their son **John** established a **Bleachfield** (on the site of the Old Mill), which then was the only one in Ross. Initially successful, it then suffered but was rescued by William Tait, who in 1779 came up from Salton Bleachfield as manager. Colonel Duncan Munro (3rd of Culcairn) gave him a lease and built him a comfortable house. In 1779 only 440 pieces of cloth were bleached, by 1790 the number was 2242. In 1786 Tait was awarded £50 to erect a drying house. The bleachfield declined after Tait's death.

In 1762 **Bishop Robert Forbes** visited Colonel Duncan at **Newton** and wrote of his "excellent garden of 21/2 acres" made out of a bog in his wood, "good fruit, many shrubs and flowers, and a pond with trout in it. His grounds produce the best of wheat, and he has erected a flour-miln for dressing it. His house lies very low, and is yet quite dry by his good policy of sunk fences and proper drains. We drank here the best of strong ale, claret of vintage '49, and good coffee, made of his own wheat."

Colonel Duncan, Commander of the Wester Ross regiment of Militia

and Provost of Dingwall in 1810, was succeeded in 1820 by his only son George, who died a captain in Jamaica the following year. George was succeeded by his sister Catherine, who married Hugh Rose Ross of Glastullich, who had made a fortune in the West Indies. He had a dispute with Blind Hugh Munro of Teaninich concerning the amount of water used by his (Rose's) new mill.

George William, their only son, succeeded. He became Colonel Commandant of the 3rd Battalion Seaforth Highlanders and Convener of the County of Cromarty. His eldest son, Duncan, a naval lieutenant, succeeded in 1883 and was in turn succeeded by his brother Major Walter Charteris Ross at his early death 2 years later.

*(Ref. Alexander Munro - 'History of the Munros')*

(There are references to a Windmill and an Iron foundry run by the Sellar family - but this is probably another Culcairn)

The Cotton mill was converted at some stage into a Corn Mill and Evanton became one of the first Ross-shire villages to have Electric street lighting when an agreement was reached in 1907 with Walker, the miller,

Alec Campbell took on the Mill from Novar in 1930. Nancy Campbell, his wife, recollects that it was almost unique in design. It was stone-built with brick floors; the kiln had a metal floor and plates; the roof had steel batons and nails; there was also a top kiln. Alec always had 2 employees. In 1930 the miller received £1 a week. A Polish displaced person, Walkozk, worked in the mill for a few years and used to make vodka out of tattie peelings. They sent meal all over the Highlands, until the closure in 1950. Alec Campbell also kept pigs and ran a coal and wood transport business from down by the river. He built Morven in 1935,

Nancy Campbell relates: "*When the bridge was being renovated and there was cement in the river, salmon ran into the turbine pool. We got them out by the cornsack-full. The village bobby used to get some and Rev. MacDonald would ask for "one of the Sacraments."*

In 1912, 5 acres of Culcairn were separated by Novar Estate to McBain, master of works. He feued a bit for the Free Church Manse, which was built in 1914. Reverend John MacDonald bought the land and

his son, Alpin, built Glenglass Estate here in 1965.

The farm was farmed by Kenny 'Assynt' Macleennan's father and Kenny himself. (See *Interview with Kenny Macleennan*). Novar took it back on the father's death in 1965. They ran it as part of Novar Estate and then applied for planning permission, using the old farm road, but were refused.

Culcairn Farm-House belongs to Novar and is lived in by the laird's sister.

Novar demolished part of the Steading and it lay abandoned for 10 years. Alpin MacDonald bought it and transformed it into houses. He also redeveloped Culcairn Mill.

Mary Marshall and her husband built Greenacres and developed the market garden here from 1952, in what had been an empty field belonging to Alec Campbell.

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