

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some of the material in this booklet is fictitious, but the real bits came from: Wikipedia, The Calum Maclean Project, the Clan MacLeod Society of Scotland (with illustrations by Ruari Halford-MacLeod), Asakiyume mita - the shapeshifting cat, Geograph, and Revival Clothing.

Copies of this booklet can be downloaded from the Clan MacLeod USA website <http://www.clanmacleodusa.org>.

First published May 4, 2015, by the
Clan MacLeod Society USA

the-chief-and-camerons-daughter-ltr-v4.doc

THE CHIEF AND CAMERON'S DAUGHTER

How
Alasdair "Crotach" MacLeod
met his Wife



THE CHIEF AND CAMERON'S DAUGHTER

“The Crotach” lived until the age of 97, and died in 1547. He was buried in St. Clement’s Church at Rodel. On the walls of his tomb are some of the finest historic stone carvings to be found in all of Scotland. His wife Tri, Cameron’s daughter, also lived to be an old age, and when she died she was buried alongside him, in the shelter of her husband.



AND AFTER THAT...

Alasdair Crotach MacLeod was one of the longest serving MacLeod chiefs, but he was also one of the oldest. When his son William came of age, Alasdair knew it was time to make William the Ninth Chief of MacLeod of MacLeod. Alasdair retired to the monastery of Rodel, on the Isle of Harris. There he endowed the monastery with lands and restored the beautiful old St. Clement's Church. He also built two more churches not far from Rodel, but little remains of them now.



BEFORE THIS STORY BEGINS, IT IS INTERESTING TO KNOW A FEW THINGS ABOUT THE GREAT MACLEOD CHIEF KNOWN AS THE "CROTACH."

Alasdair Crotach MacLeod was born in 1450. He became the Eighth Chief of MacLeod of MacLeod after the death of his father, William the Black. William died in a terrible battle on the Isle of Skye, known as the "Battle of Blood Bay," when Alasdair was about 30 years old.

In this same battle, Alasdair was also hurt. His shoulder and back were cut very badly by a battle axe. His shoulder never healed



properly, and he was never able to stand up straight and tall afterwards. For this reason, he became known as the "Crotach," which means "crooked" or "humpbacked" in Gaelic. (Gaelic was only one of the languages that Alasdair spoke.)

Being the Chief of a Clan when Alasdair was alive was very difficult. There wasn't much food or medicine and there were very few schools or roads. Most of the homes that people lived in were small and dark. Families tried very hard to take care of each other, but people also fought with each other to get the things that they needed or wanted.

Chief Alasdair, who was also known in the English speaking world as "Lord Alexander," was a fierce warrior and protector of his Clan. He is sometimes remembered for some particularly violent attacks on other clans, both on his home

ugly," he protested, "and I'm humpbacked." Cameron and Ghillie both gasped. They couldn't believe Alasdair was practically telling Tri to refuse him! But the young woman had made up her mind.

"Those things don't matter," Tri said firmly. "I've never seen a hump or a hill where there wasn't shelter on one side or the other of it." When Alasdair heard those words, he smiled. He knew it meant that Tri would be happy with him.



So they were married, and there were three sons and two daughters born to them. The Clan MacLeod did not end, and Alasdair's family continued to live in Dunvegan Castle.

met my youngest daughter," said Cameron, trying to make Alasdair feel better. "She will be down here in a moment. I am sure you will like her." "Well, I also liked the other two," muttered Alasdair to himself.

The youngest daughter, named Tri, entered the room slowly. She looked long and thoughtfully at Alasdair. Alasdair grew hopeful because she did not seem as distant as the oldest daughter, nor as timid as her other sister. After a while her father asked her, "Will you take this man for your husband?"

Tri turned her head and smiled at her father. "Yes, I will, gladly," she said.

Alasdair was delighted, but he couldn't believe his good fortune. He was so accustomed to being rejected that he didn't believe that the young woman was willing to marry him. "But I'm old and

island of Skye as well as on other islands. But he is also credited with many positive accomplishments.

He had work done on Dunvegan Castle, where he built the famous Fairy Tower. He was a man of culture, and employed a number of musicians, singers, and story tellers. Chief Alasdair also founded a college for pipers on Skye.



AND NOW, THE REST OF THE STORY GOES SOMETHING LIKE THIS...

The years went by, and Alastair was growing quite old in his home, Dunvegan Castle on the Isle of Skye. Even though he had achieved a great many things as the

Chief of the MacLeods, he still felt badly about how he looked because of his injury from so many years before. He was lonely, and he had never married.

Alasdair had a servant named Ghillie who had been with him from a very young age. Ghillie went into Alasdair's room one morning, and watched the Chief sitting by the fire. Alasdair had become an old man, and his long beard reached nearly down to his knees. The servant thought that he looked as if he had swallowed a horse and had left its tail hanging out!

But Ghillie had cared for Alasdair for many years, and he was worried about the Chief. He asked him, "What's wrong, man?"



beard and crooked back, and she thought he wasn't as handsome a husband as she thought she should have. Aon told her father she wouldn't marry Alasdair.

If the old man had felt discouraged before, he felt far worse when Aon rejected him. "Don't worry, don't worry!" said Cameron, "I have two more daughters who are eager to meet you." Then he sent for his second daughter.

The second daughter appeared and faced MacLeod. Her name was Dhà. She was not concerned with his appearance, but all she could think about were the stories she had heard about his viciousness as a warrior. Dhà closed her eyes and shook her head, and quietly told her father that she was afraid to marry this man.

"Och, this is bad!" thought Alasdair. "Come now, old friend, you still haven't

your daughters. He came here because he hoped to find a wife!"

"Come in, come in," Cameron said, "I have three lovely daughters. We'll speak to the oldest one and see what she has to say." Of course, Cameron would be a very proud father indeed if one of his daughters married the great Chief of the MacLeods.



The oldest daughter was brought down to speak to the Chief. Her name was Aon. She was a dark haired and intelligent woman who seemed very aloof. This made Alasdair feel discouraged. Cameron asked if she was willing to marry the Chief of the MacLeods. She looked at the great man with his long grey

Alasdair signed and replied, "I'm growing old, and I'm ugly, and I'm humpbacked. And if I don't marry soon, I'll never have any children and that will be the end of the Clan MacLeod."

"Well," said Ghillie, "Don't keep thinking like that. We'll get you a wife yet! We'll go to visit Cameron of Lochiel, in Lochaber. He has three daughters, and surely one of them will be happy to marry you."

Alasdair agreed to go. After a day or two, they set off in a cart drawn by horses. They crossed over the sea from Skye on the ferry and kept going until they reached the home of Cameron of Lochiel.

When they arrived, they were made to feel very welcome. Ghillie stayed in a house with the people who worked

for the noble Cameron, and Alasdair stayed with the nobleman himself. Cameron of Lochiel was a friendly host throughout the visit, but the Chief never asked about his daughters.



Finally, it was time to go home. Ghillie had not seen the Chief during the entire time they were there. He came to the nobleman's house and helped Alasdair get ready to travel. Once the two of them were back on the road, he quietly asked the Chief, "Well, how did you do?"

"Oh!" said Alasdair, very sadly, "I didn't say a word about getting married to anyone. I feel this will be the end of the Clan MacLeod."

"That won't do at all!" said Ghillie. "We're not going back to the Isle of Skye

without a wife, or – even better – a wife and a child! This is the whole reason we came to Lochaber in the first place. So we must go back right now."

"Do you really think we should return to Cameron's place?" asked Alasdair, now becoming a little bit interested.

"Yes, we'll not take one more step toward home," said Ghillie. "And I'll break the ice with Cameron if you promise to put your feet through it. The rest will take care of itself."

So they quickly went back. Cameron of Lochiel met them at the gate, but he was very puzzled. "Have you forgotten something?" he asked Alasdair.

"He didn't forget very much," said Ghillie, "but he did forget the most important thing – to speak to you about