

CLAN BAND

©2021 Michael C. Hubbard.. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, or information and retrieval systems without written permission of the publisher.

Published by Hellgate Press
(An imprint of L&R Publishing, LLC)
Hellgate Press
PO Box 3531
Ashland, OR 97520
email: sales@hellgatepress.com

Interior & Cover Design: L. Redding

ISBN: 978-1-945163-07-2

Printed and bound in the United States of America

First edition 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CLAN BAND

A Century of
Piping, Drumming,
Characters,
and Stories from
Clan Macleay Pipe Band

MICHAEL C. HUBBARD

Hellgate Press



Ashland, Oregon



This work is dedicated to the late E. Joseph Hewitt III, artist, historian, husband, father, Drum Sergeant, instructor, and good friend to us all. We will never forget you, Joe.

CONTENTS

Preface	ix	
Introduction	1	
PART ONE: HISTORY		
History of Pipes and Drums	7	
Formation of Clan Macleay Pipe Band	11	
Additional Clan Band History	18	
Review and Theories of the Clan Band's Formation and History	24	
PART TWO: OVERVIEW OF THE CLAN BAND		
What is the Clan Band	29	
By-Laws, Members, Structure and Officers	31	
The Band's Look and Uniforms	36	
Competition.....	43	
Support and Promotion of Scottish/Celtic Culture and Other Entities	46	
Performances	49	
Tunes, Practices and Rehearsals	56	
Instruments	58	
Gunderson/Greenbrier	61	
PART THREE: "CLANECDOTES" (STORIES & ANECDOTES)		65
PART FOUR: PHOTOGRAPHS, MUSIC AND MISCELLANEOUS ...		101
Acknowledgments	127	
About the Author	129	

CLAN BAND

PREFACE

I HAVE BEEN PART of the Clan Macleay Pipe Band—known to most as simply the “Clan Band”—based in Portland, Oregon, USA, for forty years—slightly more than one third the existence of such a historical and long-lived organization; yet not as long as a few other current members. Through the years—and admittedly as a product of my own procrastination—I now regret not starting this while we had more former members still with us, or at least with their memories written down...though, as you’ll see, there are, fortunately, a few.

While we do have a Band Historian who, along with others in the community, has kept scrapbooks and other material, I have yet to encounter any work more narrative in nature of this bagpipe band. The sad thing is that those from the early days of the band, as well as many from even the 1950s and 1960s, are now gone. Yet rather than mourn what we’ve lost, we’re assembling what we can at this point, perhaps as some sense of celebration of over a century of the Clan Band’s continuous existence. And few bands can claim that continuous longevity.

The Northwest, including the U.S. states of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, and Canadian provinces, such as

British Columbia, Alberta and surrounding areas, has been rich with bagpipe bands. In the Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington area (across the Columbia River from each other), so many pipe bands have come and gone. And while a number exist today—whether new ones, or recreations of former bands—the Clan Band has continued...sometimes just plugging along, surviving; sometimes experiencing wonderful growth and heights. It seems only right that a band of this continuously existing history deserves some level of its story told and preserved. Angus Ironside, son of the owners of the once popular The Scottish Shopper, once said, “The Clan Macleay Pipe Band is one of the most successful bands in the country.” Whether true or not, the band certainly has endured.

Regardless of that validation, the band is a product, as well as a reflection, of the history of bagpipe bands. The band has been perceived and described with a variety of adjectives and labels through the decades. Some perspectives have been more pejorative (e.g., “geezer band”); but most have considered the band an institution, or the quintessential presence for performance, especially in look (though the band strives for respectable sound, too). No matter the perspective, the band exists still; and we pray that it continues to be a presence.

INTRODUCTION

WHILE THIS IS A story of The Clan Macleay Pipe Band, the “Clan Band,” it is only a part and descriptor of a larger narrative, reflecting the experiences of a culture, expressed in many ways beyond bagpipes and drums.

CONNECTIONS

I have a favorite photograph of our band. It’s not a studio or other formal shot; it’s actually quite casual. It’s an outdoor photo of the band after a parade. In looking over the members in the photo, I note that most are now gone. A third of them are gone from this earth; all the rest are either with other bands or no longer playing. In fact, there are only two of us in the photo still actively playing with the band. But it’s still my favorite photo; and I’m not certain why.

Perhaps it’s the smiles on everyone’s face. Perhaps there’s a nearly palpable relief in the expressions that we’re in a shaded area after finishing a warm parade. Or maybe I’m looking on the faces of those friends we and this planet have lost; and looking fondly and with respect on those who’ve gone to other piping and drumming pastures, or have just come to the end of their playing days. While I believe all those reasons to be true, there’s

also a personal connection to that setting of which I was unaware until a year after the photo was taken.

The photo was taken in 1987 in Gladstone Park, following a parade in Gladstone, Oregon, not far from Portland. We are in what's often referred to as "civilian" uniforms, with Prince Charlie coats, hose, ghillie brogues, glens, and so forth. Three drummers are kneeling and smiling broadly in front with the bass drum proudly showing "Clan Macleay Pipe Band" around a rampant lion and St. Andrew's Cross logo. The term "Band of Brothers" could well fit, for only men were in the band back then (today, though, it would be a "Band of Brothers and Sisters").

A year after this band photo, I was sent a family photo by a cousin. It shows some elderly men, shouldering muskets and marching. Amongst the gentlemen in the photo is my great great grandfather, David McArthur, a Scottish immigrant, U.S. Civil War veteran, and eventual homesteader in Oregon. In the photo, he is carrying the U.S. flag. These are Civil War veterans, and the handwritten inscription says, "G.A.R. Drill Gladstone Park July 4, 1914." (G.A.R. is Grand Army of the Republic, referring to the Union Army in that war).

Unknowingly at the time, my bandmates and I were standing for our photograph in roughly the same spot in which my ancestor and his own band of brothers were marching seventy-three years before. The connection was awe-inspiring. And yet there was another connection with our pipe band.

At the time of these Civil War vets' drill, the Clan Band existed. I don't know if there was a Gladstone Parade in 1914 or if the band participated. But it had participated



Gladstone Park, Gladstone, Oregon, 4 July 1987. Front Row (*l to r*): Ron Galloway, David Day, Joe Hewitt. Second Row (*l to r*): D/M George Paterson, Michael Hubbard, P/M Jeff Brewer, Bill McCulloch, Fraser MacCartney, Bill Cunningham, Howard Cooper. Third Row (*l to r*): Bill Farr, Mark Cameron, David Brown, Don Stewart, John W. Osburn.



The GAR Veterans marching in the same park on 4 July 1914.

in many parades and other events since its inception; and by doing so, it's connected hundreds of communities and thousands of individuals, no matter their ethnic or cultural backgrounds

COMMUNITY

A friend made a comment of which I've heard variations for many years: "I remember seeing Clan Macleay when I was four years old." But she added another interesting statement: "Think of all the communities you have united in some way through your performances." I had not thought of it put that way.

While people may not share the same religious or political views, or musical tastes, one thread involves what I've heard hundreds of times having to do with individuals who have watched our band in parades and other performances. It's a common thread, including statements such as, "I watched the band every year in the Rose Parade." "My ancestors were from Scotland." "Seeing the band is what made me take up the pipes" [or drums]." "Hearing the bagpipes brings up such emotions in me," and so forth.

Of course, these connections or common links are certainly not unique to the Clan Band. Every pipe band and its members have likely had the same impact and heard the same comments. The only unique aspect is that the Clan Band has experienced this, and made its presence known, for as long as it has.

The communities constitute part of a network, spreading out in space...and even in time. Instructors may have students who spread their knowledge to future generations

of musicians, including pipers and drummers. Others may have been inspired by seeing a pipe band, and then learned, joined, or perhaps started other bands, ensuring future ones. Likewise, those of us who play, whether solo or in a band, can relate backward in time to those who preceded us, whether ancestors, instructors, or others. We certainly honor past pipers, drummers, dancers, athletes, and others as we don our kilts and other regalia and play instruments that have been around for a long time.

To add some perspective, perhaps there is another “C”: *Continuity*. When we’re putting on our uniforms, gathering up our instruments, and performing at some event, nearly all that we do is hardly removed or indistinguishable from what our band members did nearly 120 years ago.

As for bands, those concepts of connections, community, and even continuity apply. Some, like immigrants, played as a continuation of something they did by either starting or joining bands. Others decided to learn, whether as a tribute to their heritage, to connect, or simply because they had always wanted to learn to play. Bands spring from others, and they come and go. Some are fleeting; and some, like the Clan Band, become an institution. Yet they’re all related to the history of piping and drumming, particularly when those instruments eventually come together to form bands. For, as will be seen in this narrative, while both instruments existed centuries ago, it was not really that long ago when they were combined to form bands.

CLAN BAND

Part One: HISTORY

THE HISTORY OF PIPES AND DRUMS

IN 1986, THE LATE Joe Hewitt, former Drum Sergeant of the Clan Band and member of other bands, as well as an artist and historian, wrote an article for the Portland Highland Games program by the title of “1986—The Year of the Pipe Band.” While it was primarily a history of pipe bands in the Portland, Oregon, area, it also had an overview of the formation of bands consisting of pipes and drums—generally just referred to as “pipe bands”—including some description of the music, instrumentation and roles of the musicians. Here is a portion of that article [with this author’s notes interspersed]:

Bagpipes have been around for a long time, the present form of the Great Highland Bagpipe having evolved in the mid-18th century [Joe refers to the Great Highland Bagpipe (GHB) and its origins, although I believe that the GHB, in some form, goes back further. Regardless, pipes with a bag attached in some form go back many centuries and have existed in a wide range of cultures. Even today, there are many versions with their own

unique characteristics and sound. The GHB is perhaps the most recognized when the term “bagpipes” is used, and has the chanter and three drones: two tenor and one bass]. Early music was generally solo and in the style of Ceol Mor, also known as Piobaireachd (“peebrock”).

As Highland regiments became incorporated as part of the regular British army in the late 18th Century, pipers became more institutionalized—even if not officially on the rolls, each company in a battalion nonetheless had at least one. It was in such use, as well as for dances, weddings, and such that Ceol Beag, or the more familiar “light music,” of marches, reels, and jigs emerged.

Drummers, however, had a much longer association with the military; and unlike pipers, were part of the regimental establishment. Their purpose was also much more involved—they not only tapped cadence, they were also the principal means of transmitting battlefield commands.

Yet it was not until the Crimean War (1854-56), and the years following, that the concept of blending the two instruments really sprouted [The oldest military bands being the Black Watch and the Scots Guards]. Of course, the mixture was not quite as natural as it seems today. Pipe music was changing somewhat to accommodate their military use, and the drumming style was still similar to that of the fife and drums corps.

Drums, in order to compliment [sic] and enhance the pipes, required major style revision to suit the needs of the highly rhythmic 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 and 6/8 marches. This gave rise to innovations in drumming techniques and drum construction, eventually producing one of the most difficult and skillful drumming styles. New drums were

developed and/or utilized—the bass drum, the tenor (and alto) drum, and later the rod tensioned side drum (which people often refer to as the “snare”). Thus, the instruments began to evolve mutually and to produce the sound so uniquely associated with pipe bands.

Interrupting here, I'll add that Joe was a drummer, on all the various drums and in many bands, instructor, and Drum Sergeant in the Clan Band for many years, moving on to more competitive pipe bands. So it's understandable that he'd describe the modification and evolution in drums and drumming styles in the creation and trajectory of pipe bands. Although the three-droned GHB was pretty well established by the mid- to late-19th century (and a number of pipers are still playing on such vintage instruments), there have been some changes, too, in pipes.

As will be described in a later section, the basic material—the wood—in constructing bagpipes has changed over time. Although many woods were, and continued to be, used, the most common woods have been some of the densest. Many 19th century sets were made from Cocuswood (*Brya ebenus*) from the Caribbean Islands (e.g., Cuba) and Ebony (often *Diospyros ebenum*, though there are other species). Cocuswood became close to extinction, and African Blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*) began to dominate in the late 19th, and through the 20th, centuries, although Ebony and other woods are still being used (and African Blackwood is becoming scarcer). In modern times, other materials, including carbon fiber, polyoxymethylene, and other materials are being used.

Sound-wise, tone and tuning has changed, with pitch

having risen considerably from the earlier times, which has also affected both the construction and tuning of accompanying drums. Early rope tension drums have given way to mechanical (rods, bolts, etc.) ways to tune, especially given the very tight heads required in this style of drumming. Those heads, too, have changed from skin to synthetic materials.

Returning to Joe's article:

Given their origin, it is quite understandable that the Scottish pipe bands emerged in a military form. There were quite early civilian bands, such as the Govan Police Pipe Band (1860s). But they typically modeled themselves after the military bands, especially since many of the so-called civilian bands were assembled by veterans...

The earliest pipe bands were formed almost exclusively by Scottish or Canadian immigrants [I assume Joe meant those established in the U.S. and other countries], many of whom were pipers from other bands and/or military veterans. In fact, the uniform of the early Portland Scottish Pipe Band was that of the 92nd Gordons, which included surplus Gordon kilts from the Second Boer War (1899-1902).

Consistent with Joe's description, and as will be seen, the Clan Band's origins are tied to a Scottish fraternal society, a chapter of the Order of Scottish Clans, for a number of the early members, including the founders and Pipe Majors, were immigrants. And the band still has Scottish, Canadian, Irish, and other immigrants, as well as members from a variety of ethnic origins.

FORMATION OF CLAN MACLEAY PIPE BAND

As with any history, particularly when a century or more has passed, information consists of memories—sound or not—articles of various types, photographs, notes, and much more. Consequently, there is more than a modicum of mystery and conflicting reports as to the actual date and circumstances of when the Clan Band was first formed. What follows reflects some of that journey to establish the Clan Band’s formation date, including some of the individuals and circumstances involved.

When I joined the band, any verbal or written biographies stated that the band was formed in 1927. There is some compelling information in notes written by the now departed Pipe Major Duncan MacKenzie for that date. Yet, as will be seen, there is also information indicating that the band was formed earlier, initially loosely evidenced by photographs from what appear to be earlier dates, showing a bass drum with “Clan Macleay Pipe Band” imprinted on it. A key one, showing a small band with such an inscribed bass drum, has a date of “1912” hand written on the bottom, possibly written by the same Duncan MacKenzie...and dismissed by many as too early. The 1927 date may also have related to when a David Gray took over as Pipe Major; for he was also referred to in a 1931 newspaper article as the band’s co-founder. We do know that David Gray played with the Portland Pipe Band (later renamed Portland Scottish), formed in 1906 (although that date, too, is arguable, as some have said 1903).

Some now deceased pipers and drummers reported

memories of the Clan Band prior to 1927, yet with nothing of support to those memories. In 2004, the above-referenced Joe Hewitt, posted on the Bob Dunsire site (a popular site for pipers, drummers and others):

The Pacific Northwest has a long and rich association with Scottish culture and piping. Pipers are well documented at early trading settlements such at the Hudson's Bay Co. facility at what is now Vancouver WA. The Clan Macleay Pipe Band in Portland, Oregon officially lists the band's beginnings as 'shortly after WW1' and I've often heard the date of 1921 mentioned.

However, I have seen photographs of the band on parade, which judging from the dress of people and automobiles in the background, I would date from 1914 -16. (Part of the problem with trying to tie down the date of formation for the Clan Macleay is that they grew out of a Scottish fraternal order that had origins in the 1800's and often combined forces with The Portland Scottish, another early Portland pipe band.) Regardless of the exact date there is little doubt that the Clan Macleay is one of the oldest pipe bands on the U.S. west coast.

We will look at the two primary sets of references to the band's formation in a moment.

As for the name of the band, what had been reported for generations was that the band was founded originally, and sponsored by, members of the Clan Macleay Fraternal Society (formal name: Clan Macleay, No. 122, Organization of Scottish Clans), an organization formed in 1893 to assist Scottish immigrants moving into the Oregon and



Early photo showing a small band with “Clan Macleay Pipe Band” inscribed on the bass drum. The date “1912” is hand written on the bottom.

Washington area (including, according to one report, helping with obtaining life and disability insurance). [Note: The 1893 date is according to an article in *The Oregonian* from 1943, stating that the Clan was celebrating its 50th anniversary, even though an article in *The Pipe Band* stated 1894]. It was also intended to promote and maintain Scottish culture. Early *Oregonian* articles refer often to that society and events, such as a 26 January 1916 mention of “Burns Anniversary Celebrated,” and on 24 January 1920, stating, “Clan Macleay No. 122 Celebrates Anniversary of Robert Burns.”

Earlier, in an issue of *The Caledonian*, dated March 1903, mentioned the organization:

*Clan Macleay, No. 122, Portland, Ore.,
Is making its influence felt on the Pacific Coast, and
yet feels in need of a more efficient organ to represent
the O.S.C. on the frontier of our land. This clan will be
represented at the August convention in Cleveland by
the secretary, Alexander G. Brown.*

The Macleay name was prominent in Portland and reportedly came first from Donald Macleay, merchant, financier, and philanthropist, born in August, 1834 in Ross-shire, Scotland. He moved from California to Oregon in 1866 and started, with William Corbitt, a grocery, shipping and commission business, called Corbitt & Macleay. Donald was also involved in starting such organizations as The Arlington Club, and donated property (e.g., Macleay Park) and other things to the community. It is reported that The Clan Macleay, Lodge No. 122, was named after him...and thus, perhaps indirectly, the Clan Band.

Let us return to the debate—and fact-finding journey—regarding of the band’s formation date:

1927: The aforementioned Duncan MacKenzie has left us notes that give a seemingly credible account of the band’s formation; or perhaps formalization. In one, dated 26 November 1926, he wrote: “Clansman Hugh MacKenzie made a favorable report on the progress of the contemplated Clan MacLeay [*sic*] Pipe Band.” [Note: P/M MacKenzie used a capital “L” in “Macleay” in all his notes].”

Hugh MacKenzie was Duncan's father, and had been admitted to the Lodge No. 122 on 12 March 1926 at age forty-nine. Duncan was admitted on 19 March 1933 at age sixteen. The word "contemplated" in Duncan's note would certainly imply that the band had not yet been formed.

Another note by P/M MacKenzie, dated 27 May 1927, stated: "Financial Sec. read a communication from DOS [Daughters of Scotia] enclosing a check for 25.00 for Clan MacLeay Pipe Band."

Another, on 24 June 1927: "After the initiation, Clan MacLeay Pipe Band played a few selections. The members of the band now are as follows. Clansman D. Gray, E. Dick & J. Brown Pipers, Wm Jeffrey, Base [*sic*] Drum, J Austin side drum."

On 8 July 1927: "Piper Gray announced he had received a check for 5.00 from P.C. J.P. Stewart towards buying equipment for the Clan MacLeay Pipe Band. Sentinel Hugh MacKenzie on behalf of Clan MacLeay Pipe Band asked for the use of the Redmen Hall (S.E. 9th & Hawthorne) on the 5th Friday of July for marching practice for the Band. Request granted."

There were more notes from 1927 and 1928, mostly having to do with donations and buying equipment (e.g., one from 12 October 1928: "Clansman MacKenzie made motion, the Clan stand expense of Roping big Drum & securing new bag for set of Pipes.") But all point to two figures in David Gray, who played with Portland (Scottish) Pipe Band, and Hugh MacKenzie—the former becoming Pipe Major of Clan Macleay and the latter being Band Manager—approaching the Clan Macleay Lodge No. 122 for sponsorship; perhaps for more.