

# Clan MacLaren Society of North America

**McRory, MacGrory, and Wright**



## About Clan MacLaren

An ancient clan with origins that predate the use of surnames, Clan MacLaren derives our name from Labhran (Laurin or Lawrence) of Ardveche, the hereditary Abbot of Achthus in Balquhiddy in the 13th Century. Many variations have been accumulated through translations from Gaelic as well as transcribed records. Other surnames adopted by Clan families trace to others though not in all cases.

The collection of surnames of a clan are known as *septs*. The word, which means branches or divisions, was originally used to designate a small group affiliated with a clan and acknowledging the authority of the chief. The word is used much more loosely today.

The current Chief of Clan MacLaren is Donald MacLaren of MacLaren. Donald, who is a retired member of the British Foreign Service, succeeded his father as Chief in 1966. Donald and his wife Maida have five children. The family property includes Creag an Tuirc, the hill overlooking the village of Balquhiddy, and the ancient rallying point of the Clan.

## About the McRory Surname

Roderick, or Ruari, was an unusual name among the MacLarens that, perhaps, derives from a marriage link to the famous Clan Ruari.

## Some McRory History

Clan Ruari traces back to the descendants of Ruari, grandson of son of Somerled (killed in 1164), first Lord of the Isles, who flourished in the middle of the 12th Century and was the progenitor of Clan Donald. Through a long series of alliances, misfortune and treachery, the fortunes of Clan Ruari rose and fell until the Clan eventually destroyed itself in feuds with Clan Ranald, a branch of Clan Donald.

The MacRuari emblem was the "Black Galley of the Isles". The black galley was added by the MacLaren chiefs to the ancestral chevrons of Strathearn on their own shield. From the heraldry of Clan MacLaren and the fact that MacRory is an important sept name of the Clan, it seems likely there was a marriage between the chiefly houses of Clan Labhran and Clan Ruari. However, no evidence has yet come to light to show when it took place.

Upon disintegration of Clan Ruari, some members transferred allegiance to Clan Labhran. According to tradition, at least one family left Balquhiddy towards the end of the 16th Century and settled in or near Perth. Many families stayed. As late as 1747, the Balquhiddy Register of Baptisms records the baptism of a child to a MacLaren "alias McRorie" thus exemplifying double surnames.

## About the Wright Surname

Though Clan MacLaren surnames were not traditionally based upon professions or trades, there were several families of McIntyres (*anglicized* as "Wright") who settled in Balquhiddy. Crown land rentals in Balquhiddy from 1509 show that McIntyres were tenants in the western end of the Glen. The following year, several were tenants of Invenenty.

There is, of course, a Clan McIntyre. Members of that Clan may have settled in Balquhiddy. More likely, it seems, was that the MacIntyres in Balquhiddy were MacLarens distinguished with a professional by-name. Their descendants fought with the MacLaren contingent under Stewart of Appin in 1745. MacIntyres or Wrights whose origin can be traced to Balquhiddy are regarded as part of Clan Labhran.

### **CMSNA Genealogy Project**

The Clan MacLaren Society of North America (CMSNA) maintains a vigorous program to research the genealogy of Clan families. Society members are encouraged to contribute their own research to our growing database to preserve their family histories or, if they are new to genealogy, use our members-only genealogy website as a starting point for their work. The online database holds records on tens of thousands of individuals spanning centuries from the 15th through the 21st. The numbers will increase as family lines are connected and documented, more information becomes publicly available and ongoing research efforts produce results.

To augment our efforts in genealogy, CMSNA participates in a Y-DNA project at FamilyTree DNA. The project is open to all males bearing a Clan surname regardless of spelling or CMSNA membership. The goal of the project is gaining a better

understanding of the deep ancestry forming the Clan's origins and history.

The CMSNA Genealogist is Arthur D. Lowe.  
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### **About CMSNA**

The Clan MacLaren Society of North America was chartered in Georgia in 1981. The CMSNA set broad goals in support of Clan MacLaren and the Scottish community in general.

CMSNA has a multifaceted purpose:

- 1) to support, promote, and publicize the Clan MacLaren in the US and Canada;
- 2) to promote celebration of the family heritage of MacLarens;
- 3) to inform members and others about the history, traditions, and accomplishments of Clan MacLaren;
- 4) to provide a vehicle for interaction and a common bond among North American MacLarens;
- 5) to promote education.

### **Eligibility for Membership**

One automatically becomes a member of Clan MacLaren by birth, marriage, or adoption. Joining the CMSNA enables full participation in Clan activities and celebrations. To become a member,

simply visit a CMSNA tent at one of the many Highland Games in the US and Canada, or contact the Membership Secretary Dave Elkin.  
Email: [membership@clanmaclarena.org](mailto:membership@clanmaclarena.org)

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