

Clan MacLaren Society of North America

Lowry/Lowery/Lowrey



About Clan MacLaren Family Names

An ancient clan with origins that predate the use of surnames, Clan MacLaren derives its name from Labhran (Laurin or Lawrence) of Ardveche, the hereditary Abbot of Achtus 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 clan's 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 Lowry Surnames

Whether spelled Lowry, Laurie, Livery, Laughler, or some other way, the name declares the bearer to be a son or daughter of the Labhran. The prime origin of the Lowry surname would appear to stem from a basic trend that Indo-European languages share: ellipsis (dropping of a final sound in a word). The lack of a "Mac" or "Mc" beginning of the name (meaning "child of" or simply "of") should not be a matter of concern. A desire to obscure association with Clan MacLaren from British authorities during times of trouble for the Clan prompted foreshortening. Spelling variations are not especially significant, either. The widespread maintenance of written records, a relatively recent practice, caused standardized spelling of names, often based on choices of the people

recording life events such as birth and marriage.

Some History

On 28 March 1609, an act was passed inviting Scots and English Protestants to undertake plantations for the crown in the north of Ireland. Because of this, by 1685 a large concentration of "Lowry" MacLarens could be found in the northern Ireland community of Donegal.

They might have continued their tenancy had a further series of both natural and man-made calamities not befallen them. Beginning about 1725, leases began to expire. Since plantations were vastly more desirable at the expiration of the leases than they had been at the commencement, rents were doubled or even tripled. Many landlords put leases up for auction, but made them available only to the English. Massive evictions followed. Between 1714 and 1719, a series of droughts devastated farm production and crippled the flax industry. Widespread blight also struck the sheep of the area. Furthermore, the English Parliament enacted a series of staggering tariffs on exports and imports for Ireland.

In the midst of these conditions, three "Lowry" MacLarens, Charles, James and Lazarus, who had been living in Donegal, took their families aboard the "White Sails" in 1728 setting out for America. Many Americans who pronounce their name as a variation of Lowry are likely descended from

one of these three families. Arriving first in Pennsylvania, these families spread into Virginia, North and South Carolina, Ohio, Maryland, Tennessee and Kentucky.

Subsequent Lowry immigrants to America came directly from Scotland, settling primarily in the southern colonies. These settlers, reared in husbandry and farming, did not find the Northeast as appealing. Seeking available land, many families migrated westward into Tennessee and through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky and later into the Ohio valley.

Lowrys are now found all over the United States and Canada. Those earliest to arrive fought native peoples along the Allegheny Trail and served in the French and Indian War. Their descendants fought on both sides of the American Civil War and have participated in every American conflict since. Lowrys have served not just as soldiers, but also as statesmen, pioneers, judges, clergy, and in almost every other imaginable occupation.

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 to gain 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. The 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

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