

# **THE HISTORY OF THE HIGHLAND CLEARANCES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649604685

The History of the Highland Clearances by Alexander Mackenzie & Ian MacPherson

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**ALEXANDER MACKENZIE & IAN MACPHERSON**

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THE HIGHLAND  
CLEARANCES**





THE HISTORY  
OF THE  
HIGHLAND CLEARANCES

BY  
ALEXANDER MACKENZIE, F.S.A., Scot.

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION  
BY  
IAN MACPHERSON, M.P.

"Truth is stranger than fiction."

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a. a. 36.

STIRLING;  
ENEAS MACKAY, MURRAY PLACE.  
INVERNESS: WILLIAM MACKAY & SON.

*First Edition, . . . . . 1853.*  
*Second Edition, altered and revised, 1911.*

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE

TO SECOND EDITION.

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MACKENZIE'S *History of the Highland Clearances*, with its thrilling and almost incredible narratives of oppression and eviction, has been for a long time out of print. In view of the current movement, described by Mr. Asquith as an "organised campaign against the present system of land tenure," it has occurred to the holder of the copyright, Mr. Eneas Mackay, publisher, Stirling, that, at the present juncture, a re-issue might be expediently prepared. He recognised that the story of the great upheaval which, early in the nineteenth century, took place among the Highland crofters would be of undoubted interest and utility to those who follow the efforts now put forth to settle the land question in Scotland. At his request I readily undertook the task of re-editing.

The circumstances, or points of view, having changed in no slight measure since the first appearance of the work, I decided to subject it to a pretty thorough revision—to excise a large mass of irrelevant matter and to introduce several fresh articles. Donald Macleod's "Gloomy Memories" are omitted out of considerations for space, and because it is proposed to reprint them shortly in a separate form. There is included, for the first time, a vindication of the Sutherland Clearances by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and another by Mr. James Loch, principal factor on the Sutherland

Estates during the time the removals were carried out. There are also given graphic and realistic word pictures of these evictions by the Rev. Donald Sage. The general arrangement of the book has been altered to the extent of grouping together the accounts relating to each particular county, and descriptions are added of a number of Clearances which were not dealt with in the first edition.

I have pleasure in acknowledging my indebtedness to Mr. Ian Macpherson, M.P., and Dr. J. H. Fullarton, London, for kindly looking over the proofs.

Special and very sincere thanks are due to Mr. John Henderson, secretary of the National Library Club, London, who manifested the kindest and liveliest interest in the undertaking. Not only did he read the proofs with scrupulous care, but he was ever ready to give advice and offer suggestions when cases of doubt arose. To me, one of the most pleasant memories connected with the labour of editing is the valuable assistance always so promptly and cheerfully given by Mr. Henderson.

I greatly appreciate the courtesy shown by Messrs. Daniel Ross & Co., Ltd., publishers, Wick, in permitting extracts to be taken from Mr. Sage's *Memorabilia Domestica*.

Regarding the Publisher, I may be permitted to mention that he rendered my task very easy by providing, sometimes at considerable trouble and expense, all works of reference which I considered would be of service in endeavouring to make this History thoroughly accurate and reliable.

## INTRODUCTION.

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IT is with great pleasure that I accede to the request that I should write a short introduction to welcome this reprint of so interesting and valuable a book as Mackenzie's *Highland Clearances*. It has long been out of print, which anyone who recalls its first appearance will easily understand. It was written by a Highlander who commanded in a great measure the esteem of Highlanders, and it collected for the first time the sane and authenticated accounts of the experience of the Highlanders in the great agrarian crisis of their history. It appealed to the race as no book within recent years has done. The Highlander loves his past and his native land with a passionate attachment, and the story of the great wrongs of the days of the clearances is still deeply embedded in his mind. Within the last year or two many accounts, more or less imaginary, have appeared purporting to be true stories of those terrible days in the north, and it is peculiarly appropriate that, when once again men's minds are centred on the great problem of the land in this country as a whole, and specific attention has been directed towards the Highlands, this reprint should now appear. We are all, therefore, under deep obligations to the public spirit and enterprize of the publishers and others who have been good enough to secure in an accessible form a reliable account of the conditions and events which at once intensified the acuteness of the land-hunger in the Highlands and constituted the blackest page in Highland history.

Many evil deeds have been associated with the abuse of the monopoly power of land ownership in this and other countries, but it is safe to say that nowhere within the limits of those islands, or, indeed, anywhere else at