

Clashmore in the 19th Century

Extract from evidence given before a Royal Commission in 1892.

William MacLeay, Clashmore, stated that at the beginning of the 1800's, all the arable land in Dornoch parish belonged to the crofters, and they were all evicted to form 21 farms, 'evicted, removed or bruised out from time to time'.

He added, 'within my own living memory there have been removed.... within a radius of 1½ miles from the village of Clashmore, 40 families', their land being added to large farms, or planted with trees. The population of Clashmore area was halved in 40 years.

1834 New Statistical Account

Coal has been found at Clashmore, similar to that found at Brora. The seam of coal goes across to Coigach, on the west coast.

Evidence given to the Crofters' Commission in 1886. A typical case was that of John Gordon, Clashmugach, near Clashmore, who stated that his croft did not keep him and his family, so to pay his rent, he worked as a labourer at 2/- per day. He had a lease for his croft, but the landlord, wanted him out, invoked a clause in the lease which obliged him to "straighten the burns on the lands, and also to keep shut a gate on the road leading into the Clashbuie Wood". The landlord was threatening him with eviction for not keeping the gate closed. Asked why he did not keep it closed, he said "Because there is no gate there, and never has been. The nearest gate is 200 or 300 yards from my house, and I am glad to keep that shut for my own good".

Men could be evicted and lose their livelihood for such trivial reasons.

At Crossburn in Clashmore lived Donald Cameron who, according to the 1851 Census was a "dyer and merchant". The blanket on display was dyed at Crossburn.

Extract from Robert Southey's journal of his travels in the Highlands with Thomas Telford, in the Autumn of 1819.

Telford and Southey visited the newly completed causeway at the mound, and Southey wrote of "the simplicity", the beauty and utility of this great work".

Then they turned back, and on their way south, stopped at newly built Clashmore Inn (described in the New Statistical Account of 1834 as one of the "respectable inns" of the parish, as opposed to mere drink-shops). Southey wrote "At breakfast, was a handsome set of Worcester china. Upon noticing it to Mr. Telford, he told me that before these roads were made, he fell in with some people from Worcestershire near the Ord of Caithness, on their way Northward with a cart load of crockery, which they got over the mountains as best as they could; and, when they had sold all their ware, they laid out the money in black cattle, which they then drove to the south.