

Tea Table Sisterhood and Rebel Dames: The Contributions of Women Jacobites 1688–1788

Gina Pittington

American Military University

ABSTRACT

Women played several roles throughout a century to restore the Stuart Dynasty following the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Women supporters of the House of Stuart participated in espionage, planning invasions of a Stuart return to Scottish soil, and raising men or monies for the Stuart cause. By 1745, many Highland clans lost interest in the Jacobite cause; it was the female supporters who provided men and money, spread communications, and badgered their menfolk to follow Prince Charles, which brought early successes during the final revolt of 1745.

This study examines the multiple roles women played to progress and support Jacobitism during the many Jacobite Uprisings from the Glorious Revolution of 1688 to the Final Battle at Culloden Moor 1746. Also, including an in-depth investigation into gender acceptance of the seventeenth century. Three crucial uprisings, including the revolts of 1689, 1715, and 1745 provide plenty of documentation to reasonably investigate the participation of women from private bedrooms, tea-tables, battlefields, and courts, spanning the British Isles and across Europe.

This study concludes women Jacobites progressed the House of Stuart goals of restoration for over a century, until the death of Prince Charles in 1788. Women used many means to show support, such as political marriages (Jacobite to Jacobite) and how they raised children regarding religion and loyalty to the Stuart cause. They passed down through the generations a strong feeling of support to the House of Stuart. Women felt national pride and loyalty fighting for their beliefs on various fields of battle.

Keywords: Scottish History, Jacobite History, Gender History, Women's History, Jacobite Rebellion, Women Jacobites, Scottish Women, Stuart Dynasty 1688–1788.

Hermanidad de mesa de té y damas rebeldes: Las contribuciones de las mujeres jacobitas 1688-1788

RESUMEN

Las mujeres desempeñaron varios papeles a lo largo de un siglo para restaurar la dinastía Stuart después de la Revolución Gloriosa de 1688. Las mujeres partidarios de la Casa de Stuart participaron en el espionaje, planificando invasiones de un regreso de Stuart al suelo escocés y criando hombres o dinero para la causa de Stuart. Para 1745, muchos clanes de las Tierras Altas perdieron interés en la causa jacobita; Fueron las mujeres partidarios las que proporcionaron hombres y dinero, difundieron comunicaciones y acosaron a sus hombres para que siguieran al Príncipe Carlos, lo que trajo éxitos tempranos durante la revuelta final de 1745.

Este estudio examina los múltiples roles que las mujeres desempeñaron para progresar y apoyar el jacobitismo durante los muchos levantamientos jacobitas desde la Revolución Gloriosa de 1688 hasta la Batalla Final en Culloden Moor 1746. Además, incluye una investigación en profundidad sobre la aceptación de género del siglo XVII. Tres levantamientos cruciales, incluidas las revueltas de 1689, 1715 y 1745, proporcionan abundante documentación para investigar razonablemente la participación de mujeres de habitaciones privadas, mesas de té, campos de batalla y tribunales, que abarcan las Islas Británicas y en toda Europa.

Este estudio concluye que las mujeres jacobitas progresaron en los objetivos de restauración de la Casa de Estuardo durante más de un siglo, hasta la muerte del príncipe Carlos en 1788. Las mujeres usaron muchos medios para mostrar su apoyo, como los matrimonios políticos (de jacobita a jacobita) y cómo criaron hijos con respecto a religión y lealtad a la causa Stuart. Transmitieron de generación en generación un fuerte sentimiento de apoyo a la Casa de Estuardo. Las mujeres sintieron orgullo nacional y lealtad luchando por sus creencias en varios campos de batalla.

Palabras clave: historia escocesa, historia jacobita, historia de género, historia de las mujeres, rebelión jacobita, mujeres jacobitas, mujeres escocesas, dinastía Stuart 1688–1788

茶桌姐妹会与反叛女士：1688年至1788年间女性詹姆斯二世党人所作的贡献

摘要

继1688年光荣革命后的一百年里，女性为复辟斯图亚特王朝一事发挥了不同作用。斯图亚特王朝的女性支持者参与了间谍活动、为斯图尔特重回苏格兰国土谋划袭击、为斯图尔特事业培育人力或提供金钱资助。1745年期间，许多苏格兰高地氏族对詹姆斯二世党人事业失去兴趣；是女性支持者提供了人力和金钱，传播消息，并不断督促男人追随查尔斯王子，这些努力为1745年的最后反抗带来了早期胜利。

本研究检验了自1688年光荣革命至1746年卡洛登最后战役期间女性在诸多詹姆斯二世党人起义中为推进和支持相关运动而发挥的多重作用。本文还对17世纪的性别接受一事进行了深入调查。三次关键性起义，包括1689年、1715年和1745年发生的叛乱都提供了充足证据，以合理地研究从不列颠群岛到跨越欧洲范围内女性的参与活动，包括从私人卧室、茶桌、战场、到宫廷。

本研究结论认为，女性詹姆斯二世党人在一百年里推进了斯图亚特王朝的复辟事业，直至1788年查尔斯王子去世。女性使用了很多方式表示支持，例如政治婚姻（詹姆斯二世党人相互通婚），以及出于宗教目的和为忠心于斯图尔特事业养育儿童。她们给后代传承了支持斯图尔特王朝的强烈情感。女性对在不同战场领域为信仰作战而感到民族自豪和忠诚。

关键词：苏格兰历史，詹姆斯二世党人历史，性别历史，女性历史，詹姆斯二世党人叛乱，女性詹姆斯二世党人，苏格兰女性，斯图亚特王朝（1688年至1788年）

Introduction

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 was a religious war as much as a political one. King James II of England and VII of Scotland was a Catholic king that leaned towards re-

ligious tolerance. England broke with the Catholic Church under Henry VIII. The break continued with Elizabeth I's reign and her successor James I of England and VI of Scotland. King James II of England and VII of Scotland married a Catholic woman who posed a signifi-

cant threat to the state under the divine rights of kings. The Whig Party's concern advanced when he overturned a long-standing parliament law concerning the exclusion of Catholics to hold office under the Test Act.¹ James II's views of religious tolerance heightened concerns for the State, and following the birth of James and his Catholic wife's son, panic ensued throughout the Protestant nobles. The Whig party's fear of popery determined their actions. Their primary objective was to remove James II as England's monarch and replace the line of succession with a Protestant one over the newly born Catholic heir.

A small group of men known as the Immortal Seven sent an invitation to the Dutch Prince, William III of Orange, inviting him and his wife Mary to invade England to usurp James II. The Immortal Seven included the Bishop of London, Henry Compton, and six noblemen—Charles Talbot, 1st Duke of Shrewsbury, William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Devonshire, Thomas Osborne, 1st Duke of Leeds, Richard Lumley, 1st Earl of Scarbrough, Edward Russell, 1st Earl of Orford, and Henry Sydney, 1st Earl of Romney—who inscribed the letter to William III and initiated the Glorious Revolution. William had married Princess Mary, the daughter of James II. Because both were Protestant, they made perfect replacements.² Most Jacobites, and the Tory Party, rejected a Hanoverian government and supported James II, as they continued to believe in the “traditional doctrine of divine right.”³ The non-Jacobites or Whig Party, on the other hand, railed against an absolute monarchy. They be-

lieved the king's power remained limited and included checks and balances through parliament.⁴ The Jacobite uprisings divided England, Ireland, and Scotland in a civil war of religion, and government support over who the rightful king was. William III landed in southern England at Brixham on November 5, 1688, and in response, James II gathered his forces for battle. James II's quickly learned he did not have the full support of the Tory Party. Many of the Noble officials defected from James and pledged allegiance to William due to the uncertainty of James's religious plans for England.⁵

James II, with his wife and infant son, fled to France. This provided Parliament with an opportunity to claim that James had abdicated the throne. Hence, Parliament placed William III and his wife Mary on the throne.⁶ The division between political parties opened avenues for propaganda that circulated from both sides in the form of sermons, history books, political pamphlets, playwrights, and newspapers.⁷ Jacobite clubs swelled across England, Scotland, Wales and in educational institutions, such as Westminster, Oxford, and Winchester, that became pro-Jacobite schools.⁸ The anti-Whig and anti-dissenter riots that occurred across Great Britain held Jacobite undertones and hostility towards the Hanoverian government but did not involve a plot to remove William III or restore the Stuarts to the throne.⁹ Staunch supporters of James followed him to France in 1689 or retired from public view in Britain. Those that escaped to the continent often joined armies of different countries

who supported James II or found success in business on mainland Europe.

Jacobite families raised their children to support the House of Stuart and often married their children into other Jacobite families. Women, mainly, took an active role in raising their children to have strong ties to the House of Stuart. Jacobite sons, daughters, grandsons, and granddaughters supported James Francis Edward Stuart, James III of England and VIII of Scotland, following the death of his father James II in 1701. James III's son, Charles Edward Stuart, who was known as Bonnie Prince Charlie, would attempt to unite the clans for a final attempt to restore his father's throne in the last uprising on Scottish soil in 1745. Jacobite women raised their families to support the Stuart Dynasty. In addition, many involved themselves in court intrigue, secret political groups, planning restoration attempts, and espionage to restore the throne. James II, James III, and Prince Charles understood the importance of women's involvement, as they were less suspect of any conspiracy due to the expectations of gender roles. The Jacobite rebellions realized setbacks and successes, but never ultimate defeat until the Battle of Culloden in 1746. The involvement of women in the Stuart cause, fighting off the battlefield, helped the Stuart restoration campaign succeed and move forward through its many attempts to reclaim the throne.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, expectations for women consisted of marrying into a family of their father's or head-of-

household's choosing, then move to their husband's home (who held complete control over their lives), provide heirs for their spouses, and raise their children.¹⁰ Nevertheless, women of different social standing broke convention to support the Stuarts, a cause they strongly supported. Openly supporting James II, James III, or Prince Charles was a serious charge for men, women, or the family unit as a whole. Female contributions to the Stuart restoration continued for a century but did not come without sacrifices. If uncovered, women faced a ruined reputation, deportation to the Americas or the Caribbean, execution, imprisonment, or exile. This forced them to live outside the traditional roles of wife and mother.

Women participated in different roles, including the adventure of politics, duty, religion, loyalty to the House of Stuart, and national pride. Jacobitism was a way of life, an unwavering commitment to the Stuart Restoration. Without the great Jacobite heroines' participation around tea-tables, at royal courts, following army campaigns, and in bedrooms, the Stuart cause would have been less successful. Women such as Lady Eleanor Oglethorpe and Lady Margaret Nairne realized equality equal to men. They built this on a foundation of duty and the gift of influence, which maintained the momentum against the Hanoverian government for a century.

Oglethorpe Women: 1689–1745

A prime example of one loyal family that remained by James II's side is the Oglethorpe fam-

ily from Yorkshire, whose women outshined the men in the active participation in all Jacobite Rebellions. Eleanor Wall married Theophilus Oglethorpe; she was Irish Catholic and served Charles II's mistress, Louise de Querailles, Duchess of Portsmouth.¹¹ Eleanor's loyalty to the Stuarts was beyond mere religious affiliation, and she was a faithful supporter of James II as she held service in the King's household. Both King James and his wife Queen Mary trusted Eleanor to such an extent that they asked her to keep some of the Queen's diamonds during the Glorious revolution of 1688. She later traveled to the King's court at St. Germain, France, and returned them.¹² While attempting to restore his throne from William III, James II found less support than he had anticipated during his rising of 1689. Nevertheless, Elenore provided assistance by transporting intelligence to her husband, stationed in Ireland, who held command of some of the King's troops. Eleanor and her husband were very active in James II's court before the Glorious Revolution and managed to purchase a home, Westbrook Place, in 1688.¹³ The Oglethorpe house became the staging area for the plot of the rising in 1689 since it contained a "secret passage" for private meetings and provided a safe haven for hiding.¹⁴ During the 1689 uprising, the government considered both Eleanor and Theophilus a threat and ordered their arrest. In February 1690, Hanover soldiers captured Eleanor while attempting to deliver messages to Ireland for King James II.¹⁵ The Hanoverian government released her shortly after her

arrest, and she returned home; what they wanted was to find her husband, Theophilus, who remained hidden for over a year, and probably hid part of the time at Westbrook Place in the secret passage.¹⁶ The secret passage had a tunnel running from the house to a building in the nearby village called the "King's Arm."¹⁷ Jacobites used the tunnel to pass along messages or hide from government men. Following the arrest of both Eleanor and Theophilus, the Oglethorpes used the tunnel to escape to France. There, they spent a few years in service to James II at his court in St. Germain. In 1696, the Oglethorpes returned to England, but they left two of their daughters, Anne and Eleanor, in France with James's wife, Queen Mary of Modena. These two girls would become known as the "Barker Sisters." They continued the efforts to restore the Stuart throne their entire lives.¹⁸

Under the pretext of visiting her daughters, Lady Elenore continued her Jacobite activities. Before James II died in 1701, he trusted her to carry one final letter to his daughter, Princess Anne, in England. James II believed that Anne's half-brother, James III, was the legitimate heir to the throne, and he requested that she use her influence to help him.¹⁹ Although Princess Anne was sympathetic to her brother's plight, she was unwilling to hand over the throne to a Catholic monarch; she became Queen upon the death of her brother-in-law William III in 1702.²⁰ During her reign, she declared the Act of Union in 1707, uniting Scotland and England as one country—Great Britain.²¹ Upon her death in 1714, the Whig Party hastily

enforced the Acts of Settlement proclaimed by William III of Orange, which prevented any Catholic from inheriting the throne of Great Britain, and placed Queen Anne's cousin, George I, on the throne.²²

Lady Eleanor continued her support to the Stuarts until her death in 1732. She ran Westbrook Place as a Jacobite underground, arranging political Jacobite marriages for three of her daughters to the French royal family, and provided strict guidance in her children's roles to restore the throne to the Stuart Dynasty.²³ There were at least seven separate uprisings from the course of 1688 to 1745. But the real battles took place in parlors, bedrooms, and public places. Women were superior to men for carrying messages and gaining secrets because women were considered inferior in intelligence to men. Women were easier to use since they were less suspected of political involvement. Such was the case when young Eleanor married a French Jacobite distantly related to the French Royal family and became Madame de Mezieres. She was notoriously known in the French court for gathering intelligence for both the French and Jacobite interest. As such, she remained part of the inner Jacobite circle, the same as her mother.²⁴ She led an active role as advisor to James III at his French court in St. Germain and arranged a political marriage for her daughter to the Prince de Lignes. Once James III lost interest in restoring his crown following the failure of the rebellion in 1715—lost before James could land in Scotland—the Oglethorpe women turned their

support to the young Prince Charles. Prince Charles returned to France and requested the assistance of King Louis XV's minister of finance to help him restore the Stuart line to the throne. One minister, the Duc de Richelieu, favored Charles because he had powerful female supporters, including two of Louis XV's "mistresses the Duchess de Chateauroux and Madame de Pompadour, and Madame de Mezieres, that indefatigable Jacobite plotter."²⁵ The young Eleanor continued to plot for the Stuart cause long after the 1745 uprising. She wrote the Prince a letter in May 1759 and begged him to approach the French once again to support him in a new campaign in England.²⁶ The letter shows the depth of loyalty the Oglethorpe women provided to the House of Stuart, which continued throughout the generations. Eleanor wrote, "All my ancestors have given marks of their zeal to Your majesty's august house; their blood runs in my veins, and I have always sought the opportunity to prove it."²⁷

Unlike her sister Eleanor, Mistress Anne Oglethorpe loved adventure and excitement. She used several aliases, such as Mrs. Worthy and Mrs. Fidelity. Anne chose an unconventional lifestyle and opted to become the mistress of England's Secretary of State, Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, the minister to Queen Anne of England. Anne met Harley in 1704 when Hanoverians intercepted the boat she was traveling on from France to England. The Hanoverians questioned Anne and the other passengers and searched for Jacobite plans. Anne used her beauty and flirtation to pit Robert Harley, the Sec-

retary of State, and the Lord Treasurer, Sidney Godolphin, against each other. Finally, Harley believed he won her attention when he allowed her release and the continuation of her mission. When she arrived at her home, Westbrook, in England, she safely delivered the crucial messages from St Germain, where the King's court was held. She found herself before Harley again in 1707 when Frances Shaftoe, a servant, accused both Oglethorpe women of kidnapping her. The servant accused them of taking her to France to convert her to Catholicism, which failed.²⁸

Hired by the Oglethorpes in 1699, Frances Shaftoe claimed she overheard a secret conversation between Anne and Eleanor.²⁹ During the conversation, Anne had confided that James II's infant son died at five- to six-weeks-old of convulsions.³⁰ And upon receiving the news of the royal heir's death, Lady Eleanor Oglethorpe rushed to England with her newborn son to switch King's the dead baby boy for her living son.³¹ With this news, Court gossip and Whig propaganda claimed the infant son to be a pretender, the son of Theophilus and Eleanor Oglethorpe, instead of the true Stuart heir. The scandal over James III's legitimacy continued his entire life and earning him the nickname, The Old Pretender.³² Even though the episode was vexing, Harley's interest in Anne grew, and she became his official mistress.³³ And with Jacobite flair, she employed the influence and power of her position in the realm of international diplomacy.³⁴ As such, Anne helped to arrange peace talks between France and Spain in the hopes of gaining Spanish

support for James III.³⁵

The Oglethorpes' participation in the Jacobite rebellions, particularly Lady Eleanor Oglethorpe, Madame de Mezieres, and Miss Anne Oglethorpe, included strong women, staunch in their families' belief in supporting a Stuart restoration. They supported James II, James III (the Old Pretender), and Prince Charles Stuart (the Young Pretender). Their involvement in reclaiming the throne of England, Ireland, and Scotland faced both failures and successes during the multiple uprisings that occurred between 1689–1745.

Nevertheless, their work within the Stuart inner circle was not their only contribution. The Meziereses bought several properties around Paris that provided accommodations for Jacobite families in exile. Furthermore, to support the Jacobite refugees she took in, Anne sold most of her possessions and ended up bankrupt. When James III became aware of Anne's hardship, he provided a pension for her. He genuinely appreciated her loyalty.³⁶ In thanks, Anne wrote to James III. "I have refused great profers of wealth and honor to be true to my principles To my dying day, I still should do the same... My great passion all my life always has been and always shall be your service and interest."³⁷

Lady Nairne and Lady Nithsdale: 1715

“Twenty-eight out of fifty” Highland clans rose behind the Earl of Mar in 1715 to

again bring about a Stuart restoration to the throne.³⁸ The support of the clan system for the House of Stuart affected men, women, and children alike. Although women continued their support, and had worked for the restoration of the House of Stuart since 1688, by 1715, there was a heightened participation of Scottish Noblewomen. Mar appreciated the work women continued to do in planning, spying, and gathering support for the cause. Still, he also became frustrated at times with pushy bold women and their squabbles.³⁹ Life was not easy for the noblewoman of the early eighteenth century, isolated on family estates; letters were their primary means of communication and companionship. The state of Scotland became divided by politics and religion. Still, women overcame those differences within the extended family or clan, by building friendships so strong that they named their children after each other.

Women of the eighteenth century contended with the raising of children, including childbirth and breastfeeding. Furthermore, running an estate often fell to the lady of the house, and chores, such as sewing, candle making, checking food stores, cleaning, laundry, and accounts were time-consuming. Women focused on strengthening their family's interests through marriages and friendships. Even so, women found time for personal interests, such as poetry, music, and reading, all within the realm of gender acceptance for women. Personal letters provide an insight into daily life and the expectations of women; they also included their political interests in the state of affairs. Politics

was a man's business. Women lived in the social parameter, but Lady Nairne chose to overstep those boundaries.⁴⁰ Women, like men, had a strong national identity in eighteenth century Scotland, and Lady Nairne had great pride as a Scot and a Jacobite.⁴¹

Lady Nairne spent years building a network of contacts, often from favors she gained during her political endeavors. For example, in correspondence with John Campbell, the Earl of Breadalbane, Lady Nairne shared plans she had drawn up to update her home, and that she wished to purchase slate from Breadalbane mines. Interwoven in her correspondence were political opinions, and invites to see progress on her home.⁴² Lady Nairne's invitations were more of a political nature than sharing her home's progress.⁴³ Most letters were written as direct communication from Lady Nairne, but she often used her husband's sickness as an excuse to write correspondence for him. Lady Nairne communicated for her husband frequently to remain involved in the Jacobite political circles.⁴⁴ *The Jacobite Lairds of Gask* is a book written by T. L. Kington Oliphant, which contains several letters and records from the Oliphants of Gask, including a letter from the Earl of Mar to the Lady Nairne.⁴⁵ In his letter dated October 23, 1715, Mar explains the state of the current army positions, including horse and foot brigades. Mar requested "a copie of the paper tonight" from Lady Nairne and wishes her "a good, quick, & safe journie."⁴⁶ Lady Nairne used her political pull and that of her husband's, as he held command in Mar's upcoming ex-



Winifred Herbert, Countess of Nithsdale (d. 1749), wife of the 5th Earl of Nithsdale
Portrait of woman, sitting outside, with scenery in background, hand on a small
dog from the National Library of Scotland. Blaikie.SNPG.16.16.

petition, to support the King over the water.

Lady Nairne had an uncanny way of getting men to do her bidding. In doing so, she earned the disapproval of her relatives. Her brother-in-law, the Duke of Atholl, wrote in a letter to Lord James Murray, “I hope you will have as little to do with my Lady Nairne as possible, for there cannot be a worse woman. I inpute the ruine of my 3 sons to her artifices,” which clearly expresses

the influence Margaret Nairne had on those around her.⁴⁷ The Duke of Atholl communicated to the Majesty’s Magistrates of a possible and planned return of the Pretender, James III, in 1714, raising men to defend against a Jacobite rising.⁴⁸ Atholl’s sons, on the other hand, sided with the Jacobites and fought in the 1715 uprising against his wishes.⁴⁹

Lady Nairne continued her part to restore the Stuart Dynasty until her



Margaret, Lady Nairne from "A Military History of Perthshire" p. 313 Portrait of woman seated, with long light coloured hair from the National Library of Scotland, Blaikie.SNPG.16.11.

death. She instilled in her children and grandchild the Jacobite spirit, and duty to the Stuart cause. And indeed, they became involved and sided with the Jacobites during the 1745 uprising when Bonnie Prince Charles landed in Scotland.⁵⁰ Lady Nairne entertained Bonnie Prince Charles before the 1745 rebellion, suggesting her life-long commitment and her family's loyalty to the House of Stuart.⁵¹ At the age of seventy-three, two years before her death, she

commanded men from her bed during the 1745 uprising in support of the young Stuart.⁵² She continued to guide her children and grandchildren in actions and decisions for the cause. Several of her children and grandchildren played a significant part in the 1745 rebellion, supporting Prince Charles Edward Stuart. Lady Nairne found Jacobite marriages for her children, which was of great importance to the King over the water.

James III was quite concerned with the number of his supporters marrying into non-Jacobite families. He became active in political marriages well before the 1715 uprising. One match he encouraged was Winifred Herbert and William Maxwell, 5th Earl of Nithsdale. Lady Nithsdale was the daughter of William Herbert, the 1st Marquess of Powis, who was responsible for securing the safe arrival of the infant James III and his mother to France during the 1689 rebellion. The Herberts lived at James II's French court in exile. Winifred, raised as a devout Roman Catholic and in service to the Stuarts, would never have questioned or refused her King and family's wishes of a husband. With strong Jacobite matches, James was more secure in holding his supporters together. Lady Winifred was a good wife and mother, supporting her husband when he openly declared for James III in 1715.

Lord Nithsdale knew the price if they failed; his family would be exiled, his lands forfeited, and his name extinct.⁵³ Fail they did; Nithsdale and several other Jacobites were captured at Preston by government troops, found guilty of treason, and sentenced to death.⁵⁴ Lady Nithsdale, the dutiful wife and submissive supporter, fought for the one thing she could not lose—her husband. Winifred did not actively participate in the uprising for the Stuarts, but helped her husband escape from the Tower of London the night before the scheduled execution. They fled to Rome, where James III held his court and raised their children to be firm supporters of the House of Stuart. Lat-

er, their children would support Prince Charles, son of James III, in the Jacobite Rising of 1745. Lady Nithsdale's actions in England made her famous and a great heroine of the '15 rebellion, but it was the consequences of her decisions and exile at Rome that led to her most significant contribution to the cause.

In Rome, Lady Nithsdale witnessed the birth of Prince Charles Stuart and given charge over the young Prince Charles, and his brother Henry when he was born in 1725.⁵⁵ Charles's upbringing included the belief in the divine rights of kings, meaning that the Stuarts were the rightful heirs to the throne. By age six, he could read, write, and speak several languages. With expectations of succeeding his father, Charles's upbringing was full of masculine contact from the age of four. As his governess, Lady Nithsdale was the only female contact in Charles's life.⁵⁶ Lord Nithsdale managed Clementina's household, James III's wife. The two young princes' households were kept separate.⁵⁷ As such, Queen Clementina did not have any control over her older son's upbringing or any contact with him. Lady Nithsdale raised the future heir and leader in the final campaign of the Jacobite Rebellions to restore the exiled Stuart Dynasty.

Lady Nithsdale and Lady Nairne are a limited example of women's contributions to the Jacobite uprising of 1715. What these two ladies represented was a change from traditional roles or expectations of women to a more modern approach to equality within boundaries. Except Jacobite, women needed no

“vindication” to champion the Stuarts. They had the will of Jane Austen’s Elizabeth Bennet from *Pride and Prejudice*, but the soft heart of Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. Lady Nithsdale provides insight into the traditional expectations of women. Her husband was chosen for her; she supported his involvement in the 1715 uprising, accepted the consequences of Lord Nithsdale’s choices, and as a consequence, lived life in exile at the Stuart court in France. Lady Nairne, on the other hand, while traditional in her marriage, maintained a household, and provided her husband with children, broke the boundaries of propriety, and overstepped traditional gender roles concerning politics. Margaret Nairne set standards for younger generations of Jacobite women to follow in 1745, especially those in her family. What these two women shared in common was a devotion and loyalty to the House of Stuart, and they raised a family with the same faithfulness to the cause.

Jacobitism and Womanhood: 1745

Charles Edward Stuart was named Prince Regent by his father in 1743 and pursued the Jacobite cause to restore the throne of England, Ireland, and Scotland to the House of Stuart. He first went to France seeking support from the French government, then sailed to Scotland; he raised his standard on Monday August 19, 1745 at Glenfinnan.⁵⁸ Women supported Bonnie Prince Charles—often before their menfolk. The first woman to publicly show support to Charles was Jenny

Cameron of Glendessery.⁵⁹ Jenny Cameron is a prime example of the Jacobite propaganda wars, which began in 1688, claiming James III the pretender. Stories romanticized her as the mistress of Prince Charles, and a sword-wielding warrior that led men to the standard of Charles Stuart.

James Ray, a volunteer in the Duke of Cumberland’s Army, provided an English perspective of Jenny Cameron in his book of first-hand accounts, *A Compleat History of the Rebellion, from its first Rise, in 1745, to its total Suppression at the Glorious Battle of Culloden, in April 1746*.⁶⁰ Ray paints a colorful past of Jenny during her young womanhood years:

About fifteen years of age; but not putting a proper restraint on her inclination, a discovery came to light that she had carried on an amour, about six months, with one Sawney, a footman, who having formerly liv’d with a man of quality, had learn’d all the fashionable vices and follies of the gay part of town; this intrigue brought on its effects, and Miss began to be surpriz’d with an uncommon alteration to her health, and being ignorant of the cause, made application to her Aunt for advice, who, to her sorrow, knew the disease too well, but had the prudence not to discover it to Miss, she being resolv’d to find the author of this misfortune; and that very night let her into the secret;----- for Miss was unwarily caught in the arms of

Sawney;---- the news of which afflicted her Father in to affecting a manner, that he took to his bed, and died of grief in about eight days after.⁶¹

Ray uses this tidbit of gossip to insinuate more into the relationship between Jenny Cameron of Glendessery, and Prince Charles Stuart. He described her manner of dress, the horse she rode at the head of the Cameron force she raised for the Stuart army, and “instead of a whip, she carried a naked sword in her hand.”⁶² According to Ray, Charles spent many hours in the company of Jenny, calling her “Colonel Cameron” and would “caress her more than ordinary.”⁶³ Little is truly known about Jenny Cameron of Glendessery. Still, Ray wrote that Jenny “continued with the army ‘til they marched into England,” a false statement, as was his claim that Cumberlands men captured and imprisoned her at Edinburgh Castle in May of 1745.⁶⁴

Maggie Craig, the author of *Damn’ Rebel Bitches: The Women of the ‘45*, explained that the name Jenny Cameron was a popular name.⁶⁵ Craig’s investigation led to at least two different Jean or Jenny Camerons supporting Charles Stuart. Jenny Cameron of Glendessery would have been roughly forty-six years old at the time of the ‘45, and surely not a choice for a handsome young prince to choose for a mistress.⁶⁶ The Forbes Papers, included in the book, *The Lyon in Mourning, Vol. I* bolster the claim of Jenny’s Cameron’s age, stating, “Jeanie Cameron, as she is commonly though very improperly

called, for she is a widower nearer fifty than forty.”⁶⁷ Forbes also concludes that Jenny remained far removed from the marching army, and was instead among the spectators, not seeing the prince again until a ball held in Edinburgh.⁶⁸

The propaganda surrounding Jenny Cameron contains a few confirmed facts about this supposedly wild woman of the ‘45. First, her contribution to the cause was to gather three hundred Cameron men. She led them to the Prince’s standard at Glenfinnan and helped to increase the number of soldiers willing to fight under Prince Charles.⁶⁹ Her recruiting efforts provided an example for other women, such as Anne Mackintosh and Charlotte Robertson of Lude, the daughter of Lady Nairne. Considering Charles had only about thirteen hundred men who composed the Highland Army at his landing at Eriskay, women supporters were able to significantly increase his military numbers by the time he reached Edinburgh in October 1745 to over five thousand troops.⁷⁰ Second, in all the pictures posted in pamphlets and the accompanying literature, Jenny appears as a “Shameless Hussy” of the Prince or as a “warlike Amazon.”⁷¹

And just as in the eighteenth century, her identity remains a mystery. Finally, due to her puzzling character, authorities arrested a milliner named Jean or Jenny Cameron in Stirling for the elusive Jenny Cameron of Glendessery.⁷² Jenny supported Charles quietly and discreetly, but her reputation did not escape unscathed during the uprising. Although Jenny Cameron



Lady Mackintosh Portrait from waist up, in white dress with green robe around shoulder from the National Library of Scotland. Blaikie.SNPG.16.4.

remains a mystery, Lady Anne was well known.

Lady Anne Farquharson Mackintosh married Angus Mackintosh, chieftain of Clan Mackintosh and Clan Chattan, a confederation of related clans.⁷³ Her husband was a commander in the Black Watch, which supported the Hanoverian government. Anne, raised as a Jacobite, defied the political role of her husband; she forcefully raised four hundred to eight hundred men from Clan Chattan members. Thus, she earned the

nickname “Colonel Anne.”⁷⁴ Although Anne did not lead men into battle, Whiggish propaganda proclaimed her as a pistol-toting, freakishly large Scots woman.⁷⁵

Anne acquired another nickname following the Rout of Moy, the Heroine.⁷⁶ While near Inverness, Prince Charles visited Anne’s home at Moy Hall. Inverness was still in English hands, and Anne’s husband held a command there. Informants made Anne and the Prince’s entourage aware that

fifteen hundred English troops, led by Lord Loudon, were approaching.⁷⁷ Anne responded. "Running about like a madwoman in her shift," she strategically placed a few men around the estate.⁷⁸ The night was stormy with thunder and lightning all about, as they ran from station to station firing guns and screaming war cries of the different clans. In this way, it appeared the entire Jacobite army was there.⁷⁹

Anne's ruse caused the English troops to flee while Prince Charles and his few troops hid beside Loch Moy. Cumberlands troops arrested Anne Mackintosh for assisting the Stuart cause, and she spent several weeks imprisoned with other Jacobite women. Authorities released her into the care of her mother-in-law. Shortly after the Rout of Moy, the Jacobite army captured Anne's husband, at which time Prince Charles released him into Anne's custody. Upon greeting each other, Anne said, "Your servant, Captain," which he replied, "Your servant, Colonel."⁸⁰

Not to be outdone in raising troops for Bonnie Prince Charles, Lady Lude, Charlotte Robertson, daughter of Lady Nairn, gathered many of the one thousand men of the Atholl Brigade under Lord George.⁸¹ Lady Lude used violence to bully her tenants into joining the cause. She would burn them out of their homes if they refused to accede to the Prince's troops. If they went missing, Lady Lude had them hunted down and forced them to pay the price in monies for their lives.⁸² In addition to her recruiting efforts for the Jacobite army, she played other significant roles

during the '45 uprising. William, Duke of Atholl, a Jacobite riding with the Prince's army, sent a message to Charlotte, his cousin, requesting she prepare his home, Blair Castle, for the Prince's arrival.⁸³ She planned dinner and dancing for Charles and his entourage. A few days later, she offered the same hospitality at her home at Lude.⁸⁴ Often overlooked, hospitality was an essential moral builder; women made significant contributions by providing a soft bed, exotic meals, and entertainment to weary, hungry men on the march.

Lady Lude did not escape punishment for her part in the Jacobite rebellion. Government soldiers arrested her for treason near the end of January 1746 and imprisoned her at Blair Castle.⁸⁵ Many of the men and families she bullied into following the Prince turned evidence on her as a sort of payback. The Privy Council motioned to prosecute Lady Lude and her mother, Lady Nairne.⁸⁶ Lady Nairne's efforts to make strong Jacobite matches for her children and grandchildren provided her with extensive contacts, which she used to plead for her daughter's life. In this way, she wrote to her nephew, a Hanoverian supporter, James, Duke of Atholl, asking for leniency for Lady Lude, since she was "a weak, insignificant woman."⁸⁷ Both women eluded indictment from the Hanoverian government.

The tea table sisterhood showed support in a less flamboyant manner. Because parlors were not common in the mid-eighteenth-century, women gathered in their bedrooms to entertain or shared information around tea

tables. Tea and gossip were all the rage. During these conversations, they discussed the Young Chevalier, Prince Charles Stuart. Sermons given at their churches promoted rebel support and the opportunity to attend Jacobite Universities, such as the University of Glasgow, where evening classes consisted of the “rights of citizens” and “duty to rebel,” which further fueled the sisterhood.⁸⁸ The support the tea table sisterhood provided was no less significant than the major heroines, such as Flora McDonald of the ‘45. These traditional women raised massive amounts of money to support Charles’s army, often selling valuables, such as their jewels and silver, for the cause. They would tend to the wounded following a battle and proudly wear tartan and the White Cockade to outwardly show their support. Many younger women continued to flaunt the tartan following the loss on Culloden Moor; consequently, government soldiers arrested them on sight for instigating a Jacobite riot.

The most important role of tea table Jacobites was their influence at home. The eighteenth-century woman maintained “a woman’s touch” to influence her husband in thought and actions, as was her duty. One example of influence at home came from Isabel Haldane, the wife of Charles Stewart of Ardsheal—the Stewarts of Appin. Upon the arrival of Bonnie Prince Charles, she shamed her husband’s support by handing him her apron while saying, “Charles if you are not willing to be the commander of the Appin men, stay home and take care of the house, and I will go and command them myself.”⁸⁹

By 1745, the Jacobites had had several failures, such as the 1715 uprising led by the Duke of Mars and the Spanish attempt, so most clans would not openly declare their support for the Stuart cause. Most men and clan chieftains had lost heart in the fight and were content to sit on the fence rather than commit themselves to action and risk another failure. Nevertheless, Jacobite women rallied and generated the support of their menfolk by bullying or whatever means were at hand.

It is unknown if Isabel regretted her words and the influence she had on her husband; she faced hardship and fled into exile in France following the Battle of Culloden. Although her husband escaped and hid in a small cave near their home, known as Ardsheal’s Cave, he eventually had to flee the country when government men enhanced their search for all Jacobites.⁹⁰ Government soldiers sacked Isabel’s house. With her ability to feed her young children stolen from her by Cumberland’s men, and the fear of reprisals, she fled into the snow with her newborn infant and five small children.⁹¹ She avoided the English army by moving from hut to hut until she could obtain passage to join her husband in France. The couple settled in Sens, in Champagne, France, for the rest of their days.⁹²

The most famous heroine of the final rebellion was Flora MacDonald. Raised as a stout Jacobite, she was the last hope to secure the safety and escape of Charles Edward Stuart from Scotland following the defeat of the Jacobite forces at Culloden. Her act of bravery included dressing the Prince as her maid,

named Betty Burke, in which she was able to help the Prince get to the Isle of Skye from the mainland of Scotland. Flora's statement described the escape, the disguise Charles used, and where he stayed along the way.⁹³ On "about the 21st of June, O'Neil, or as they call him Nelson, came to where she stay'd, & proposed to her, that as he heard she was going to Skye, that the young Pretender should go with her."⁹⁴ According to Allan R. MacDonald, author of *The Truth About Flora MacDonald*, the plan to dress the Prince as a woman, and Flora's part in the escape, was her step-father's idea, Captain Hugh MacDonald.⁹⁵ Forbes confirmed Captain MacDonald's role as "the grand contriver in laying and executing the scheme for the Prince's escape in women's cloaths from the Long Isle to the Isle of Skye."⁹⁶ The English captured Flora MacDonald in Sleat on July 12, 1746, and kept her imprisoned thereafter until her release in July 1747. She returned to Skye on August 2.⁹⁷

From Skye, Charles boarded a ship destined to France and safety. Due to his brother's position as Cardinal, in Rome, Charles could not attempt another invasion. And restraints from the Catholic church would prevent all chances for a Stuart restoration. Thus, his supporters faced exile, imprisonment, forfeiture of lands, deportation, and execution. The government outlawed the Scottish clan system, and the Scots assimilated to the Act of Union. Jacobitism ended with the death of Charles Stuart in 1788, a century after the Glorious Revolution.

Although many of the women documented in this research are well known in Jacobite history, they were treated according to their class status. Flora MacDonald, Anne MacIntosh, and Jenny Cameron belonged to the nobility class and obtained privilege allotted to their social status. The lower class or commoner women suffered extreme hardships and cruelty for any suspected Jacobite activities or sympathies. Anne Mackay serves as a good example. She stayed in a letted house near Inverness following Culloden waiting for news of her husband's fate, who died in battle. She lived with her children ranging from less than a year old to seventeen years old, but the number of children is not recorded. Following the Battle of Culloden, the English captured two wounded men and housed them in the cellar below Anne's rented home.

Together with the aid of the great Lady Anne Mackintosh, Anne MacKay conceived a plan to help one wounded man escape, Robert Nairne. Nairne received judgment while held in the cellar for his actions as a Jacobite then sentenced as a traitor, which is punishable by death. Plans for his journey to London were made for his execution, but MacKay, according to plan, distracted the soldiers guarding the prisoners allowing Naire the opportunity to escape. Once the English discovered that Robert escaped, Anne suffered severe interrogations and torture for helping, who the English considered "an important prisoner."⁹⁸ Colonel Leighton of the Blakeley Regiment interrogated while forcing Anne to stand without food and water for three days. The treatment en-

dured caused severe leg swelling and had lasting health effects.⁹⁹ Following three days of torture and verbal abuse, Anne's sentence included eight hundred lashes administered throughout the town for her part in the escape. Several high-born women, including Lady Mackintosh, loudly objected to the punishment and saved her from the lashings.

Anne MacKay gained her freedom seven weeks later without the beating. Still, soldiers visited her house shortly after her release afterward, beating her seventeen-year-old son so severely that he died the three days following the horrible abuse.¹⁰⁰ Anne received help, and thanks, from Robert Nairne and his family, she received financial contributions to help raise and educate her fatherless children.¹⁰¹ Anne's story is just one of many Jacobite women's involvement in hiding men on the run or tending wounded Jacobite soldiers. The commoner woman risked rape for herself and her daughters, physical assault to her family, sacking and burning of her home, and even deportation without her family for the smallest act of kindness to any Jacobite. There is less documentation explaining the scope of brutality that the majority of the commoner class women suffered for their acts of service in support of Prince Charles. Although the noble class woman received more prestige for their acts during the Jacobite Rebellions, the commoner woman's participation was just as meaningful. They hid men fleeing Cumberland's wrath, tended wounded men after the battle, influenced their husbands to support the Prince, and re-

mained home and cared for their family as any woman of any class status.

Conclusion

There are many stories about the women who supported the House of Stuart, and much can be confirmed and written about the vivacious and courageous acts of Jacobite women. The majority of documentation available is from letters and memoirs of the upper-class women but much less on the commoner woman. Jacobite women felt a strong sense of national pride and honor to remain loyal to the cause. Jacobite women were the backbone of the Jacobite campaigns throughout the many failures and successes. The contributions of women, noble or commoner, along with the many roles they played from the Glorious Revolution in 1688 until the death of Prince Charles in 1788, provided a solid basis for duty, influence, and sacrifice equal to any man when supporting the Stuart Restoration.

Lady Eleanor and her daughters, Eleanor and Anne, felt strongly in their sense of duty and service to their king, James II. They devoted a lifetime of counsel to James II, his son James III, and his grandson Prince Charles. Lady Eleanor and Anne suffered arrest while carrying messages and information from the Stuart court in both France and later Rome. The young Eleanor and Anne, accused of kidnapping, did so to protect the interest of James III over his birthright. A high sense of duty motivated their actions more than many of the men Jacobites, who supported the

Stuarts restoration. James II understood the importance of female support, such as the Oglethorpe women, and found great loyalty and trust in them. James II's son and grandson followed his example in catering to the female Jacobites, using their ability to maneuver throughout many locations to transfer information to other Jacobites, listening to their counsel, and accepting different forms of support that women could offer.

The eighteenth century Jacobite lady maintained awareness of duty and influence expected of her, such as Lady Nairne, Lady Nithsdale, and Isabel Haldane, who each held significant influence over their families. Isabel influenced her husband to gather the Stewarts of Appin and fight with Prince Charles. Winifred Nithsdale would risk everything to rescue her husband from the Tower of London, live in exile, and become a governess to the Young Prince Charles and Prince Henry. Margaret Nairne held influence over her family, raising her children with strong Jacobite loyalty. Lady Nairne, in her seventies, ordered men to battle from her sickbed. Influence was a powerful weapon, and the Jacobite woman knew how to wield it better than a sword. Without women's influence, the support for the House of Stuart would have been far less than it was in the 1745 rebellion.

Women Jacobites fought on different battlefields than men during the Jacobite uprisings. Females battled at tea tables, at royal courts, in secret chambers, and at social gatherings. The bulk of the money raised for the campaign

came from women selling their jewelry and silver. With unwavering support for the Stuarts, women, such as Jean Cameron, Anne Mackintosh, and Lady Charlotte Lude, gathered men for the army to fight for Prince Charles. Women, such as in the Oglethorpe family, played roles in espionage and in planning international support for Stuart landings in Scotland of both the 1715 and 1745 rebellions. Women worked as a communication system throughout Scotland, England, and mainland Europe through letters to friends, family, and colleagues. Jacobite women were proud to support a cause they believed in, noble and commoner alike. Without women and their acts of service and heroism to the Stuart cause, the Jacobite cause would have fizzled out long before the final uprising of 1745.

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