



# The Spectator

The Quarterly Newsletter of Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg

Spring 2008

## President's Message

Lads and Lassies,

I'm delighted to be writing you once again about the wonderful activities of our society and to alert you to coming events. I thoroughly enjoy my contact with each of you at our events and am anxious to find activities that help our Society to grow in a way that raises awareness of our objectives among the general population of the Williamsburg area, increases our membership, and that leads to the incorporation of activities and projects that are meaningful in promoting Scottish heritage .... and are also enjoyable!

Springtime always means National Tartan Day and our members celebrated the event on April 4<sup>th</sup> at the Colonial Heritage Club. Our turnout was wonderful and particular thanks must go to Jim White for his planning and organizational effort and Jamie Griffin for her excellent talk on the origins of Tartan Day. We hosted the Spring Kirkin' o' the Tartans at historic Christ Church in Irvington on May 4<sup>th</sup> with Bob Davis and Wil Phillips coordinating the event. In joining with other Scottish organizations from central and southeastern Virginia at this Kirkin' we promoted our goal of sharing our rich Scottish heritage and culture with others.

On May 18<sup>th</sup> we held our second annual St. Andrew's Society Family Picnic and Ceilidh at the Queens Lake Clubhouse, planned and orchestrated by Jamie Griffin. The event also served as our recognition of Founders Day and the founding of our society forty years ago on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1968. It was an afternoon of exceptional food, wonderful piping and drumming by the Williamsburg Pipes and Drums, fine



exhibitions of Scottish Country Dancing, and a rousing Scottish Sing-a-long.

The Williamsburg Scottish Festival will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October and we will once again have our large gathering tent on the festival's "Clan Row." I encourage you all to make plans to support and attend this fine Highland gathering. It was established by members of the St. Andrew's Society more than thirty years ago and remains an exceptional opportunity to promote Scottish heritage. ... oh, and don't forget ...also an opportunity to recruit new members for our Society!

Well, this has been a very quick note to bring you up to date on the SAS-W's spring activities and events. I hope that you all will have an enjoyable and relaxed summer. Please take the opportunity to visit one of the many Highland games and festivals that will be held during the next few months.

Yours Aye,



Howard S. Topp  
Clan Sutherland

### **Tartan Day at Colonial Heritage Club**

On April 4 the Society celebrated Tartan Day at the Colonial Heritage Club. This turned out to be another fun gathering with high attendance. The venue was delightful and the lunch was quite good. Jamie Griffin, the Society's first female member, spoke about Tartan Day and the huge contribution that Scots have made to American history, institutions and society. Lynn Newcomer provided wonderful bagpipe melodies. There's nothing like "Scotland the Brave" to fully energize you on a Friday afternoon. Following is the speech made by Jamie:

### **Tartan Day**

How many of you have ever been asked if you were Scottish? Obviously, I don't mean when you were on your way to a St. Andrew's Society event, dressed in full Scottish attire. As a group, Scots do not have distinct physical characteristics that are recognizable as part of an ethnic group. But if some of you gentlemen wearing kilts were to stop at 7-eleven on your way home today, people would know! Bagpipes and kilts are the two most well known symbols of Scottish culture. Our collective blood boils when we hear kilts referred to as "plaid skirts"; but this is said, not out of spite,

but ignorance. This is sad, since we of Scottish descent make up the 8th largest ethnic group in the United States.

While kilts and bagpipes are very much a part of our heritage, there is more to being a Scot than kilts and bagpipes. And Tartan Day is about much more than having lunch and wearing our tartans. This is a day to honor the men and women from Scotland whose contributions to medicine, science, education, religion, literature, the arts and even the history of this country have enriched our lives and made this country great.

It is certainly no exaggeration to say that our country is the most powerful nation of all time, and this is due in large part to Scottish ideas and efforts. In fact, Scottish explorer Prince Henry Sinclair led an expedition which reached North America in 1398, almost a century before Columbus “discovered” America. In 1776, 38% of the men who signed the Declaration of Independence were Scottish. And it was signed in Independence Hall, a building designed by a Scot, Andrew Hamilton. Nine governors of the original 13 states were of Scottish descent. Over the next 232 years, more than 75% of our presidents have been of Scottish descent. And this is in a country where Scots make up less than 5% of the population.

If you have not read the book, The Mark of the Scots, by Duncan A. Bruce, I recommend it to you. It is amazing that a group of people that makes up less than ½% of the world’s population has done so much! Throughout history, Scots have left their mark. I was surprised to learn that Thomas Jefferson, who drafted the Declaration of Independence, was a descendant of a sister to King Robert I, the Bruce. Others include Patrick Henry, the son of a Scottish born Judge, Thomas Edison, Andrew Carnegie, Washington Irving, and eight generals in the War Between the States. In the more recent past, Billy Graham, Grandma Moses, General Douglas MacArthur and eight of the astronauts who walked on the moon. Duncan Bruce’s book has so many names and lists of accomplishments: I could stand here hours and just give you names.

In 1995, Duncan MacDonald, executive Vice President of The Caledonian Foundation invited Scottish-American groups operating at the national level to a meeting in Sarasota, Florida. The first item of business was to plan a national observance of Tartan Day. Before this time there were many individual observances, but nothing organized nationwide. In 1997, the U.S. Senate proclaimed April 6<sup>th</sup> to be Tartan Day. The next day, JoAnne Phipps, a Caledonian Foundation member, began working with Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott to prepare a resolution for the Congressional Record. The book, The Mark of the Scots was presented as a resource, and the next year, in 1998, National Tartan Day was permanently recognized by U.S. Senate Resolution 155.

If you have never read U.S. Senate Resolution 155, I encourage you to do so. This well-written document explains that April 6<sup>th</sup> was chosen because the Declaration of Arbroath, the Scottish Declaration of Independence, was signed on April 6, 1320. More than 450 years later, our forefathers used the language and concepts of the Declaration of Arbroath as the model for our own Declaration of Independence.

Senate Resolution 155 recognizes and honors the major role that Scottish Americans played in the founding of this nation, and states that “Scottish-Americans helped shape this country in its formative years and guide this Nation through its most troubled times.” It “commends the more than 200 organizations throughout the United States that honor Scottish heritage, tradition and culture,” and the fact that these organizations “do not let the great contributions of the Scottish people go unnoticed.”

After Senate Resolution 155 had been passed, a decision had to be made regarding an appropriate location for the original document. The College of William and Mary was chosen as the ideal place. William and Mary was founded by Scottish Cleric James Blair. It was organized along the lines of a Scottish university, rather than like English schools such as Oxford and Cambridge. Originally, William and Mary only had a president and two teachers, and two of the three were Scots. An alumnus of the college, Thomas Jefferson, said that his mentor, William and Mary Professor William Small, a Scot, “probably fixed the destinies of my life.”

During the presentation ceremony on September 25, 1999, Wayne Retherford, representing the Association of St. Andrew’s Societies in the United States, said, “Tartan Day is a way to start re-educating Americans on the contributions that our forefathers have made. It is fitting that we leave this document here at William and Mary where in so many ways we are close to the beginnings of our nation.”

Margaret Callander, vice president of the Association of Scottish Games and Festivals, said, “The U.S. has given us an official day to be celebrated on April 6<sup>th</sup> of each year. It behooves all of us who have a drop or two of Scottish blood to take full advantage of this opportunity to share our Cultural heritage. Let us wear our tartan with pride.” And in the words of Robert Murdoch, national Chairman for Tartan Day, “In closing, let me say I am proud to be involved with persons throughout the country concerning Tartan Day.....and most of all, I am proud to be a Scot.”

As I was doing this research, I stumbled onto a wonderful website, [www.tartanday.org/educators.htm](http://www.tartanday.org/educators.htm) that has a Tartan Day Teacher’s Guide. I contacted the curriculum coordinators of the WJCC and the York school systems to get the word to the school systems about this site, and let them teach it to our children. To learn about Scottish contributions to America is to learn American history.



**Tartan Day at Colonial Heritage**



**Jamie Griffin addresses the Society**



**Lynn Newcomer energizes the crowd**

## Kirking of the Tartans

On May 4 SAS cooperated with several other local Scottish heritage organizations to conduct a well-attended "Kirking of the Tartans" at historic Christ Church in Irvington, Virginia. The bright sunny weather and the lovely Northern Neck surroundings were inspiring. The kirking at Christ Church is always memorable, and this time was no exception. The 12:30 service took place with the Rector Rev. David May and Vice Rector Rev. Megan Holloway officiating. Christ Church is a beautiful, truly historical brick building with the ten commandments carved into a huge wooden wall panel. Attending the service, I felt one with my ancestors and two thousand years of Christian tradition.

The Kilmarnock and District Pipe Band played rousing bagpipe music during the service, including *Scotland the Brave* and *The Black Bear*. Afterwards they conducted a Celtic concert under the trees for members and local church-goers. The attendees wore highland attire and the event was highly successful. The gathering was organized by the Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg, the Saint Andrew's Society of Richmond, the Scottish Society of Richmond, the Scottish Society of Tidewater, the Tidewater Saint Andrew's Society, the Williamsburg Scottish Festival and the Foundation for Historic Christ Church.





**The new generation (above); color guard (below)**





**The Kilmarnock and District Pipe Band**





## **Family Picnic, Ceilidh and Founder's Celebration**

On May 18<sup>th</sup> the Queen's Lake Clubhouse was again the venue for the Society's annual picnic and ceilidh. Members and guests filled the clubhouse as they enjoyed delicious chicken and pork barbecue with a wide assortment of side dishes and desserts provided by members. This was also a celebration of the Society's Founders Day. Williamsburg Pipes and Drums provided rousing bagpipe tunes and the Richmond Country Scottish Dance Society demonstrated country dancing. President Howard Topp spoke on the founding of the Society forty years ago, and later sang many traditional Scottish songs in a guitar duet with his wife Carolyn as the audience sang along. The event ended with the singing of the beloved 'Auld Lang Syne' written by Robbie Burns,

This was a delightful afternoon with good friends and high spirits.



**Filling Queen's Lake Clubhouse**



**Williamsburg Pipes & Drums (above); Country Scottish Dance Society (below)**





**Howard and Carolyn romancing the attendees**

### **Origins – by Howard Topp**

We all have interesting stories that explain our Scottish heritage and highlight our pride in kinship. I'd like to relate a personal story about an incident that occurred more than thirty years ago. It concerned the forming of the Clan Sutherland Society of North America ...but, with a very personal twist. At that time Carolyn and I frequently attended to Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, since the St. Andrew's Society of Williamsburg was one of the first 25 sponsors of the event and always had a preferred place along the parade field perimeter fence. We were accorded this honor because the Williamsburg St. Andrew's founder, Bob Duncan, was an avid supporter of the games and co-founder Dave Shepherd was an early vendor at the mountain.

The irrepressible Paul Ritchie would always organize a fairly large Williamsburg contingent, staying at a small motel in nearby Newland, NC.

During one of our visits, Carolyn and I met a Miss Sally Southerland. Miss Sally lived near the mountain and had always envisioned starting a Clan Sutherland society. Like us, other Sutherlands had encountered Miss Sally and expressed an interest in joining such a group when it was formed. She began the planning efforts, contacted people interested in forming the clan society, and finally called for a founding meeting in conjunction with the 1976 Grandfather Mountain Highland Games.

On the Saturday evening of the games, a small group of fifteen members gathered at a nearby Holiday Inn for the purposes of formally establishing the society. At the meeting the participants worked out the details of the society structure and established the procedures to be followed in incorporating the organization during the following weeks and months. Once all the administrative and business details had been worked out, we formally declared the existence of the “Clan Sutherland Society of North America.”

Following the meeting, the attendees enjoyed refreshments and began to relate stories of their own Sutherland connections. During the animated discussions an elderly brother and sister, Alva Myers and Arnold King, told of their own personal history. Alva was particularly thorough in explaining their Sutherland connection. She described how an Alexander Sutherland, a British Army surgeon from Elgin, Scotland had served in India and subsequently in Canada. She described a number of the events that pertained to his life: pensioned from the Army, settling into a practice in Ontario, calling for the rest of his family to come from Scotland to start a new life in Canada, the tragedy of a young daughter dying during the voyage and being buried at sea. I sat in awe as she described their family history.

After she finished and another person started to describe his family’s Sutherland origins, Elva got up to get another cup of coffee. I walked over to her and said, “Ma'am ... I think we are related.”

She said, “Oh yes, isn’t wonderful! We are all Sutherlands here!”

I responded, “No, Ma’am! We’re a whole lot closer related than that!”

”Why do you say that?” she asked.

“Because I grew up listening to the very stories you just described.”

“Why ....who told you these stories?” she asked.

“My mother.”

Puzzled, she asked “What was your mother’s name?” I had only to say my mother’s first name ... Marguretta ... and Elva cried out a name that I had as a baby and only those from my very close family would have known.

Elva was my mother’s cousin and closest friend as a young child growing up. The last time that she had seen me was in the spring of 1939 when she held me during a visit by my mother to Elva’s home. During and after the war they had lived in different states and gradually drifted apart. My mother passed away in 1968 and I had little contact with other members of her family after that time. And yet, in the founding of our clan society I had reconnected with a long lost relative. Amazing! We remained in close contact until she and Arnold passed away.

### **Letter from Gen. William S. Wallace**

Following Burns Nicht, President Howard Topp received the following hand-written note from Gen. William S. Wallace who we had invited to Burns Nicht as Guest of Honor. Howard wanted to share it with the members:

Commanding General  
United States Army Training and Defense Command  
7 Fenwick Road  
Fort Monroe Virginia 23651-1049

28 Jan 08

Howard –

My sincere thanks for having been given the opportunity to join the St. Andrew’s Society in celebration of Burns Nicht.

Scots are a unique and proud people, as we all realize. Their heritage is part of what makes our Country strong. Having the chance to celebrate that heritage with drink, haggis, and pipe was most enjoyable.

Thanks again to you and the Society. I wish you all the best in 2008.

Sincerely,

Scott Wallace

ELIZABETH LEE VLIET, M.D.  
PO BOX 64507, TUCSON, AZ 85728  
520-797-9131, leevlietmd@aol.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A \$1,000 prize for a research paper documenting genealogical links between Scotland and the United States has been established in honor of Virginia Lee Hutcheson Davis, formerly of Williamsburg, a noted author of Virginia genealogical publications.

The prize, to be awarded annually, is offered by Davis' daughter and son-in-law, Dr. Elizabeth Lee Vliet and Gordon Vliet of Tucson, Ariz. Davis, who died in 2007, received the 1994 National Genealogical Society award of excellence for her book "Tidewater Virginia Families: A Social and Genealogical History" published by the Genealogical Publishing Co. of Baltimore. She wrote six additional books of genealogy and for 12 years edited the quarterly magazine, Tidewater Virginia Families.

Dr. Vliet said her mother was devoted to researching family links between Scotland and Virginia, a study the research prize is intended to continue. Submissions for the prize must be based on original documented research for the time period of 1580 and 1899 and essays should be six to 10 typed pages in length.

Entries will be judged by a panel headed by Joyce Alexander White, former Regent of the Williamsburg chapter of the Daughter of the American Revolution; genealogist Marion Lukens Brigham, also of Williamsburg, and Gordon Vliet. Inquiries regarding the prize and requirements for submission should be addressed to White at [jwhite11@erols.com](mailto:jwhite11@erols.com). Deadline for this year's submission is Nov. 15. The Award will be presented at the St. Andrew's Society of Williamsburg during the annual Burn's Nicht celebration at the end of January honoring Scottish poet, Robert Burns.

Dr. Vliet said possible areas of research include documentation of the immigration path of individual Scottish families; identification of genealogical sources in Scotland, Northern Ireland or the United States; original research of immigrant patterns and genealogical findings using DNA analysis. Previously published material, including material published on the internet, is ineligible.

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**Virginia Lee Hutcheson Davis**

### **Heritage Research Services**

Your editor's sister-in-law, Roseann Thomas, is running a new genealogical research service, should anyone be interested in tracking down Scottish roots. Although I haven't formally used her company I was amazed at the job she did previously in researching and documenting a formerly unknown branch of my Father's Cornish family tree that ultimately went all the way back to Europe in the 1300's. She didn't charge us for that, but her company's rates seem reasonable. She has had experience tracking down Scottish ancestors and as a member of the Church of Latter Day Saints she has access to their superb genealogical records. Please see her website at <http://www.heritageresearch.org/>



# Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg

## Application for Membership

PO Box 533, Williamsburg VA 23187

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Schools/Colleges: \_\_\_\_\_

Business or Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Names and Ages of Children: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Years at Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Legacy Application? Yes or No \_\_\_\_\_

(A Legacy member is the son/grandson or daughter/granddaughter of an active member in good standing or of a deceased former member, who is age eighteen through twenty-one. Admission fees are waived for Legacy Members; however annual dues are required.)

If Yes, Father/Mother or Grandfather/Grandmother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership in Other Professional or Social Organizations: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Scottish Family Connections (documentation not required): \_\_\_\_\_

Any Visits to Scotland – Frequency and Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

General Scottish Interests – (History, Literature, Arts etc): \_\_\_\_\_

Clan Association(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Membership in Clan Organization or Other Scottish Society: \_\_\_\_\_

What tartan(s) do you wear? \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_



To the best of our knowledge, the above applicant is of sound character and is entirely suitable to membership in the Society. Applicant will actively participate in the functions of the Society as circumstances allow and will perform conscientiously any duties undertaken.

Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Co-Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Checklist**

Initiation and First Year's Dues (\$60.00) \_\_\_\_\_

Small Photograph suitable for digitization \_\_\_\_\_

Current local address and telephone number included \_\_\_\_\_

Verification of Legacy Member Eligibility \_\_\_\_\_