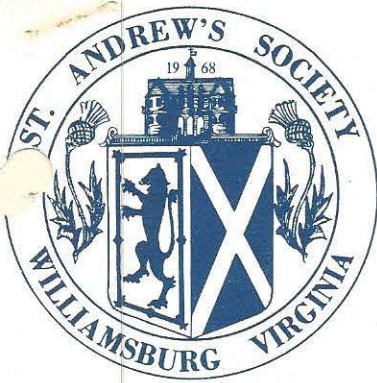




Saint Andrew's Society

Williamsburg, Virginia

Quarterly News Letter, No. 3

March, 1969

HAGGIS, SONGS AND POETRY FEATURED AT SOCIETY'S FIRST BURNS NICHT DINNER

A nearly complete turnout of members and guests was on hand January 25 for the Society's first Burns' Nicht Dinner in honor of Robert Burns. The Rev. Walter Kennedy, an Ulster Scot by birth who is Minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Newport News, read some of Burns' works and colorfully and interestingly discussed the kind of man Burns was.

Mr. and Mrs. Scott Hester and Mrs. Gail Ticknor led the group in several Scottish folk-tunes, ending with all linking arms for "Auld Lang Syne."

A highlight for some that evening was the chance to taste the legendary Haggis, Burns's "great Chieftain o' the puddin' race." Escorted in by Piper Maxwell, an uncertain waiter seemed amazed at the fuss over a bit of hash; a number carefully placed in their mouths just enough for a taste, and left the rest untouched; but mostly, it was the perfect Scottish climax to an enjoyable meal.

The Burns' Nicht affair was the work jointly of President Robert A. Duncan, Entertainment Chairman Duncan M. Cocke and Secretary James P. Whyte, Jr. David M. Shepherd, vice president, arranged for the supply of Haggis.

NEXT TRADITIONAL-STYLE EVENT SCHEDULED IN MAY: THE KIRKIN' O' THE TARTAN

Directors have under consideration the invitation of the Williamsburg Baptist Church (The Rev. Thomas Pugh, Pastor), that the Society hold its first Kirkin' o' the Tartan there in May. This group participation in religious worship will be the subject of a later announcement.

HIGHLAND GAMES AT GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN TO HIGHLIGHT BLACK WATCH OF CANADA

The 1969 Grandfather Mountain Highland Games program is scheduled this year on July 12-13. Featured attraction is the fine Black Watch of Canada.

For persons wishing to obtain more information on these Games, the most outstanding in this region of the nation, write to Mrs. Agnes McRae Morton, Linville North Carolina, 28646. In past years, visitors have found it best to make their hotel/motel arrangements early in the year.

Other Dates of Note

In April, the annual Indoor Highland Games will be held at Toronto, date not set.

In May, the Ottawa-Highland Dancing Assn. of Ontario, open competition dancing, May 10; Penticton, B.C., Canada Highland Games, May 17; Alma, Michigan Highland Games, May 24.

In June, the Annual Gathering of the Clan MacMillan is scheduled in Williamsburg. Clan Chief will be present.

In July, in addition to the Grandfather Mountain Games, there are these events scheduled: Brantford, Ontario, Canada Highland Games, July 12; Scarborough, Ontario, Canada, Games, July 19; Port Credit, Ontario, Canada, Games, July 27.

In August, the major North American event--the Glengarry Highland Games at Maxville, Ontario, including the North American Pipe Band Championships, will be held August 2.

Other major events are the August 3 International Highland Games at Collins Landing, N.Y. (1000 Islands) and Games on August 4 at Cobourg, Ontario and August 16 at Fergus, Ontario.

these two apparently violently opposed opinions may be summarised as (a) "There are certain known occasions upon which tartan was used as a Clan uniform before 1745, and it is logical to assume that there were others at present unknown"; and (b) "There is no evidence for assuming that everybody, always, wore tartan as a uniform." From this, it would appear that, although the latter opinion might be considered the more cool and scientific, there is really no essential difference between the two viewpoints.

Antiquity of Tartan as a Pattern

From the available evidence, all that one can be sure of is that the garb of the Highlanders was multi-coloured, the Latin of early descriptions being apparently incapable of both accurate description and precise, unequivocal translation. Although the "mantles" of the Highlanders are sometimes described as "striped," this effect can be achieved quite easily in the pleating of either kilt or belted plaid. Thus, a garment described as striped by an observer (as distinct from an examiner) cannot be taken to be not of tartan. The Gaelic name, Breacan, is of little help in defining the pattern of the material as, in modern usage at any rate, it can signify anything from "piebald" to "spotted."

From time to time discoveries have been made in Scotland of fragments of material dating back as far as the third century, A.D., and although these appear to have been patterned mainly with small checks, thus resembling the shepherd plaid rather than tartan as we are here considering it, they are mainly in twill weave and thus exhibit the principal distinguishing features of the present-day tartan, i.e., a twill woven pattern of squares and lines using the same material for weft and for warp. Taking into account also that the Celtic race have a certain fondness for colour and a certain tendency towards formal artistic design, there would seem to be little room for doubt that the modern style of tartan (albeit perhaps not the symmetrical type), would make its appearance at an early date, probably almost as soon as the advance of the dyer's art made it possible.

The Clan Tartan Idea

The blame for starting the Clan tartan idea is usually placed on the shoulders of Sir Walter Scott, or on the tartan weaving trade. Oddly enough, since their publications set out to show that Clan tartans were a rigidly formed system of Heraldry going back into the mists of antiquity, the Sobieski brothers do not seem to have been called upon to share the responsibility. To accept the Vestiarium Scotium view that Clan tartans were rigidly defined at an early date, is to accept that the Highlander of the 15th-18th centuries would stand for a degree of law and order in his dress that he would not stand for in other matters. There is a certain amount of evidence, e.g., the Grant "Champion" and "Piper" portraits, to show that the more powerful chiefs dressed their immediate followers or personal staffs in matching tartans, and also that upon occasion Clansmen were required to turn out in uniform. There is no suggestion that these liveries and uniforms were intended as a means of identification, but rather that they were intended to give a good show on parade. Very shortly after the repeal of the Dress Act, in 1782, Wilsons were making a few tartans under Clan names; at this time they must surely have had some customers who knew whether there had been such things before 1745. On this basis, it would

Secarlett (cont).

not seem unreasonable to deduce that the Clan tartan idea existed before 1745, that it was encouraged by the Act of Union, and perhaps also by the 1715 Rising. Upon this foundation the Clearances, Emigration and Victorian romanticism would have been sufficient to build the tartan structure that we have to-day.

Origin of Clan Tartans

There can never have been a "Tartan Design Service," and we must look to the local weaver as the source of designs which became adopted for Clan use, although this is not to say that one weaver might not base his designs upon those of another. Costing for my own work suggests that a piece of material to a special design would be sold for up to three times the price of a standard pattern made in long lengths, and in a poverty-stricken country it is doubtful whether there would be any call for special patterns at all, except from the Chiefs. In villages or areas occupied mainly by one Clan plus its adherents the eventual, though not necessary, emergence of this pattern as the Clan sett can be surmised, while in the more sparsely populated neighborhoods a District sett might easily develop.

Undoubtedly the best source of old setts lies in the various collections of pre-1745 portraits, and it is unfortunate that these are all of either chiefs of their retainers wearing tartans that bear no close resemblance to the present day clan setts. This has been hailed as overwhelming evidence that Clan tartans are a modern invention, but shows only that the wearing of a Clan tartan, if it existed, was not obligatory. In fact, a man who could afford to have his portrait painted could afford a best suit in which to have it painted. Much is made by authors of the alleged accuracy of the work of many artists, which is rather remarkable in view of the artist's ability to interfere with the pattern of his model and of the fact that we have no original fabrics from which to compare the portraits. Representation of tartan also presents some difficulty for the artist, as witness the picture from the "Army Clothing Book" which is reproduced by Mr. J. Telfer Dunbar in "Highland Dress," in which a Highland soldier is depicted in a kilt with a diagonal pattern. The same author describes the differences between the tartans worn by the Grant "Champion" and "Piper," and goes on to say that he feels sure that both tartans are intended to be the same. If the artist is as accurate as he is claimed to be, the tartans are either the same, or they are not the same. An artist for whom, apparently with some justification, great accuracy is claimed, was David Morier, whose Culloden picture is often cited against Clan tartans. In writing of this picture in the above-mentioned book, Mr. Dunbar gives details of twenty-three different tartans worn by eight Highlanders, but omits to point out that of the five kilted figures shown, as far as can be ascertained from the colour plate reproduced in the book, three are wearing very similar greenish tartans in the kilt, while the remaining two have similar reddish ones. In view of the extant order for Black Watch tartans for the regiment, in which the requirement is stated that it should be as "nearly of one sort and colour as may be," and bearing in mind probable vagaries of vegetable dyes, one wonders whether it is reasonable to expect exact similarity between tartans of those days, even when worn as a uniform.

TOP FIFTY SURNAMES IN SCOTLAND, contributed by Robert A. Duncan

Using the 1951 census as compiled by the Registrar General, the following frequency of Scottish surnames was found. They include the 50 most popular names in Scotland. A previous census in 1861 revealed the Smiths to be the most numerous, with MacDonalds second. The "Broons" have now ousted the MacDonalds into a third place position.

1. Smith	19,396	18. Mackay	6,920+	35. Graham	5,356+
2. Brown	14,462	19. Ross	6,864+	36. Gray	5,311
3. MacDonald	14,039+	20. Young	6,751	37. Kerr	5,120+
4. Thomson	13,724+	21. MacLean	6,654+	38. Hunter	5,110
5. Wilson	13,146	22. Mitchell	6,548	39. Allan	5,063+
6. Campbell	12,737+	23. Taylor	6,508	40. White	4,951
7. Robertson	12,383+	24. Morrison	6,376+	41. Grant	4,875+
8. Stewart	12,246+	25. Fraser	6,348+	42. Simpson	4,853
9. Anderson	10,679+	26. Watson	6,295	43. Bell	4,707
10. Johnston	9,774+	27. Walker	6,166	44. Martin	4,495
11. Scott	8,755+	28. MacLeod	6,135+	45. Black	4,172
12. Miller	8,723	29. Henderson	5,889+	46. Kelly	4,074
13. Reid	8,133	30. Ferguson	5,604+	47. MacMillan	4,054+
14. Murray	8,124+	31. Davidson	5,526+	48. Russell	3,955
15. MacKenzie	7,787+	32. Duncan	5,500+	49. Gordon	3,828+
16. Clark	7,676	33. Cameron	5,425+	50. MacGregor	3,820+
17. Paterson	7,356	34. Hamilton	5,371+		

+Surnames with this symbol are considered recognized Clans with tartans

Smith are sept members of the Clan MacPherson and Clan MacFarlane. Brown are sept members of Clan Lamont and Clan MacMillan. The Irish-tinted Kellys belong to Clan MacDonald of the Isles--Clan MacDonald of the Isles has more septs than any other Clan, a total of 213 members!

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NEWS FROM THE CLANS: (Reprinted from The Rampant Lion, Scottish Historic and Research Society of the Delaware Valley, Broomall, Pa.

From Scotland's Magazine, Jan, 1969--"For the first time in a number of years three chiefs of Clan Donald--Gengarry, Clanranald and young Sir Ian Macdonald of Sleat--sat at the same table at the annual dinner in November of the CLAN DONALD SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH. The gesture was of some significance, since no fewer than five recognized chiefs--Lord Macdonald and the Earl of Antrim are the others--Clan Donald has had perhaps more than a fair share of bothers about precedence. Sir Ian, as the youngest of them all, took the opportunity of the dinner to make a plea for unity. He recalled that his late father dropped the title "of the Isles" for the sake of peace and he suggested that if they all met together in the future, Lord Macdonald, as chief of the name, should take precedence, but if he were absent the others should toss a coin for the honour."

The CLAN HANNAY SOCIETY reports a most encouraging response to their appeal for funds to restore Sorbie Tower, the ancient family stronghold in Galloway, so that it will be made safe for visitors.