



Sgurr Uaran

CLAN MACRAE SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA
PO Box 2145, Palestine, TX 75802-2145

March 2021



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Online at www.macrae.org
or find us on Facebook!

**We pray for all MacRaes worldwide to
be safe and sound in body and spirit!**

The President's Letter

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Greetings Fellow MacRaes,

Are we not having some radical weather these days? During the recent Polar Vortex, we endured sustained low temperatures not seen for decades in Texas. We had no water for several days and could not drive out for a week due to the ice on our steep drive. Then we lost power for 26 hours in zero-degree temps! Fortunately, we had a stash of firewood and enough food and water. We lived in front of the fireplace with no TV, no computer and tried to read by candlelight; it reminded us of the pioneer days that our MacRae ancestors lived through. We are warm now, had no broken pipes and are hoping that Texas will fix its electric grid!

So, Judy and I are feeling like most people for we are ready to get out, go somewhere and do something. To prove that point, the Northeast Florida Highland Games were held at the end of February and set a record for attendance! It was the first "in person" Scottish games to take place in a long time. Clan MacRae was the Honored Clan and Commissioner John Wayne McRae reported that MacRaes came from all over even from out of state! Way to go John, good job! It just proves the point that people are tired of being cooped up.

We do believe that Scottish festivals will slowly reopen in 2021, but many have already canceled or are doing virtual events. So far, the Grandfather Mountain Games are still a go in July. Please let me know if you have a festival in your area that needs a Clan MacRae tent. We can help you get started and help you put together a team to work the tent. As a reminder, we do still need to be wise and use caution when in public spaces.

I am pleased to announce our new Editor Michael McRae, who lives in the Chicago area. Welcome aboard Michael! We also have brought together a writing team for our Sgurr Uaran newsletter. It's already produced a synergy among the writers that's got their creative juices flowing. This team will be a huge support to Michael as he starts his journey as Editor. Email Michael if you want to join our writing team.

Also, Bryan McRae and myself are now the front-line contacts for anyone with genealogy questions. Larry Cates has been our clan genealogist since 2006 and we immensely appreciate him. Larry, thank you for all your hard work on behalf of our members!

Larry is still an active member and will be available to Bryan and myself for any difficult genealogy issues.

I am sorry to announce that we are canceling the Scotland tour for September. Each person's safety is extremely important to us and there are just too many hurdles to guarantee a safe international journey this September. Also, in December, we lost Beverly McCraw, the wife of Director Dean McCraw. Dean and Beverly lived in Savannah and she will be sorely missed by our Society, family and friends.

Enjoy 2021 and be safe when you are out and about. Don't throw caution to the wind!

Sgurr Uaran! Bruce W. McRae, President



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2021 Clan MacRae Scottish Events Calendar

The Scottish festivals listed below will have a Clan MacRae tent hosted by one of our members. For a list of all Scottish festivals, go to www.asgf.org. If there is a local Scottish festival where you would like to be our Clan MacRae host, please contact our President, Bruce McRae, at brucewaynemcrae@gmail.com. We'll help you get started! Please check the website of each game as needed as some games have been canceled or postponed.

April 3-4, 2021 - Canceled! - San Antonio Highland Games, **San Antonio, TX** www.sahga.org Contact Ronald Crowe at doccrowe@gmail.com.

April 6, 2021 - National Tartan Day and the 701st anniversary of the Declaration of Arbroath

April 2021 - Canceled! - Loch Norman Highland Games, **Huntersville, NC** www.lochnorman.com Contact Leon Folsom at leon.folsom@prodigy.net.

April 2021 - Canceled! - Las Vegas Highland Games, **Las Vegas, NV** www.lasvegascelticsociety.org Contact Patrick MacRae at patrick@patrickmacrae.org.

May 2021 - Bethabara Highland Games, **Winston-Salem, NC** www.cityofws.org/Departments/Recreation-Parks/Historic-Bethabara/HBP-Events-Listing/Bethabara-Highland-Games Contact Larry McRae at mcralt@gmail.com.

May 1, 2021 - Postponed! - Savannah Scottish Games, **Savannah, GA** www.savannahscottishgames.com Contact Dean McCraw at dean_mccraw@bellsouth.net.

May 15-16, 2021 - Smoky Mountain Scottish Festival, **Maryville, TN** www.smokymountaingames.org Contact Andy McRae at amcrae52@gmail.com.

June 25-26, 2021 - Ohio Scottish Games, **Berea, OH** www.ohioscottishgames.com Contact Darcee Olshavsky at darcillao@gmail.com.

June 26-27, 2021 - San Diego Scottish Games (**Virtual Event!**), **San Diego, CA** www.sdhighlandgames.org Contact Patrick MacRae at patrick@patrickmacrae.org.

July 8-11, 2021 - Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, **Linville, NC** Clan MacRae Dinner on Saturday, July 10th. www.gmhg.org Contact Bruce McRae at brucewaynemcrae@gmail.com.

August 2021 - Colorado Scottish Festival, **Edgewater, CO** www.scottishgames.org Contact Bruce McRae at brucewaynemcrae@gmail.com.

September 4-5, 2021 - Caledonian Club Scottish Highland Games, **Pleasanton, CA** www.thescottishgames.com Contact James McCrea at clanmacrae_na_sf@yahoo.com.

September 10-12, 2021 - Longs Peak Scottish-Irish Highland Festival, **Estes Park, CO** www.scotfest.com Contact Bruce McRae at brucewaynemcrae@gmail.com.

September 2021 - Middle Tennessee Highlands Games, **Nashville, TN** www.midtenngames.com Contact Andy McRae at amcrae52@gmail.com.

September 11-12, 2021 - Columbus Scottish Festival, **Columbus, IN** www.scottishfestival.org Contact Ray White at channaray@protonmail.com.

September 18-19, 2021 - Niagra Celtic Heritage Festival, **Olcott, NY** www.niagaraceltic.com Contact Bruce McRae at brucewaynemcrae@gmail.com.

September 18-October 2, 2021 - Clan MacRae Tour of Scotland

September 2021 - Houston Highland Games, **Houston, TX** www.houstonhighlandgames.com Contact Bruce McRae at brucewaynemcrae@gmail.com.

October 15-17, 2021 - Stone Mountain Highland Games, **Atlanta, GA** www.snhg.org Contact David Ray at dhray@charter.net.

November 6, 2021 - Charleston Scottish Games, **Mount Pleasant, SC** www.charlestonscots.org Contact Dean McCraw at dean_mccraw@bellsouth.net.

November 5-7, 2021 - Tucson Scottish Highland Games, **Tucson, AZ** www.tucsoncelticfestival.org Contact Sheila Schmidt at sschmidt99@msn.com.

November 12-14, 2021 - Salado Scottish Festival, **Salado, TX** www.saladoscottishfestival.com Contact Ebby Darden at ebbydarden@msn.com.

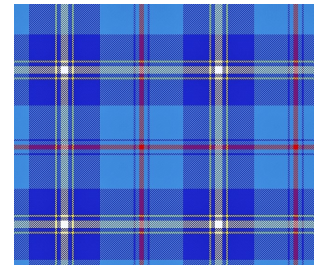
November 30, 2021 - St Andrew's Day

*Come out and join us at one or more of these festivals in
2021 and meet your fellow MacRaes!*



Taking orders now for our Clan MacRae North American Tartan Fabric!

It's official! We now have 45 yards of our Clan MacRae North American tartan fabric for you to order! The 13-ounce worsted wool is double width at 59", so only 4 yards are needed for a kilt. The fabric is \$70 a yard plus a small shipping cost (no tax). You may order any length which makes it ideal for scarves, crafts, etc. There are also professional kiltmakers who can make you a kilt or a scarf, etc. If you are interested in ordering our tartan fabric or having something made, please contact Judy at judymcrae777@gmail.com. Here is the meaning of our tartan:



"In our Society Tartan, the MacRae "Sett" is used, of course, as the basis of construction. The colours used were not randomly chosen, but have significance, viz.: The Base colour is the light blue with a white stripe as in the Saltire Flag. There is a somewhat darker blue/grey that symbolizes the Ocean crossed by "The scattered children of Kintail". Then we have the Stronger blue that, in combination with the Red and White stripes, symbolizes the colours of "The Stars and Stripes" of our American Flag. Finally, the White Stripe is supported on each side by a lining of Gold. This represents the "Golden Opportunity" that this country has represented to its vast number of immigrants who came seeking a better and more prosperous life."

A Big Welcome to our New Editor Michael Thomas McRae!

We are pleased to announce Michael Thomas McRae as our new volunteer Editor for our Sgurr Uaran newsletter. We are thrilled to have Michael as a part of the team! Michael has been married to his wife Kristen for five years and they have two children, Harper is 2 years old and Nolan is 6 months old. They reside in Mokena, IL which is in the Chicagoland area.

Michael provided us with a brief history of his adulthood: He joined the Navy soon after graduating from high school and was enlisted for five years and completed two tours of duty in Iraq from which he received a Purple Heart. After the Navy, Michael became a Police Officer; however, he decided after a few years that he really wanted a safer career, so he enlisted in an Engineering program at Northern Illinois University. He currently works in the mechanical contracting industry across the Midwest and hopes to continue with this work until retirement.

Michael really loves the great outdoors including fishing, boating, hunting, golf, and essentially any other outdoor activity.

To the best of Michael's knowledge, his ancestors settled in the U.S. in Anson County, N.C. and many settled in Waynesboro, M.S. This is where he first attended a family reunion at approximately 16 years old. Since then he has taken up an interest in learning more about his Scottish roots and heritage. He has also done the DNA testing on Ancestry.com as well as FamilyTreeDNA.com and enjoys trying to find where others split off of his tree.

As we said before, we are thrilled to have Michael as our new Editor and we ask all of you to support him by becoming volunteer writers for our awesome Sgurr Uaran.



A Very Successful Northeast Florida Games Were Held in February! Clan MacRae was the Honored Clan!

The Northeast Florida Scottish Games brought a "Wee Bit o' Scotland" to the Northeast Florida area in late February. Clan MacRae was the Honored Clan and was piped in and introduced by the Games President at the Sponsor's Reception. Our Commissioner John Wayne McRae gave a few opening remarks and they all enjoyed a beef round and roast suckling pig! They broke the attendance record for the games with 23-24,000 there with many McRaes from the surrounding region and other states attending! In the picture at left is John Wayne's Grandson, Thomas Jackson Hastings, in the middle is Commissioner John Wayne and Commissioner David Ray on the right who sponsors the Stone Mountain Games MacRae tent in GA. Commissioner Daniel McRae who sponsors our tent in Winter Springs, FL was there and also Tracy McRae who brought in some of her snacks from her catering business. Many MacRaes were able to make family connections with those working the Clan MacRae tent, so all in all, it was a very successful games for everyone!



Savoring the McRae Family Heritage

by Herb McRae

In September of 2018 my wife, Carol, and I saw pieces of a puzzle come together in a marvelous way. We had the opportunity to see parts of Scotland, including much of the McRae clan heritage, with our daughter, Heath, and son, John, along with his wife, Shannon. We had wanted our children to see and savor the wonderful heritage we enjoy as a family and to share in the stories we have talked about for years.

Heath had planned for a year to trek the West Highland Way from outside of Glasgow to Ft. William, a total hike of over 100 miles in 5 days. We found that both John and Shannon had available vacation time from their jobs during this period and had wanted to see some friends in London. Also, we had discovered that a Rick Steves tour of Scotland was starting just as we would all go our separate ways. Carol and I had done one of his tours of Rome and were sold on the value of how it was conducted. Serendipity!

Carol loves to plan trips and I love to take them. A great combination! She got busy lining up places to stay, transportation and guide services for the family portion of our trip. We decided that John and Shannon would meet us in Edinburgh and Heath would take a bus at the end of her hike to Inverness where we would all meet up.

Our flights into Edinburgh arrived within 30 minutes of one another so Carol, John, Shannon and I got an Uber ride into the city to Jurys Inn hotel on Jeffrey Street. For the next three days, we explored the Edinburgh Castle, St. Giles' Cathedral, National Museum of Scotland, Holyroodhouse Palace and Queen's Museum, several pubs, and bistros. We enjoyed whiskey tasting at



Cadenhead's Whiskey Shop and then a delicious meal at the Gardener's Cottage near Calton Hill. We topped off one day with something I had wanted to do for many years - hike up Arthur's Seat, the site of the "wild MacRae's" mutiny!



John and Shannon were having high tea as Carol and I began the hike at Holyrood Park. Halfway up, my 80 year-old body began to complain, but I was determined to continue and was encouraged by Scottish hikers who passed us on the way up. It was a brilliantly sunny, cool day and hundreds of people were out to enjoy the weather and the hike. John and Shannon said they would come along as soon as they could, so as we neared the top, to my surprise, there stood the two of them! "How did you get here so quickly," I asked them. "Did you find a different path up?" "No," admitted John. "We just caught a taxi to nearly the top." Oh, well. That is youth for you.

The rest of the climb was the steepest, but we made it and took a picture of John and me by the monument at the apex of the mount and then, a photo of all of us with the Castle and Edinburgh in the background. We had a 360-degree view of this area of Scotland on a beautiful and clear day. It was glorious.



John, Shannon, Carol, and Herb atop Arthur's Seat

Our hotel was close to the Edinburgh train station, so we checked out the next day and rolled our suitcases to the station for our train to Inverness. Carol had found us a bed and breakfast not far from the Inverness rail station. John rented a car since he and Shannon were going on to the Isle of Skye, Wales and London once they left us in two days at Eilean Donan Castle.

Heath joined us that afternoon after taking a bus from Ft. William to the Inverness station. She made her way to the B&B, cleaned up and we all walked down to the River Ness. We had a delightful dinner, all together that night, exchanging stories of our Edinburgh visit with her adventures of trekking, in record time, through the mountains and pasturelands of the western highlands.

With a car at our disposal, we decided to take in Culloden in the morning and attend a tour and tasting at the Tomatin Distillery on the A9 that afternoon. It was the second time Carol and I had been to Culloden, and the museum and grounds were much improved over our first visit. Extensive exhibits showed the history that led to the battle and the tragic aftermath that destroyed many families and their livelihoods, sending them in a diaspora around the world.

At the distillery, we had a lovely young guide who was extremely knowledgeable of the industry. She made our tour interesting and informative. We thoroughly enjoyed our tasting afterward as well...*slainte va!* Except for John, of course, who was driving. Sweet revenge after the Arthur's seat play! We did make sure he had a bottle for the evening, though.

The next day was the highlight of the trip. Carol had arranged for George Munro, a Highlands guide, to drive us over to Eilean Donan Castle and Clachan Duich graveyard preceded by a visit to the site of the Battle of Glenshiel. George's "Granny" was a MacRae and he knew a great



He regaled us with stories, jokes and lively tales for the full day. John and Shannon followed us in their car, so they missed some of the stories, but we made George retell them over lunch at Hotel Dornie.

I have tried to locate the gravesite of my great grandfather, James Hervey McRae, a rebel who served the South and was killed during the Civil War. He was from somewhere around Chesterfield, SC and had a farm there with his mother. While at the Clachan Duich graveyard, we found the memorial stone of a presumed Clan chief (since, according to George, he was in a private section of the graveyard) who also had 'Hervey' as part of his name. I have no idea if there is any connection, but it does not seem to be a common name. Oh well, food for future thought.

Eilean Donan Castle was amazing as always. Carol and I had been there 25 years before and more rooms were open this time. Also, a gift shop and welcome center were new to us, so souvenirs were purchased for everyone as a reminder of this special day! John and Shannon left us at the Castle for an overnight on Skye and Heath, Carol and I returned to Inverness with George. The next day the three of us caught the train back to Edinburgh for two more days of exploring and enjoying before we had to put Heath, and her huge pack, on the train back to Glasgow for her flight home to Florida.



Carol and I moved to the Parliament House Hotel on Calton Hill where we joined the Rick Steves group for another ten days of Scottish hospitality and history. All the while we relished the time we had with our children as we enjoyed and learned together as a family the marvelous heritage we have in this truly incredible country!



Branson Jackson McRae 1920-1997

contributed by James William McRae (Branson's son)



Branson and Lorraine McRae

Branson Jackson McRae was born January 9, 1920 in the small township of Pee Dee, Montgomery County, North Carolina. His parents, James Jackson McRae and Maggie Smith McRae, raised their children on a small family farm where they kept some livestock and grew and preserved most of what they ate. Branson's dad also supplemented his income by being a shoe cobbler and a self-taught gun smith. As a young man, Branson worked on the farm and described himself as an "Opportunist and a Dreamer". He recalls that in the 1930s when "I'd have a mule in a cotton patch and would be seeing all the nice automobiles drive by. There was a special Buick out there then and I would think, "Will I ever have one of them?" Later in life, Branson not only had a Buick but he also owned a Buick dealership.

After spending his boyhood on the farm, he moved to Wilmington, NC to assist in the war effort during World War II. Branson worked as a carpenter in the shipyard, building bunks and cabinetry inside the ships. This is where he met his wife to be, Lorraine Hamilton and they married in 1941. In 1944 Branson and Lorraine returned to Montgomery County where Branson and his brothers formed a successful construction company. During this time, McRae Brothers Manufacturing built many of the homes in the county.

In 1958 Branson announced that a New York shoe manufacturing company was moving into the old school building in the community, which would bring much needed jobs into the rural area. Branson had purchased the abandoned school years earlier to store construction materials. When the New York company decided to locate in Alabama instead, Branson decided to take a shot at the shoe business himself. He invested \$100,000 in cash and assets in exchange for a third of the new company's stock and sold the remaining two thirds interest to local investors.

The company went to work producing children shoes under the Grow-Right name with the guarantee "The soles would outlast the uppers" which they did. The shoe business was not an easy one for there was lots of competition that was better capitalized. Even with all the effort, there were little if any profits.

Then in 1966 everything changed. The US government was looking for manufacturers that could produce combat boots that would hold up to the hot, humid conditions of Vietnam. The stitching of their current welt constructed boots was rotting out and the soles were falling off. Branson, the "Dreamer and Opportunist" kicked in and McRae Industries Inc. was awarded its first government contract in 1967.

The manufacturing process being used by McRae was called "vulcanizing" and it was far superior to other methods and this construction method continues to be used today on McRae's commercial footwear. McRae has continuously made military combat boots for the US Government and some foreign Governments such as Saudi Arabia, Brunei, Canada, Israel, and the UK since 1967. During this time, McRae Industries has manufactured in excess of 18,000,000 pairs of boots.



Early building (1925) still incorporated into the shoe factory today

IN STOCK:
For back-to-school orders
CAMP BOOT - CHUKKA BOOT
FOUR EYELET OXFORD
PLUS... many popular styles
with conventional leather uppers
having the exclusive GROW-RIGHT features.

SEE THEM AT THE FOLLOWING SHOWS:
New York Popular Price Shoe Show -
Hotel Sheraton - Atlantic Room 505 -
April 30-May 4
San Francisco Shoe Show - April 30-May 4
Dallas Shoe Show - May 7-10
Columbus Shoe Show - May 8-10

GROW-RIGHT® waterproof shoes
for children's all weather wear

This Fall be sure your store has the only waterproof shoe for children with these outstanding selling features: Laboratory tested... SYL-MER tanned glove leather uppers that "breathe" yet keep water out... All seams sealed... modern molded construction produces unbreakable, waterproof bond between upper and sole... No nails... No laces... Steel arch supports... Deep, insulating full-cushion midsole... Foot conforming flexibility-needs no breaking in... Holds its shape through extraordinary wear... So durable, so lasting that each pair sold is guaranteed.

Five widths in sixteen sizes of sensible wide toe design enable you to fit even the problem foot. Long markup makes profitable retailing possible.

UNIT VULCANIZED IN
PROCESS 82
U.S. Patent No. 2,792,075

GRO-RITE SHOE COMPANY, INC. A WELCO-RO-SEARCH AFFILIATE
Mount Gilead, North Carolina

GROW-RIGHT
Get a pair of
A NEW PAIR FREE
on \$10.00 purchase of any
other shoes. See your dealer
for details. No cash redemption.

Protected dealerships available

Over the years Branson started and/or bought many companies which reflect his entrepreneurial instincts. One in particular was American West Trading Company, a manufacturer of western style boots which was purchased in 1996. This company is now known as Dan Post Boot Company (danpostboots.com) and continues to be one of McRae Industries leading divisions. The brands featured by this division are Dan Post, Laredo, McRae Industrial, and Dingo.

Other start-ups and acquisitions include the following:

- AMIC - land development company in Charleston, SC
- Compsee Inc - automatic identification products and svcs
- McRae Office Solutions - distribute and maintain office products in NC
- McRae Buick / Chevrolet - car dealership
- Uwharrie Mountain Lodge and Restaurant - restaurant and motel
- Sacks Inc. - fast food restaurant in Raleigh, NC
- McRae printing - local print shop



Branson McRae on the farm (1930)

In addition to his duties as President, CEO, and Chairman of the Board of McRae Industries, Branson was an active member of the community and a philanthropist who supported many civic and charitable causes. He was also active politically and served on the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners.

The first of Branson McRae's ancestors to settle in the US were brothers Duncan and Donald. Duncan (death 1782-1787) settled on the east side of the Pee Dee River near Hamer's Creek, Montgomery County, NC. Donald (death 1789) was a tailor by trade and settled in Fayetteville, NC.

As it turned out, Duncan's granddaughter Flora McRae married Donald's son, Finley McRae, in 1788. This "kissing cousin" phenomenon was not uncommon at the time, as young people often married within the Clan. Finley and Flora's family lived on Clark's Creek near the town of Mt. Gilead, NC.

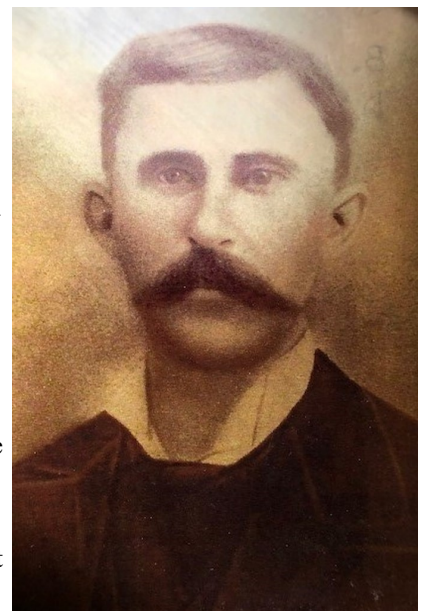
Their second son John R. McRae (1800-1843) lived on his parent's homestead and then later owned nearly 300 acres of his own; he married Jane (Jincy) Parker. They had a total of 14 children. Unfortunately, John died relatively early in life and Jincy was forced to raise her youngest children along with some of her grandchildren as well.

John and Jincy's son Murphy (1821-1855) married Amanda (Mandy) Williams. Murphy died from disease when he was only 34 years old. Mandy died three years later from pneumonia, leaving four orphaned children.

Joseph Cephus McRae (1855-1901), son of Murphy and Amanda McRae lived with Asbury and Mary Bailey in Anson County, NC following his mother's (Mandy) early death. He later married one of Asbury's daughters, Margaret.

One of Joseph Cephus and Margaret's sons was James Jackson McRae (1889-1983). James married Maggie Smith and they had seven children. Their second son was Branson Jackson McRae.

Branson passed away in 1997 after battling mesothelioma lung cancer and it is presumed that he contracted the disease from his earlier exposure to asbestos when he worked in the shipyards as a young man. Branson and Lorraine's daughters, Gail and Sandra, are retired school teachers and live in NC. The two sons are active in the company with Gary as President and CEO and James as Vice-President and Secretary. Lorraine is 98 years old and lives in the lake home she and Branson bought in 1980 located on Lake Tillery on the Pee Dee River. The family remains close and are fortunate enough to be in close proximity to one another to visit often with Lorraine keeping a tight rein on the whole Clan.



Joseph Cephus McRae

Finding our Clan During COVID!

contributed by Melissa McRae



Greetings from Ohio and from two of your newest members!

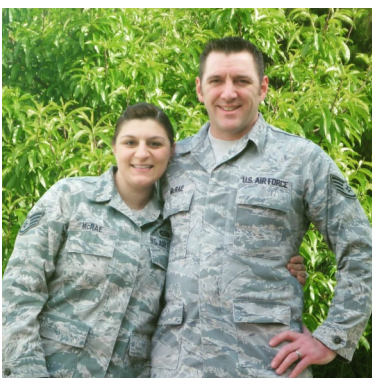
Needless to say, 2020 was a year unlike any other for most of us. While many used the time to find new hobbies and ways to connect with family, we used it as a time to get connected to a part of our family we know the least

about - the McRaes. In doing so, we found you!

My name is Melissa, and I am a McRae by marriage to Benjamin (Ben) ... but I like to say he found me because I was meant to be one, a McRae! The things that make a MacRae were always what made me stand out with my Swiss and Bavarian roots and he with his family. Despite the love of the name, due to some difficult history, my husband and I have no connection to the McRae side of our family and we are at peace with that. Despite this we have always been very proud of the name, and this year I decided to give the name new life in our home - so I found our MacRae Clan for a Christmas gift. It was time to breathe new life into the name and our home. But first, just a bit more about us!

Ben and I have been married almost 10 years and met in the Air Force while stationed in Barksdale AFB in Louisiana. Ben and I were both Intel analysts and he was stationed at Offutt AFB (NE) and Barksdale. He was a ballistic missile analyst, worked with anti-terrorism teams and B-52s and deployed to Afghanistan, Qatar and Guantanamo. I was stationed at Elmendorf AFB (Alaska) and Barksdale and worked with F-22 fighter jets, anti-terrorism teams, a nuclear task force and the nuclear bombers training unit.

Ben and I are both disabled veterans in our 30s and have been getting back on our feet after years of medical battles. Due to my health I am high-risk for COVID so it has kept me especially house-bound. We love our home but it has been hard not traveling and meeting new people like we used to do regularly. Ben is now getting a degree in



psychology and I'm working on yoga certifications and holistic care (reiki and healing touch) to provide free care for disabled veterans. We want to bring a holistic healing approach for our warriors to combine with western medicine to heal mental and physical pain.

We have traveled the world together a few times over and love road trips with our dogs - in 11 years together we have lived in Louisiana, Ohio, Colorado and back to Ohio all the while hauling two Great Danes and my very old prior-Ohio farm dog. As individuals we both loved to travel and learn history and visit new places - as a team, it's our life.

With 2020 being such a hard year for connecting and travel I was reflecting on our old travels and planning our next adventures, if only on paper. For some reason the MacRaes were heavy on my heart and I felt it was time for me to connect to the name and for Ben to find pride in sharing it with me and for Scotland to make its way higher on our list.

So that's when I found you, our MacRae Clan, and gave it to Ben as a Christmas gift.

Christmas morning Ben opened up an entire MacRae gift set that included "History of the Clan Macrae With Genealogies" by Alexander MacRae, a few copies of the Scurr Uaran newsletter, our Welcome Letter in a frame with our Family Membership to the Clan. He was SO excited and never expected any of it.

I even bought us shirts that say "MacRae - wreaking havoc since the Middle Ages" and found a MacRae pin for Ben's kilt (let me tell you about the looks a shirtless man in a kilt gets while grilling on a hot day in Louisiana...). He immediately got to reading the newsletters and history.



We are nature loving folk, and I told Ben we need to look at family like we do the regrowth of trees and forests - sometimes you lose a branch, but it only takes a twig to be replanted to start a tree again with new roots. With proper love and care, or sometimes blessings and dumb luck, a forest can grow. So... we have planted a MacRae twig and are finding our roots together for 2021.

Every night Ben reads more of his book and fills me in on where we came from. He has said repeatedly, "if ever we had people - it's the MacRaes." He also tells me how amazing it is to read about the MacRaes fighting wars in Afghanistan ... just like him.

We are very excited to be a part of Clan MacRae and look forward to meeting you when the world is a little less chaotic... we hope this finds you safe in today's chaos, and we are glad to be blessed with the genes and name to handle such times. Blessings to all, from Ben and Melissa (and the dogs)!

The 1715 Battle of Sheriffmuir

contributed by Judy McRae

One of the most significant events in Clan MacRae history is the Battle of Sheriffmuir, the first battle of the 1715 Jacobite uprising. Many events led to this uprising, but there were two that really rankled the Scots. The first was the 1707 Act of Union whereby 400 years of Scottish independence were “undone” as England and Scotland united. The second event was the ascension of George I to the British throne as the first monarch of the House of Hanover. George was German, Protestant and supposedly could not even speak English. It is said that there were over 50 closer relatives to Queen Anne who had died, but all Catholics were banned from ascension to the throne by the 1701 Act of Settlement law.

So in September of 1715, John Erskine, Earl of Mar raised the Jacobite standard at Braemar starting the uprising against George I. What was their goal? They wanted to depose George and replace him with James Francis Edward Stuart. Jacobite, derived from Jacobus - Latin for James, was the term given to those who continued to support the Stuart dynasty as representing the true heirs to the throne. It is interesting to note that the House of Stuart began with King Robert II of the House of Bruce as the first King of Scotland in 1371.

It was on a bitterly cold day then in November of 1715 that an indecisive battle was fought at Sheriffmuir between the Jacobites under the Earl of Mar and George I's forces under John

Campbell, Duke of Argyll. Mar commanded one of the largest Highland armies ever raised numbering around 12,000 men opposing around 4,500 government troops. The opposing armies outflanked each other, with the right wing of each army overwhelming the left wing of the other. Unfortunately, the MacRaes were on the Jacobites' left wing. They fought valiantly for many hours against Argyle's heavy cavalry dragoons. They were pushed back to the Allan Water where they were cut down almost to a man. There is an old saying that there were 58 new widows in Kintail that day.

It seems odd to be drawn to such a tragic event, but I feel a sense of awe and reverence when I consider men willing to fight to the death for a cause. For those of us who have been to the Sheriffmuir Battlefield, we know it is not an easy trek to get there from Kintail. And we know from historical references that the MacRaes were poorly clothed and poorly supplied, but what they had in abundance was a will to fight for what they believed was right and they had the courage to die. Most of us do not even have a clue

about the horrors of war and I believe the reality of Sheriffmuir was worse than any battle scene in Braveheart. The MacRae warriors at Sheriffmuir were outnumbered and savagely attacked by the British dragoons and each time their lines were broken, the MacRaes rallied again up to ten times that day.

The MacRae clan crest badge has an arm grasping a sword with the word Fortitudine which is Latin for “with fortitude”. When you look up the definition of fortitude, you come across “mental and emotional strength in facing difficulty, adversity, danger, or temptation courageously”. The MacRae warriors at Sheriffmuir displayed all of this and so much more. These warriors did not surrender, but continued to rally again and again and surge forward as they fought superior forces unto their very deaths.

November 13, 1715 was a shattering day for Clan MacRae, but we honor the

strength of character and the integrity of these MacRae warriors. In a day and age where loyalty and courage are hard to find, remember Sheriffmuir and the fallen MacRaes. As you put on your MacRae tartan and as you pin on your clan crest badge, remember their courage and shout “Sgurr Uaran”, the war cry of Clan MacRae. It's in your blood to have fortitude - to have mental and emotional strength in facing difficulty, adversity, danger, or temptation courageously. So, rise up MacRaes into the true identity of your warrior blood! Sgurr Uaran!



Whiskey Galore! And Alasdair Ewan MacRae

contributed by Judy McRae



On February 5, 1941, the cargo ship SS Politician ran aground on a sandbar near the island of Eriskay. It was on its way to New Orleans via Jamaica, but because of the war, she was heading to north Scotland to join a convoy for the Atlantic crossing. She was carrying 22,000 cases equal to 264,000 bottles of “premium whisky” for the American market. The cargo also included other goods including Jamaican banknotes worth over \$4 million in US dollars. No crew were injured or killed.

The locals under the “rules of salvage” saw this shipwreck as a “gift from God” to help them through the hard times of wartime rationing for whisky was scarce. So began a game of cat and mouse between the local residents and Customs officials who deemed retrieving the salvage looting because no duty had been paid on it. They raided the locals and confiscated the boats of those suspected of looting. However, it is believed around 2,000 cases or 24,000 whisky bottles were looted. Eventually 19 locals were incarcerated at Inverness Prison for up to two months. One of those was Alasdair Ewan MacRae whose story is below. After legal salvage attempts, the government blew up the ship’s hull, sending it to the depths of Eriskay Sound.

Compton Mackenzie, who lived on the island of Barra, wrote the novel *Whisky Galore!* in 1947 based on this shipwreck. Compton’s character Norman Macleod declares, “Love makes the world go round? Not at all. Whisky makes it go round twice as fast.” The movie *Whisky Galore!* premiered in 1949 and as a remake in 2016.

My Story by Alasdair Ewan MacRae Weekly Scotsman: Thursday, May 30, 1963

We were caught in the Sound of Eriskay. The Custom’s officer and the policeman drew alongside and asked what we were doing. We only had 35 cases on board at the time and I shouted to him that we had been trying to salvage some of the Politician’s cargo. He shouted back that we would get our salvage reward in Lochmaddy Court. We landed at Ledag Jetty and all the cases were taken away. We were charged by the policeman.

But the Politician had more than whisky on board. She was carrying general cargo and there were bicycles, motor bicycles, cotton goods, cigarettes, tobacco, carpets, toothpaste and everything you could think of. But we were only interested in the whisky. I’ve seen a man breaking his heart fishing a heavy case out of her oily hold only to kick it back in disgust when he found that it was ladies stockings and not whisky.



Alasdair MacRae



When we got safely home with our spoil, there was great parties and visiting among the houses. A fine neighborly spirit it was. You could drink that whisky and fall asleep. Five minutes later you would wake up again as fit as a deer and be ready to start all over again. It never harmed any of us and there’s many a sad teetotaler in the cemetery today who would have been better off for a drop of polly.

We went to Lochmaddy Court anyway. The fiscal was very fierce and frustrated, poor man, for he couldn’t talk Gaelic. About 12 of us were sent off to Inverness Jail, escorted by a bunch of policemen, just as if we were a bunch of criminals! When we got there, we were herded, three at a time into wee stalls, I suppose until they could find out what to do with us.

We got out after six weeks. Having no tobacco nearly killed me for I’m very heavy on the pipe. As soon as I got outside the jail, I found a piece of tobacco still in my jacket pocket. I lit my pipe and then started buying more in every tobacconist in Inverness.

There were plenty of drams when I got home for I had a few cases buried down on the seashore, maturing in bond, and these drams were the most enjoyable of the lot for we had suffered a lot for their sake.

The original Whisky Galore! Movie can be watched free on <https://vimeo.com/334445572>.
A good article in Whisky Magazine can be found at <https://whiskymag.com/story?whisky-galore>.

Ceud Mile Fàilte: 100,000 Welcomes to Our New Members!

We warmly welcome the new members to our Society!
We are all the more richer to have you in the family!
Bruce W. McRae. President

#1600 Wendy Sue
El Cajon, CA

#1603 Nansea Markham
Melrose, FL

#1601 Gregory Ayers
Lovettville, VA

#1604 Jackson L McRae
Darlington, SC

#1602 Charles B Porter
Elk, WA

#1605 Daniel S Settle
Brunswick, GA

Notice: Moving soon or recently moved?
Changed your email address recently?

Please email change of address or email to
judymcrae777@gmail.com or mail to
Clan MacRae Society of North America
PO Box 2145
Palestine, TX 75802-2145

2021 Clan MacRae Tour of Scotland



With sadness, Bruce and Judy McRae are canceling the 2021 Clan MacRae Tour of Scotland that was scheduled for this September. After much contemplation, they believe there are just too many unknown issues that hinder them from offering a safe international journey. Everyone expected things would be better in 2021 and no one expected the level of uncertainty that currently exists. Right now, many of the hotels in Scotland are closed and all the coach companies are closed and do not know when they will reopen. Even Eilean Donan Castle is still closed. We know Scotland will open for travel at some point, however there are just too many uncertainties to do the tour this September. Spring of 2023 is the best possibility right now for a future tour!

In Memoriam - Beverley McCraw



Beverley McCraw, wife of our Director Dean McCraw passed away Sunday, December 27, 2020 at home in Savannah after a six-year battle with breast cancer.

Dean and Beverley have been long time Society members who richly enjoy their Scottish heritage. Beverley was a talented kiltmaker and she looked forward to attending Braemar Summer School of Kiltmaking in Troy, NY over the many years of her craft. Dean is wearing one of her kilts in the photo.

She and Dean have hosted MacRae tents in Savannah and Charleston and attended Scottish Games across the Southeast to

watch their granddaughter dance. Beverley has been to Scotland with Dean three times for the Clan MacRae Gatherings there.

Beverley began her nursing career at Memorial Medical Center in Savannah, later with the Red Cross and the Special Care Nursery at Candler Hospital. She was a Certified Lactation Consultant and worked with the Teens and Tots Program. For the last 23 years she served in the Memorial Neonatal Unit where she touched the lives of many. She is greatly missed by her co-workers who she loved dearly and who supported her like family.

Dean hopes to set up a scholarship fund for student nurses in Beverley's name. Beverley and Dean have a strong faith and love for their family with two daughters Lauren and Lindsey and two grandchildren Laurel and Everly. Over the years they were blessed with fostering 43 children and adopted two, Jared and Joseph. In 2002 they were awarded the Service to Children Award by Chatham County DFACS in recognition of their work with foster and adopted children.



2021 Clan MacRae Dinner at Grandfather Mountain

The pandemic has disrupted many things, so even though the Eseeola Lodge is closed now, we are assuming that this year's dinner will be able to take place. That is our hope.

The 65th Annual Grandfather Mountain Highland Games is tentatively scheduled for July 8-12th at MacRae Meadows on Grandfather Mountain near Linville, NC. Attending these Games is a once in a lifetime event that should be on your bucket list! In association with these Games, our Clan MacRae Society has held an annual dinner at the Eseeola Lodge in Linville for over 30 years and it is a glorious and time-honored tradition. The dinner this year at the Eseeola Lodge will be on Saturday evening, July 10, 2021. We reserve a special room and each person attending orders their meal from the Lodge's menu. This way, each person can either choose a steak or a salad and pay accordingly for their dinner. We want all MacRaes visiting the Grandfather Games to join us for this dinner! A cocktail hour with cash bar will precede the meal, and we always enjoy a serenade by the Grandfather Mountain Highlanders on the exquisite grounds of the Eseeola Lodge. This is the only pipe band we know of who wear MacRae tartan kilts! Cocktails begin around 6:30 pm and seating for dinner is at 7:30 pm. Feel free to wear your Scottish finery, but casual dress is also fine. If you plan to attend, please notify Judy McRae at judykrae777@gmail.com by July 9th so she can give Eseeola Lodge an accurate headcount. It is a very special evening and we hope to see you there this year!



Barry Mackenzie, who is originally from Balmacara but now lives in Liverpool, took this picture recently during a visit back home. This photo is taken from an even higher road above Eilean Donan Castle and Barry graciously gave us permission to print this in our newsletter. We believe it is going to create a new fad in photographing our fabulous Eilean Donan Castle.

"The lockdown hasn't deterred my spirit!"
says member Erik Sanders.

