Stepping Aside is Hard to Do; Writing about it is Much More Daunting
By President David R. McKay

It was during a family camping trip in 1962, at St. Ann’s, Nova Scotia, that I was introduced to the Clan Mackay. The newspaper there featured an article about the 24th annual Gaelic Mod (a gathering) at St Ann’s. The news article mentioned that there would be a gathering of the Clan Mackay featuring a distinguished Mackay named J.Keiller Mackay, Chief of the Canadian clan and Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

At the event, it was the beginning of 45 plus years of intensive self discovery of everything Scottish and everything Mackay. A thousand years of heritage was there for the taking. In those days, however, there was no American Clan Mackay. It was not until 1984 that Mackays in USA had the opportunity to get involved with a Mackay Society. What better way to discover Mackay than to join a clan and what better clan to join than Mackay? So in 1984 I answered Ivor and Pag McKay’s invitation and joined the Clan Mackay Society of North America.

Like most new members my only involvement was to read the Mackay newsletter Duthaich Mhic Aoidh “Mackay Country” A mimeographed informative piece put together by Mary Anne McKay of Alexandria, VA (not the Mary Ann McKay, we presently know as treasurer) and one of our current members, Dick McKee of California, as contributing editor. These two volunteers wrote of Mackay happenings from around the country. And again, for several years like most members, that’s about all I did. Interest yes, involvement no; then the Big Step came. Volunteering as a Michigan commissioner got me hooked on what the Society had to offer those who would take a leadership role.

Taking a leadership role forced me to get out of my comfort zone, and to really learn about things Scottish and things Mackay with more understanding. All of my searching for Scottish and Mackay heritage now came with much more satisfaction and understanding. Meeting Mackays with their fastening stories, seeing sites I had read about all these years, visiting Duthaich Mhic Aoth, coordinating and planning Mackay events and activities at our tents, communicating with lots of folks by e-mail, or snail mail, writing for the Banner or the Mackay WEB, participating in committee discussions, talking to folks from around the world with Mackay interest, socializing at banquets, lunches, dinners, having a dram of malt with old friends at various gatherings, listening to the pipes at practices or in concerts, watching the young dancers perform at competition; listening to harpist, fiddlers, guitarist, drummers, from all over the world; all while being a representative of Clan Mackay, has been probably the most rewarding experiences of my life.

The 200th anniversary of Clan Mackay Scotland that Cheryl and I attended, along with 16 USA members and friends, was truly an exciting time. To be in Scotland attending a function of the oldest active clan in existence as the USA President was a once in a life time experience for most clan members.

At this gathering we not only met Lord Reay, hereditary chief of Clan Mackay, but we met the Mackays’ of Scotland as well. There was an opportunity for the three Presidents of Clan Mackay (Scotland, Canada, and USA) to meet, to socialize and to basically have a good time.

Whether it is wearing the kilt marching down 44th Street in New York City’s Tartan Day Parade or down the main aisle of the National Cathedral at the St Andrew’s Tartan Day festivities in Washington DC, the thrill is enhanced by being part of the Clan Mackay’s participation.

Continued on the following page
In July 2009, our members will have a grand opportunity to experience this rush by representing Clan Mackay at the Scotland Homecoming. A rush that can come when marching the Royal Mile in Edinburgh along with 8,500 other clan folk from 121 different clans.

After the weekend’s gathering 16 Mackays will be participating in a tour of Mackay Country. **It is not too late to join them.**

To get the most rewards from any organization one must get involved. My five years as President has been the most rewarding career experience in my life time. I am very proud of the accomplishments that our Society has made during my tenure as President. I will leave the list for others to identify. Let it be said that our progress could not been possible without the hundreds of volunteers from across the country.

Special thank goes to those like our National VP Michelle Sandelier, our Regional VP’s and their commissioners, our treasurer, Mary Ann McKay, our PR Director Mark Bain, our WEB Master Jim Voelker, have made it happen. The support of my family has been essential. Each one of them has contributed in some way. Others have taken a major role in the day to day operation of the Clan. Special thanks go to our Scholarship Chair, my wife, Cheryl McKay, and to our Banner Editor, Membership chair and National Secretary my daughter, Rachel McKay LaVoy.

Now it is time to give way to new and younger members as leaders with new ideas and new ways of conducting business to keep our Society moving forward. We are the oldest active clan society in existence with an important reputation to maintain. Keeping our membership as the prime focus is fundamental in maintaining our success.

The quality and dedication of those who have decided to run for the various offices open in 2009 is very encouraging, and I look forward to great things for Clan Mackay. However, as the focus is on membership their cooperation is as essential for the success of our new leaders as it was for me. Member support through dues, by voting on issues and by letting their opinions be know through the Regional VP is very important.

"We don't accomplish anything in this world alone ... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something." - Sandra Day O'Connor

Thank you all for your support and untiring efforts you have provided to me and the great Clan Mackay Society USA, Inc. these past 5 years.

Dave McKay, President

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**CLAN MACKAY TOUR OF SCOTLAND**

The tour is scheduled to begin on Monday, July 27th, in Edinburgh. It will take you through the Highlands--visiting Scone Palace, Glenmorangie Distillery, Dunrobin Castle and some incredibly beautiful scenery up to the most northern part of Scotland, where you will visit the lands of the Mackays’, and learn of their colorful history. We take a different route back via Durness, Ullapool, and Loch Ness – stopping at Urquhart Castle, Fort William and Stirling Castle before arriving back in Edinburgh on August 1. We need only four more participants to complete the minimum group.

For more detailed information please contact Kate Graham at Caledonian Travel, 2563 River Knoll Drive, Lilburn GA. 30047 e-mail Caledonians@mindspring.com. Phone numbers are 770-979-1010 or 770-979-5283. Don’t miss out on this unique opportunity to travel with other clan members on a tour put together especially for the Mackays.
Voelker To Retire As Web Master

“In Effective December 31, 2008 I will be resigning my position as webmaster for our society.” This was the announcement that Jim Voelker posted on the Clan Mackay USA discussion board December 16, 2008. Jim had informed the Board several weeks ago of his intentions, but publicly he chose his own WEB page to make the announcement. Jim expressed his feelings about his work with the WEB page, “I have enjoyed working with many of you for these several years on this important communication vehicle.”

As far as the Society is concerned Jim and Lois Voelker have always been from Georgia; however, they were transplants from New York City in 1988, when Jim accepted a transfer with IBM as a Computer Course Developer. Jim was born in New York City to Anthony Voelker and Elizabeth McKay. Elizabeth was born near Glasgow and came to the United States as a small child.

Jim has been in the forefront of the leadership of Clan Mackay USA for at least 20 years. He started with the Society as Commissioner from Georgia. From there he served as National Secretary, Membership Chair, National President and finally as WEB Master for the Society. Along with being WEB master Jim and Lois are commissioners for Georgia. Both have contributed significantly to the Society. In 2000, Lois worked with the IRS on the paper work for our tax exempt 501 c3 status.

The Board, the membership, and the friends of Clan Mackay owe a tremendous ‘Thank You’ to Jim Voelker for his 20 years of dedicated service to the Society. On behalf of the Board thank you, Jim and Lois. We would hope you will still be a significant part of our extended family in the future, and continue your presence at the Stone Mountain Games, Georgia, for many summers to come.

Clan Mackay Steamers

In 1881 the Clan Line Association of Steamers was formed and with an influential Glasgow businessman joining the firm, the company was moved to Glasgow. Clan Line head office was established at 109 Hope Street, Glasgow. The original line was formed in 1877 in Liverpool as C.W. Cayzer & Company. In 1890 the name of the company became The Clan Line of Steamers Limited.

There were five CLAN MACKAY steamers from 1882 until 1945. Clan Mackay (1) was built in 1882. It was a 2,171 ton ship and was wrecked in Ceylon in 1891. Clan Mackay (2) was a 2,600 ton ship built in 1894, and sold to Adelaide SS Co. in 1914 and renamed Ceduna. Clan Mackay (3) 5,040 ton ship was built in 1916 and sank after a collision southwest of the Scilly Isles in 1918. Clan Mackay (4) was owned by the Hamburg America Line. In 1914 it was captured by the Royal Navy and named Huntscraft. In 1919 the 5,182 ton Huntscraft was purchased from the Shipping Controller of the Royal Navy, and in 1921 it was renamed Clan Mackay. In 1934 it was wrecked near Sierra Leone. Clan Mackay (5) was a 7,389 ton ex-Empire Gun fleet ship purchased in 1946 from MOWT and renamed Clan Mackay. In 1962 it was sold to Panama, and renamed Babylon.

Executive Board Modifies Dues and Dues Structure Effective as of October 1, 2008

Under the new dues structure there will be only one type of annual membership available. All memberships will include the member, and family members who are included on the member’s W-2 tax form. The yearly cost will be $24 for the membership regardless of the number of members it covers, and will renew on January 1 of each year.

- Members joining in the 1st quarter beginning January, 2009, will pay $24.
- Members joining in the 2nd quarter (April 1, 2009 to June 30, 2009) will pay $18, which covers the remainder of the signing year and renews on January 1, 2010 the following year.
- Members joining in the 3rd quarter (July 1, 2009 to September 30, 2009) will pay $12, which covers the remainder of the signing year and renews on January 1, 2010.
- Members joining in the 4th quarter (October 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009) will pay $6. For the remainder of the current year plus $24 for 2010 for a total of $30.
- On January 1, 2010, current members will be billed the yearly membership amount. New members joining may have their first year’s dues prorated by quarter to reflect their sign-up date.

The First President

by Mark Bain, Public Relations

Ask any fifth grader who the first President of The United States was and undoubtedly you will get the same answer – George Washington. It turns out however, that there were a few first Presidents of the nascent country before George Washington became the first “President of The United States under the United States Constitution”.

For example there was Peyton Randolph (September 5, 1774 to October 22, 1774), the first “President of the Continental Congress of The United Colonies of America”. There was John Hancock (July 2, 1776 to October 29, 1777), the first “President of the Continental Congress of the United States of America”. Then there was Samuel Huntington (March 1, 1781 to July 6, 1781), the first “President of the United States in Congress Assembled”. George Washington became President in 1789, nine Presidents after Samuel Huntington.

Samuel Huntington, the son of a Puritan farmer, was born in Scotland, Connecticut on July 16, 1731. He was a distinguished statesman during the Revolutionary War, a Governor of Connecticut and was a signer of The Declaration of Independence. You can visit his house in Scotland, CT which is a National Historic landmark and museum.

Scotland, CT is also the site of the last seasonal Clan Mackay gathering in the Northeastern part of the country, usually held in early October. At this time of the year the leaves on the plump ancient Chestnut trees have turned a lush golden color and the air is crisp like it’s never been breathed before. It is a magical place of green fields surrounded by low, dry stone walls built with deliberate hands from an age long gone by. We like to call it ‘Oor own Brigadoon’.

It was there, in this time-transcending place that I was privileged to be introduced to Mr. Channing Huntington II, a descendant of Samuel Huntington and a founding member of the Samuel Huntington Homestead Museum. I felt like a stunned fifth grader as he unfolded the unknown story of America’s early years in a hypnotizing narrative I wish I could have recorded for posterity.

As I write this on November 5, 2008 a certain childhood rhyme comes to mind. ‘Remember, remember the fifth of November’. In 1605 Guy Fawkes had challenged the Crown with the ‘Gunpowder Plot’ and was hung, drawn and quartered for his efforts. The Crown called it treason. That very same fate awaited Samuel Huntington and his league of founding fathers - and they certainly knew it.

We cannot comprehend the utter conviction to their principles that these people had. We can, however, tell others of their accomplishments and celebrate in their abilities to be among the very first to bring change.

Today we have a new first President-elect. We wish him Godspeed.

For more information please visit the following websites; www.huntingtonhomestead.org www.scotlandgames.org www.samuelhuntington.org

(L-R) Jim & Connie Bain, Murdoch and Malcolm Bain, Channing Huntington II, Duncan and Elizabeth Bain at the Scotland CT Gathering.
**New Members**

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<tr>
<th>Life Membership</th>
<th>Southeast</th>
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<tr>
<td>Charles McKay</td>
<td>James Charles Mackey</td>
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<td>James and Annalee White</td>
<td>James Bryan Mackey</td>
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<td>Doug McCoy</td>
<td>Lon D. Mackey Family</td>
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<td>Katherine S McCoy</td>
<td>Scott McKay</td>
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<td><strong>International Membership</strong></td>
<td>Kevin and Amy Mackay</td>
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<td>Colin McKay</td>
<td>Lt Hugh McKay Post #</td>
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<td>Lesley Mackay Kimove</td>
<td>David G. McKay</td>
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<td><strong>Central</strong></td>
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<td>Candy Doak</td>
<td>Dwight E. McCoy</td>
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<td>Lu Ann Danley</td>
<td>Raymond McKee</td>
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<td><strong>Midwest</strong></td>
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<td>Kathleen Hupper</td>
<td>Mamie Morgan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gene and Ann McDonough</td>
<td>Hally Keyes</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Reef Family</td>
<td>Charlotte Slater</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adam Reef Family</td>
<td>Sara J McKay</td>
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<tr>
<td>David C. McKay</td>
<td>Wanda Houck</td>
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<td>Joseph Dinger Family</td>
<td>Vahrah Heath</td>
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<td><strong>Northeast</strong></td>
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<td>David MacKay Family</td>
<td>Scott Arthur Mackay Family</td>
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<td>Mark Bain Family</td>
<td>Paul &amp; Ann Key Family</td>
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<td><strong>Western</strong></td>
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<td>Richard Mackay</td>
<td>Craig S. Morgan</td>
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<td>Deborah M. Tallman</td>
<td>Dawn Silveira</td>
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<td>Julie Nazro</td>
<td>Bart Weaver</td>
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<td>Jeffrey Herbster</td>
<td>Patricia Bayne</td>
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<td><strong>Rocky Mountain</strong></td>
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<td>Col. Sir John Castle</td>
<td>Scott Beck</td>
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<td>Guy McCoy</td>
<td>Elizabeth R. Bain</td>
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<td>Patricia Goodwine</td>
<td>Richard S. McKee</td>
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<td>Judy K. Wisehart Family</td>
<td>Russ McKee</td>
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<td>Donna M. Howes</td>
<td>Stuart Brown Family</td>
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<td>John McCaughey</td>
<td>Patricia Pruitt</td>
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<td>Margaret R. MacKay</td>
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<td><strong>Mid-Atlantic</strong></td>
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<td>Ray Everett</td>
<td>Joyce &amp; David Lindley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Douglas W. McKay Family</td>
<td>Elizabeth Armstrong</td>
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<td><strong>Kudos to the new life members!</strong></td>
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**Hogmanay 2008 Happy new Years Eve**

Hogmanay is the Scots word for the last day of the year and is synonymous with the celebration of the New Year (Gregorian calendar) in the Scottish manner. Its official date is 31 December (Auld Year's Night). However, this is normally only the start of a celebration which lasts through the night until the morning of Ne’erday (1 January) or, in some cases, 2 January which is a Scottish Bank Holiday.

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**CLAN MACKAY SOCIETY USA INC.**

**Membership Application Form**

Make checks payable to Clan Mackay and mail with application to:

**Mary Ann McKay**
**National Treasurer,**
**9510 E. Flanders Rd.**
**Mesa, Arizona 85207**

Joining or renewing your membership in Clan Mackay is easy. Simply choose the quarter in which you are joining and click on the Pay Pal link [http://clanmackayusa.org/JoinNow.htm](http://clanmackayusa.org/JoinNow.htm) to join now. Online, or send your check (made payable to Clan Mackay Society, USA) along with the form and clan affiliation (Sept name)

**PLEASE INDICATE THE TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP**

- **Memberships Jan 1 to Dec 31 2009 $24**
- **Memberships Apr 1 to Dec 31 2009 $18**
- **Memberships July 1 to Dec 31 2009 $12**
- **Memberships Oct 1 to Dec 31 2009 $6**
- **Memberships Oct 1 2009 to end of 2010 $30** ($6 - $24)
- **Life Membership $250 One time only**
- **Life Membership Family $300 One time only**

**PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE**

- **YOUR FULL NAME**
- **SPouse’s Name**
- **Mailing Address**
- **City**
- **State**
- **Zip Code**
- **Home Phone**
- **E-mail**
- **Fax**
- **Allied Family (Sept)**

**SEPT Names**

There are about 240 different spellings of the name and its SEPTS (branches). Some of the more common ones whether Mc or Mac are:

- All(an)en | MacEth | Magee
- Bain | MacGee | Morgan
- Bayne | MacGhie | Nelson|ison
- Kee | MacKee | Paul|son
- Key | Mackie | Reay
- MacCay | MacPhail | Scobie
- MacCoy (Koy) | MacQuay | Williams (son)
An introductory commentary by David R. McKay:

This story was circulated May 18, 2008 in the UK and parts of the USA. The article is a review of a new book written by Lord Dacre: THE INVENTION OF SCOTLAND MYTH AND HISTORY obviously is an attempt by Lord Dacre to besmirch the Scots for his own political gain. The book was to be published at the end of May 2008, five years after Lord Dacre died of cancer.

The last book written by the late Lord Dacre of Glanton states that the Declaration of Arbroath, which confirmed Scotland's independence in 1320, is plagued with inaccuracies and details of "imaginary" kings. He argues that Scotland's literary, cultural and political traditions, which are claimed to date back from Roman times, were largely invented in the 18th century.

Its controversial findings debunk many of the cultural arguments for Scottish independence, and are likely to fuel the current heated political debate over the country's constitutional future.

Lord Dacre, formerly Hugh Trevor-Roper, concludes in the book: "In Scotland, it seems to me, myth has played a far more important part in history than it has in England.

"Indeed, I believe the whole history of Scotland has been colored by myth; and that myth, in Scotland, is never driven out by reality, or by reason, but lingers on until another myth has been discovered to replace it."He claims that the "myth" of the ancient Highland dress was perpetuated by historians to provide a symbol by which Scots could be universally identified, as well as to support the country's textile industry.

The traditional dress of the Highlanders was in fact a long Irish shirt and a cloak or plaid, he states, and only the higher classes had woven in stripes and colors creating tartan.

"The kilt's appearance can, in fact, be dated within a few years," he reveals in the book.

"For it did not evolve, it was invented. Its inventor was an English Quaker from Lancashire, Thomas Rawlinson." He claims Mr. Rawlinson decided to shorten belted plaids after workmen in the Highlands, where he was staying, said they were uncomfortable. Scots are also accused in the book of fabricating their own literary tradition, culminating in the publication of The Works of Ossian.

These have been claimed to have been translated from ancient sources in Gaelic about the lives of Celtic heroes. But historians have long suspected them of being a figment of the imagination of James Macpherson, the 18th-century Scottish poet who claimed to have translated them.

Lord Dacre also declares that when the Scots were looking for a writer and poet to rival Shakespeare following the Act of Union in 1707, they found nothing.

This led to ancient writings being forged and passed off as Scottish literature.

He concludes: "It was natural that Scots, seeking compensation for the end of their independent history and politics, should turn to discover and appreciate their native literature.

"Unfortunately when they looked for it, they could not find it. There was none."Lord Dacre was one of the world's most respected historians prior to his death, and was professor of Modern History at Oxford University for 23 years.

But his reputation was damaged when he claimed that forged diaries, purportedly written by Adolf Hitler and serialized in the Sunday Times, were authentic.

Michael Fry, an eminent Scottish historian, claimed Lord Dacre was not "a very reliable guide to Scottish history", Tartan was worn in the Middle Ages and his claims about the kilt "prove absolutely nothing."

"Lots of things emerge in history and just because we can't pin down their origins it doesn't follow from that everything about it is phony," Mr. Fry said.

"There is a distinguished school of medieval Scottish literature, and poetry in something that is recognizably Scots was being written in the 14th century."
DID YOU KNOW?

THAT GORDON MCKAY invented the sewing machine. He is best known for the development of machinery that revolutionized the manufacture of footwear. McKay made his fortune inventing machines that made boots for Federal troops during the Civil War.

THAT STEELE MACKAYE, who was born in Buffalo, New York, was the author of thirty plays. As a dramatist, MacKaye is seen as representative of the transition from an older theatrical tradition to a newer one, incorporating realism and naturalistic portrayals. His first play to be published was Hazel Kirke. By 1885, MacKaye had established three theaters in New York City: the St. James, Madison Square and the Lyceum Theatre. For the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893, he began to construct a theatre capable of seating 10,000 people—the "Spectatorium"—but the Panic of 1893 deprived the project of necessary funds. The project was left incomplete.

Mackaye was a member of New York's Seventh Regiment, in the Civil War and rose to the rank of Major before an illness forced his retirement. MacKaye would later model in full uniform for John Quincy Adams Ward’s Seventh Regiment Memorial statue, which stands in Central Park.

THAT BENTON MACKAYE, (Left) son of Steele Mackaye, was an American forester, planner and conservationist. Born in Stamford, Connecticut, MacKaye helped pioneer the idea of land preservation for recreation and conservation purposes, and was a strong advocate of balancing human needs and those of nature; he coined the term "Geotechnics" to describe this philosophy. MacKaye authored two books--The New Exploration: A Philosophy of Regional Planning and Expedition nine: A Return to a Region--and a collection of 13 essays. In January 1935, Benton MacKaye helped to found the Wilderness Society, the first national organization dedicated to the preservation of wilderness. MacKay's attachment to wilderness began in the early 1920s, with his visionary proposal for an Appalachian Trail from Mt. Washington in New Hampshire to Mt. Mitchell in North Carolina. Like the wilderness idea, the Appalachian Trail remains one of our most important models for preserving natural areas and providing outdoor recreation.

Bishop’s Curse May Have Hexed a Man Held in Jail for Vandalizing Dornoch Cathedral

Contributed by David C McKay, retired editor of the Detroit Free Press

Man’s death in custody linked to ancient curse Bishop’s hex to anyone who damaged cathedral. The death in police custody of a man suspected of vandalizing Dornoch Cathedral has led to speculation that a curse, said to have been laid in mediaeval times, has struck again.

Gilbert de Moravia, Bishop of Caithness, invoked a solemn curse “upon those who destroy and injure” the fabric of the 13th-century building in his deed declaring the foundation of the cathedral, which was completed in 1239.

When the much-respected warrior-cleric died in 1245, he was interred beneath the floor of the cathedral. He was subsequently made a saint.

Daryl Shearer, a 19-year-old arrested for allegedly vandalizing and stealing money from the ancient building on Friday, October 24, died mysteriously in a police cell in Dingwall later the same weekend, while awaiting a court appearance. A post-mortem examination has been carried out. No cause of death has been released.

Back in 1570, St. Gilbert’s curse was said to have struck down landowner William Sutherland, of Evelix, near Dornoch. During the sacking of the cathedral by the Mackays of Strathnaver and retainers of the Earl of Caithness, Sutherland had joined in and kicked over St. Gilbert’s bones. According to local tradition, the very foot that perpetrated the deed rotted away creating such stench that no one would go near Sutherland as he died a slow, agonizing death.

Sue Higgins, curator at the local museum, said she was aware of stories about the curse, but added: “I personally have not heard any speculation locally about what happened more recently.”

Reprinted from The Press and Journal Aberdeen Scotland Saturday, November 1, 2008
Robert McKay emigrated from Scotland to America in 1848. As a struggling stonemason in Fraserburgh, he travelled to the northwest coast of England and set sail for New York from where he made the arduous wagon trip to the frontier town of Ohio, attracted by the promise of work on the railroads and a better life for his wife and young son.

Now, 160 years later, his great grandson David, 77, is preparing to return to take part in the Homecoming 2009 celebrations — a year-long series of events planned by the Scottish government to mark the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns. He will be in Edinburgh as the Mackay clan’s American representative and is looking forward to a week of revelry with clansmen from around the world.

“I am very excited about it. It’s a once in a lifetime opportunity to be a part of the heritage,” says the national president of the clan, from his home in Monroe, Michigan.

The Homecoming year idea was conceived by the last Labour administration, led by Jack McConnell, but Alex Salmond, his successor, has been more than happy to pick up the ball and run with it.

His government is planning more than 100 cultural and sporting events, beginning on Burns night and ending on St Andrew’s Day. The events will be themed around Burns, whisky, golf, the arts and Scotland’s heritage. Regular events such as Celtic Connections will contribute and the Edinburgh festivals will give more than their usual nod to Scottish roots. In football, the Scottish Cup is being renamed the Homecoming Cup for this year only.

The centerpiece will be The Gathering, the biggest mustering of clans ever seen in Scotland, in Holyrood Park, Edinburgh, in July.

Kenneth Croker, vice-president of the Clan MacPherson Association in Oakhurst, California, is determined not to miss out on the festivities. “It’s been well publicized over here. Around two dozen of our members visit Scotland every year and I guess there’ll be a similar number going over next year. The idea of getting people back to Scotland is a good aim.”

The Scottish government’s professed aim is to use the event to help boost the economy — it is estimated that visitors will spend £40m and it is hoped that some expatriates will realize what a vibrant, mature, outward looking nation Scotland has become and will return for good.

Even the bravest-hearted, most blue-blooded, misty-eyed patriot would have to admit this is optimistic. Jim MacKay, 67, from Tampa, in Florida, is still undecided about whether he will come but says: “I wouldn’t be tempted to move to Scotland. It’s 72 degrees here.”

Yet amid the skirling of the pipes and the fine colored tartan, some already detect a note of discord. The target audience is supposedly the estimated 100 million people worldwide who have some connection with Scotland, even if it is only, as Salmond says, that their “granny once went to Saltcoats on a day trip”. Genealogists call them “heart and blood Scots”, although Homecoming organizers prefer the less visceral “affinity Scots”. Yet little attempt appears to have been made to reach beyond the well-established clan societies and Caledonian clubs in former colonial outposts which meet regularly to doff their Glengarries and compare skean dubhs.
Critics who question the purpose of this strategy of preaching to the converted have been vindicated to some extent with the launch last week of a television advertisement promoting Homecoming 2009.

The stirring finale to the 60 second broadcast is designed to remind Scots of all that’s great about their homeland. Hand on heart, Lulu belts out the last lines of Dougie MacLean’s patriotic anthem, Caledonia, standing proud on the rocky shores of Loch Laich, in Argyll, with Castle Stalker silhouetted in the background. Except she’s not. The Glaswegian singer’s contribution was filmed in London, the moody scenery slotted in later for effect.

Lulu wasn’t the only star who couldn’t make the journey home for Homecoming. Amy MacDonald, the singer who introduces the advertisement, also filmed in London.

The choice of Dougie MacLean’s song, recently voted the second most likely to make Scots feel patriotic, hit the right note but it has also emerged that the advertisement will not be televised or shown in cinemas outside Scotland, which begs the question: who is it aimed at? What is the point of spending £150,000 producing a video intended as a rallying cry to those living outside Scotland to come home, if they are never going to see it?

Opposition politicians claim the whole enterprise is aimed at the five million Scots still resident in the country, particularly those who will have a vote in an independence referendum planned for the following year. They are explicit in their belief that this is a cynical attempt by the SNP to soften up public opinion by playing to the lowest common denominator of nationalist sentiment.

“We initiated this project but Alex Salmond is making an absolute hash of it. He’s wasting hundreds of thousands of pounds promoting the SNP rather than Scotland. It’s shameful,” says Michael McMahon, Labour MSP for Hamilton North and Bellshill. “What makes it even more laughable is he’s not prepared to spend a few pounds on a train ticket to bring Scots home to film the advert. That goes to show just how short-sighted and completely incompetent the SNP are in handling this event.”

Michael Fry, a Scottish historian, said: “The whole thing has to be sensitively handled. Similar occasions in the past, with gatherings of clans, have not been an enormous success and if anything has rather antagonized relations between the Scots that live in Scotland and the Scots who live in Winnipeg who think being Scottish is wandering up and down Princes Street wearing a Tam o’Shanter.

“The danger is that it creates a saccharine, sanitized, tartanised Scotland that is covered in a mist of sentimentality. I would like the visitors to Scotland to get a much more accurate view of the past and present of the country.

“We are, of course, at a crossroads in Scotland and I would hate the Homecoming to descend into a propaganda bun fight. There’s also the fact that we will be in the middle of a recession. People don’t have the money, and even the Americans won’t have the money to get involved.”

Such skepticism is not entirely without foundation given Britain’s unenviable track record in handling major cultural events and public projects. The Scottish parliament building at Holyrood showed just how easily best laid plans can go badly wrong. When it opened in 2004, the seat of Scottish democracy was 10 times over budget at £431m and more than three years late.

The global credit crunch was not an issue when the Homecoming was being devised but will have a major bearing on peoples’ decision to spend hundreds, or even thousands, of pounds to attend a party.

Caroline Montgomery, 79, from Michigan, who is a member of the Montgomery clan, said that about a dozen clan members planned to attend the celebration but many more wanting to make the trip would find the travel costs too expensive. “My husband and I would love to come but it will cost too much money,” she says.
Oops We Goofed: Correction with a Little Help from Colin McKay

In the last issue of MACKAY BANNER we had a photo identified as Ruthwell Church According to Colin McKay, our member from Scotland, the photo at the top of page 5 is miss-labeled. It ought to be Caerlaverock Castle. Any Scot would have recognized this, but Americans just are not quite with it.

A LESSON FOR THE DAY

♦ A church is intended for people to enter. A castle is intended to keep people out.
♦ Church construction is frequently decorative, with large ornamental windows. Castle construction is mostly massive, with very few openings.
♦ Churches have two doors. Castles have one.
♦ Churches usually have roofs. Castles do not, because they have been destroyed by attacks from Oliver Cromwell's canons, or have rotted.
♦ Churches are almost always in reasonable repair. Castles can be in poor repair, to the point of being dangerous.
♦ Churches can have few people attending them. Castles which are in good repair can have more.

In both cases, those inside prayed to be saved.
Wenn Sie Interesse an unseren anderen Artikel haben, die noch nicht hier gezeigt werden - wie engl. Tee, Marmaladen, Whisky, Shortbread -, oder aber auch an unsere vorhandene Artikel, bitte kontaktieren Sie uns oder schauen Sie direkt bei uns in Rothenburg ob der Tauber vorbei.

This is not Gaelic, and the shop is not in Scotland! It is in Rothenburg on the Tauber in Germany, and was discovered this past summer by Don McGee of Naples, Florida, on his recent trip to visit our German Cousins Siggy and Mona Mackay.

It translates (I hope) to: If you are interested in other items that are not shown, e.g. English tea, marmalades, whisky, shortbread -, or if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us. Or pop by our store in Rothenburg ob der Tauber in the beautiful Franken-region in Germany. It would be a great pleasure for us to be able to greet you personally. http://www.schottenladen.de/

Don says, “I met Peter recently while in Rothenberg. He has owned the shop for 21 years and briefed me upon seeing my Mackay insignia on my jacket of such marvelous stories about Dinkelsbühl and Rothenberg on the Tauber, and the long history with the Mackay Clan as a result of the INVINCIBLE Mackays during the Thirty Years’ War 1618-48. Even today they have a Scottish festival annually.”

“The town has adopted the Mackay Strathnave tartan as their tartan respecting the incidents.”

Written by Peter Hughes: The following articles I’ve taken from a wee booklet, sent to me a few years ago by the widow of the writer, R.L. Mackay, O.B.E., M.C., M.D., B.Sc., “The Clan Mackay Its Origin History and Dispersal of The Military Contribution of the Mackays: In 1642.” Donald, First Lord Reay, in order to pay part of the cost of raising his regiment for service in the 30 years war sold Strathnave, the home of his kinsman, Ian Aberach Mackay. The purchaser was the Earl of Sutherland.

The Thirty Years War on the Continent of Europe, under Sir Donald Mackay (1590-1649) his regiment gained great praise for its gallantry on the River Elbe, and later for its valiant holding of the Pass at Oldenburg against overwhelming odds in attacks by Marshall Tilly. (He is the knight in our Thirty Years War Chess Set on the Catholic side). The Regiment was given the name of “Mackay’s Invincible”.

After the battle at Breitenfeld, where Tilly’s army was routed, King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden gave special mention of praise for the Scottish and Dutch Regiments which stood their ground in the face of fierce attacks by Tilly’s army, before they commenced to roll them back. It was after this defeat, that Tilly then began a march south, which brought him to Rothenburg, Dinkelsbühl, (where the children were sent out to meet the Swedish army, before a feared attack). This in fact saved the town. As Col. Robert Monro so clearly describes, “battle after battle, skirmish after skirmish, without respite, with these towns changing hands continually, leaves one with a pitiful picture of the total chaos which was inflicted on the population at that time.”

Peter
Hogmanay Greetings from the 2009 Homecoming Gathering to Clan Mackay USA

Happy Christmas - see you at The Gathering 2009!

Printed By: St. John Valley Times