

The Whistlin' Thistle

Newsletter of the Scottish Society of Wilmington, NC Founded in 1993



August 2019

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Be sure to check out
our Website at
www.wilmingtonscots.org
for event updates and
membership
information.

Follow us on
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Co-President's Message

FALL NEWSLETTER

FALL CEILIDH!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 22 BETWEEN 4:00 AND
7:00 PM AT THE WATERLINE BREWING
COMPANY**

**721 SURRY STREET (UNDER THE BRIDGE)
THE CELTIC BAND "BARROWBURN" WILL
PERFORM. FAMILY FUN, FOOD TRUCK DRINK
AND HAGGIS!**

**SPONSERED BY
SSOW AND CLAN MACKENZIE**

As we bid fairwell to summer and look forward to an exciting series of events in the coming months we are excited to announce a new annual event. We have always ended the season with a Ceilidh, we thought why not have a kick off event as well? Several members have expressed their wishes to have more opportunities to mingle with those of like interest and further celebrate our Scottish heritage. As our organization continues to grow we would like nothing more than to have more of these opportunities. In addition to the Fall Ceilidh, as in years past, we will host our annual meeting and St. Andrews Dinner; our 27th annual Robert Burns Supper, our wreath laying at the Moore's Creek Battlefield Loyalist (Scottish) monument, support our Irish brethren in the St. Patricks Day parade, and of course our Spring Ceilidh.

As I write this, our co-president, Joyce Elliott, is finishing up her tour of Scotland. I was there last summer for my third visit. Between the two of us we have many stories to relate. If you haven't been there the next best thing is to listen to our stories while you plan your own trip.

Just a reminder as our new year begins, make sure you keep your membership current. And if you are trying to figure out a fitting birthday present for “Uncle Angus” or “Aunt Bonnie”, there is a membership form at the end of this newsletter. It is a gift he or she will enjoy all year long.

In previous newsletters we have mentioned our quest to have the 18th Century Scottish migration through the port of Wilmington commemorated. That effort is moving forward swiftly. For those of you that don’t subscribe to the Star News, I have attached the “Front Page, Above The Fold” article by reporter Hunter Ingram. What the article doesn’t address is the behind scenes work done by your committee chaired by Leon Hicks. There have been meetings with the mayor and City Council and Parks Department to determine the proper location for a monument site. Trips to Raleigh, as well as discussions with other Scottish groups throughout the state have been held.

Among our membership, we are fortunate to have both artists and architects to help with a fitting design. Obviously such a bold project does not come without significant cost. After the location has been selected and a memorial designed to fit that location, we will start a serious fund raising effort. Besides corporate and charitable foundation appeals we will be asking other Scottish societies for assistance. We will also have a way to recognize individual donors through plaques or bricks to memorialize individuals or families. Were your ancestors part of this wave of 20,000 plus immigrants that first set foot on this continent in Wilmington? You may want to consider a lasting tribute.

GAMES

A big part of what we enjoy about our culture are our Highland Games. Your society always sets up an informational table to spread the word about our efforts to celebrate our unique culture. Unfortunately at this writing, it appears that the Cape Fear Games will not be held this year due to lack of sponsorship. This is a tremendous disappointment. For those of you that don’t mind a little travel, you have a few other options. The Scotland County games will take place in Laurinburg, NC on Saturday, October 5 and the relatively new Swamp Fox Highland Games will be held in Florence, SC on Saturday, November 16. We sincerely hope games will return to the Cape Fear region soon.

CLANS AND FAMILIES

As I hope you noticed on the first page of this newsletter, the Fall Ceilidh is being sponsored jointly by your society and Clan MacKenzie (Thank you Mark and Claire Tobyne). Do you know what clan or Scottish family group your name or ancestor’s name is associated with? The clan system is widely misunderstood. Clans are a Scottish Highland thing. The highlands were pretty much a feudal culture with average people pledging their allegiance to the local chief for mutual benefit. There is usually no blood relationship to the chief. The clans also have “Septs”. These are family names that are considered every bit as much of the clan. In my case I am a McLeod member of Clan MacLeod. A person with the last name MacAskill is a sept and also

part of Clan MacLeod. In Lowland Scotland there are many Family Societies while not technically a clan, they sometimes have strong and active organizations and have adopted their own tartan. Last month at Grandfather Mountain there were about 120 clans and societies, a very proud group celebrating their mutual heritage.

If you have not already traced your roots and found your clan or society, I would highly encourage you to do so.

If you haven't already done so, please "Like" the Scottish Society of Wilmington Facebook page and check out our website.

Aye!

Bob McLeod and Joyce Elliott Co-Presidents
Holdfast4909@gmail.com (Bob)
Whefrog@aol.com (Joyce)

Here is the Star News article

By Hunter Ingram StarNews Staff

Posted Jul 16, 2019 at 3:22 PM Updated Jul 16, 2019 at 3:52 PM

The Scottish Society of Wilmington is working on plans for a monument on the riverwalk to honor the Scottish immigrants who arrived in the 1700s.

WILMINGTON – Bob McLeod grew up sitting through North Carolina history classes and taking field trips to Moore's Creek Bridge National Battlefield. But one facet often left out of those history lessons was the contributions of Scottish Highlanders to the Cape Fear's development in the 1700s.

"Most people, myself included, never really knew the real size and scale of the Scottish immigrants coming here," said McLeod, who is now the co-president of the Scottish Society of Wilmington.

During the Scottish Clearances of the early 1700s, it is estimated that more than 20,000 or more Scotland Highlanders immigrated to America through the region prior to the American Revolution, first at Brunswick Town and later Wilmington.

“This was a real Ellis Island to the Scots,” McLeod said. “That is something that has been overlooked and that is a shame because there’s so much history in the area.”

When they arrived, the Scots were required to sign a loyalty pledge to the king in Britain, a pledge that would enlist most of them to fight for the British in the American Revolution.

To commemorate and better educate the region on the culture and the history those immigrants brought with them, the Scottish Society is working to bring a monument to the Wilmington Riverfront.

Initially, McLeod said the society’s monument committee discussed erecting a cairn, a traditional Scottish pile of rocks, with an educational plaque. But as the idea developed, they have moved on to something more significant for the city and the whole state.

“Our idea is this should be the beginning of a statewide project, something like a Scottish Migration Trail,” he said. “Their immigration started in Wilmington and we believe that’s where this project should start.”

The society is currently working with an architect to design a monument that would have interactive features and possibly be comprised of standing stones like those seen in England. McLeod said the society recently met with the city, which was receptive to the idea and suggested a few sites downtown as possibilities.

But they don’t envision it being a passive monument.

“We also see it as a gathering place for the Scottish Society, where we could have a piper and invite speakers and talk about the area’s Scottish heritage,” he said. “It’s not going to be just a monument where we put it down and walk away.”

From Wilmington’s monument, McLeod said the trail could direct people to Moore’s Creek National Battlefield in Pender County and then west across the state to places like the Scottish History Museum in Laurinburg.

In recent years, Wilmington has garnered stronger attention for its Scottish heritage thanks to Diana Gabaldon’s “Outlander” book series and the Starz TV series based on them.

Later installments in the historical time travel series feature characters arriving to the Americas through Wilmington and spending time in the area. The TV series featured Wilmington-set scenes in its most recent season, though the project is shot in Scotland.

Wilmington Bill Saffo was made aware of that international attention last year, when the Scottish Society first met with him about the idea of a monument.

“My personal vision is that we have this beautiful riverwalk and we have so many tours that visit it every day, and I’ve always felt that should be where we depict the heritage of this community,” he said. “This place is rich with history and we have an opportunity to showcase it and share it with the world, and we should and need to do it.”

McLeod said the conceptual designs for the monument are still being formulated, so an exact cost and timeframe are still in flux. But fundraising is already underway and will ramp up once things get more concrete.

“We would like to have the concept finalized and a story to tell before we go out the public to get money,” he said. “But this isn’t a pie in the sky anymore. We have been working on it a few years now, and we are on track to get something done in the next couple of years.”

Reporter Hunter Ingram can be reached at 910-343-2327 or Hunter.Ingram@StarNewsOnline.com.

Learn more about the Scottish Highlanders’ impact on the Cape Fear region in the Battle of Moore’s Creek Bridge episode of the Cape Fear Unearthed local history podcast.

Scottish Society of Wilmington
P.O. Box 4164 Wilmington NC 28406-4164

Date of Application _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip + 4 _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Membership (check one)

Individual / \$20.00

Family / \$30.00

Sustaining / \$50.00

(fees are pro-rated by whole month if less than 12 months for initial year)

Volunteers are needed for the following committees:

- Newsletter / contributing writer or photographer
- Robert Burns Supper & Celebration (Jan./Feb.)
- Anniversary of Battle of Moores Creek Bridge (Feb.)
- SSOW Ceilidh (Spring)
- Scot's Heritage Day at Moores Creek Battlefield Park (June)
- Scotland County Highland Games (October)
- SSOW Annual Meeting (Fall)
- St. Andrews Day (November)

Please return this application with your check (payable to "Scottish Society of Wilmington) to...

Scottish Society of Wilmington
P.O. Box 4164
Wilmington NC 28406-4164

Questions? Contact Robert McLeod at 910-769-2109 or send an email to holdfast4909@gmail.com or Joyce Elliot at 910-612-3283, whefrog@aol.com.