

# THE BUCHANAN BANNER



Volume V

Summer

Number 2



An Ceann  
Cirean Cinnidh

CLAN BUCHANAN SOCIETY  
IN AMERICA, Inc.





CLAN BUCHANAN SOCIETY  
IN AMERICA, Inc.

Purpose

The purpose of this organization is to foster and promote understanding and good fellowship among descendants of Scots in America; to study, preserve, and promote the culture, customs, and traditions of the people of Scotland and the Isles especially with regard to the Clan Buchanan; to foster and promote the Society by initiating goals and objectives consistent with our heritage and the desires of the membership.

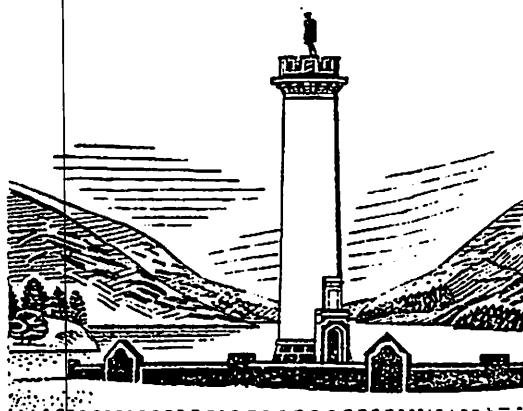


Clan Buchanan Society's Tour

Your Society is planning to sponsor a tour to Scotland during the period 23 May through 6 June 1981. While the details have not been worked out as yet, your tour Chairman is working hard to get schedules worked out so that we can get back to you with the schedule of events and the costs. The tentative plans are to be in Edinburgh for a portion of the "Capital Week" which begins on 22 May. Then be in the Glasgow-Loch Lomond area for the Buchanan Gathering during the period 29-31 May. Further plans include a visit to the Isle of Skye and up the Great Glen to Inverness then back to Edinburgh.

If you would like to receive information regarding this tour please write:

Ms. Lavon Watson  
14000 Castle Blvd. #607  
Silver Spring, Maryland  
20904



# ANNOUNCING CLAN BUCHANAN SOC. PICNIC & FALL MEETING

DATE ..... SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1980

TIME ..... Eleven A.M. Until.....

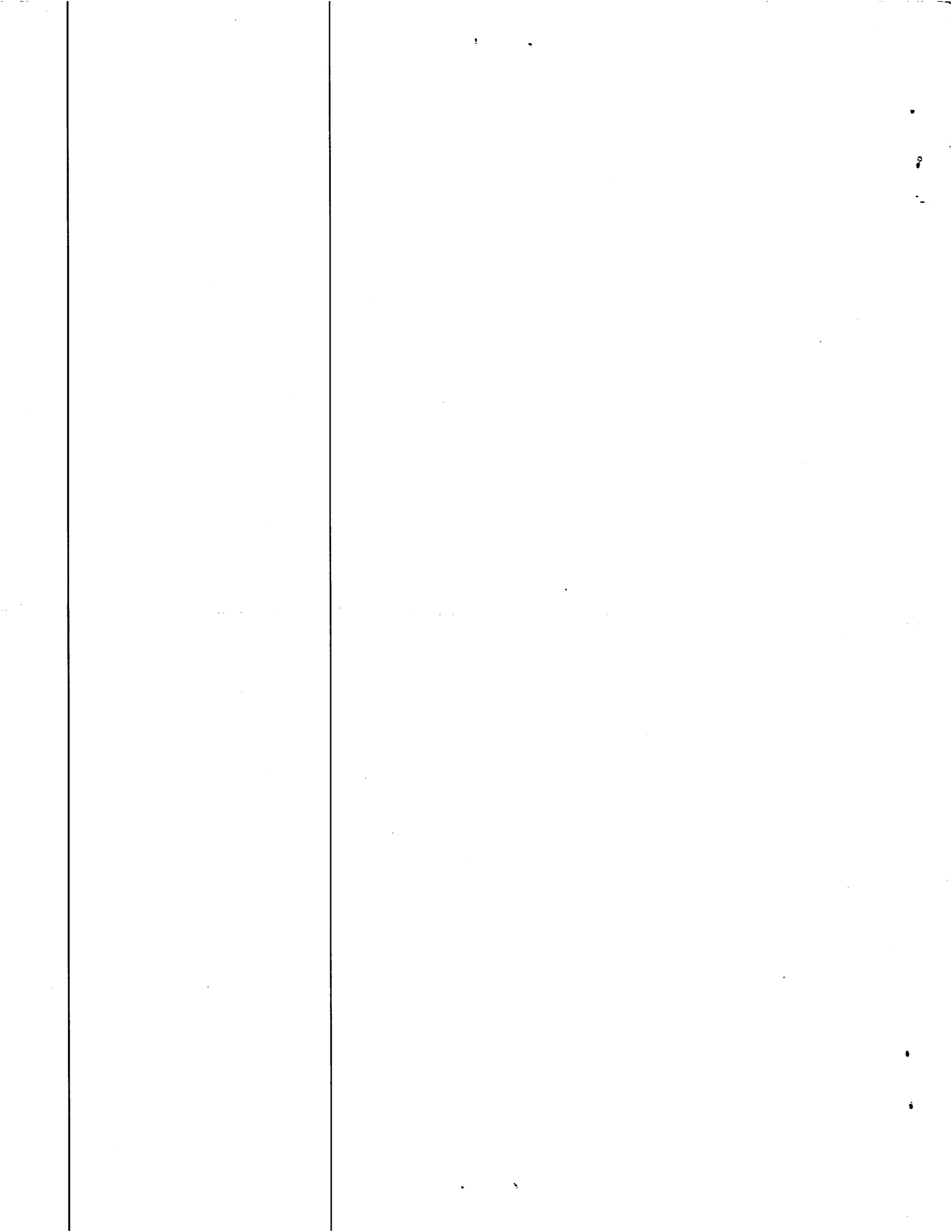
PLACE..... TRUXTON PARK - Pavillion Number 1  
Annapolis, Maryland  
(Same place we have held it for  
the last two years running)

- \* From the South, Exit Rt. 50 at (Parole/Crownsville)exit. Cross through the light, turn left on Forest drive. Go about 3-4 miles turn left on Hiltop lane, right on Primrose Drive (at Spa Cove sign) straight into park.
- \* From the North, Exit Rt. 50 at (Parole) exit. Go through light to Forest drive and left. Directions as above.

## CLANSMEN:

The 5th Annual Clan Buchanan Society in America, Inc. Picnic and Fall Meeting will be held (by popular demand) at our usual lovely location as indicated above. We encourage you all to attend this family affair. Come and bring your picnic baskets full of fare for you and yours with a little extra to share. This has proven to be a most enjoyable time for all who have attended in the past, so lets do it again.

If you have any questions or need more specific directions please call Lou McCaslin at 301 544-0290. See you at the Picnic.





## Clan Buchanan Society's Tenth Anniversary Celebrated

By

Rod McCaslin

On July 11, 12, and 13, 1980, members of the Clan Buchanan Society in America, Inc. celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the Society at the 25th Annual Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in Linville, North Carolina.

Ten years ago, Margretta Buchanan Eagon founded the Clan Buchanan Society in America as a tribute to her father. At that time 30 families registered as Buchanans. This year at Grandfather Mountain 27 new members joined the Society, sending the membership rolls over the 160 mark, with over 70 persons attending the annual membership meeting and ceilidh.

The annual meeting of members was held at the Ramada Inn in Boone, North Carolina and opened by Harold Townend, the Society's Executive Secretary. Harold's reports as well as those given by Membership Secretary, Margretta Eagon and Treasurer Bob Whitfield were upbeat and optimistic, noting that the Clan Buchanan Society in America is still solid and growing.

At the meeting, Mr. Benis Frank was granted honorary membership in the Society for his honorable work towards the promotion of things Scottish.

President Louis McCaslin arriving late after attending the Presidents Reception held at Grandfather Mountain Country Club proceeded to spell out the future of the Clan and plans for the Society members to congregate at the 1981 Gathering of the Clans in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The Ceilidh began with a sumptuous buffet and high spirited conversation. Old and New friends greeted each other with 100,000 welcomes. Mary Ellen Whitfield and Scott Townend performed a highland fling for those assembled and Kathy Whitfield played "Bonny Fyrie" on the Chanter. The skirl of the pipes was provided by Dr. John Youel, whose Great Highland Pipes have a bag covered in the Buchanan tartan. His fine piping ended the formal part of the evening save for a group of hard core lovers of the "visge beathe" who continued on with the Ceilidh in the Buchanan Hospitality Room at the Inn.

On Saturday morning, clan members arrived at the Buchanan tent on MacRae Meadow, decked to the teeth in our distinctive tartan, ready to enjoy the events that have given so much pleasure to the Scots for centuries. Burly athletes of highland stock entertained thousands by tossing the caber and the sheaf, throwing the stone and running a kilted mile. Richard Fromm of the Clan Buchanan Society, triumphed in his kilted mile run and gained 6th in the AAU sponsored mile event. Bob Fromm took second in the age 12 and under kilted mile. We favor the brave.

Mike Cusack, whose parents are members of the Society, returned to Grandfather Mountain after a lengthy stay in Scotland and captured the prize for Open Piping competition. He competed directly in front of his clan at the games.

The winner of the Buchanan Society sponsored Minnie H. Watson Memorial Trophy for Grade 11 Amateur Piobaireachd was J. Mark Blihorde of Decatur, Ga., a member of Clan Graham.

For the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games Silver Anniversary this year, a Cairn was designed to honor the clans who left their home in Scotland to settle in America. In the Cairn designed by Douglas James Ferguson, scottish stones were donated by 53 clan organizations and Scottish Societies. Clan Buchanan is represented by a stone from the heart of Buchanan country on the shores of Loch Lomond and was donated by Stuart Frazer, whose wife is a member of the Clan Buchanan Society in America. The stone is from the hearth of the old manor house.

For three glorious days, the Clan Buchanan celebrated its scottish roots, ancient ancestors and noble traditions. Approximately 30 Buchanan clansmen marched in the colorful parade of tartans, following the pipes of Garry Ermuth and Dr. Youel. The Buchanans, indeed, ranked amongst the largest clan groups represented on the field.

After 10 years of organization, the Clan Buchanan Society in America has grown to be one of the major names in the Scottish Community. With the involvement of more members, and the acquisition of persons with clan names into the Society, the scottish traditions will live, and it is those traditions which all of scots blood can be proud.



Clair Inch !



Northern Virginia Games

This year they came from all over the country on the 26th and 27th of July to participate in the fifth annual Virginia Scottish Games and gathering of the clans.

They came to socialize, to test their physical mettle and above all to celebrate their Highland heritage.

Clan Buchanan Society was well represented and we thoroughly enjoyed meeting with our members and with new prospects.

It is worth noting that even though the days of the warring clans are long gone, there is still a fierce pride in one's lineage. More than 40 clans were represented at this two day event where they spoke proudly of their peoples heritage and jostled verbally with rival clansmen.

There's no finer clan in all of Scotland boasts a McMillan, amid scoffing looks from a Buchanan and a McLeod! And there's no mistaking a clansman. He wears his kilt with pride and rarely utters a sentence without some reference to his roots.

Alexandria is an ideal site for a clan gathering since the city owes its name to a Scottish merchant, John Alexander and much of its atmosphere to Scotia. For two days prior to the games the streets of Alexandria are filled with the music of the pipes in anticipation of the Weekend Celebration.

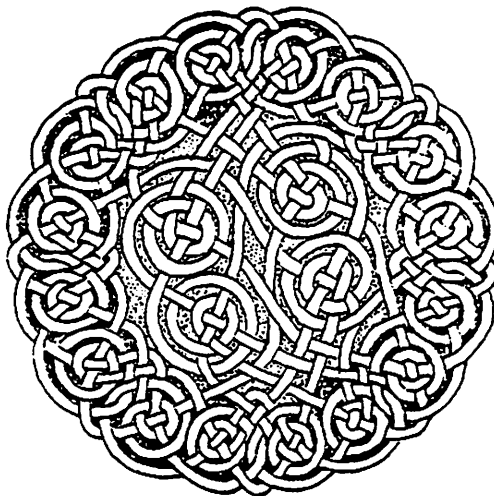
In this age of ethnic pride, we Scots rank among the proudest of them all. At this celebration the crowd was regaled with piping, drumming, fiddling and highland dancing. The multitude of 12 to 15,000 were fed on meat pies, bridies, and shortbreads and the crowd was amazed by the feats of athletic strength and skill seldom seen at ordinary athletic events. They were entertained by the Cairn Terriers as they pursued the ancient enemy the badger (simulated of course) into his burrow.

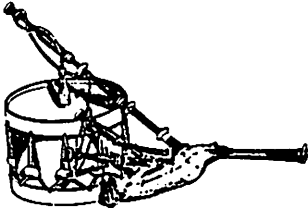
Hundreds of spectators watched mammoth men hurling objects that lesser mortals would barely be able to lift off the ground. These athletic giants were vying in the day-long Heplathlon, an ancient Scottish athletic competition composed of seven grueling events. The 16 pound stone putt, the 22 pound hammer throw, the 28 and 56 pound weight throws, the sheaf toss and the caber toss.

The real crowd pleaser was, as always, the caber toss which originated in the days when the Scot would toss a log across a stream to serve as a rude bridge.

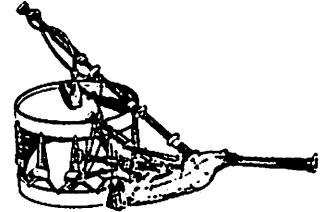
For those spectators who prefer art to athletics the games also feature a variety of competitions in dance, bagpiping and fiddling. More than 170 dancers and 15 pipe bands competed.

By the way, the Virginia games will be shown on Television (sometime during October). Watch for them on "The Games People Play" TV show.





Genealogical Corner



Mrs. Jackye K. Choate, 3501 Hyde Park Avenue, Muskogee, Oklahoma, 74401 seeks parents of James R. Buchanan, born during June, 1821 in Alabama; married Rebecca Nichols on July 3, 1845 in Tishimingo County, Mississippi where they lived until moving to Center (now Mena) Township, Polk County, Arkansas, Robert W. Buchanan who married Frances Williams during 1854 in Tishimingo County, Mississippi may be a brother.

Esther Stewart Schontz, P.O. Box 3258, West Sedona, Arizona 86340 seeks connection of Ann Linn as first cousin of President Buchanan. Esther's great-great-grandfather, Joseph Hughes, and Ann Lind were married. Their son, Samuel Alexander Hughes was born 1829 Oremuto, Canada.

Charles H. Young, 802 West Blanco, Kyle, Texas, 78640 seeks ancestors of James Buchanan who married Margaret Sayer (Sawyer). Their daughter, Margaret Buchanan, born in Ireland married 1743 Charles Campbell. She died 1777 in Virginia

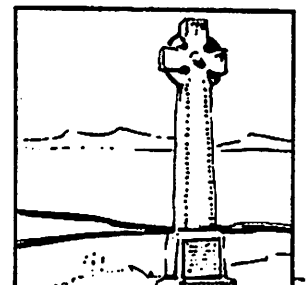
Elayne Alexander, 13200 Doty Ave., #220, Hawthorne, California 90350 seeks McMorris (MacMaurice, Fitzmaurice, etc.) family origin in Scotland. They came to Ardmore, Ireland in 1500s.

Jim Buchanan, 7435 Pearl Road, Middleburg Heights, Ohio, 44130 seeks connection of poet Thomas Buchanan Read born 1822 at Corner Ketch (near Guthriesville), Pa. with President Buchanan. Thomas' great-grandfather, Thomas Read, an Ulster Scot emigrant, settled at Newark, Delaware.

Robert Lee Gillam, RR #1, Box 192, Thornton, Indiana 46071 seeks ancestors of Mary Jane Gilbert born 1836 Sevier County, Tennessee, died 1905 in Decatur, Alabama, buried at Trinity Mountain Cemetery near Austinville, Alabama, married 1860 David Andrew Poer.

Keven R. Hayes, 99 East 4th St., New York City, N.Y. 10003 seeks ancestors of Catherine Buchanan born about 1858 Donegal, Ireland, died 1940 Ticonderoga, N.Y., married Dennis Sullivan born Warren County, N.Y.. Catherine's parents were John Buchanan and Bridget (Biddy) McGunn (McGuinn) (1829-1920) of Aigan, Dunkinelly, Donegal, Ireland.

Richard Hosking, 1830 Truxton Ave., Suite 208, Bakersfield, California 93301 seeks data regarding Edward Gibson of Canada who married Mary (Mary Polly) Rankin born 1829 New Brunswick, Canada.







## TRACING YOUR ANCESTORS



(Continued from Spring Issue)

### NORTHERN IRELAND

#### BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS

In Northern Ireland registration of Protestant marriages commenced on April 1, 1845, and births, deaths, and Roman Catholic marriages on January 1, 1864. The original records are in the custody of the Superintendent Registrars and District Registrars of the areas in which the events occurred and certified copies of entries may be obtained from these officers. The central records since 1922 are kept at the General Register Office, Fermanagh House, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, where an index covering the whole of Northern Ireland is maintained. The central records prior to 1922 are in the General Register Office, Custom House, Dublin, but if particulars are furnished in respect of any birth, death or marriage which occurred in Northern Ireland prior to 1922 the Registrar-General in Belfast will arrange for searches to be made on payment of the prescribed fee.

#### PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, BELFAST

Many old wills were destroyed by a fire in Dublin in 1922, but several thousands of copies, notes, and extracts from Ulster wills and other documents taken prior to the destruction are preserved in the Public Record Office for Northern Ireland, 66 Balmoral Avenue, Belfast, 9. This office also has lists of early rent rolls. These refer mainly to country dwellers of moderate substance.

#### SOURCES IN DUBLIN

Information about persons in possession of land other than small tenants may be obtained by a search in the Registry of Deeds, Henrietta Street, Dublin. Its records go back to the early eighteenth century. The Genealogical Office, Dublin Castle, Dublin is another useful source of information.

#### PARISH REGISTERS

Although many Irish church registers also perished in the 1922 fire, about 200 of those referring to Northern Ireland are still in the custody of the parish clergymen. A list of them will be found on page 12 of the 1924 report of the Record Office of Northern Ireland, and the dates they cover may be ascertained from a list for all Ireland in Appendix 11, to the Twenty-eighth Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Records of Ireland, Dublin, 1896. This report should be available in most public libraries. Only in a few instances do the parish registers of the Church of Ireland go back to the seventeenth century.

## PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Forty-three Presbyterian congregations have deposited their registers with the Presbyterian Historical Society Church House, Fisherwick Place, Belfast, where they can be readily consulted. Registers not transferred should be still with the congregation.

## ULSTER SCOT HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

Information about Ulster ancestry may also be obtained from the Ulster-Scot Historical Foundation, 66 Balmoral Avenue, Belfast. The initial registration fee is £2 which should be enclosed with the request, and a further charge is made to cover the cost of the search.

## NORTHERN IRELAND TOURIST BOARD, BELFAST

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board, River House, 48 High Street, Belfast, BT1 2DS, issues free of charge, a very useful advisory leaflet entitled "Tracing Your Ancestry in Ulster".



### The Septs of Clan Buchanan

(Continued from the Spring Issue)

We began this examination of the Septs and their origins in earlier issues and wish to continue our efforts by reviewing the Sept names of Lenny, MacAslan, and MacMaurice.

The Sept of Lenny includes the following surnames.

Lennie	MacWattie	Watters
MacAldonich	MacQuattie	Waters
MacMaldonichs	Watt	Watson
MacRob	Wason	

These members of the Lenny Sept are descended from the most ancient cadet branch of the Buchanan Clan. According to Buchanan of Auchmar, John de Buchanan married Janet de Lenny in the latter part of the 14th century. John who married the heiress of Lenny died before his father ever actually inherited the Buchanan estate. He had three sons, the eldest, Sir Alexander who killed the Duke of Clarence at the Battle of Baugl, and was subsequently killed at the Battle of Vernoil in 1424, never having been married. The second was Sir Walter, who succeeded to the estate of Buchanan and the third, John who after his father's death succeeded to the estate of Lenny. It was at this point that the Cadet family Buchanan of Lenny was formed.

The MacWatties are descended from Walter who was a son of John, Laird of Lenny. This Walter was called Wattie of Callintuy, this being the name of the place of his residence. His son John, following a common custom among Highlanders changed his surname into a patronimical one which was derived from his father's proper name. That is: John Macwattie, Wattie being the diminutive of Walter. This John MacWattie had nine sons who all had sons consequently in a short space of time the name and its derivatives became quite numerous.

The MacAldonichs derived that surname from a Lenny family name of Muldonich, that being an ancient Highland christian name. There is no record of the exact point in time this name came off the family of Lenny. The reason that it is a rare name today is because many of the members of this family reassumed the name of Buchanan.

The ancestors of the MacRob's was one of the Lenny family called Robert, his progeny obtained their surname by using the contraction "Rob". This was quite a prolific family and took up residence in the parishes of Calender and Kilmadock.

The Sept of MacAslan includes the following surnames:

Cousland	Macauselan	Macauslane
Macaslan	Macauslan	Maccasland
Macaslin	Macausland	M'Auselan

These names are synonymous with the name Buchanan which is a territorial one. The early chiefs were known as MacAuselan, MacAslan, etc. in allusion to their descent from the Irish Prince Anselan Buey O'Kyan who was granted settlement in Lennox by Malcolm II. The eighth laird, Gilbert was the first to assume the surname of Buchanan. This Malcolm is believed to have been the Baron MacAuselan from whom the bearers of this patronym are descended. The MacAuselan first actually recorded was Malcolm, Steward to the Maldouen Third Earl of Lennox during the reign of David II.

The Sept of MacMaurice includes the surnames of:

Morrice, Morris, Morreis, Morrison

According to Buchanan of Auchmar these names are derived from an illegitimate son of Maurice, Laird of Buchanan during the reign of Robert I. or from Maurice, who was the illegitimate son of Walter, Laird of Buchanan during the reign of James III. Descendants of the latter are found in the area between Stirling and Culross.



### Buchanan Gathering In Scotland

We have received word that the Buchanan Society is joining with the Friends of Loch Lomond to sponsor a gathering of the Clan and its Septs during the International Gathering in Scotland in 1981. The gathering will occur over the period 29-31 May and will start with a reception and lecture in Glasgow and will culminate in a cruise in the steamer "Maid of the Loch" from Balloch to the head of the Loch and back again. During the cruise there would be a lecture on the wild life around Loch Lomond and a ceilidh atmosphere would be provided on board by pipers, accordinionists and singers.

Other clans whose territories border on Loch Lomond will be invited to participate in the cruise. This includes the Colquhouns, MacGregors, Galbraiths and MacFarlanes.





BUCHANAN WINNERS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR  
by  
Jim Buchanan

Since the inception of the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1863, three persons of the name Buchanan have won the award. Perhaps the number would not have been so high except that before the 20th century, there was no progression of medals, the result being that awards were given for events in the 19th century that would not have been so honored today. Regardless, three Buchanans have performed acts which warranted medals of honor.

The first Buchanan to receive the medal was Corporal George A. Buchanan of Company G, 148th New York Infantry. Born in New York, he entered the service in Ontario County and was sent to Virginia during the Civil War. On September 29, 1864, he, as the citation reads "took a position in advance of the skirmish line and drove the enemy's cannoners from their guns." In doing so he was mortally wounded. For his actions at Chaffin's Farm, Virginia, he received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Apprentice David M. Buchanan of the United States Navy was the second Buchanan to receive the medal. Born in Philadelphia in 1862, David entered the service from that city. Assigned to the U. S. S. Saratoga, he was on the ship in New York Harbor on July 15, 1879, as it set off the battery. The next day Robert Lee Robey, a crew member, fell overboard and was caught by the ebb tide. Buchanan jumped over the railing of the ship into the bay, swam out to Robey and rescued him. For this action he received his medal.

Lieutenant Commander Allen Buchanan of the U. S. S. Florida was the last Buchanan to receive the medal. Born in Evansville, Indiana, on December 22, 1876, he had entered the service and risen to the rank of lieutenant commander when the Mexican problem arose in 1914. Assigned to the Florida, Buchanan was given command of the First Seaman Regiment for the American seizure of Vera Cruz. On April 21, 1914, he led his men into the city, the unit landing at Pier Four and assigned to seize the Customs House and other public buildings. Composed of 570 men and 30 officers, the First Seaman Regiment ran into heavy fire shortly after landing, and remained under fire for two days. Buchanan directed the men and routed the new arrivals from other ships to areas where they were needed most. For his actions and his cool, calm composure under continuous enemy fire, Buchanan received the Medal of Honor, one of the first group of officers to receive such a medal. In the past only enlisted men and non-commissioned officers could receive the medal, but a special act was passed to award officers, including Buchanan, the medal for their actions in the Vera Cruz operations.





## Buchanan Clan's Tartan

By

Hugh Waters



So handsome are the tartans bold,  
The green of Forbes; MacLeod's of gold,  
The reds of Fraser and MacRae,  
How lovely all, the whole array.

So striking, pretty is our sett,  
Its vibrant colours we'll ne'er forget.  
Threads of azure, red and white  
Black and green and yellow bright.

Slowly woven, the myriad threads,  
New colours through the cloth are spread,  
A unique pattern soon appears,  
The chequered plaid we all revere.

Eight yards all sewn, the claim,  
Will make a kilt for a Scotsman's frame,  
To wear this tartan, much pride bestirs,  
In highland lads or lowlanders.

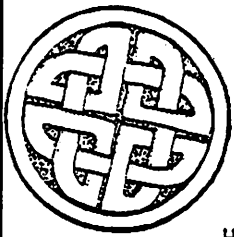
Among the setts you'll ever see,  
Buchanan Clan's shows artistry.  
It's the bonnie cloth we all prefer,  
So striking...and colourful...lovelier.

We love this tartan, we'll admit,  
In kilt, skirt or sash it's exquisite.  
The distinguishing mark of one great clan,  
The pride of every east Loch Lomond man!

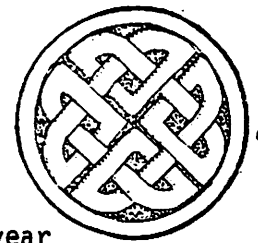


HW - July '80





## The Scots Calendar



Halloween falls on the 31st of October. This is the time of year when the fairies move home. While they are flitting it is the time to rescue any mortal they may have stolen and forced to live with them. Both witches and fairies are powerful at this time, and it is indeed a chancy time for humans as fairies and witches and the spirits of the dead are abroad.

At Halloween between sunset and sunrise it is possible to gain admittance to a fairy shian. A "shian" is the home of the fairies.

On Halloween, bonfires are lit. It is a festive time especially for children who dress up and go from door to door collecting apples, nuts, cakes or coins. Each child is expected to sing, tell a story or dance. Ducking for apples is a special delight. Apples are put in a tub of water where they float. The children may duck in turn and try to catch the apple in their teeth or they may kneel on a chair, hold a fork in their mouths and drop the fork over the back of the chair into the tub of moving apples. If the fork lands on an apple they get it. Sometimes a scone covered in treacle is hung by a string from a height. The children try to get a bit out of it. Another game is a dish of mashed potatoes with small favors in it. At one time there used to be tiny china dolls, silver coins, little thimbles, buttons and horse shoes. If you received something in your helping, it told your fortune. Halloween cakes also have favors and are decorated, usually with witches, black cats and the like. The children who dress up are known as "guisers". Often they carry a turnip lantern which has been made by taking out the inside. A face is made out of the shell of the turnip and a candle is placed inside and lighted.

Another way of foretelling the future is a visit to the kail yard. The young girls go out after dark and with their eyes shut pull the first Kail (cabbage) they touch. As it is in appearance so will be their future husband - tall, short, thin or fat, straight or crooked, and by the amount of earth carried with the plant so the dowry will be large or small. If the heart is sweet so will be the disposition of the future husband. If sour, then so will he be. There are many local variations of this and other fortune telling rites.

These customs began as pagan rituals even before Christ walked the earth. The holiday got its start as "Samhain" a major feast of the Celts. The Celts believed that the souls of the dead returned to mingle with the living and they lighted great bonfires to honor the Sun God and scare away evil spirits. They also believed that women who had sold themselves to the Devil danced on hilltops with goblins and imps, hence the Halloween witches.

When the Romans came to the British Isles their customs intermingled with those of the natives. The use of nuts, apples and other fruit had its origin in the Roman harvest feast.

In the 8th century Pope Gregory III moved the festival of All Saints to November 1st. This is where the name "Halloween" which means "holy evening" before the holy day came from.

Editors Note:

Halloween got its roots in America when the Celtic immigrants (Scots, Welsh and Irish) brought over many old world customs. Jack O' Lanterns came from a Celtic folk tale about a stingy old man name Jack, who loved to play tricks on the Devil and was condemned to wander the world for eternity carrying a lighted lantern.

The Trick in trick or treating is purely American. For years the night before Halloween was "Mischief Night" but then the practical jokes began to occur on Halloween so they could be blamed on "goblins". The "treat" comes from the time when the poor used to beg for "soul cakes" baked especially for All Souls Eve. In return for taking a cake, the recipient was required to say a prayer for the dead.

In early times when spirits were believed to visit the people's homes, costumed and masked villagers - representing the souls of the dead - paraded to the outskirts of the town to lead the spirits away.

The Halloween colors of orange symbolizes the color of the ripe grain at harvest time while the black stands for black magic.



#### MOVIE REVIEW

#### THE VOICE IN THE FINGERS



The Voice in the Fingers is really three films in one: a history and presentation of the bagpipe as one of the oldest of musical instruments, still popular in many parts of the world, although primarily associated with Scotland; with scenes of Scotland's splendors, from wild of the Gaels, their love for music and how Scottish music and dance developed apart from Western European trends; for the bagpipe buff it gives a glimpse of such masters of the instrument as the late John MacFadyen, Seumas MacNeil and Capt. John MacLellan. It lets us hear them and others playing Piobaireachd, the classical music of the bagpipe. If only for this performance aspects of the film, it would be important; putting all aspects together, it makes a truly outstanding contribution to the film field.

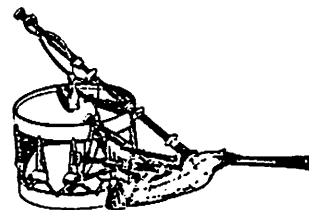
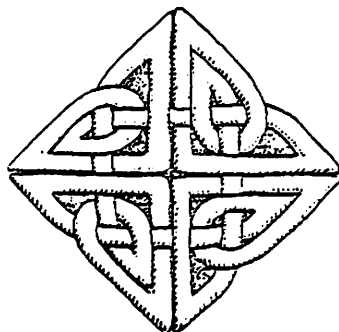
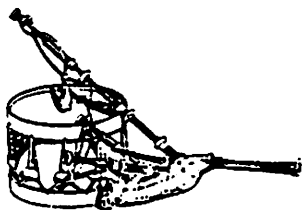
Piobaireachd, "the music of the piper", is a highly articulated form of music whose roots are lost in antiquity, but which was developed in its present form in Scotland mainly through the efforts of the MacCrimmon family, MacLeods of Skye. It is, as is all classical music, exacting in style and execution and covers the spectrum of wild and rousing salutes and battles through decorous expositions; i.e., stories of meetings or historical events, to some the saddest music to be heard, the Laments. The Piper, along with the bard, was responsible for maintaining and recounting the history of his Clan and he did through his piobaireachds. In a time before the printed word and the media, music and poetry and tales were the source of learning and, to be true to the tales they told, piobaireachd was "exact". Prior to the development of music notation, it was taught by master to pupil using "Canntaireachd" (cantrock), a system of "vocables", each one representing a note or combination of notes. The film shows students in various stages of development being taught by canntaireachd and staff notation and it is not too difficult, as the camera shows the rocky waste of Dunvegan Bay on Skye, to imagine the MacCrimmons and their students at work centuries ago.

The decline of piping after its ban by the English following the Battle of Culloden in 1746 and its restoration when the English realized their error and developed pipe bands for their Scottish Regiments, is detailed in the film. The spread of bagpipe music is highlighted by shots of the bagpipe band of the Gurkha Battalion on duty at Buckingham Palace, and a number of shots of pipe bands and solo contestants who have competed in various games and other gatherings. Judging from the sales of bagpipes there are many more people playing the pipes in North America than there are in Scotland. There is no doubt that viewing the Voice in the Fingers will inspire accomplished pipers as well as arouse the interest of those who would like to learn to play one of the oldest and most enjoyable instruments in the world.

The film has wide appeal. People interested in folk music will hear Kirsten MacLean singing some of the "mouth music" of the Western Isles, and those interested in the dance will be able to see a New Zealander who comes to Scotland in the summer and wins many of the dance competitions at the Games. The transition of the exuberant dance of the Scottish soldier to the more discreet ballroom style is also well illustrated, along with an example of some very good Scottish fiddle music.

Something for anyone interested in Scotland, folk song or dance; the impact of Scottish music on Country-Western music, the development of Piobaireachd and of the pipe band - all this described in the lilting Scottish burr in what makes the Voice in the Fingers a truly memorable film.

This is a GBS Production of A Patria Films, Ltd. The film runs 54 minutes and is in Technicolor. Watch for it on your PBS station.







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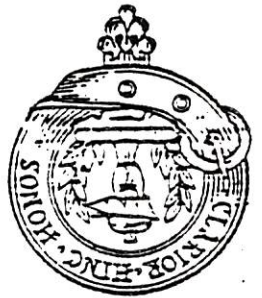
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