



The St. Andrew Society of Colorado

KILTS IN COLORADO
A History of the St. Andrew Society of Colorado
1963—1988

By Gayle Ray

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Introduction

The promotion of Scottish heritage and culture in the Rocky Mountain region has been the primary goal of the St. Andrew Society of Colorado since it was founded in 1963. The SASC implements this goal by its celebrations of events associated with Scottish life and history – Burns Suppers, Highland Games – and by supporting traditional activities, such as piping and dancing.

As the Society approaches its twenty-fifth year of existence, this paper attempts to record the founding, growth and activities of this particular St. Andrew Society in order to define its purpose and to discover the meaning the Society has for its members. Before we look at the St. Andrew Society of Colorado in detail, it is necessary to look at the historical beginnings of such organizations as they were established during the colonial phase of immigration to North America.

The North American colonies provided a home for numerous Scots forced to leave their native land for lack of economic opportunities, for having lost ill-fated rebellions, or for holding unpopular political opinions or religious beliefs. Clinging strongly to traditional ways, Scots in America maintained their cultural and national identity through various organizations:

Their earliest societies, however, limited themselves to relieving destitute countrymen stranded in American seaports – and to maintaining their country's good name which such paupers threatened. The first was the **Scots Charitable Society of Boston**, founded in 1657; during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries others began in New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, Savannah, and wherever else the need was endemic. Usually they took the name of their national patron saint. (1)

St. Andrew Societies, indigenous to the American colonies, were formed to assist newly arrived Scots in their adaptation to a new life. The oldest still existing society in America is the **St. Andrew Society of Charleston, South Carolina**, founded in 1729 by several men from Scotland who saw a need to alleviate want among the Scots of Charleston. Similar societies were organized in Philadelphia in 1747 and New York in 1756.

Created primarily to assist newly arrived Scots, St. Andrew Societies in colonial America also involved themselves in political events. The colony of Georgia was beset by various difficulties arising from quarrels between the colonial governors and the members of the "Scotch Club."

The St. Andrew Society of New York counted among its members, signatories of the Declaration of Independence and other notables, such as Alexander Hamilton, Washington Irving, and Andrew Carnegie. (2)

Immigrant associations sometimes represented communal attempts to meet material needs in times of crisis. Thus the numerous mutual aid societies and benevolent associations strove, with varying degrees of success, to provide sickness benefits and to pay funeral expenses. But the real function of these and similar immigrant organizations was to satisfy the desire of their members for companionship and familiar surroundings, and thus to soften the efforts of contact with a strange environment. (3)

St. Andrew Societies no longer assist newly arrived immigrants by providing financial aid and do not involve themselves in political matters. In the United States of the 1980s, Scottish organizations, which can be found in forty-three states (4), may have varying titles, but have as their reason for existence a common goal: to preserve, promote, and celebrate Scottish tradition and heritage. This three-fold purpose also provides a sense of cultural identity and a source of ethnic pride based upon traditional values and responds to a nostalgic longing for the past. Membership in these societies also provides opportunities to combine culture, tradition, and pride into re-creations of a way of life that has long since disappeared. By participating in an activity, such as a Burns Night Supper, a Highland Games, or a St. Andrew's Ball, members may feel a connection with a romantic past as embodied in the customs, music, dance, folklore, literature, and history of a proud people.

The St. Andrew Society of New York and several of the older societies retain their traditional requirement that members be men of Scottish descent. Societies which were founded later, especially those in areas with a small population of Scottish Americans, are more inclined to accept not only native-born Scots and descendants of Scots but also those merely interested in Scottish culture and activities. Obviously, many of these societies would have ceased to exist without the additional support of people of non-Scottish origin. One such Society is the St. Andrew Society of Colorado.

The Society is not an immigrant historical society, which is by definition "an association having as one of its major objectives the promotion of immigrant history and the collection, study, and publication of historical data relating to the members of its group in what is today the United States of America." (5) Above all, the St. Andrew Society of Colorado

exists to provide an organization for all persons of Scottish birth or descent, their kin, and all other persons with an interest in Scotland, so that they may pursue their interest in Scottish culture, traditions, history, and the customs of sport, dress and the like. (6)

The Early Years

Dr. William H. Mackintosh, an associate minister at Montview Presbyterian Church in Denver, originated the Society in 1963. He asserts that “all the hard work of first selling the idea, drawing the people together, persuading persons to serve as officers, starting the new organization, began with my sole initiative.” (7) Dr. Mackintosh’s grandfather was a native-born Scot who made his living as a soldier, a shepherd, and a crofter. William’s father, born in Rogart, Scotland, emigrated to the United States and settled in Illinois, where William was born. The importance of his Scottish heritage was impressed upon Dr. Mackintosh from early childhood with emphasis on “traditional family virtues of thrift, hard work, honesty, making do, and judging a person by what one is rather than what one has.” (8) Education and religion were highly valued in the family. The son of a minister himself, William Mackintosh did graduate work in Scotland and was ordained a minister of the Church of Scotland. He served as an assistant minister at St. Cuthbert’s Church, Edinburgh, in 1957 and worked for a time at St. Columba’s, London, before coming to Denver. His experiences with the St. Andrew Society of Edinburgh, his ministry at St. Columba’s Church, which belonged to the Church of Scotland and had a large Scots congregation, and his involvement with the Illinois Caledonian Club, all gave him the idea for starting a similar organization in Denver. He hoped to organize the Scots in Denver for fellowship and for the recognition of their heritage.

The following letter, which was directed specifically to Scots, was sent by **Dr. Mackintosh** to those individuals he felt shared his idea of a St. Andrew Society in Denver.

1945 Eudora Street
Denver 20, Colorado
14 March, 1963

Caledonian greeting! I am taking the liberty of writing to a number of people like yourself, who I think would be interested in the possibility of forming a St. Andrew’s Society here in Denver.

To my knowledge, there is at present no organization for the traditional purpose of sharing the Scottish cultural heritage and planning activities for the Scottish community in Denver. As you know, such societies and groups are common in all parts of the world, and for us they offer a grand opportunity to express Scotland’s contribution to the international colour of America.

If you are an exiled Scot or have a strong blood tie with the old country, and would be interested in meeting with fellow Scots to establish such a society, would you please come to Montview Presbyterian Church on Friday evening, March 29th. **Miss Dorothy Mackay Leitch**, who has been active in leading Scottish Country Dancing, joins me in issuing this invitation, and we look forward to seeing you then. Coffee and Kilts in the McCollum Room at 7:30 p.m.!

Yours sincerely,

(Rev.) William H. Mackintosh (9)

In response to Dr. Mackintosh's letter, a general exploratory meeting was held on March 29, 1963 at the Montview Church with twenty-five prospective members in attendance. At this meeting, officers were elected to serve as president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, and assistant secretary-treasurer. **Dr. Colin Walker**, a pediatrician from Dundee, Scotland, became the first president of the new, as yet unnamed, organization. As Dr. Walker recalled:

Bill and I met through my membership of and his appointment to the ministerial staff of Montview Blvd. Presbyterian Church. Bill has always been very keen on things Scottish and through time he thought up the possibility. We learned that there had been previous attempts to initiate Scottish groups – “Caledonian” and “Scotia” I think their names had been. They had lasted a few years each but had all disbanded so we decided to try again. There was a good nucleus of Scots in Denver at the time whom we knew through the **English Speaking Union** and **International House**. We had in fact put on one or two Scottish Country Dance displays and I think they came before we started the St. Andrew Society. There were also lots of 1st generation Americans with Scottish ancestry whom we also got to know. So it was surprisingly easy to get a reasonable number together to make a start. (10)

The two organizations mentioned by Dr. Walker were the **Caledonian Club No. 1 of Denver** and the **Daughters of Scotia**. The Caledonian Club had been active at the turn of the century and was responsible for the **statue of Robert Burns in City Park**. The Daughters of Scotia formed during World War II and disbanded in the early 1950s. Another charter member of the St. Andrew Society, Dorothy Mackay-Collins, interviewed former members of the Daughters of Scotia and worked closely with Drs. Mackintosh and Walker in order to launch the new organization. Mrs. Mackay-Collins was also the first instructor of Scottish Country Dancing for SASC. As she recalled, “Of all the purposes and goals of the Society there was one prime issue – that all the Scottish events held by this Society should always be authentic in its Scottish presentation.” (11)

Dr. Mackintosh hoped to have an enthusiastic core for the new Society and this role was filled at first by the officers. The first council meeting, held April 14, 1963, consisted of these new officers, who met to discuss membership and a name for the group. At this first meeting “It was agreed that the officers and council members must have close ties with Scotland to preserve the Scottish character of the Society's leadership.” (12)

The council accepted the following recommendations at a meeting held in June of 1963:

- (a) the name (of the organization) shall be the St. Andrew Society of Colorado, Denver Chapter.
- (b) affiliation with the St. Andrew Society, Edinburgh.
- (c) the Society's programme should consist of the major festive occasions for Scottish people – St. Andrew's Day, Burns Supper, Games and Picnic, Ceilidh, and Annual General Meeting. (13)

The Denver Scottish Association or Denver Caledonian Society had been suggested as names for the new group, but Dr. Mackintosh preferred that the organization be known as a St. Andrew Society rather than a Caledonian Club. He felt that

The St. Andrew Societies world-wide have traditionally had a humanitarian and benevolent character in addition to fostering traditional Scottish heritage and celebrations. St. Andrew is the Patron Saint of Scotland. It is a name associated with the mind and heart of the people. It is the oldest and most traditional name for Scottish Societies. Caledonian clubs are usually purely social and the name is really Roman in origin. (14)

An inaugural invitation was sent to potential society members for a meeting held at International House on July 23, 1963. Sixty people responded to the invitation, including the British Consul, L.P. L'Estrange; James S. Holme, president of the English-speaking Union; and Dr. James Galvin, International House president, upon whom honorary Society memberships were bestowed. Dr. Walker said at this meeting:

The Society's purpose will be to further Scottish culture and tradition; to provide a nucleus through which Scots in Denver may be welcomed and assisted; to provide programs of Scottish type and talent to enhance the image of the Scot in the United States, and to act as a complementary group to other associations interested in international affairs, such as International House and the English-Speaking Union. (15)

Any persons, whether of Scottish extraction or not, were to be welcomed into the Society. However, Thistle memberships, referring to the national symbol of Scotland, were to form the core of the Society and were:

open to any British subject of Scottish birth or residence, or any citizen of a country other than Scotland who is born of a native Scottish parent, or any person demonstrating strong Scottish ties, and who has resided as an adult in Scotland for a period of not less than two full years. (16)

Those members who joined the Society in its first few years of existence were understandably those born in Scotland, married to a Scot, or children of Scottish-born parents, as these were the individuals to whom Dr. Mackintosh had directed his attention.

The minutes of the first General Business Meeting held on October 24, 1963 reported that sixty-two adult and eighteen junior members had joined the Society since June of that year. Affiliations with the World Federation of Scottish Societies and Individuals and also with the St. Andrew Society of Edinburgh were readily approved.

The St. Andrew Society of Edinburgh is not the oldest such body. That distinction belongs to the St. Andrew Society of Charleston, South Carolina. The Edinburgh St. Andrew Society was incorporated in 1907 as an offshoot of the Scottish Patriotic Association and now encompasses the World Federation of Scottish Societies and Individuals. Its chief aim “is to place the history of Scotland in its true light, thereby correcting erroneous statements and implications which have become increasingly frequent during the past half century.” (17) Currently, “the Society has sought to provide a central point of reference for Scottish societies across the world...affiliation to the St. Andrew Society is regarded by many local St. Andrew and Caledonian societies as a mark of recognition.” (18) This affiliation with such a “parent group” headquartered in Scotland was probably necessary, in order to gain credibility for the new St. Andrew Society of Colorado. **James McIntosh**, Overseas Secretary, Edinburgh, stated that:

we are not in touch with each and every St. Andrew Society in the world – partly because some of these societies have no permanent address and sometimes sink from our sight when there is a change of secretary, and partly because we have not worked hard enough at keeping the channels of communication open. (19)

During the early 1980s there was no official contact between Edinburgh and Denver, but since 1986 the St. Andrew Society of Colorado has once again been an affiliated member.

The main item of business to be dealt with in October 1963 was the adoption of the Society’s constitution, which had been adapted from the constitution of the St. Andrew Society of Edinburgh. Arrangements for the first St. Andrew’s Ball were also announced, as well as plans for future traditional events. But Scottish Country Dance instruction, under the direction of two trained teachers, became the first Society-sponsored activity.

These traditional Scottish celebrations drew – and continue to draw – new people into SASC. One hundred and fifty members and guests attended the **first St. Andrew’s Ball, held on November 30, 1963**, to honor Scotland’s patron saint. The **first Burns Supper, January 25, 1964**, had two hundred in attendance, to hear a visiting Burns scholar from the University of Edinburgh, **Professor Thomas McCourt**, deliver the *Toast of Immortal Memory*. (20) These and other traditional activities will be discussed in detail later.

At the second Annual General Meeting held on April 24, 1964, **Dr. Mackintosh was elected president**, succeeding Dr. Walker who was returning to Scotland. Dr. Mackintosh had not wished to be the first president of SASC for fear of dominating it during its formative phase; but as its first secretary-treasurer, he had been the driving force behind the fledgling organization. It was his perseverance, determination, and guidance which enabled the group to survive and to grow during the 1960s. The St. Andrew Society of Colorado which exists today grew out of the foundation laid by William Mackintosh. It seems fitting that he was awarded the first Life membership in the Society in 1967.

The Society grew slowly yet steadily during the late 1960s. Various events were sponsored, such as a concert by the **Caledonian Singers**, a group of professional singers, dancers, and pipers from Scotland, and the formation of a **cricket team** in cooperation with the English-Speaking Union and British Overseas Airways employees. But the St. Andrew’s Ball and the Burns Supper remained the mainstay of SASC activities. As Dr. Mackintosh stated, “We have tried to aim at planning a few major functions, well supported and appealing to all rather than planning many small activities sporadically supported and appealing to few.” (21)

Changing Times

The aims of the Society, as listed in a *Denver Post* article of January, 1968, were explained as follows:

To provide a meeting ground for persons interested in Scotland or of Scottish descent; offer hospitality or assistance to resident Scots, visiting Scots, or persons belonging to the several dozen other Scottish organizations and clans in this country; promote Scottish culture, traditions, history, literature, arts and all customs of sport, dress “and the like”; and it will schedule suitable programs to commemorate St. Andrew’s Day and Burns Day. (22)

While not entirely differing from the statement of purpose Dr. Walker made in 1963, this statement differs in tone. This formal restatement of the Society’s goals was composed under the guidance of **Andrew McKean**, then serving the second of three terms as chieftain. (23) McKean was first mentioned in the SASC council Minutes of March 20, 1964. Dr. Walker felt that Mr. McKean, who had served as a former secretary of the St. Andrew Society in the Philippines, would be invaluable to SASC due to his work and experience in Scottish affairs. McKean was made chairman of the Traditional Activities committee at this meeting. At a council meeting in May of that year:

Mr. McKean raised the question that, in his opinion, the Society’s membership application form was not specific enough regarding qualifications for membership. He felt it should be plainly stated on the membership application that completion of the form did not constitute automatic membership but that each application would be considered by the Council, appropriate screening of the applicant would be made and, if suitable for membership, the applicant would then be informed as to acceptance. He felt it was necessary for the Society to be cautious in their (sic) acceptance of members. (24)

His reasoning was that the lack of specific requirements would have the SASC accepting as members “amateur Scotsmen,” those who enjoyed playing at being Scottish.

He felt such members would dilute the impact of the Society’s events and would affect the traditions associated with these activities by tolerating less than strict adherence to customary procedures and observances. Mr. McKean requested that a new application form be prepared and submitted to the council at the next meeting. This was done, and the Minutes state that after the Council made unspecified amendments to the new form, it was approved for use. Despite this attempt to tighten membership requirements, nearly every application to the Society for membership during the past twenty-four years has been accepted. “Amateur Scots” have supported and contributed to SASC, while Mr. McKean has been the guardian of Scottish tradition and observance.

McKean was also responsible for rewriting portions of the constitution, arranging for many of the St. Andrew's Balls and Burns Suppers, as well as overseeing special events such as the Caledonian Singers. McKean was the only chieftain to have served three terms in office. Dr. Mackintosh, who served as chieftain twice, resigned his office prior to completing his second term. He felt that a change of leadership would be good for the Society; and he also anticipated traveling to Scotland, although his plans were indefinite. He did, however, wish to retain his seat on the council.

Dr. Mackintosh proposed Mr. McKean as his successor; McKean accepted and was confirmed by the membership at the Annual General Meeting of April 1966. But McKean was unable to serve as chieftain due to a job transfer away from Denver. Dr. Mackintosh did go to Scotland and the leadership of SASC was left in disarray. Attendance at the monthly social evenings declined also, and it was debated whether SASC concentrate on the traditional Scottish events and discontinue the informal gatherings. But McKean returned to Denver in 1967 and was asked by the council to resume a seat on the council as acting chieftain. He accepted.

Revising the constitution seems to have been McKean's special project through the years. While he firmly believed in maintaining authentic Scottish tradition, he also realized the "need to broaden our horizon since we must visualize our society within the present American way of life...the fact that most of our members are indeed American-born asks that we avoid a limitation of the Society..." (25) Constitutional revisions reflected the changing needs of the growing Society, such as acquiring nonprofit status, expanding the Highland Games, and establishing the St. Andrew Foundation. In recognition of his services to the Society, McKean was presented with the Tartan Award (26) at the 1973 Burns Supper.

In addition to his work on the constitution, McKean prepared protocols for the St. Andrew's Ball and Burns Supper, in order ensure proper continuation of these ceremonial and traditional events. With minor variations from year to year, these guidelines remain in effect.

Due to changes and growth within SASC over the years, a constitutional revision committee was formed in early 1982. The committee proposed and the membership approved the following changes:

- (a) Added to the Council the individuals who are responsible for the major activities.
- (b) Added the editor of the *Highland Herald* to the Council.
- (c) Created the position of Society historian.
- (d) The Games Marshal, the chairman of the Traditional Feasts, the chairman of the Country Dancers and the Highland Dancers should be on the Council.

The *Highland Herald*, the Society's newsletter, began publication in 1978. The title refers to the mountains of Colorado, not the hills of Scotland. The current newsletter had been preceded by the *Bulletin*, initiated in September 1963 as a one-page listing of Society events and short items of business. An actual newsletter format had been suggested several times during the formative years of SASC, but a lack of funds and individuals willing to undertake the task prevented such a move. **Jean Casson**, a SASC member since 1970 and a former Council member, has been the editor of the *Highland Herald* since its creation in September of 1975. The newsletter informs the membership of upcoming activities, the results of Council meetings, and publicizes Scottish events and entertainments. Articles about Scottish history, customs, holidays, food, and wearing apparel are included as well as material submitted from the membership. No particular view of modern Scotland is presented nor is there any evidence of Scots nationalism. The newsletter merely reflects the interests and concerns of the local Society. Mrs. Casson maintains personal contact with SASC members through her dual roles as newsletter editor and recruiter of volunteers for the Rocky Mountain Highland Games. (27)

The position of Society historian had been filled by **Commander Kenneth D. Iain Murray**, from 1968 to his death in 1977. Commander Murray had been appointed to this position by Chieftain Andrew Roy, as the constitution allowed, because of his experience as a naval and military historian. The Commander presented Toasts of Immortal Memory at Burns Suppers and was highly regarded by the members of SASC. Perhaps in deference to his many talents and abilities, the position of Society historian remained vacant until 1986.

Frequent constitutional reviews and revisions have kept the SASC fluid and in step with changes in American culture. Instead of imposing a set of archaic and rigid rules, the constitution reflects the needs of an American organization. Though no longer centered around a core of native Scots, the St. Andrew Society of Colorado continues to provide a place for the celebration of tradition and heritage based on the idea which originated with William Mackintosh.

Dancers, Drummers and Pipers

The auxiliary groups have always been the most visible representatives of the Society. These groups are the Country Dancers, the Highland Dancers, and the St. Andrew Pipe Band. The Country Dancers began as the first Society-sponsored activity and have been the most active over the years. The Country Dancers affiliated with the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, Edinburgh, in 1965 (28) and formed a performance team to entertain at SASC functions and community events. Scottish Country Dance instruction has been offered in the Denver area once a week for more than twenty years.

The Highland Dancers affiliated with SASC in 1965 but got off to a rather slow start, as there was no qualified teacher available to train dancers for competition. Therefore, these dancers provided entertainment only at Society events. Competition, which is essential in order to improve as a dancer, became available much later. Dancers from Denver entered their first competition in Oklahoma in March 1973 and brought home twelve medals. Since that time, the Rocky Mountain Highland Dancers of the St. Andrew Society of Colorado have expanded and have been able to provide a competitive event of their own through the Rocky Mountain Highland Games. SASC also provides travel money for dance competitions outside of Colorado. In 1986 two dancers from SASC competed in the national championships held in Chicago.

The Colorado St. Andrew Pipe Band originated with a few individual pipers who wished to affiliate with a formal organization. There were official society pipers over the years, but no band existed as such until 1981 when, with Society approval, **Tony Ciuffo** formed these pipers into a small band under his direction. **Sean Detmers** became the pipe major in 1983, and under his leadership the band entered competitions and offered instruction to beginning pipers. The band continues to perform at all major Society events, parades, and other special functions in Colorado as well as competing in Highland Games throughout the region.

The auxiliary groups of SASC provide the primary means for the expression of Scottish culture through music and dance for the individual members of these groups. The auxiliary groups have also been a source of new officers for the Society, as new members who wish to be active in the Society frequently join one of them.

A Calendar of Scottish Events

In order to understand the history of SASC, it is necessary to describe the major activities of the Society in greater detail. For ease of presentation, they will be discussed in the order in which they occur throughout the year.

January

The Burns Night Supper is held near January 25, the birthday of Robert Burns:

For the cult of Burns surpassed all others. Hardly a Scottish concert or banquet ended without a dozen songs or recitations from their ain darlin' bard. As early as 1820 they held a banquet in New York on his birthday and everywhere thereafter the twenty-fifth of January was the one day which all Scottish-Americans were sure to celebrate. (29)

The wearing of Highland dress is encouraged, but the Burns Supper is not as formal an event as is the St. Andrew's Ball. A *Toast to the Immortal Memory*, which is a speech relating to some aspect of Burn's life, writings, or reputation, is central to the Supper. Burns' songs are sung and his poetry quoted. Toasts to the lassies, the laddies, and "The Land We Came Frae" are featured. The Haggis, the traditional native dish of Scotland (30) is borne into the room preceded by a piper, and Burns' "Address to a Haggis" is recited. The hotel at which the 1971 Burns Supper was held served only a meal of potatoes, not realizing that the Haggis was not the entrée and that only a token serving was made for purposes of ceremony.

The Tartan Award is presented at the Burns Supper to the person who has contributed outstanding service to the Society and a brief memorial service for deceased Society members is conducted, during which a solo piper plays the traditional lament, "The Flowers of the Forest." The evening concludes with Country Dancing and a rousing version of "Auld Lang Syne." **Dr. Thomas Sutherland**, a native of Falkirk, Scotland, and at that time a professor at the University of Colorado, presented the *Toast of Immortal Memory* in 1972 and 1973. (31)

For Scots everywhere, Burns may supply the cohesive element that was once supplied by language or religion. His songs express universal emotions of love, friendship, sorrow, hope separation, and loss. His poetry ranges from stirring patriotism to bawdy humor. Burns is not only the Scots national bard but

a song writer for all English-speaking people. Wherever in the world they may be on New Year's Eve, when, helped by drink and the reminder of their bondage to time, men and women indulge their instinct of a common humanity, they join hands and sing a song of Burns. (32)

May

In May a Kirkin' o' the Tartan service is conducted at Saint John's Cathedral as a joint effort of the church and the Society. This service evolved from the Kirkin' of the Tartans started by **Peter Marshall** in Washington, D.C. during the 1940s and includes a blessing of the tartans, the music of pipe bands and a gathering in Cathedral Square for performances by the Highland and Country Dancers.

June

In 1986 a family picnic was held and the attendance was encouraging enough to reinstate it as an annual event on the SASC calendar. Scottish athletic events were demonstrated, and the pipe band performed; but these activities were secondary to eating.

August

Highland Games have been held in America since 1836 but really began to be popular after Queen Victoria extended her patronage to Games in Great Britain in 1848. Highland Games are believed to have been a part of traditional clan gatherings and provided not only a way to display strength and bravery, but were used as a method of replenishing the ranks of the sponsoring chieftain's army. (33)

The enthusiasm extended to this facet of Highland life underscores the way in which Highland customs have become the dominant view of Scotland. As one English author has written, "similar events have penetrated the Lowland and Border counties whose inhabitants, less than two centuries ago, would probably have died rather than adopt the customs and dress of the barbaric Highlander." (34)

In America, the distinctions among Highland, Lowland and Border are even more blurred. The colorful nature of the Games and the romantic view of "Tartanism" (35), which focuses on the kilt and the pipes, lure the public to Highland Games. Advertisements and notices for fifty-eight U.S. Games, running from May to October, were published in a recent issue of *The Highlander*. (36)

But in spite of potential arguments which may be presented by purists in regards to Scottish customs, the premier event of the entire year for the St. Andrew Society of Colorado is the annual Rocky Mountain Highland Games held the second weekend in August. Preparations for this major undertaking of the Society begin early in January and involve many individuals serving on various committees which meet throughout the year.

The Games began in 1964 as an informal picnic for SASC families. Pipers and dancers provided entertainment for the 175 people who attended this first gathering. Two pipe bands and demonstrations of Highland and Scottish Country Dancing were again the highlights of the Games held in 1965. Following this, "**Dr. Mackintosh** felt the Highland Games could very well become the most popular meeting of the year." (37) In 1972 a Games committee was formed to oversee the planning and running of the Games. The committee suggested that the 1973 Games be self-supporting, that Scottish attire be worn, and that the emphasis remain on a family outing with competitive sports events. Some 2,500 people attended the 1974 Games, where, for the first time, the dance competition was sanctioned by the Scottish Official Board of Highland Dance. (38) The Society also experienced a large increase in new members, which was attributed to the information booth at this Games.

Since that time SASC has endeavored to attract new and to retain old members by offering quality competitions with prestigious awards in athletics, Highland dancing, piping, and drumming. (39) Clan tents, vendors of Scottish goods, entertainment, children's events, and food are all a part of the rocky Mountain Highland Games today. As the SASC Games has grown, it now faces competition from the Longs Peak Scottish Festival held in Estes Park and various smaller events held in Colorado Springs and Fort Collins. But the Games committee feels that the quality of the Rocky Mountain Highland Games will continue to attract the best competitors and an enthusiastic crowd. Corporate sponsors support the Games by underwriting the cost of the major awards. Coors provides the Sword of the Rockies for Highland Dancing, KOSI Radio and R.G. Hardie sponsor the Rocky Mountain Chanter for piping. Other sponsors provide scholarships to the piping and drumming school, held the week prior to the Games, other awards or services. In return these sponsors are given advertising space in the Games program and are recognized at the awards ceremony. It should be mentioned that some of the individuals who are employed by the corporate sponsors are also Americans of Scots ancestry. This sponsorship has enabled the Games to expand and develop a reputation for quality competitive events. In order to maintain this reputation, the Rocky Mountain Highland Games is a member of the Association of Scottish Games and Festivals, which encourages, supports, and assists member organizations in the presentation of Highland Games. (40)

November

The final event on the SASC calendar is the St. Andrew's Banquet and Ball held in late November, a formal event and also the most ceremonious. Toasts are made to the President, the Queen, and St. Andrew. A cake is piped in with an honor guard, after which the Chieftain, the piper, and the cake bearers are rewarded with a **quaich** – a Highland drinking cup – of whisky. Traditionally, the Chieftain is the last one to drink and is expected to drain the cup of its contents. Entertainment is provided during dinner by the Chieftain's dancer and piper, the pipe band, and the Country dancers. The Chieftain presents a "State of the Society" address and he then begins the evening's dancing by leading the Chieftain's reel. The evening ends with a rendition of "Auld Lang Syne."

Saint Andrew is both a patriotic and a religious symbol. The X-shaped cross on which he was supposedly crucified is the Scottish national symbol and is seen on the **saltire**, the flag of Scotland. But Saint Andrew has been largely overshadowed by Robert Burns (41), especially in the hearts of expatriate Scots, who yet name the majority of their organizations after the saint and not the poet.

The St. Andrew Society of Colorado was organized for the purpose of celebrating these traditional Scottish activities and continues to do so. But these activities alone would not have been enough to sustain the organization had it remained a small enclave of Scots interested in strict adherence to tradition. Older St. Andrew Societies, such as those in New York, Georgia, Washington, D.C., and the Carolinas limit themselves to male members and insist upon Scots ancestry as a condition of membership as they are located in larger centers of Scots population and have been in existence much longer so that membership in these societies is quite prestigious. The Colorado St. Andrew Society realized long ago that in order to survive it must appeal to a broader range of people and that it would be possible to maintain tradition through them.

Great-Grandfather Came from Glasgow

Individuals have been attracted to membership in SASC for a variety of reasons. Participation in a specific activity, such as piping or dancing, attending the social and traditional events, or to simply meet new people are important to many. The opportunity for men to wear Scottish attire is frequently mentioned in response to questions regarding the appeal of the St. Andrew Society. The importance of appearance has been addressed by *Denver Post* columnist **Jack Kisling** as follows:

When a crowd of Scotsmen comes along in native regalia, sweating and swaggering to the godawful squawk of bagpipes, it's hard not to yearn secretly to be one of them.

They seem so proud and square and cocky as they pound along in their bearskins and kilts, a stubborn splinter group that would rather perish than forsake the outrageous, the outlandish, and the outmoded. No wonder they have become Great Britain's official wild men.

For pure romantic appeal, these Celtic peacocks have gradually upstaged the Irish, who can outtalk and outdrink them, and the Welsh, can outsing them and play better football. (42)

These elements of mystique, pride, and romance which surround the wearing of the kilt are by no means contemporary observations for a Justice of the Peace received the following complaint from a Hampshire innkeeper in 1760:

"... that four Highland officers were quartered on him, who being brawny handsome fellows, he began to be jealous of his wife, who was not very old, and fearful for the virtue of his daughters; the Highlanders, being in their own country dress, the females could not keep their eyes off them." (43)

This unique form of male attire also provides a sense of exclusiveness and group identity, which are also reasons for belonging to any sort of group. The kilt represents the same sort of identification provided by athletic teams wearing the same uniform or by a Shriner wearing a fez. The emphasis on Highland dress is a constitutional provision for SASC but that does not mean that such attire is mandatory at its events. Although one author states that "the kilt is perfectly normal dress for a man of Scottish ancestry or connections, and anyone who feels differently is simply displaying his ignorance" (44), a few of the male members of SASC are not so easily persuaded.

The increased awareness of ethnicity resulting from social movements in America during the 1960s and 1970s and the popularity of **Alex Haley's** *Roots* may have been the impetus for Scottish-Americans to recognize their own heritage after the process of assimilation blended them into mainstream American culture. As the editors of the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* have stated:

All Americans who are not themselves immigrants have ancestors who came from elsewhere. But ancestry alone does not automatically confer distinctive ethnic identity, even though ethnicity is often viewed as ascriptive, immutable, and primordial, on the grounds that "you can't change your grandfather." The assertion is accurate: you cannot change your grandparents. But you can forget them, and many Americans have. (45)

Except for the initial phases of colonial immigration, Scots did not settle into ethnic neighborhoods, as did other groups such as Poles or Italians; nor did religion provide quite the same cohesion for Scots as it did for Jews or Catholics, although most would have claimed Presbyterianism. The Scots were not as well known for their exercise of bloc voting, as were the Irish, nor were they discriminated against because of color, as were Blacks. This smooth transition into the mainstream culture was initially important to the new immigrants. But over time, "the Scots felt the need to assert themselves, to take note of their individuality and to look for the fellowship of people like-minded with themselves." (46) The SASC charter members used the phrase "oor ain folk" to describe their sense of identity; their need to distinguish themselves as a group, to speak of the land they themselves had known or the land they knew only through the reminiscence of others. As **Thomas Saunders**, the historian of the St. Andrew Society of Winnipeg, explained:

The Scot on his native heath can take or leave St. Andrew Societies. In the homeland he is among brither Scots and has no need to assert his Scottishness; but when he fares abroad he feels the need of a society which will help bind him to his own kind. He becomes sentimental about the land of his birth, or the land of his forefathers, and displays his Scottishness on every possible occasion. (47)

This attachment to things Scottish further described by Saunders:

A remarkable feature about Scots who fare abroad, too, is that their descendants – second and third generation Scots in Canada, for example – often are more obviously Scots than the original emigrants. They wear kilts, perform Highland dances, form branches of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, and play the bagpipes. (48)

Saunders illustrates his contention by his own experience stating, "I came to Canada in 1920 as a boy of eleven. I never wore a kilt; I never played the bagpipes. But one of my sons plays the bagpipes and two of them sport kilts on every appropriate occasion." (49)

The experience of Scots in Canada is also true of Scots in America, even for those whose Scottish ancestry is too distant to have made a conscious impact on identity. Several members of SASC can trace their genealogy to immigrant ancestors who came to North America two hundred years ago. While these ancestors may not have left behind family traditions, stories, records or mementoes that influenced their descendents, they may have bequeathed what one writer calls an "ancestral memory" (50), for "Americans who have Scottish ancestry seldom seem to forget the fact." (51)

You Don't Look Scottish

For individuals without Scots ancestry, the decision to join a Scottish organization may be difficult to understand. It may be an interest in music or an opportunity to engage in outrageous behavior that prompts an Italian-American to become a piper. A woman of Icelandic stock performs with the Country Dancers because she feels an affinity for the traditions and music of Scotland. One member, who was adopted as an infant, chose to join the St. Andrew Society, because she believes it is emotionally healthy to identify with a history and a heritage. Others are attracted by opportunities to participate in the social and traditional events, such as the Burns Supper or the Highland Games. These responses were obtained from an informal survey, a copy of which is included in the Appendix, taken at a Country Dance class in the spring of 1985 and explain only a few reasons why non-Scots belong to SASC; for the majority of its members do not play the pipes, dance reels, toss the cabers, eat haggis, or even wear a kilt. When asked, those who are actively involved in SASC mentioned the friends they have made as the primary reason for remaining members, although they were initially attracted to membership for some other reason.

The Structure of the Society

The St. Andrew Society of Colorado is governed by a Council consisting of the Chieftain, Vice Chieftain, Treasurer, Secretary, and three members-at-large, who meet monthly to conduct the business of the Society. The chairmen of the auxiliary groups, the Games marshal, the membership secretary, and the editor of *The Highland Herald* also attend the Council meetings to report on their activities and to advise the officers as the need may arise. The Council has the power to authorize expenditures and disburse Society funds, appoint members to fill vacant Council positions, and conduct the activities of the organization. All Society events are to have a Council member in charge of any such activity, the procedures for which are included in the Society's constitution.

The membership figures and categories for 1986 and 1987 may provide some insight into the current composition of SASC. The Thistle classification has already been defined elsewhere. Honorary memberships are bestowed at the discretion of the Council but there are currently no members in this category. During the early years of the Society, Honorary memberships were given to the governor of Colorado and the mayor of Denver but this has not been the practice for several years. The Honorary Thistle is used to fulfill the constitutional requirement that all officers hold Thistle or Honorary Thistle memberships. One does not have to have this designation prior to being nominated for an office; it is granted after a candidate has been elected to the Council. A Life membership is obtained by paying a one-time fee, currently \$75.00. An Ordinary membership is open to any person interested in the activities of the Society. Any member who is eligible for a specific membership category and demonstrates additional interest in and support of the Society by subscribing to a higher annual dues, presently \$30.00, may be a Patron. The number of members in these categories are as follows:

Thistle	133
Honorary	0
Honorary Thistle	22
Life	85
Ordinary	366
Patron	1
Single	253
Married	264
Family	9

The total membership for 1986-87 is 781. The above figures do not include classifications such as Honorary Life. Married couples are not counted individually if their classifications are the same. Clan affiliations are claimed by 396 members and it is not a membership requirement that these claims be documented. (52)

The following chart lists SASC membership by years and the number of members who attended the Annual General Meeting for a comparison of membership size to the number of active members.

YEAR	MEMBERS	ATTENDANCE AT A.G.M.
1963	62	no record
1964	148	150
1965	172	100
1966	207	75
1967	212	no record
1968	230	no record
1969	215	no record
1970	190	no record
1971	111	no record
1972	110	no record
1973	145	no record
1974	160	no record
1975	280	no record
1976	216	no record
1977	no record	no record
1978	425	54
1979	364	25
1980	625	42
1981	745	32
1982	769	60
1983	667	46
1984	816	60
1985	707	49
1986	784	30
1987	781	39

The Society's annual reports credit the large membership jump of 1978 and the gradual increases during the 1980s to the expansion of the Highland Games and the resultant publicity for the Society. This expansion not only attracted new members but also corporate sponsors for the Games, as discussed previously.

Over the years, the Society has attempted to encourage more active participation by its members in order to keep the Society vital and growing. But as with any similar organization, there are those members who are willing to be actively involved and those who are not. The Annual General Meeting agendas are much the same from year to year and attendance has continued to be small, even in those years in which major constitutional revisions were undertaken, as in 1982, 1984, and 1986. Perhaps for this reason, the constitution states that twenty-five members will constitute a quorum for the A.G.M. There is currently no provision for proxy voting; although it was considered and rejected at the 1986 A.G.M., primarily because there was no procedure for implementation attached to the proposed amendment.

At this same meeting, the St. Andrew Foundation was established “for the purpose of providing charitable and educational assistance to any person of Scottish descent, their kin, or anyone with a demonstrated interest in Scotland.” (53) A scholarship fund had been created by the Society in 1982 as a way to stimulate interest in Scottish cultural activities. Funds were awarded to Highland dancers, Country Dance instructors, and the pipe major to allow them to travel to competitions or workshops in other parts of the United States. An award was also made to a SASC member who was studying Scottish history at the University of Edinburgh.

But the St. Andrew Foundation is intended to provide for a broader range of needs, in addition to scholarship in specific areas. Provisions are included to “aid needy persons of Scottish nationality, their widows, or lineal descendants of Scots including but not limited to the elderly, infirm, and/or indigent.” (54) This provision recalls the original intent of early Scottish organizations, especially the colonial Societies, which were discussed in the Introduction. Though no funds have yet been given to individuals by the St. Andrew Society of Colorado on the basis of indigence, the fact that there is a provision for such aid connects this modern organization with its historical forebears.

SASC is able to support a charitable and educational foundation through its financial resources. While the Highland Games is the primary source of fund raising for the Society, income is generated through interest and dividend accounts, Society events, newsletter advertisements, and membership dues. The auxiliary groups maintain separate accounts and support their own activities through their own funds, although the Council has provided support for major expenses, such as equipment for the pipe band and a midwinter Highland dance competition. The major events – St. Andrew’s Ball and Burns Supper – have been self-supporting and have shown a profit on occasion.

Scots, Wha Hae

The changes in American society as a whole have also been reflected in SASC over the past twenty-five years. Members who have belonged since the 1960s and 1970s have all mentioned the move of the Society from a small clique uninterested in expanding its membership to the broad based organization it has become as the most obvious change. **Jean Casson** stated that “there has never been a membership drive mentality in the society, but it needed to become more than a social club for people born in Scotland if it was going to survive.” (55) Another long time member recalled that, “there used to be a lot of friction among the Council members and they used to rule the society very tightly.” (56) **George Barnes**, a member since 1964, credits the growth of the Games, good leadership, and well-supported activities as the factors that have caused the greatest changes in the Society. (57) But **Andrew McKean** feels the Society is “very Americanized. The people that are running it now have no Scottish connection other than ancestry. The thought process is totally American and has a romanticized view of Scotland.” (58) Mr. McKean is still an active member of SASC despite his opinion about the current state of the organization.

The Society admits women as full members but has not yet faced having women in any position of Council leadership other than Secretary. Four women have served as Treasurer but none since 1967. The question of having a woman as Chieftain had been raised at the A.G.M. in 1983 and the response was, “that nothing in the constitution precludes it.” (59) But it was understood among the charter members of the Society that men would be the leaders of the Society as is traditional in most ethnic groups, not just among the Scots.

The St. Andrew Society of Colorado concentrated on its celebrations of traditional activities and avoided political issues over the years. However, an attempt was made by one of its members, who had served in the British navy, to involve the SASC in a political matter during the Falkland Islands dispute between Britain and Argentina in 1982. A motion was made that a central body of U.S. and Canadian Scottish societies be formed:

to give moral support to Britain over the Falkland Islands issue and to examine ways of exerting political influence in our country of domicile over this dispute. As Denver is centrally located, the SAS of Colorado is willing to host the first meeting of such a committee and to coordinate responses from interested societies. (60)

The motion was hotly debated and finally defeated based on concerns that political activity would jeopardize the Society’s non-profit status and that the Society could not afford the cost of such a meeting.

Conclusion

Scottish societies in the U.S., including St. Andrew Societies, may be criticized for their insistence on historical authenticity when, in fact, there may be no such basis for many things the organizations hold dear. Yet, in the final analysis, orthodoxy in such matters is not the primary concern: it is the bonds of kinship and friendship within the context of an ethnic heritage that bind members together.

The St. Andrew Society of Colorado has been a creative, enthusiastic, and stubborn clan since 1963, when **William Mackintosh** “believed there was a need for a place to exchange humor, a place to speak freely of Scotland and things Scottish, and a place where people may relate to each other on the basis of similar values and concerns.” (61) The past twenty-four years have not proved him wrong.

Endnotes

1. Berthoff, p. 165.
2. Information pamphlet, St. Andrew Society of New York.
3. Jones, p. 136
4. As documented by the 1987 Directory issue of *The Highlander*, “the magazine of Scottish heritage.”
5. Appel, p. 6.
6. St. Andrew Society of Colorado membership application.
7. Letter from Dr. Mackintosh, New Orleans, to author, June 5, 1986.
8. Interview with Dr. Mackintosh, December 15, 1986.
9. Letter from Dr. Mackintosh to prospective members, Denver, March 14, 1963.
10. Letter from Dr. Walker, Dundee, Scotland, to author, July 23, 1985.
11. Letter from Dorothy MacKay-Collins, Oakland, California, to author, May 7, 1985.
12. SASC Minutes. April 14, 1963.
13. SASC Minutes. June 10, 1963.
14. Mackintosh, letter of June 5, 1986.
15. Joan White, “Scots and Friends Salute St. Andrew”, *The Denver Post*, July 25, 1963.
16. SASC membership application.
17. St. Andrew Society, Edinburgh, *Newsletter*, p. 6.
18. *Introducing the St. Andrew Society*. Information leaflet of the St. Andrew Society, Edinburgh.
19. Letter from James McIntosh, Edinburgh, Scotland, to author, June 4, 1986.
20. SASC. Program of the Burns Supper, January 25, 1964.
21. SASC Minutes. April 9, 1965.
22. John Buchanan, “Gathering of the Scots”, *The Denver Post*, January 21, 1968.

23. The title of president had been changed to chieftain in January, 1965 in order to lend a more Scottish tone to the office.
24. SASC Minutes. May 15, 1964.
25. SASC Minutes of the Annual General Meeting. October 23, 1970.
26. The Tartan Award is presented annually at the Burns Supper in recognition of outstanding service to the Society.
27. Interview with Jean Casson, May 9, 1985.
28. The Scottish Country Dance Society was formed in Glasgow by Miss Jean Milligan and Mrs. Stewart of Fasnacloich in 1923 in an effort to preserve the traditional social dances of Scotland. The Royal designation was given to the Society by King George VI in 1951. As of 1987, the RSCDS had 149 branches internationally for the purpose of dance instruction, training, and certifying teachers. Not only are there RSCDS branches in Canada, Australia, and America but there are also branches in Japan, Kenya, and Sweden, to name only a few.
29. Berthoff, p. 168.
30. Haggis is made of a mixture of the minced heart, lungs, and liver of a sheep or calf mixed with suet, onions, oatmeal, and seasonings, and boiled in the stomach of the animal.
31. A member of SASC since 1973, Dr. Sutherland was taken hostage in Lebanon in 1985 and remains a captive as of this writing.
32. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, fifth ed., p. 91.
33. 1986 *Rocky Mountain Highland Games Program*, p. 4.
34. Kightly, p. 139.
35. Kightly, p. 13.
36. *The Highlander*. May/June 1987 issue.
37. SASC Minutes. September 13, 1965.
38. SOBHD is headquartered in Edinburgh and governs competitions internationally through its certification of teachers and adjudicators of Highland dance. Dancers and judges abide by the rules and standards of SOBHD as the authority in matters of attire, performance technique, training, and competition.
39. Piping competition in the U.S. is governed by two organizations: Western United States Pipe Band Association (WUSPA) and Eastern United States Pipe Band Association (EUSPA). Whereas Highland and Country Dancing have affiliations with governing bodies headquartered in Scotland, there is no such authority for piping.
40. 1986 *Rocky Mountain Highland Games Program*, p. 10.

41. In the opinion of Kightly, p. 201.
42. Jack Kisling, "Western Notebook", *The Denver Post Magazine*, February 9, 1986.
43. Alastair Phillips of the *Glasgow Herald* quoted in the article "Banning the Kilt", *The Highlander*, July/August 1986.
44. Thompson, p. 2.
45. *The Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, p. vii.
46. Saunders, p. 8.
47. Saunders, p. 16.
48. Saunders, p. 13.
49. Saunders, p. 13.
50. Rowe Findley, "Scotland, Ghosts, and Glory", *National Geographic*, July 1984.
51. *Harvard Encyclopedia*, p. 908.
52. Membership information provided by John Cook, SASC records, and Nita Windes, membership secretary.
53. St. Andrew Society of Colorado constitution, Article X, Section 1.
54. SASC constitution, Article X, Section 2 D.
55. Interview with Jean Casson, May 5, 1987.
56. Interview with Marcia McEachron, May 5, 1987.
57. Interview with George Barnes, May 8, 1987.
58. Interview with Andrew McKean, May 11, 1987.
59. SASC Minutes of the Annual General Meeting. May 6, 1983.
60. SASC Minutes of the A.G.M. May 21, 1982.
61. Sarah Beatty, "Salute to St. Andrew", *The Denver Post*, November 29, 1970.

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Individuals Named In This Document

Listed in order of their first mention within this document:

- Dr. William H. Mackintosh
- Miss Dorothy Mackay Leitch
- Dr. Colin Walker
- James McIntosh
- Professor Thomas McCourt
- Andrew McKean
- Jean Casson
- Commander Kenneth D. Iain Murray
- Tony Ciufu
- Sean Detmers
- Dr. Thomas Sutherland
- Peter Marshall
- Alex Haley (author of *Roots*)
- Jack Kisling
- Thomas Saunders
- George Barnes

Note to reader: This document is a transcribed computer file version done by Ken McIntosh in 2012 from the original typewritten version written by Gayle Ray in 1988. The transcription was proofread by Sandy Campbell, Jean Casson, Cindy Murphy, and Keith Schrum.

