



# BLAIR BRUIDHINN



Blair of Blair

• Honorary Member Rt. Hon. Robin Blair — Former Lord Lyon King of Arms of Scotland •

Blair of Balthayock

“Blair Talk” for Clan Blair Society

[www.clanblair.org](http://www.clanblair.org)

August – September, 2025



President Jim Blair

### CBS President Message

Fellow Scots – Happy Fall 2025. Many of us have seen major spring/summer storms and now wildfire and flooding. The severe heat across the country, and the motherland of Scotland and Ireland, and Europe, is spreading misery far and wide. Mother nature seems focused on chaos and keeping humans on their toes. Our hearts are with all affected. Good Scots are prepared – stay safe.

This newsletter includes reports of festivities and activities of our members. Editor Adoree has prepared reports on history and family connections. We have been in the recruiting mode to find a successor to Russ McCrary as our Membership Chair. To date we have not found a volunteer and while Russ is filling in temporarily, we would appreciate a member stepping forward to help. CBS relies on your participation, and the board so very much appreciates your support. Also, if you have not yet sent in your 2025 dues payment of \$20, please do so, either by check or credit card via the [clanblair.org](http://clanblair.org) website. As of August, 218

members are registered. However, 36 have not sent in their 2025 dues. This is the last newsletter to be shared with these 31 unless dues are received. Please contact Russ or Jim with questions.

### Please renew - NOW.

This is time to plan for fall events including Tartan Day, Kirk’n of the Tartan, and festivals. Several festivals have been attended by our members in North and South Carolina and California. Many communities have announced festivals this year and I encourage you to find these activities in your area and then send us pictures and stories of Blair attendance. We receive many questions and messages from fellow Scots via the Clan Blair Society Facebook page and all input is welcome. As the new [clanblair.org](http://clanblair.org) website is designed we will offer users the opportunity to learn more about CBS and invite their membership to the Society.

Please enjoy this newsletter and share your ideas with me at [president@clanblair.org](mailto:president@clanblair.org) or with

[adoreel@outlook.com](mailto:adoreel@outlook.com). It is a Great Day to be a Scot!

Slaint'e!- Jim

**Website Redesign and Update:**

A small team of members is re-imagining the [clanblair.org](http://clanblair.org) website. We have engaged the experience of a corporate web-designer and members skilled in managing effective web-use and artistic presentation. The includes Maggie Blair from South Carolina, Nick Shryack from Colorado, Dyani Blair Galligan from Colorado, and Jim Blair. The goal is to develop a commercial and user-friendly website that delivers exciting information, easy application for membership, seamless access to CBS purchasing, delicious pictures, messages about tours and exciting adventures of our members, access to genealogy research, and more. We would like to hear from you about needs and good ideas for offering a fresh look at [clanblair.org](http://clanblair.org). Please send your ideas to Leslie at [lvblairgallagher@gmail.com](mailto:lvblairgallagher@gmail.com).

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From: L. Buddy Blair <l.buddyblair@yahoo.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, August 13, 2025 11:12 AM  
Subject: RE: Call for 3 Q 2024 reports

Clan Blair was represented at:

- the Highlands of Louisiana's Celtic Festival 2024
- the Highlands of LA. Burns Ball 2024.
- the Krewe of Sgian Dubh St Andrews Ball-2024.
- the Central LA St Patrick Day festivities 2025.
- the Mississippi Celtic Festival 2025.

Plans to attend these current years events above  
As well as: LA Renfair Celtic weekend 2025.

Fraternally,

COL L. Buddy Blair PM

Kentucky Colonel.

Krewe of Sgian Dubh- Founding Laird.  
District Trial Commissioner- 2022-2026  
Masonic Building Association Treasurer-2021.  
Oliver Lodge #84 Past Master-2020.  
Booth Lodge #380 Past Master- 2004.  
32° Scottish Rite Mason-Valley of Shreveport,  
Orient of LA.  
Knight of St Andrew.  
El Karubah Shrine- Home of the 1st Shriner's  
Hospital.  
El Karubah Escort Unit.

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**COLORADO COMMISSIONER AND CBS  
VICE PRESIDENT REPORT**

Leslie Blair Gallagher

Road trip to Michigan - 2025 to show the kids, big and small, some of their family heritage. Spent time with the family genealogical expert finding out more about our family.

Apparently, I also can trace back to Pocahontas' son Thomas Rolfe! So far back, no Native America DNA shows up.



Three Lakes, Michigan: Margaret Blair Dupras (center)Leslie Blair Gallagher (left)Leilani Allen (right)

Sage Blair Allen (left)Shorey Autret Allen (right)



Three Lakes, Michigan: Leilani Allen, Merlin Blair Allen, Leslie Blair Gallagher

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**LATHA MATH FROM THE HIGH COMMISSIONER,**

**Scott Blair**

My name is Scott Blair and I have recently taken the position of the Clan Blair Society High Commissioner. I live in North Carolina with my wife Vallie and my two sons Tristan and Lochlan. I have participated in the Highland games since my early 20's in athletics. I was a heavy thrower at first and then found Highland Wrestling or Cumberland Wrestling. I wrestled for several years but life happened, and I drifted away from the games. Several years later I married Vallie and had my two boys. We decided to attend the Loch Norman Highland games. After that day in April my entire family was hooked. As a family we have not missed a game at Loch Norman since (except for the COVID year). We have attended Stone Mountain Highland games in Atlanta GA several years and will be there again this year.

Several years ago Charlie Diman, then North Carolina's commissioner, asked that I take the commissioner position from him. I told him it would be an honor to but I had some very large shoes to fill. Literally Charlie had some of the largest feet I have ever seen. This takes me to some sad news I have learned recently. Charlie had passed away. Unfortunately I do not have any

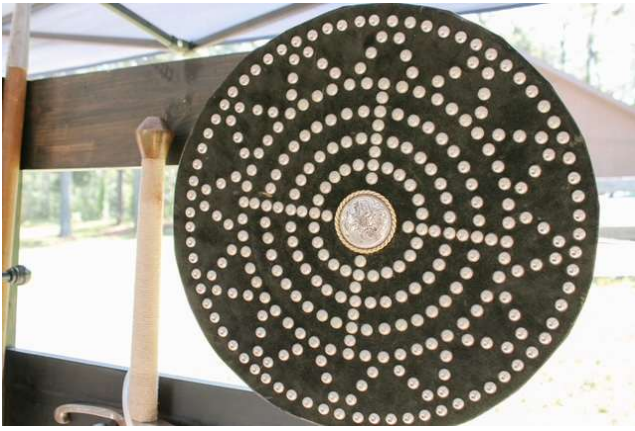
details of his passing. Charlie met me and my family with open arms and a huge smile. I had met Charlie and his wife Betty when I was younger and participated in athletics for Clan Blair. It wasn't until my family and I came back to Loch Norman that I got to know Charlie better. Charlie taught my oldest son Tristan everything he knows about the history of Clan Blair and the history of Scotland. Tristan took his knowledge and to this day will spend hours in the CBS tent retelling his stories to anyone who will listen. Charlie and Betty would travel to Stone Mountain to spend time at the games with us. They were happy to help but liked having the freedom to come and go to enjoy seeing the events from other than in the tent. I hope Betty is well. I haven't seen her since before COVID. I have a picture of Charlie when he visited Scotland displayed in the CBS tent at every game and it will stay until someone way down the road is the North Carolina commissioner. I thank Charlie for his wisdom, cheer and welcoming smile that he had at every meeting, he is truly missed. We will be setting a stone in remembrance of Charlie at the Loch Norman site next April.

Now for some different news. My boys and I attend a BSA camp here in North Carolina call Camp Bud Schiele (also CBS). The theme this year was the Scottish Highland Games which is right up our alley! I was asked if I would set up our CBS tent at camp and to tell some of the history of our Clan and Scotland. I set up the tent and both Lochlan and Tristan were able to tell their peers about Clan Blair Society. The adults and Scouts love seeing all of our Scottish weapons. I had several adults and Scouts look up some of their Scottish history. The tent was a significant hit for camp. I am still trying to get a current list of state commissioners together and possibly have a meeting in the near future. Please reach out to me if you are a current commissioner and have not received an email from me. We will be at the Stone Mountain Highland games on October 17-19 of this year. If you live close to Atlanta, we would love to see you there! If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to me [Scotblair3@aol.com](mailto:Scotblair3@aol.com).

Slainte!

Scott Blair

Photos of the Clan Blair tent at Camp Bud Schiele:



Charlie Diman Through the years. and

Clan tent at Camp Bud Schiele



## LIBRARIAN REPORT

Elana McCrary

As we head into the Fall and students of all ages are returning to class, I decided to profile Princeton University (originally founded as the College of New Jersey in Elizabeth, New Jersey, in 1746). Why? Because I had come across a reference to the Blair Arch. Why was this architectural wonder mentioned? Because it became Princeton University after Blair Hall was built. Where is it located? And, how was it significant to the Blairs of the past?

I found a map if you are interested in exploring <https://visitour.io/princeton-university/orange-key-tour/blair-arch>

### John Insley Blair's Mark on Education

“Blair Hall, the University's first collegiate Gothic dormitory, was a Sesquicentennial gift of John Insley Blair (1802-1899), a trustee of Princeton from 1866 to 1899.”

“In 1864 he endowed the professorship of geology then held by Arnold Guyot; it is Princeton's second oldest endowed chair. Asked for a few remarks after his installation as a trustee in 1866, he reminded the Board that his own formal education was limited; he had spent most of his life learning addition and now, he said, ‘I have come to Princeton to learn subtraction’ (Blair philanthropy). He gave funds for Blair Hall in 1896; it was built in 1897. He did other exercises in subtraction in favor of Blair Academy in Blairstown, N.J., and of the Presbyterian Church, making gifts of land and money toward the building of more than a hundred churches in towns he had helped lay out along the route of the Union Pacific and other western railroads.”

“When built, Blair, Little, and the Gymnasium marked the western boundary of the campus. Originally the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks came to the foot of the broad steps leading up to Blair Arch, which served as the entrance to the campus for visitors arriving by train.”



Charlie Diman with Santa (Claus Clan)



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Blair Modern Plaid

Alexander Leitch, A Princeton Companion, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1978., p.59., accessed 8/14/25.



1898: Blair Hall

View from northeast

(photo circa 1897, before clock installed)

Princeton University. Property of the Trustees of Princeton University.

Source: Princeton University Archives, Mudd Library, Grounds & Buildings.

Photos used with grateful permission of Thomas Swift '76, Chief Curator, Princetoniana Museum, Past President, Princetoniana

Committee <https://www.princetonianamuseum.org/>

Blair Arch



View through arch, looking southwest (photo 1930's or 40's).

As the largest arch on campus, Blair Arch (built into Blair Hall) is a popular space for student a cappella groups to give free concerts (along with 1879 Arch). The broad steps behind Blair Arch are the location of the Senior Step Sing and the First-Year Step Sing. The Senior Step Sing occurs the night of Baccalaureate Day, with seniors singing songs from throughout their Princeton years, culminating in the Princeton alma mater Old Nassau. The arch was also featured in the Movie A Beautiful Mind.

Blair's son, DeWitt Clinton Blair, (Princeton class of 1856) was also a trustee 1900-1909. He continued his father's philanthropy in 1907, giving a donation for the extension of Blair Hall that terminates in a gateway tower on University Place.



John Insley Blair (center) outside the Blair home with his nephew John Davis Val and his family circa 1892-1894

<https://archive.org/details/FinancialHistory125/page/n31/> assessed via Internet Archives, 8/15/2025

John Insley Blair was age 97 when he died on December 2, 1899, in Blairstown, New Jersey. He amassed a fortune of \$70 million but was always known affectionately in Blairstown as "Plain John I.," where compared to his wealth he lived modestly.

“His name is perpetuated in towns like Blairstown, Iowa and Blair, Nebraska where the railroads crossed the country”

Blair Historic Preservation Alliance, <https://blairhistory.com/>, accessed 8/15/25.

# CLAN BLAIR SOCIETY ON FACEBOOK



Derek Blair and wife at Dalry (Blair House/Castle)

L Buddy Blair

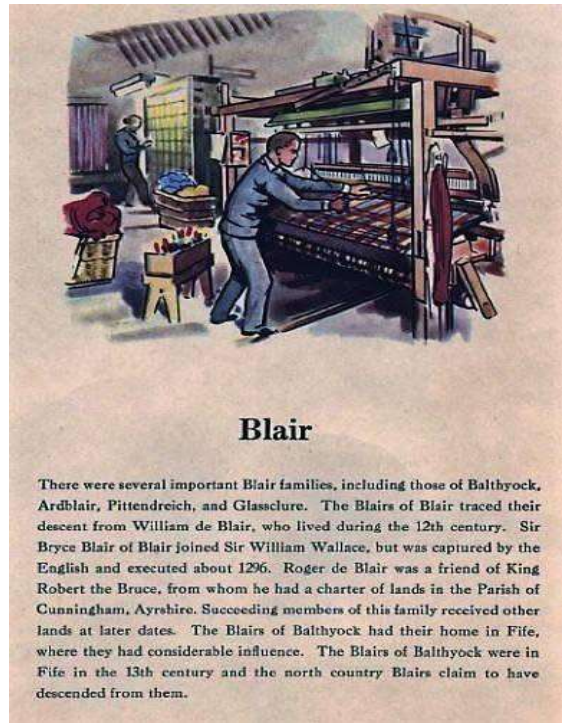
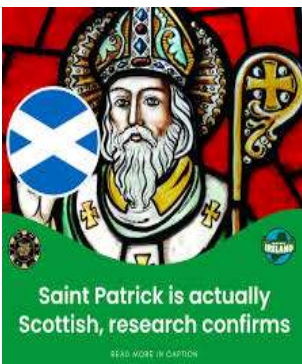
 **24th Annual Scottish Tartan Festival**  
**APRIL 11, 2026**  
 Miller Quarters Park  
 198 Gleason  
 Minden, Louisiana



L Buddy Blair, August, 2025

**Barbara Pixley**

★ Rising contributor



## Blair

There were several important Blair families, including those of Balthyock, Ardblair, Pittendreich, and Glassclure. The Blairs of Blair traced their descent from William de Blair, who lived during the 12th century. Sir Bryce Blair of Blair joined Sir William Wallace, but was captured by the English and executed about 1296. Roger de Blair was a friend of King Robert the Bruce, from whom he had a charter of lands in the Parish of Cunningham, Ayrshire. Succeeding members of this family received other lands at later dates. The Blairs of Balthyock had their home in Fife, where they had considerable influence. The Blairs of Balthyock were in Fife in the 13th century and the north country Blairs claim to have descended from them.

Howard Blair



**CELTICFRINGE** ACROSS THE SOUTHERN DOWNS  
 Australian Celtic Women and Highlander Celtic Rock Band play Club Warwick RSL, Limerick MCB play Sandy Creek Pub, Downs Explorer heritage train trip to Clifton, Celtic parkrun, Celtic workshops - and more!

**OCTOBER 3<sup>RD</sup> - 5<sup>TH</sup> 2025**

Warwick - Old

Medieval Village | Pipe Bands | Entertainment | Highland Coos | Celtic Music | Highland Games

[celticfestqld.com.au](https://celticfestqld.com.au)

**Leslie Blair Gallagher**

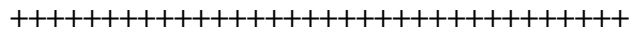
★ Rising contributor



clanblair.org

## The Clan Blair Society - Celebrating Blair and Scottish Heritage

- If you're a Blair descendant or just a friend of Blair, join us as we strive to educate people on the Blair and Scottish heritage.



## ST. PATRICK WAS BORN A SCOTSMAN

(From AI, gathered and verified)

by the Editor

According to recent research, **St. Patrick was likely born in Old Kilpatrick, Scotland**, around the year **387 AD**. This challenges the long-held belief that he was born in Roman Britain (often thought to be Wales) and aligns with Roman place names found along the Antonine Wall, which support the Scottish origin theory.

Here's a deeper look at his life and legacy:

### Early Life

- **Birth name:** *Maewyn Succat*; later Latinized to *Patricius* (Patrick).
- **Family:** Romanized Britons with religious ties—his father was a deacon and minor official.
- **Kidnapping:** At age 16, Patrick was captured by Irish raiders and enslaved in Ireland, where he worked as a shepherd.

### Conversion and Escape

- During his **six years of captivity**, Patrick turned deeply to Christianity.
- He escaped after a dream told him a ship was ready to take him home.
- After returning to Britain, he had another vision—"The Voice of the Irish"—calling him back to Ireland as a missionary.

### Missionary Work

- Patrick returned to Ireland as a Christian missionary and **played a pivotal role in converting the Irish to Christianity**.
- He traveled widely, baptized thousands, and founded churches, monasteries, and schools.
- He's credited with using the **shamrock** to explain the Holy Trinity and is famously (though mythically) said to have **banished snakes** from Ireland.



### Writings and Legacy

- Two of his writings survive: the *Confessio* (his spiritual autobiography) and the *Letter to Coroticus* (a denunciation of violence against Irish Christians).
- He died around **461 AD** in Saul, Ireland, and is believed to be buried in **Downpatrick, County Down**.
- His feast day, **March 17**, is celebrated globally as **St. Patrick's Day**, honoring his life and the spread of Christianity in Ireland.

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## Fact vs. Fiction - Blair Castle History

Elana Sotelo McCrary

The history of Blair goes back to the 12th Century, with the castle reportedly the longest continually inhabited mansion house in Scotland.

The barony was given by King William I – also known as William the Lion – to John Francois, whose son, also William, changed the family name to Blair.

His descendant, Bryce de Blair, reportedly fought alongside William Wallace and Robert the Bruce and was imprisoned and executed at Ayr in 1296, his hanging immortalised (sic) in Blind Harry's 15th Century poem *The Wallace*. It is readily available to read for free online. Another source is Book 4 of Barbour's epic poem *The Bruce*, an important near-contemporary source, mentions very briefly that "Sir Ranald of Crauford also, and Sir Bryce the Blair, were hanged in a barn at Ayr"

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barns\\_of\\_Ayr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barns_of_Ayr).

## FLOWERS OF THE FOREST

### Charles Nathaniel Diman



**October 2, 2024**

CHARLOTTE – Charles Nathaniel Diman passed away on Wednesday, October 2, 2024. He was born in Newton, MA on June 28, 1942, the son of William Alexander Diman and Lisbeth Shafer Diman.

Charlie graduated from the Browne & Nichols School in 1961 where he played football and wrestled in the unlimited weight class. He received his Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 1967. After college, Charlie worked at Arthur D. Little in Cambridge, MA, where he met the love of his life and wife of 58 years, Betty Boroyan Diman. Charlie was the author of multiple patents in the field of chemical engineering and traveled across the United States, Europe, and South America managing manufacturing plants. In 2005, Charlie and Betty moved to Charlotte, NC where he settled into his new life as a Southerner and proudly joined the newly established Armenian Church. Charlie retired as a Math teacher at Garinger High School. He found joy in retired life volunteering at Pinewood Elementary School building gardens, and teaching children about agriculture.

Charlie’s industrious nature was always on display in his flower and vegetable gardens at his home of 31 years in Billerica, MA. As a perpetual learner, he became a licensed Genealogist, helping many

“Sir Bryce de Blair was a close supporter of Sir William Wallace, but was executed during the Barns of Ayr massacre in 1296”

<https://www.scotclans.com/blogs/clans-b/klan-blair-history>. The problem with the dates is the Ayrshire men were hung in 1296, while William Wallace was executed in 1305.

The family line died out in 1732, and the property passed to the Scotts of Malleny, who took the Blair name. The castle was sold in 2013 after more than 850 years in the Blair name.

Multi-millionaire philanthropist Sir Tom Hunter bought a “magical” castle and estate for his foundation where headteachers, local authority staff and entrepreneurs will converge for inspiration and relaxation.

Blair Castle and Estate near Dalry, has been bought by The Hunter Foundation from former Tory energy minister Charles Hendry and his wife Sallie for an undisclosed sum.

The castle, which has 19 bedrooms and sits in 220 acres of landscaped grounds, will now become home to the Hunter Global Leadership Centre, with the hope the impressive surrounds will inspire greatness in those invited to stay there after it opens next month.

Sir Tom, 60, said: “The moment we drove up to Blair, we knew it was the place that we wanted. We looked at places all over [Scotland](#), but this was it.

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/business-hq/20038213.sir-tom-hunters-foundation-buys-magical-castle-ayrshire/>



Picture credit Shawn Blair. From a newspaper article he saved on the original sale, *The Times*, November 19, 2011.

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families trace their roots and even publishing a book on the Diman Family history. Charlie spent time as a leader of Clan Blair in North Carolina and represented them wearing the Blair tartan in Scottish Games across the state. He was also an avid fan of music who played the 12 string guitar with and without finger picks, and sang bass in his church choirs for over 40 years. He loved history and had an incredible ability to recall even the smallest detail of historical events. Books were always overflowing in his ever-growing collection. If you spent any time talking to Charlie, you would quickly learn his most cherished accomplishments were his two boys, his unwavering devotion to Betty, and his three adored grandchildren. Charlie was a dedicated member of the Armenian Church, serving on its Parish Council first at St. Vartanantz Church in Chelmsford, MA, and again at St. Sarkis Church in Charlotte, NC. He loved Boston sports, particularly the Bruins and Patriots, especially during the Brady years.

Charlie is survived by his wife, Betty; children, Jay Diman and his wife, Jodi of Holden, MA and Andy Diman and his wife, Laurie of Charlotte, NC; and his grandchildren, William Pierce Diman, Kyra Ivy Diman, and Elizabeth Page Diman. He is also survived by his sisters, Alice Diman Pratt and her husband, Sandy of Cardiff by the Sea, CA and Margaret Carter Diman of Needham, MA.

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### **FINDING A BLAIR FROM THE PAST**

As this newsletter was preparing for publication, we received an email from both Shawn Blair, Past President, and Helen Blair, Past President, telling us about an outstanding Blair CBS member they'd both known. Helen remembered going to Scotland with Bob Blair and 3 other Bob Blairs. This Bob Blair became "The Real Bob."

#### From Shawn Blair to Helen and Editor:

"I just saw an old document from Bob Blair somewhere in my papers. He was the Bob Blair that created Blair's books. He had a photocopied 'catalog' that he sent out and a web page. He collected books about Blair and sold them. He started that in the 90s!

He did attend the 2004 AGM we held in Maryland. We attended the games in Maryland which Stuart Blair and his wife hosted. Then we had the clan dinner at the hotel. I think we had 25 -30 people there Helen & Bob, Bill & Betty, Stuart & Brigitte?, John Blair (VA) and his wife, Bob Blair (the real Bob Blair), Don Blair, maybe Francis Holt and Vicky Bartlett. I'll have to think about others. Maybe Wyomia Blair. Of course myself and Shay; we flew my Skylane down.

I've reached out over a number of years to a few folks: Don Blair, Jean (Hilty) Blair in particular but have never received a response...

#### From Helen Blair to Shawn and the Editor:

"I noticed that the 13th was Robert Blair's of Woodstock VA, birthday. It has been years since I talked to him but at one time we were close. I found his obituary online & he died in 2018! I think he was a life member.

Robert "the real Bob" Blair got his nickname during a CBS Scotland trip in 1999. I believe there were 3 or 4 Bob Blairs on that trip. (Bob Blair AZ, Bob Blair FL, Bob Blair VA & there might have been a 4<sup>th</sup>.) He also attended some of the east coast AGMs. We all had some really happy times. Lots of laughs & snickers.

This Bob Blair had a farm in Woodstock VA. He had that wicked Blair sense of humor & all the guys on that trip fed off each others jokes & gaffes.

I know he used his farm to feed the needy & eventually started a nonprofit to increase production to feed more...

Helen"

(Editor: From those intriguing emails and some research, we've unearthed the following Flowers of the Forest story about an outstanding Blair):



**Robert Henry Blair Jr.**

1935 – 2018



**“The Real” Bob Blair**

**1935 - 2018**

Robert Henry Blair Jr., 83, of Woodstock, passed away Sunday, July 29, 2018 peacefully at home surrounded by his family. He was born June 13, 1935 in Cleveland, Ohio.

He was a veteran of the United States Army and had a distinguished career with FEMA. He was the founder and head of the Volunteer Farm of Shenandoah and a long time member of the Woodstock United Methodist Church.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Marilyn Reeves Blair.

Robert is survived by his two sons, William Charles Blair and Robert H. Blair III; a daughter, Alice Reeves Blair; and two grandchildren, Robert H. Blair IV and Lorvens J. Blair.

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More about our Robert Blair From [DC News Now](#): **“Community remembers charitable farmer who started a movement”** by: [Ellie Williams](#)

Posted: Aug 1, 2018 / 10:04 PM EDT

Bob Blair was a man on a mission. The 83-year-old Woodstock resident passed away July 29, just a few years after retiring for good.

After a long career with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Blair started a Christmas tree farm in Woodstock, Va. But Christmas trees can take a decade from seedlings to harvest, so Blair made a change in his 70s and started growing vegetables in 2004.

There was a twist though; everything on his vegetable farm was grown by volunteers and donated to charity.

“They produced over 250,000 lbs of food that they gave to the Blue Ridge food banks every year,” said Blair’s son, Robert.

Blair’s volunteers came from churches, scouting groups, and were even criminals serving their community service hours.

“He had a dream. He literally had a dream telling him to do this,” said Jeanne Jackson, a former volunteer coordinator and office manager at the Volunteer Farm. “No body was really doing it back then. It was just kind of this weird concept.”

The Volunteer Farm closed in 2015, due to a lack of volunteers and funding. Jackson now works at the Loaves and Fishes food pantry in Front Royal, Va.

She and her husband Chuck run their own volunteer farm, inspired by Blair. Everything on their farm is donated, just like Blair’s. Blair’s fields are now full of soy beans, rented to another farmer. But Blair’s legacy lives on.

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Blair Dress Plaid

## CLAN MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### Russ Mc Crary, Membership Chair

As of August 1, 2025, we have 218 active members in The Clan Blair Society. 72 Life Members, 8 Honorary Life Members, and 138 dues-paying members.

If you are not current with your membership dues it is never too late and remember you can pay your dues at the CBS website. We thank all our members for their continued support. If your contact information needs to be updated, please send in your new information as soon as possible.

#### NEW MEMBERS

We welcome nine new members since the latest newsletter, and we hope they find a lasting connection with other clan members in this Clan

#1361 Derek and Carly Blair from Colorado

#1354 Pamela Drew from Ohio

#1355 Richard and Heather Blair from Florida

#1356 Philip Blair from County Down

#1357 Cathryn Mannix from Australia

#1358 Gerald and Elizabeth VanDam from Minnesota

#1359 Jeffery Cox from Georgia

#1362 John Jewel from New York

#1360 Tristan Blair from North Carolina

Gaelic Proverb:

*“Theid an dichioll thar neat.”*

“Diligence will overcome strength”

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Blair Modern Plaid

## NOTICE: HONORING MARY POWERS, AUTHOR OF NEW ENGLAND BLAIR GENEALOGY

Past CBS President, Shawn Blair

[Shawn Blair wrote to me in March, but unfortunately, I only found it this month. Thinking it is important for members to be aware, I'm putting this in the newsletter, although late.] Shawn wrote: I'm forwarding this from the Blandford, Mass Historical Society. Mary Powers researched and published a revised edition of the The Blair Family of New England book in the 2000s. That book was originally published in the early 1900s and contained numerous errors as well as being incomplete. Mary spent many years researching her family, descendants of Robert & Isabella Blair who sailed from now Northern Ireland as part of the 5 ships to Boston in 1718. He settled his family in Worcester, Mass and they spread from there. Her work was a significant contribution to Blair research in New England. Mary would often visit the clan tent when I hosted it in the 1990s and 2000s. Particular at the Glasgow Lands Festival held in Blandford.

Gary Hart

Email

[DalisDad786@gmail.com](mailto:DalisDad786@gmail.com)

Subject

Celebrating The Blairs of New England

March, 2025

The Blandford Massachusetts Historical Society plans to honor Mary Powers, a Blair descendant and author of the “THE BLAIR FAMILY OF NEW ENGLAND REVISITED, BLANDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS, 2008” during our town’s 4-day 2025 Labor Day Fair.

You may view a 12 minute oral history of Mary Powers

at <https://www.blandfordhistoricalsociety.org/legacy-and-oral-histories.html#/>

# CALIFORNIA COMMISSIONER REPORT

**Russ and Elena McCrary**

Given the fact that at least 30 early New England Blair family settlers are buried in our town's cemeteries- including several Revolutionary War veterans, The Blandford Historical Society is willing to assist any members of the Blair family who might be interested in organizing some sort of Labor Day Weekend family reunion. We currently have enough interest to hold special Blair related events on Saturday, August 30. If there is enough interest we will add more events on Sunday, August 31.

Our Society owns Blandford's 1822 iconic White Church building which is on the National Register. Several years ago, this building was the venue for extraordinarily successful reunions for the local Wyman and Hart families, with several hundred visitors attending from all over the country. This location can be viewed at "thewhitechurch.org".

Blandford is a small rural Berkshire town with a population of just over 1,200, one Country Store, a library, and a small museum. In addition, it has a wealth of history including Native American sites, ancient burial grounds and the location of an early 20th century nationally recognized silent movie studio. Excellent housing accommodations can be found within a 25-mile radius, including Air B and Bs, numerous bed-and-breakfasts, boutique hotels, as well as a several commercial hotels- (Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, and Stockbridge, as well as the Springfield, Amherst areas).

Anyone interested in the possibility of organizing a Blandford Blair Reunion this coming Labor Day should contact Gary Hart at [dalisdad786@gmail.com](mailto:dalisdad786@gmail.com).

Aye,  
Shawn

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As summer draws to a close we look forward to upcoming events with plans into 2026. This is where extra volunteers and hosts are most welcome.

Memorial Day weekend hosted Scottish Fest. Southern California's largest Scottish, Celtic, American Festival in Costa Mesa, CA. We are looking for someone to host a Clan Blair booth next year. Please contact Russ & Elena McCrary at 925-658-2731 or email to [reclanblair@gmail.com](mailto:reclanblair@gmail.com)

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Up next over Labor Day weekend (August 30-31), 2025 is the 159<sup>th</sup> Scottish Highland Gathering & Games at the Pleasanton Fairgrounds.

The Games will feature the 2025 Women's Scottish Heavy Athletics World Championships, along with the 49th annual U.S. Scottish Heavy Athletics Championships for both men and women. Exciting!

Get your tickets here:  
<https://thescottishgames.com/>

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We hope to be celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the San Diego Scottish Highland Games sometime next year. Location and Date to be determined. In the area, sign up for news as their board has been actively seeking a new venue since the Vista, CA location in north San Diego County is not available.

<https://sdhighlandgames.org/>

We will be entering new territory as we head north into Oregon for the McMinnville Scottish Festival to be held at the Yamhill County Fairgrounds on October 4 & 5, 2025.

Role of a Blair Commissioner  
By Elena McCrary

Not only do we have friends who live nearby, but we are looking forward to the Clan Blair members who have volunteered to help us set up our tents.

This year will be tinged with some sadness as John Lowry passed away earlier this year. We hope you can come to celebrate with us as we once again are a sponsor.

Do you feel like having a new adventure? Whether you are in the Oregon area, or just want to get in some new volunteer time, as well as meeting new people, sign-up on the website to help out <https://celticheritage.org/mac-scottish-festival/>

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We come back for a few days' rest, then head south into scenic Ventura, CA for the Seaside Highland Games October 11 & 12, 2025 at the Ventura County Fairgrounds. =====

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<https://sdhighlandgames.org/>

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**A Scotsman walks into a library and asks for books on paranoia. The librarian whispers, "They're right behind you!"**

When Dr. William Campbell Blair sought a replacement to take over his role as the Northern CA Commissioner, it took several years of us visiting his tent at the Pleasanton games to get us hooked. Long before Russ knew of his DNA connection to Clan Blair, he always felt a kinship to Dr. Blair due to the warm welcome we always received.

That warm welcome is at the heart of how we conduct ourselves in our Blair tent. Being inviting, and using our own tagline of, "we are Blairs who care." We care to listen to your stories as we encourage your search of ancestors. Or if you are drawn in by the maps we display.

Any of these ways are what any member of Clan Blair can do if they are not represented at their local games. Need more information? Ask a commissioner to be a mentor.

I reached out to Sampson Blair back in 2024 for his thoughts as a former commissioner. His responses follow.

"Greetings from Buffalo! Our "initiation" into the Clan occurred many years ago, when we resided in Phoenix. While attending one of the Scottish festivals there, we met Helen Blair and her family. Helen was a delightful host, and we found ourselves visiting more festivals over the years, specifically so that we could spend time with her. When we told her that we were moving to New York, *she pressed us into service*, as the state needed a commissioner at the time. Of course, we agreed, and assumed the duties back in 2002. Helen was very helpful and sent us not only a set of genealogical materials about the Blair clan, but she also sent us a tent! So, over the past two decades, we have represented the Clan at many festivals, not only here in New York, but also in Canada and Pennsylvania.

As a professor, I knew that we needed to have something in our tent display which would attract an audience. After all, if spectators merely walk past your tent with only a glance, they will never

learn anything about the Blairs. First, our approach involved upgrading our tent, so we purchased a colorful blue tent from EZ-UP, and had it customized with "BLAIR" in large letters on the fabric. Second, we purchased a variety of Scottish weapons (e.g., swords, maces, axes) which were quite eye-catching, and I built a nice wooden frame for them, which displayed them in an upright (and very visible) manner. We then obtained a large model of Blair Castle (yes, we knew full and well that it wasn't our castle anymore), and displayed it, along with the weapons. We made a large flag from the Blair tartan (modern) and fastened it to the front corner of our tent. On the opposite corner, as well as on the inside walls of the tent, though, we displayed large vinyl displays, which provided a wealth of information about the Clan, the history of the Blairs, and information about famous Blairs, throughout Scottish and American history. I made these myself and had them printed through VistaPrint (an online printing company). The banners are colorful, and when spectators stopped to look at the photos and images, they invariably would take the time to read them, as well. Our tent contained a large banner which displayed the Clan crests, along with the mottos, and spectators would almost always ask about their meanings. I would typically stand to the side and wait for someone to show interest in our display, and I always provided a friendly, but scholarly, explanation. My wife would do the same, but she also had another strategy - she always kept a wooden bowl of candy (fruit-flavored suckers) behind our table display, and whenever families with children would walk past, she would offer the kids some candy (always asking the parents for permission to do so, of course). As a result, we always had lots of families stopping at our tent.

My response to your question about what works best is a bit complicated. Attendees at Scottish festivals have a variety of interests, and your clan tent needs to appeal to a broad array of interests. Our combination of historical and genealogical information, weapons, colorful banners, and a friendly delivery of answers worked quite well for us. I feel secure in stating that our approach worked well, as many of the other clans

began to imitate us, over the years, in their own displays. If imitation is, indeed, the sincerest form of flattery, then we felt very flattered! lol

I hope that this information is helpful. If you should have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Take care!"

Dr. Sampson Lee Blair  
 Editor, Contemporary Perspectives in Family Research  
 Vice President (North America), Research Committee on Youth, International Sociological Association  
 430 Park Hall  
 Department of Sociology  
 The State University of New York  
 Buffalo, NY 14260-4140



Sampson, Becky, Betsy and Marilou in new Scottish attire

Sampson and Marilou Blair

New York Commissioners, *Blair Bruidhinn Newsletter*, Aug 2005.

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Glencoe, Scotland

Love to Write? Is research fun for you?

Please consider

I (Editor) am looking for a person who loves history and communication, and often thought it might be fun to put out a newsletter. I felt this way almost 15 years ago when I volunteered to be in charge of the Blair Bruidhinn. It has been a lot of joy to put out this newsletter for those years, but due to age and striving to fill a bucket list. I feel it is someone else’s turn to enjoy this publishing.

Questions answered:

The newsletter publishes four times a year. I pushed the months together somewhat and took the need to publish away from the too-busy month of December. Right now, I have a publication going out to members in November/December, February/March, May/June and August/September...

- You have some nice autonomy as a publisher, being able to share things about our last name or Scotland, history, etc., to reflect things that our readers would like to know.

- I can share the format and etc., to get you started, and can answer questions via email for the next aspiring Editor.

Please let Jim Blair know if you’d like to take this Board position @ jeblair@msn.com. If you have further questions, please email me (I am not good at getting to the phone) at adoree1@outlook.com, and put ‘newsletter’ in the subject line.

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### *The Mystery of the Miniature Coffins of Arthur’s Seat*

From AI, gathered by the Editor

The coffins are a mystery that’s captivated historians, folklorists, and the morbidly curious for nearly two centuries.

#### The Discovery

In **June 1836**, a group of boys hunting rabbits on the slopes of **Arthur’s Seat**, the iconic hill overlooking Edinburgh, stumbled upon a small cave hidden behind slabs of slate. Inside, they found **17 tiny coffins**, each about 95mm (3.7 inches) long,

arranged in **three tiers**: two rows of eight and one solitary coffin at the top.

Each coffin contained a **wooden figure**, carved with wide eyes and dressed in hand-stitched cotton garments. Some were decayed, suggesting they had been placed there over a long period of time.

Theories about their origin and purpose abound:

- **Witchcraft or Pagan Rituals:** Early newspapers speculated about “Satanic spell-manufactories” and rituals meant to curse or memorialize individuals.
- **Memorials to the Dead:** One compelling theory links the coffins to the victims of **Burke and Hare**, infamous body snatchers who murdered 17 people in Edinburgh between 1827–1828. The coffins may have been symbolic burials for those denied proper funerals.
- **Children’s Toys or Folk Art:** Some suggest they were simply macabre playthings or part of a forgotten local tradition.

#### Where Are They Now?

Only **eight coffins survive** today, and they’re housed in the [National Museum of Scotland](#). Their craftsmanship and mystery continue to draw visitors and researchers alike.



Some of the miniature coffins



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**BOARD OFFICERS AND CHAIRS OF STANDING**

**COMMITTEES OF CLAN BLAIR SOCIETY**

August - September 2025

Jim Blair - President 8861 Eagles Nest Lane, Highlands Ranch, CO 80126 303 795 9754 <a href="mailto:President@clanblair.org">President@clanblair.org</a>	Nick Shryack - Web Admin 8870 Goosander Lane Littleton, Colorado 80126 720 299 0741 <a href="mailto:nickshryack@gmail.com">nickshryack@gmail.com</a>
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Leslie Blair Gallagher – Vice President 5102 Galley Road, Lot 302A Colorado Springs, CO 80915 720 201 3128 <a href="mailto:lvblairgallagher@clanblair.org">lvblairgallagher@clanblair.org</a>	Russ McCrary - Membership 29 Haven Place San Ramon, CA 94583 925 719 0324 <a href="mailto:ClanMembership@clanblair.org">ClanMembership@clanblair.org</a>
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Vallie Blair – Treasurer 2901 Colony Woods Rd. Gastonia, NC 28054 704 996 0734 <a href="mailto:Treasurer@clanblair.org">Treasurer@clanblair.org</a>	Jim Blair – Clan Store 8861 Eagles Nest Lane Highlands Ranch, CO 80126 303 795 9754 <a href="mailto:ClanStore@clanblair.org">ClanStore@clanblair.org</a>
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Scott Blair – High Commissioner 2801 Colony Woods Rd. Gastonia, NC 28054 704 943 6232 <a href="mailto:ClanTent@ClanBlair.org">ClanTent@ClanBlair.org</a>	Elena McCrary - Librarian 29 Haven Place San Ramon, CA 94583 925 719 0324 <a href="mailto:Librarian@clanblair.org">Librarian@clanblair.org</a>
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Nominations Committee Curtis Blair 2- Vacant 3- Vacant	Genealogy - Vacant
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Russ McCrary  
29 Haven Place  
San Ramon, CA 94583  
First Class Mail  
Address Service Requested

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