



# 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)

First quarter: February-March 2025



**CBS President Jim Blair**

Fellow Scots – Happy Winter 2025. Many of us have seen major snowfall and ice this holiday season. This follows a hot and dry Fall and tough winter weather along with atmospheric river rain which is causing flooding and mud slides. And our Carolina members have weathered hurricane damage. Our hearts are with all affected. Good Scots are prepared – stay safe.

It is time to renew your membership for 2025. Russ McCrary dutifully started mailing reminders in November and renewals are being received. In order to stimulate member retention the board voted to adjust the fee structure to encourage longer engagement. Fees for 2025 are:

- One year subscription - \$20
- Two-year subscription - \$35
- Three-year subscription - \$50

Please renew:



This is the time of year to celebrate Scottish poet Robert Burns. Many clans host Rabbie Burns suppers, as well as St. Andrew Societies. I encourage you to find the celebration in your local. It is much fun. The Colorado chapter celebrated Rabbie this past Saturday Feb. 8. Fifty three of our good friends and members enjoyed potluck, haggis - bacon appetizers, desserts, and of course plenty of whisky and other libations. Torin Blair did a wonderful job reciting the Ode to the Haggis, and others toasted the Laddies and Lassies. Thanks to all involved.

It is also time to plan for spring events including Tartan Day, Kirk'n of the Tartan, St. Patrick's day and then spring festivals. Please find these activities in your community 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 [adoree1@outlook.com](mailto:adoree1@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. Thi includes Maggie Blair from South Carolina, Nick Shryack, Elisa Blair 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).

**William Campbell Blair Youth Award 2025**

Clan Blair Society announces the invitation to member nominations for the 2025 WC Blair Youth Award. The Award recognizes youth who demonstrate excellence in their lives and activities. This opens recognition of an outstanding youth member of the Society who is nominated by their family or friends for their extraordinary achievement in the forms of music, dance, art, athletics, scholastics, theatre/performance, social impact to the community or CBS. The recipient receives recognition at the Annual General Meeting and a \$500 cash award.

William Campbell Blair was a founding member of CBS and served as President and a State Commissioner in California for many years. He was a pediatrician and his love for children is represented by this award in his honor. Please nominate a young member of the CBS family.

The nomination materials are found on the [clanblair.org](http://clanblair.org) website and the nomination form is included in this newsletter. Nominations must be received by July 31, so please begin thinking about prospective nominees. Questions can be forwarded to Jim Blair at [president@clanblair.org](mailto:president@clanblair.org).

**Leadership Transitions:**

The membership duties performed by Russ McCrary for the past 8 years are changing to a digital form and the administration of membership is being assumed by Elisa Blair of Littleton, CO. Thank you Elisa for stepping into this new role. It will be a challenge to transition from manual to digital, and Elisa will be assisted by Dyani Blair Galligan of Littleton. Thank you both for volunteering to lead these efforts. Elisa's email is [elisablair9@gmail.com](mailto:elisablair9@gmail.com). Dyani's email is [dyanigalligan@gmail.com](mailto:dyanigalligan@gmail.com).

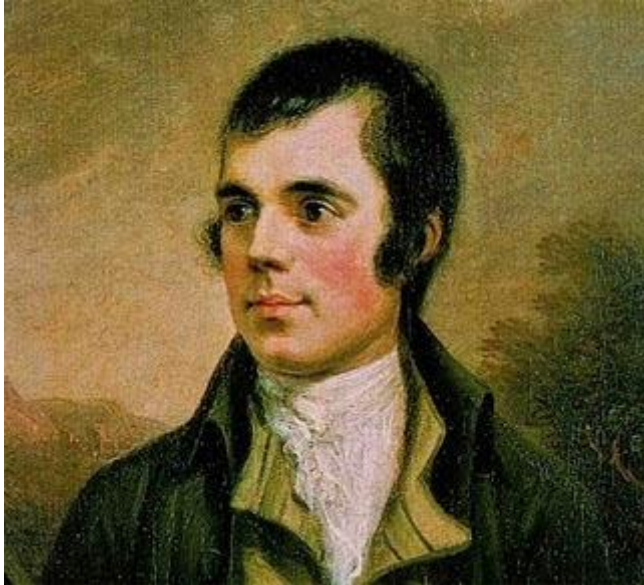
The office of High Commissioner is transitioning from Bill Blair to Scott Blair from North Carolina. Scott is full of great ideas and I look forward to his thoughts and inspiration. All Commissioners should look for communication from Scott. He is on the prowl to meet with you.

And special thanks to Nick for agreeing to step into the website administration duties. The new year will bring some challenges. Nick's email address is [nickshryack@gmail.com](mailto:nickshryack@gmail.com).

Welcome to the leadership team Scott, Elisa, Nick, and Dyani.

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## Bard Robert Burns



In Colorado, it is the time of year when we gather Blairs and friends to celebrate the Bard Robert Burns, the “most romantic and sentimental” of the great Scottish poets.

Here, we always have the presentation of the Haggis, on a platter held high by our son Torin Blair, while we march around the rooms behind him, to the tune of Highland Cathedral on bagpipes. Then, Torin recites the Ode to the Haggis while we listen with delight. Then we toast the haggis with Blair Athol scotch. Someone presents further Burns writings, with Jim Blair reciting the “ to the Lassies, and another citing “To the Laddies.”

From that beginning, we continue to eat a great feast of dishes brought by participants, many of them Scottish, and visit and enjoy. It is great fun and has grown to be a fairly large crowd full of families. Most of our guests love the celebration and ask about it as the time for Burns Supper nears. If you do not have a Burns supper in your state, think about starting one! You can rent out room in a local pub or hold the event in a home. Let us know about your Burns Suppers and we’ll publish your story in our newsletter!

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## COLORADO Clan Blair BURNS SUPPER, 2025

### Leslie Blair Gallagher, VP and Colorado Commissioner





**We had the Colorado Clan Blair Burns Supper on 8 February 2025. Well attended as always. Ode to Haggis, Toast to the Lassies and Lads and a blessing. Great company and food as always. Our bard is a treasure for his ability to bring people together.**

Regards, Leslie

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**Rabbie Burns and Auld Lang Syne**

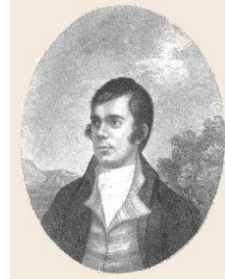
**By the Editor**

Auld Lang Syne is well-known for the New Year’s celebrations of the English-speaking world. First published in 1796, the song "Auld Lang Syne" was written by the famous Scottish poet **Robert Burns** in 1788. The lyrics are in Scots and were based on an older Scottish folk song. He never did claim full authorship, but he said he wrote it after listening to an old man sing. Auld Lang Syne means ‘long ago.’

Although Burns was a tenant farmer and tax collector, his book of poems published in 1786 called “Poems, chiefly of the Scottish Dialect, which was a large success and he became famous. He went to Edinburgh and was celebrated by the wealthy people there.

Robert Burns is known for his writing about drinking and eating and carousing. He often gave in to his earthly desires, fathered children out of wedlock (but cared for them financially) and, after fame became his, was known for his revelry. He

was handsome and charming. His description of himself was that he was a ‘miserable dupe to love...I am no saint. I have a whole host of sins and follies to answer for.’ Yet people loved him and women forgave him despite himself. One woman reported that “no man’s conversation ever carried her so far off” her feet as that of Burns. His wife, Jean Armour, once lamented, “Poor Rob – he should have two wives.” He said “[my] sweetest hours that e’er I spent are among the lasses.”



This likeness of Robert Burns was carved by a friend, John Buengo, in 1787.

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**BLAIRS OF BALTHAYOCK**

**From the Editor**



**Blairs of Balthayock**

Compiled from the book *The Blairs of Balthayock and their Cadets* by Jack Blair

**Stephen de Blair** (1150 to 1210) is the earliest known prominent Blair to own lands in eastern Scotland. Whether they were somehow related to

the Blairs of Blair near Glasgow is possible and has been much speculated. During King Williams' reign, (1165-1214) Stephen de Blair gave land to the monks of Coupar in Lethcassy, and the king gave the lands a confirmation. De Blair made this gift to bring salvation to his kinfolk and for three departed kings. This was witnessed by many prominent families. Balthayock was given to de Blair near Errol. Stephen de Blair's father had no surname, so it is assumed he took the name Blair from the names of the lands around him, including Blairgowrie and Mount Blair. These lands became part of his holdings.

Stephen de Blair was witness to many charters, which tells us his importance in the eyes of prominent persons.

The next significant Blair was **Alexander de Blair**, (1180 to 1220). It is not clear if he was the son of Stephen de Blair. His wife was Ela, and it is thought that perhaps he had a son, William, who succeeded him.

**Sir William de Blair (1220 – 1250)** . He also witnessed many charters. There are a great deal of possible life adventures mentioned, such as that he may have married a daughter of Constantine. He was knighted by Alexander II. He had at least two children, Walter and Alexander.

Sir Alexander Blair, (1225-1275) , married Helen Ramsay, sister of Sir William Ramsay, and had a son, John. .

**John Blair(1260-1310)**- He inherited his father's lands in Fife and elsewhere when he was still young. He had a son, David, and possibly two more sons, John [who may have served as counsel to William Wallace as written about in the last newsletter] and/or Arnold.

**David de Blair (1280-1340)** – Could have owned Balthayock. Had three sons: Patrick, John of Ardler, and Thomas of Moulin. (Who is possibly the Blair who began the line of Blairs of Ardblair).

Between David de Blair and the following Patrick de Blair, the author Jack Blair suspects there may have been another generation of Blairs not yet found.

**Patrick de Blair (1340-1405)** He held many lands in Scotland. He was armour bearer to James, Earl of Douglas. He may have fought alongside the earl in 1388. He worked through disputes over his Balgillon lands with a neighbor, and was chartered further lands in his lifetime, making him landholder of comparable sized lands with the king. He inherited his brother John's lands. He lived to an old age for the time, and left sons Thomas and probably William, Abbott of Kinloss. He died before 1408.

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**PREFACE TO THE BLAIRS OF  
BALTHAYOCK AND THEIR CADETS, 1150-  
1850 by JACK BLAIR, PART II**

In 1993, Anne and Preston Groome, some of the first members of Clan Blair Society, went to Ontario, Canada to meet Robert Tower Fergusson, who was a descendant of the last Balthayock Blair. In 1833, Adam Johnson Fergusson Blair had sold all the Balthayock lands and moved to Canada where he became famous as a "builder of Canada."

The Groomes discovered a list of abstracts, which were partially listed by Jemimah Blair Johnson, before she died at a young age. In 1999, Robert Tower Fergusson gave a chest to store the muniments, made of metal. Some of the contents were still with original seals on them. Some had been taken from the original documents, but 93 remained. In 2000, Noel Blair McCullough, with Anne and Preston Groome, arranged the documents

in chronological order. Very helpful were Jack Blair of Scotland and Willard McCullough. These documents were primary in contents of this book.

**What AI says:**

The Blairs of Balthayock are a notable Scottish family with a rich history. Their story begins with Stephen de Blair in the 12th century, who owned land in the area now known as Blairgowrie. Stephen de Blair was a witness to a charter on land at Balgillo by an Abbot of the monastery of Arbroath2.

One prominent member of the family was Alexander de Blair, likely Stephen's son, who married Ela, daughter of Hugh de Nyden, and gained the lands of Cults in Fife. Alexander's son, William de Blair, received a knighthood from King Alexander II of Scots and became Steward of Fife in 1235.

The Blairs of Balthayock held their seat at Balthayock Castle, a commanding tower house near Perth, which was their home for over 500 years. The male line of the family ended in the early 1700s with John Blair of Balthayock, who left a daughter as his sole heir.

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**FAMOUS BLAIRS IN HISTORY**

**Catherine Blair, Warrior for Women in Scotland**



Catherine Blair and the Queen Mother

The Rural, or the Scottish Women’s Rural Institute is often seen as a quiet, genteel organization, offering feminine activities and friendship, but its foundation came at one of the most turbulent times in the women’s movements...and its founder, Catherine Blair, was rumored to have been ‘in the thick of it!’

In 1917, influenced by the Canadian Women's Institute, Catherine set up the very first Scottish Women’s Rural Institute, in Longniddry. Rumors say she may have hidden women prisoners from their jailers and helped them escape as the British justice system battled against the rise of activism in the suffragette movement.

Born in 1872 in Bathgate, she married farmer Thomas Blair and their family home was Hoprig Mains Farm, near Gladsmuir. A farmer's daughter, she was raised by her aunt following the death of her mother.

She was one of six children and excelled at art during her time at Bathgate Academy.

The family later relocated to Dolphingstone Farm, near Tranent.

Although she was an active member of the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU), chairing local meetings and writing many letters to the press, she did not engage in militant protest because of her young family.

However, with the support of her husband, she turned Hoprig Mains Farm into a clandestine refuge for Scottish suffragette prisoners released under the Cat and Mouse Act.

In Scotland in 1909, women were not considered ‘persons’ and did not have the vote.

Mrs. Blair's involvement with the Women's Social and Political Union, known as the suffragettes, was

significant, although she refrained from participating in military campaigns.

Instead, her home, Hoprig, became a sanctuary for women imprisoned under the Cat and Mouse Act\* and a resting place for Scots travelling to marches in London.

She actively spoke at events and wrote articles and letters to the press and prominent individuals.

In 1911, she made a stand during the census by staying in a barn with her children, ensuring she was recorded in her own right rather than just as the wife of Thomas Blair.

In 1921, Mrs Blair became a justice of the peace.

Her interest in housing improvements led her to join various committees.

Her vision was to provide rural women opportunities to meet, discuss topics, form social networks, and develop new skills through talks and practical demonstrations.

In addition to her social contributions, Mrs. Blair nurtured a love for art, including pottery painting, which led to the creation of Mak'Merry Pottery in a garden studio at Hoprig.



This provided local women with a creative outlet and a source of income, with pieces even being sold to the Queen Mother and often proving popular in America.

In 1932, the Blairs moved to North Berwick, where they continued their arts and crafts projects.

During the war, Mrs. Blair actively supported the work of the Red Cross and Polish Relief.

She passed away in 1946 and was cremated at Warriston.

The SWRI continues to this day and, at its centenary in 2017, the original banner was given to her great-granddaughter at Longniddry.

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\* The Cat and Mouse Act: The **Cat and Mouse Act**, officially known as the **Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health) Act 1913**, was a British law passed under H. H. Asquith's Liberal government. It was designed to handle the issue of hunger strikes by suffragettes who were imprisoned for their militant activities in support of women's suffrage<sup>1</sup>.

The act allowed for the temporary release of prisoners who were weakened by hunger strikes, giving them time to recover before being re-arrested and sent back to prison to serve the remainder of their sentence. This process was likened to a cat playing with a mouse, hence the nickname "Cat and Mouse Act"<sup>1</sup>.

The act was controversial and seen as a way for the government to avoid responsibility for the harm caused by force-feeding and imprisonment. It also meant that suffragettes could be repeatedly released and re-imprisoned without further trial.

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**Scottish Woolly Cows**

**Scottish Memes:**

Before I got married, I'd just smash into the back of cars because I didn't have a wife to gasp and scream when someone braked 3 miles ahead



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**Bella Belle**   
@Bellabelle

My husband pirated me off, and thinks he going to sit in the living room and watch TV in peace. So I downloaded the LG remote app and keep turning the TV off from the bedroom.

He came in and I acted like I was asleep so now he thinks we have ghosts.

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Mrs rang me, dog's ran off in the Woods and she can't find him. Drove home from Warrington at 200mph and he's sat on the finishing doorstep wagging his tail.



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**LIBRARIAN REPORT – ELENA MCCRARY**

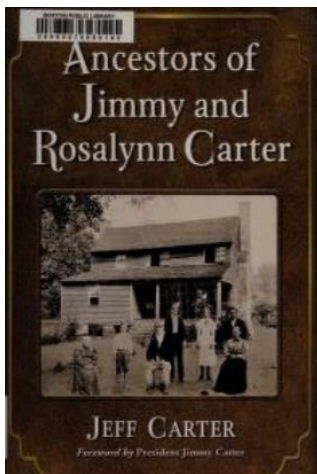
(Book cover used with grateful permission of [Boston Public Library](http://BostonPublicLibrary.org) through its collaboration with InternetArchives.org)

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***Ancestors of Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter***

by Jeff Carter

You know when there is a book you really want to read, but it is either unavailable at your local public library, or is suddenly nowhere to be found to purchase? This was the case with this title. Alas, I was not thwarted because I did find it electronically through The Internet Archives. So first thank you to the Boston Public Library who allowed it to be uploaded and secondly to Jeff Carter for writing a solid family history.



## SCOTTISH CLAN REPOSITORY

Courtesy of The Odom Genealogy Library

[https://mccls.org/information/locations\\_hours/odom\\_genealogy\\_library](https://mccls.org/information/locations_hours/odom_genealogy_library)

With the death of Jimmy Carter, I wanted to know more about his and Rosalynn's ancestors.

"Carter is of Irish, Scottish and English origin and is an occupational name given to one who transports goods by cart or wagon and ultimately of Celtic derivation from the word "cairt" meaning cart, which is still used in Gaelic." Read more at [this link](#).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carter\\_\(name\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carter_(name)).

I have begun reading a personally autographed copy of *First Lady from Plains* by Rosalynn Carter. Her mother was a Murray and her father a Smith.

On a personal note, as a supporter of The Carter Center we were invited to a private celebration of Carter's life work. We had an 11am reservation hosted at The Elfenworks Foundation and were greeted by staff from The Carter Center. A short movie played showing the Carters around the world. We signed a condolence book, shared stories with other like-minded people from all over the bay area. We had refreshments then enjoyed the many pictures from their time in the White House and around the world. We were given a copy of *The Nobel Peace Price Lecture* by Jimmy Carter as we left. <https://www.jimmycartertribute.org/>

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Notice anything about the picture above? I sent Blair tartan to Irene Godwin when they were updating the library space. She helps so many people search for their Scottish roots. I encourage you to reach out.

If you have not visited the Clan Repository and specifically looked at the titles from the Blair holdings, take time. Just copy the link above or simply type in "Ellen Payne Odom library Scottish collection." To the left is the clan repository click to get all the holdings.

One of the titles I recently borrowed and need to return is *Blairs of Drummond Lanark Co., Ontario, Canada* or the original title *Blairs of Drummond: Robert Blair and Rebecca Jane Forrester, their descendants for six generations in Canada and U.S.A.*, written and compiled by Mildred Blair Hawkins; illustrations, Ross Hawkins; genealogical charts, Richard Hawkins.

What was I searching for you may ask? Answers. When Russ and I were at the Seaside Games I came across a scarf for sale: Drummond of Perth.

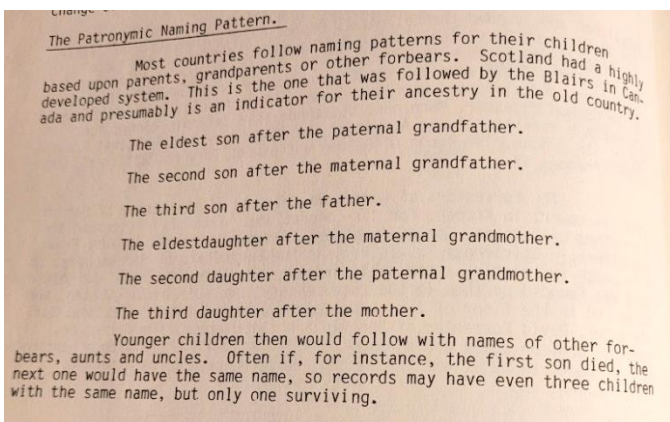


I wanted to know more, such as when and where did the Blair and Drummond connection happen? Well, the story begins with a Forrester ancestor which Russ really enjoyed, because his ancestor Matilda Forrest married McCrary. The author writes, "It is assumed that our line of Blairs descends from Alexander de Blair of Balthayock. (p. 14)."

What is even more fascinating are all the source references throughout the text. I found myself searching and finding digital copies through google books (sometimes only previews) or through the Internet Archives [internetarchives.org](http://internetarchives.org) This site has a search field; type in Blair and be amazed.

A piece of advice, though: I use my laptop connected to a larger monitor that is much easier on the eyes. You may want to consider this if you are doing a lot of online reading.

Something Mary J. Ross mentioned was the same name popping up and trying to figure out the order. I found on page 10 the Patronymic Naming Pattern.



As the second daughter I was named after my paternal grandmother. Lucky me!

Finally, I want to mention that the genealogy used the "Henry system" for identification of individuals with the same name in many branches over generations (p.270).

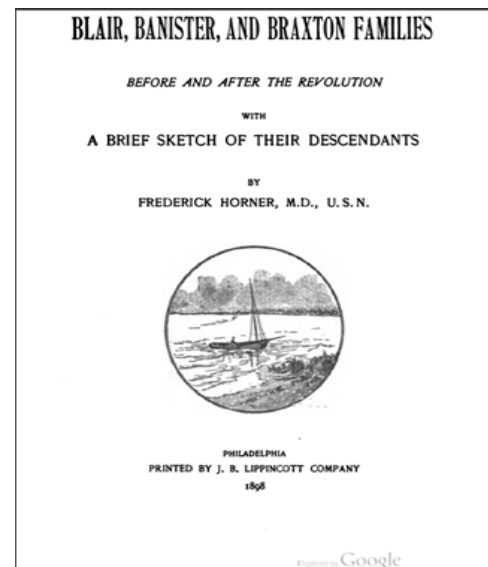
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### On Research and Sources

The question of having a genealogy library nearby is, in most cases, as close as your computer.

Sometimes you need a library card to access digital resources like *Heritage Quest* which has census data and is a good starting point in looking at old records.

I mentioned Google™ books earlier, but I wanted to share an example from an 1898 book they digitized.



This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<http://books.google.com>



*(The above is about the book at the bottom of the preceding page)*

This is an example of history you come across. You can scan the QRcode or type in the book's title and download it into pdf format.

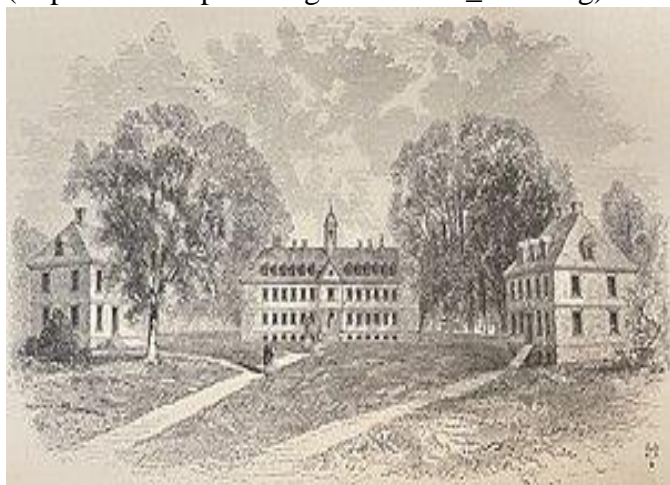
"...hence the purpose of this volume is simply to save from oblivion the records of the family of John Banister, who, with others, framed the Articles of Confederation of the Colonies of America, and thereby planted the germ seeds of a great Republic; of Carter Braxton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, who developed thereby into quickened life a giant Empire; and of John Blair, who contributed on the part of the State of Virginia

to confirm a more perfect union by the adoption of the Federal Constitution of the United States. The trio—soldier, patriot, and jurist—thus deserve at the hands of their descendants, — A Monument More Lasting than Bronze (Horner, Preface).”

While this book does not have an index, it is divided into three families starting with the Blair line. As you read, they also mention the source from which they found the information contained within.

The Horner book profiles the Blairs of Virginia starting with James Blair (1656- 1743). He founded the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. The college building was designed by Sir Christopher Wren

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wren\\_Building](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wren_Building))



**Print depicting the Willia, and Mary campus before 1859. The President’s home was on the right.**

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**NEWS FROM THE LIBRARIAN**

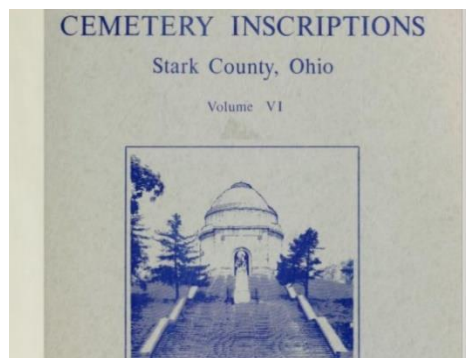
**By Elena McCrary**

I wanted to share this in the newsletter because this organization does incredible work. *A Starter Guide to Genealogy at the Archive*. Yes, I do donate because they are a Nonprofit. They are based out of San Francisco, but they are just one of the many genealogy tools available across the country. I bet you could have me profile one in your neighborhood.

Sometimes you may head to your local library that hosts a genealogy section. Sometimes you are perusing the web. Do not forget to ask an organization (especially if you do not live nearby) if you may have electronic access to their digital files via an electronic library card. If you explain your purpose, they are more likely to support you. Other times it may be necessary to write or chat with an in-house librarian to get help in finding an answer to your question(s).

May 2024

Browsing the Archive



IA Genealogy Starter Pack

Did you know the Archive hosts a vast collection of resources related to Genealogy and cultural preservation for the use and enjoyment of patrons like you? For those interested in genealogical materials scanned from books, periodicals, and microfilm we have a starter guide to some of our richest resources!

1. [Genealogy Collection](#): Resources include books on surname origins, vital statistics, parish records, census records, passenger lists of vessels, and other historical and biographical documents from various libraries, cultural centers, and archives.

2. **Family Genealogy Collection:** A collection of almost 4000 books on the genealogy of various families, background in surnames and generational history— dating all the way back to the **1700's**.
3. **Yearbooks:** Peruse the various preserved yearbooks, featuring the student bodies of high schools, universities, academic institutions, and academies—giving us a modern glimpse into history and cultural connection to the past.

Internet Archive, *A Starter Guide to Genealogy at the Archive: Browsing the Archives*, May 2024 (accessed Nov 23, 2024).

300 Funston Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94118

[archive.org](https://archive.org)

Want to read more about this organization and see all the files, check out the Wikipedia page [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet\\_Archive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Archive)

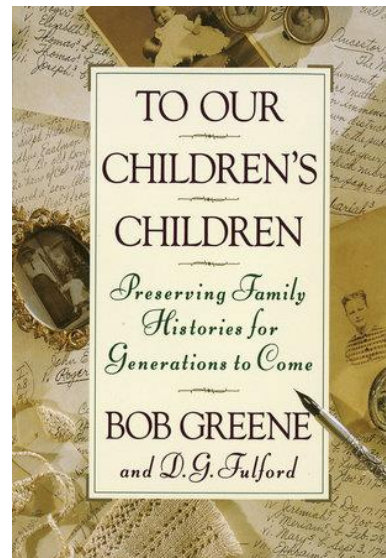
When we are searching history we need to constantly look for what links us. This is why I just requested a book from the Moultrie library. I had seen something at the Seaside Games, and I remembered a Blair Connection. I wanted to know more, so I am hoping this book provides insight into some questions I have been wondering about.

Recently I went to my local library and the Friends of the library were hosting a book sale. I found, *To Our Children's Children: Preserving Family Histories for Generations to Come* by Bob Greene and D.G. Fulford.

I picked up the book because it was in was full of questions you might not think to ask, especially if you are from a different generation. To me, if you were to use the format as you try to fill-in the family or extended family history, you could have quite a story because as the author says, “If you ask

just one question and get the details, which is showing history.” For me, the best part comes at the end when he asks, “If you had to write a note – one note-and leave it propped against a sugar bowl on your kitchen table...what would it say?”

Think about it and write your own note as we give thanks to our friends and family. As well as the time that we have given this year to the Clan Blair organization.



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**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA COMMISSIONER  
REPORT**

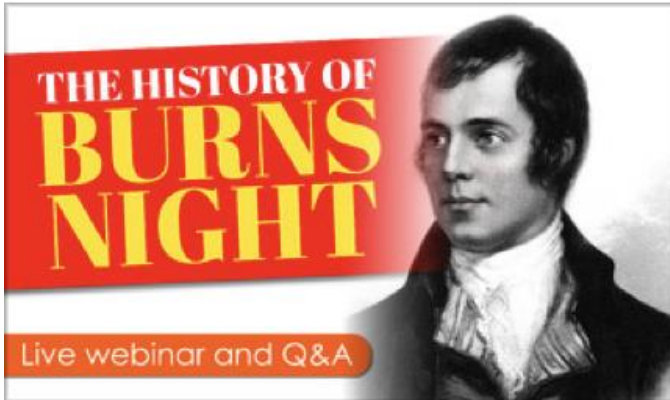
**Russ and Elena McCrary**

Winter has arrived with a vengeance to California communities. As of this writing, another fire has broken out in Los Angeles County. We used to live in Tujunga which is near Altadena. We still have friends in the area, but so far everyone is safe.

If you know someone who may be impacted, post it to the Clan Blair Facebook page. There are lots of Blairs in the state. What can we do to help?

January is Elena's birthday month and while I usually give gifts, I am donating to [worldcentralkitchen.org](https://worldcentralkitchen.org) to help provide hot meals.

While we wanted to attend a Burn's Night celebration, we decided to enjoy this Webinar from [historyscotland.com](http://historyscotland.com), The Centre for Robert Burns Studies and sponsored by The University of Dundee distance learning.

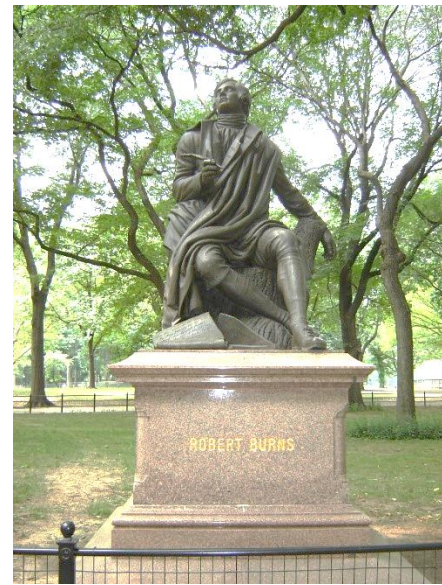


Dr. Allan Kennedy moderated this interesting lecture by Dr. Pauline Mackay, Editor of *Burns for Every Day of the Year*. Also, a 2023-24 winner of *The Queen's Anniversary Prizes*, The University of Glasgow was recognized for:

“Editing and curating Robert Burns for the 21st century.”

What we learned from this lecture:

- The very first Burns Night was held at Burns' Cottage in Alloway, by a small group of his friends on July 21, 1801, five years after his death. It was only in 1803 that the group met on the correct date, Burns' birthday, 25 January.
- Auld Lang Syne begins a month of celebrating all things Burns and concludes with a Burns Supper.
- He has the most statues of any poet in the world. This 1880 statue by Sir John Steell was the first outside of Scotland. Dundee and London also have ones by the same sculptor (Wikipedia).



<https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/central-park/monuments/197>

- He was an extensive reader.
- He shaped Scottish culture writing over 600 poems and songs.
- He was an Excise Officer (tax man) at one time.
- Working on a farm was hard labor, but he did it.
- His relationships with women inspired him.
- Burns night is a worldwide celebration.

<https://burnsc21.glasgow.ac.uk/supper-map/>

The map inventories more than 2,500 contemporary Burns Suppers and Burns **Night events, spreading across six (6) continents and 150 countries. Most of these events took place in either 2020 or 2019**, although earlier occurrences (as early as 2009) have also been recorded for areas with sparser Burns activities. If an event you hosted or attended in recent years does not feature on the map and you'd like to be included, please contact us at [arts-burnssupper@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:arts-burnssupper@glasgow.ac.uk)

- Burns and related celebrations contribute approximately £300 million annually to the Scottish economy.

- He was a mere 37 years of age when he died.

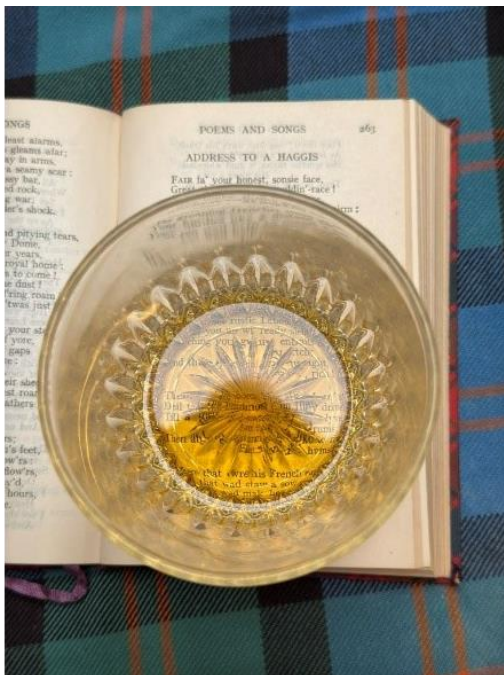
How we celebrated

Elena cooked canned haggis (\$17.00). Worth every bite!



Russ w/haggis

Set the table with Blair tartan, Burns poetry, whiskey for toasting and haggis with mashed potatoes.



Elena read Selkirk Grace then recited *Address to a Haggis*. Russ and Chris toasted.

Served the food.

Sang *Auld Lange Syne* thinking of friends in Southern California.

### Upcoming California Events

Double check the Southern California events due to the wildfires.

#### **CALAVERAS CELTIC FAIRE & CONCERT "Former Sonora Celtic Faire"**

March 7, 8 & 9th 2025

<https://calaverascelticfaire.com/>

Event goes on Rain or Shine - All Music is inside the buildings

Friday March 7th 9:30am-2:30pm

(Family & Educational Day Limited

entertainment and NO Alcohol Sales on Friday)

Saturday March 8th 10am-8pm

Sunday March 9th 10am-5pm

<https://www.kernscot.org/highland-games>

April 19 & 20, 2025 (check website)

#### **NORCAL CELTIC FESTIVAL - FREE**

<https://www.norcalcelticfestival.com/>

Downtown Woodland, CA

April 26 - 27, 2025

8am-7pm

#### **KVMR CELTIC FESTIVAL 2025**

<https://kvmrcelticfestival.org/>

May 2 -4, 2025

Nevada County Fairgrounds

11228 McCourtney Road

Grass Valley, CA 95949

**SCOTTISH FEST**

<https://www.scottishfest.com/>

**Memorial Day Weekend**

**May 24-25, 2025**

**10am-6pm Sat. 10am-5:30pm Sun**

**SAN DIEGO SCOTTISH HIGHLAND GAMES**

**- 50<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary**

<https://sdhighlandgames.org/>

**June 28-29, 2025**

These games have early bird and discount tickets, sign-up to follow them if you want to know more.

**159<sup>th</sup> SCOTTISH HIGHLAND GATHERING & GAMES**

<https://thescottishgames.com/>

**Labor Day Weekend August 30-31, 2025,  
Alameda County Fairgrounds, Pleasanton, CA**

**SEASIDE HIGHLAND GAMES**

<https://www.seasidehighlandgames.org/>

**October 11 & 12, 2025**

**FRESNO GATHERING AND GAMES (TBD)**

In the meantime, if you want to learn Scots Gaelic check out their site.

<https://www.fresnoscottishsociety.com/scots-gaelic>



**Colorful Scottish Town**



**CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC**



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**COMMUNICATION and STORYTELLING –  
Their Importance in Clan Blair**

In August of 2024, when member Mary January Ross joined The Clan Blair Society I was so moved by the letter she sent, I contacted her for a chat. I followed up January 2025, because I wanted to know more about her and the research she was doing. This is the importance of reaching out to members. We all have the opportunity whether we meet via letter, email, Facebook or doing research for Blair relatives. I can help by suggesting sites, books, or step-by-step instructions using digital tools. Her letter is so wonderful, and I asked, and she gave us permission to reprint it for the newsletter. It was incredible reading about all her ancestors and the trove of documents she received. We talked about the possibility of meeting up at the Pleasanton Games later in the year.

What is your story?

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**Scottish Village**

Dear Russ McCrary,

I am truly honored by my acceptance as a member of Clan Blair Society. Sending my sincere apologies for the delay in replying to your letter.

Thank you for the accompanying Clan documents. I look forward to learning about Clan Blair Society and sharing discoveries with other Blair family members and descendants.

My maternal grandmother, Gussie Mae Jones Robinson, was a woman with deep love and respect for her family. Her mother was Mary Jennie Blair, daughter of Alexander Clark Blair of Bedminster Township, New Jersey, grandson of Robert Blair, Esquire 1748-1800 who served in the New Jersey militia during the Revolution. Robert Blair's service is noted in Clan Blair Revolutionary War records. I am currently organizing documents for application to the Daughters of the American Revolution, so this documentation is helpful.

Robert Blair's grandson, Alexander Clark Blair, came to Dallas, Texas in 1857 and built a home, a cotton gin and a farm that supported four generations of my family. I grew up hearing the stories of the Blairs and had the great fortune to meet and grow up with other Blair descendants. Alexander fought for the Union during the Civil War.

Over the years Gussie Mae and I spent hours together delving into her collection of family history stories, documents, and photos when I visited Texas from my home in the Bay Area of San Francisco.

During her last moments at age 98, my grandmother's last words to me were "Follow the Blairs". I wanted her to know I got it. "You want me to follow our Blair ancestors"? She nodded and squeezed my hand. I later inherited her collection of documents and photos of Blair history. I cherish them. Gussie Mae passed in 1992, and I have since kept my promise to her to record and preserve these wonderful treasures. I sometimes feel Gussie Mae is on my shoulder directing my searches.

Joining the Clan Blair Society is a wonderful next step. Now retired, I can dedicate more time. My cousin, Maggie, and I are planning a 2025 trip to Scotland and the British Isles, including the Isle of Man. Isle of Man Museum shared a bit of Blair history and other lines of my family including Mary Elizabeth Christian, wife of Alexander Clark Blair.

Since you are in San Ramon, please inform me if there are Scottish Games in the Bay Area. My home in Medford is a five-hour drive to the Bay Area, and I make a few trips a year.

Thank you again for your follow up. I am looking forward to meeting you and other Clan Blair members as we celebrate our shared Blair history.

Kind regards,



Mary January Ross

**Another wonderful tidbit I received when I started corresponding with Norma Jean Blair Gilmore was information about the authors of Our Scott and Blair Kinfolk. *"We lived in Whichita Hgts (sic) for 3 years in late 1990's & so met them & knew both Mary and Edith (Scott) & also drove to Sabina where we saw them at their home. They were so happy to be able to talk with us about the Blair family. Mary died first & in the last year of life Edith was not too well.***

**I typed as written by Norma.**

**Norma included this picture of Edith Scott in her note to me too.**

**In the book referenced above there is a picture of Norma as a young girl with her father.**

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**CLAN BLAIR SOCIETY FACEBOOK PAGE POSTS**



**The Thistle Lady: Scottish Culture and Celtic Passion** added a new photo to the album: **Art**  

**Billy Duff by Charles Landseer (1799-1879):**

A watercolour portrait of Billy Duff, who sits on a rock, pipe in mouth and wearing a Murray of Atholl kilt, with his dog asleep beneath his legs. On their second visit to Scotland in September 1844, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert stayed at Blair Castle in Perthshire, the seat of the Duke of Atholl. William Duff was one of the Atholl Highlanders, who formed the Queens Guard during her visit.

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**Clan Blair Society**

**Maggie Blair**

Hello All! Do you know about the Clan Blair Zazzle Store? Check it out and let us know if there is anything you would like to see added!

**[www.zazzle.com/Clan\\_blair\\_store](http://www.zazzle.com/Clan_blair_store)**.



**Clan Blair Society Store: Designs & Collections on Zazzle**

Check out all of the amazing designs that Clan Blair Society Store has created for your Zazzle products. Make one-of-a-kind gifts with these designs!

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**Clan Blair Society**

**Danny Miller** ·

**Hiya from south central Ohio.**



movement1. She moved to Wisconsin in 1881 and began giving illustrative talks to children, eventually becoming the superintendent of the juvenile department for the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).

Ellen's work took her across the United States, Canada, and even to national conventions. She was known for her "chalk talks," which captivated both young and old1. In addition to her public duties, she taught oil painting, drawing, and crayon work. Ellen passed away in 1926 and is buried at Sunset Hill Cemetery in Clinton, New York1.

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**The Colonel John Blair**, who was involved in the Revolutionary War was from the American colonies and served in the **New York Militia**. He was born around 1720 in England and later moved to the American colonies. He served as a **Lieutenant Colonel** in the Albany County Militia and was involved in various military engagements during the war.

Colonel John Blair, born around 1720 in England, played a notable role in the American Revolutionary War. He served in the **New York Militia**, specifically in the **Albany County Militia**. His military career included several promotions and assignments:

- **Ensign** in the Salem County, NJ Militia in 1776
- **2nd Lieutenant** in 1777

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**TWO OTHER FAMOUS BLAIRS**

(Compiled by the Editor from Wikipedia, CoPilot and various other sources)



**Ellen A Dayton Blair**

Ellen A. Dayton Blair (1837-1926) was an influential American social reformer and art teacher. Born on December 27, 1837, near Vernon Center, New York, she graduated from Fort Edward Institute in 1837. She began her career as a preceptress at Upper Iowa University, where she also managed the art department.

Ellen married Emery H. Blair, a mathematics professor, and both were passionate about anti-slavery and prohibition causes. During the Women's Crusade, she discovered her talent as a temperance speaker and dedicated herself to the temperance

- **1st Lieutenant** in 1779
- **Regimental Adjutant** in 1780
- **Brevet Captain** by the end of the war in 1783

Blair's contributions were part of the broader effort to secure American independence from British rule. His service and leadership were recognized by his peers, and he was admitted to the **Society of the Cincinnati**, a hereditary society for officers of the Continental Army and their descendants.

After the Revolutionary War, Colonel John Blair continued to be active in his community. He settled in **Cambridge, Albany County, New York**, where he lived out the rest of his life. Blair passed away on **March 7, 1789**, at the age of approximately 68.

Blair's post-war life included maintaining his family and property. He had several children, including **John Blair Jr., Susannah (Blair) French, and Elizabeth Blair**.

Colonel John Blair's post-war life was dedicated to his family and community in Cambridge, New York. Here are a few highlights from his later years:

**Family and Personal Life**

- **John Blair Jr.:** His son, John Blair Jr., followed in his father's footsteps and was active in local community affairs.
- **Susannah (Blair) French:** One of his daughters, Susannah, married into the French family, which was another prominent family in the area.
- **Elizabeth Blair:** Another daughter, Elizabeth, was known for her involvement in local charitable activities.

Colonel Blair remained an active figure in Cambridge. He participated in various civic activities and was respected for his leadership and contributions to the Revolutionary War effort.

**Legacy**

Blair's legacy was honored by his descendants and the local community. He was remembered for his dedication to the cause of American independence and his service in the militia. His contributions were also recognized by the **Daughters of the American Revolution**, who often celebrated his memory through commemorative events and activities.

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“A Scottish boy sits backwards on a horse,” **Molnár** said. “His neighbour tells him, ‘You’re sitting on the horse backwards’. ‘I know,’ the boy replies, ‘but it swallowed a penny with the oats last night and I’m waiting for it.’”

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**Before you judge a man, walk a mile in his shoes. After that who cares? He’s a mile away and you’ve got his shoes!”**

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“When people say ‘it’s always the last place you look’. **Of course it is. Why would you keep looking after you’ve found it?”**

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**"In Scotland we have a verdict 'not proven' that means 'not guilty, but don't do it again'." -**

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**CLAN BLAIR SOCIETY**

# William Campbell Blair Youth Award Nomination Form

2-2025

Clan Blair Society (CBS) has introduced the William Campbell Blair Youth Award to be granted annually to a deserving youth member who has achieved excellence in pursuits related to youth activities, including their Scottish/Irish heritage. The annual award is \$500 and will be granted annually at the fall Annual General Meeting (AGM). Nominations for youth members 18 years old and younger can be made by friends and/or family (members) utilizing this nomination form found on the [www.clanblair.org](http://www.clanblair.org) website.

Please complete the following information and submit your nomination no later than July 31.

Name of Youth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ (18 years old or younger)

Name of Nominating CBS Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Contact Information: Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominating Member Contact:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Category of Outstanding Performance/Success:

\_\_\_\_\_ The Arts; Academics; Athletics; Clan Blair Society Support; Other

Provide a detailed description of the nominee's activities that achievements for which the nomination is being made:

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Please provide additional pages of text, pictures, news articles, etc. that support the nomination. Materials should be scanned and submitted via [www.clanblair.org](http://www.clanblair.org) or emailed to [president@clanblair.org](mailto:president@clanblair.org).

## William Campbell Blair

### Youth Award

2/10/2025

Clan Blair Society (CBS) has introduced the William Campbell Blair Youth Scholarship to be awarded annually to a deserving youth member who has achieved excellence in pursuits related to youth activities, including their Scottish/Irish heritage. The annual scholarship is \$500 and will be awarded annually at the fall Annual General Meeting (AGM). Nominations for youth members 18 years and younger can be made by friends and/or family (members) utilizing the nomination form found on the [www.clanblair.org](http://www.clanblair.org) website.

The following outlines the expectations of award nominees:

1. Nominations may be generated by members/families/friends
2. Nominees are aged 18 and younger
3. Special consideration will be made if the area of achievement is focused toward Scottish/Celtic activities
4. Scholarship recognition may be for Outstanding Performance/Success in:
  - a. The Arts, including:
    - i. Artistic – painting, drawing, sculpting, characterization
    - ii. Music – piping, drumming, stringed instruments, piano, vocal, etc.
    - iii. Dance
    - iv. Theater – performance
    - v. Other
  - b. Academics:
    - i. Excellence in the study of Scottish/Irish history
    - ii. Writing related to Scottish/Irish history, or stories
    - iii. Excellence in the study of Gaelic languages
    - iv. Formal recognition of achievement by local educators or foundations
  - c. Athletics:
    - i. Football (soccer)
    - ii. Rugby
    - iii. Wrestling
    - iv. Scottish Games (where offered for youth)

v. **Other**

**d. Social Impact**

- i. **Youth organizations**
- ii. **Outdoor venturing groups**
- iii. **Volunteerism**
- iv. **Other**

**e. Clan Blair Society support:**

- i. **Active support of local CBS activities**
- ii. **Tent/festival support**
- iii. **Promotion of CBS – recruitment, fund raising, etc. Nominations are invited in the February newsletter for submission in July (7/31)**

5. A selection committee will evaluate and recommend award recipient candidates to the BOD for final selection.

6. Recognition includes the \$500 cash award, a certificate of excellence and news coverage in the Blair Bruidhinn (and other Celtic publications associated with CBS)

Questions may be sent to Jim Blair at [president@clanblair.org](mailto:president@clanblair.org), or 1-303-886-8450



**CLAN BLAIR EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS AND CHAIRS OF STANDING  
COMMITTEES, February 2025**

Jim Blair - President  
8861 Eagles Nest Lane,  
Highlands Ranch, CO 80126  
[President@clanblair.org](mailto:President@clanblair.org)

Leslie Blair Gallagher – Vice  
President  
5102 Galley Road, Lot 302A  
Colorado Springs, CO 80915  
720 201 3128  
[lvblairgallagher@gmail.com](mailto:lvblairgallagher@gmail.com)

Maggie Blair – Secretary  
8 Seaward Ct.  
Greer, SC 29650  
Cell –803 292 7915  
[margareteblair@gmail.com](mailto:margareteblair@gmail.com)

Vallie Blair - Treasurer  
2801 Colony Woods Rd.  
Gastonia, NC 28054  
704-996-0734  
[Treasurer@clanblair.org](mailto:Treasurer@clanblair.org)

Scott Blair - High  
Commissioner  
2801 Colony Woods Rd.  
Gastonia, NC 28054  
704 943 6232  
[Clantent1@clanblair.org](mailto:Clantent1@clanblair.org)

Nick Shryack -Web Admin  
8870 Goosander Lane  
Littleton, Colorado 80126  
207/619 0494  
[Nick Shryack@gmail.com](mailto:Nick Shryack@gmail.com)

Elisa Blair –Membership  
8374 S Everett Way, Unit E  
Littleton, CO 80218  
303 829 4097  
[clanmembership@clanblair.org](mailto:clanmembership@clanblair.org)

Adoree Blair – Blair Bruidhinn  
8861 Eagles Nest Lane  
Highlands Ranch, CO 80126  
303 798-3881  
[Bruidhinn@clanblair.org](mailto:Bruidhinn@clanblair.org)

Jim Blair – Clan Store  
8861 Eagles Nest Lane  
Highlands Ranch, CO 80126  
303 795 9754  
[Clanstore@clanblair.org](mailto:Clanstore@clanblair.org)

Elena McCrary - Librarian  
29 Haven Place  
San Ramon, CA 94583  
925-719-0324  
[CBSlibrary@clanblair.org](mailto:CBSlibrary@clanblair.org)

Vacant - Blair Genealogy -  
[CBStgenea@clanblair.org](mailto:CBStgenea@clanblair.org)

Nominating Committee:  
Curtis Blair, Chair - CO  
Helen Blair – AZ  
Charles Diman - NC  
[Nominations@clanblair.org](mailto:Nominations@clanblair.org)

**First Class Mail**

**Address Service Requested**

**8374 S Everett Way, Unit E**

**Littleton, CO 80128**