



# 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)

Second Quarter, May/June 2023



Shawn Blair, Clan Blair Society President

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings Clan Blair Members!

June of 2023: The year moves so fast! I hope this is finding your family and yourselves well and experiencing the wonders of approaching summer. That means that the season of Scottish events around the world are well under way! What are your plans for plans this year for experiencing the celebration of your heritage? If you haven't planned anything or even thought about it, I encourage you to make a bit of time to find something nearby or even create your own. The Scottish heritage community has always been welcoming, enjoyable and a source of many new friends.

Clan Blair Society commissioners are hosting games in several states. They do it for the Scottish experience, friendships, and to provide a place for Blairs and Blair descendants to meet and learn about their heritage. They love the company, appreciate participation, and represent Blair in the world of Scots. Look for events in your area and plan to visit and experience the festivals. If there is

a commissioner hosting a tent, be sure to visit and introduce yourself. Invite your family and friends.

I often see questions about the clan tent at various events, and Blair missing from some. Our commissioners are volunteers who often can only host one or a few events. We're always looking for more members that are up to hosting a tent themselves at a local event. I encourage anybody that's enthusiastic about your heritage to consider hosting a clan tent. If you have any interest, contact us on [clanblair.org](http://clanblair.org) or the Facebook group and we can assist you in getting started. It's a good idea to look ahead a couple of months for any event you may want to join.

I hope you all get a chance to experience some of the many events that the Scottish heritage groups organize throughout the year. If you have questions or want to learn more about different Scottish experiences, join us on the Facebook Clan Blair Society group. We have 780 members and we are growing.

## **CBS NEEDS VOLUNTEERS**

This is your Clan Blair Society. The society exists because members volunteer to do parts of all that it takes to keep it operating and reaching out for 35 years. Founded in 1988, we have a long history of volunteers who have built and kept us going. So, we need fresh enthusiastic faces among our volunteers and that comes from our members.

Please consider how you can participate in even small ways to the continued existence and growth of our society. There are a variety of ways you can participate in Clan Blair Society. Many of our board members have held positions for a lot of years and could use assistance or someone that could step into their position. If you might be interested there is a list of volunteer opportunities in the Members' Only site. You'll find the site in the delivery email or on the clanblair.org site.

We need your help, in small or large ways. The more of our members who volunteer, the easier it is for those that do.

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## **DNA TESTS, RESEARCH, AND GENEALOGY**

Have you done a DNA test yet? Hesitant for some reason? Not sure it will be useful? DNA testing for family research may seem new, but it's been around for quite a while. Data reporting is getting better as more people participate.

For some there's hesitation because of privacy concerns or concern about misuse. For others, it's just a confusing area and hard to understand how it's used or if it has benefits.

For my story, I submitted my DNA for the Blair DNA project in 2001. I was interested in how my DNA would connect to other Blairs or if I'd

connect. That was 2001. In 2002, we found a direct descendant of Blair of Blair and met with him on the Clan Blair Society Scotland trip, convincing him to participate. This DNA gave the Blair DNA project a direct link to weigh all other submissions against. It still does. My own results were interesting and had a lot of close connections. Over time my Y-DNA matches have grown, especially as I expanded my test. Recently I was finally able to upgrade to the Big-Y, the ultimate test.

The Y-DNA testing was interesting and my results, and those of the group I'm in, has a 'close' connection to the Blair of Blair descendant which is exciting. The Y-DNA, though, generally builds an ancestry connection to a distant ancestor. I hadn't yet submitted the autosomal DNA test. I didn't consider how it could be useful. I finally submitted it last fall.

The autosomal connections I have found to be AMAZING! I never realized I would have so many matches on both sides of my family. Matches number in the thousands which is a little overwhelming. I've determined that at least a couple dozen are fairly close relatives.

The DNA testing can sound simple, and the actual test is. The trick with both the Y-DNA and Autosomal DNA is determining your relationship with a match. If both parties have sizable trees uploaded, you can often search the trees to find the connection. I have to sometimes research siblings to my tree to find the connection to a match.

Y-DNA testing (male lineage) is done primarily by [FamilyTreeDNA.com](http://FamilyTreeDNA.com). Family Tree DNA has a variety of testing, including Y-DNA, Autosomal, mtDNA (matrilineal), and numerous other tests related to the Y-DNA. There are several services (and online genealogy sites) that offer autosomal testing. Once the autosomal is done, you can upload it to other genealogy sites. Some of the most

popular are [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com), MyHeritage, Family Research, FamilyTreeDNA, and GedMatch. Each has their strengths and resources.

DNA participation can open numerous doors of research for you. It still takes work to resolve connections. But all of these sites can make a huge difference in your personal genealogical research. If you haven't submitted your DNA yet, I highly recommend giving it a try.

Just one more comment, particularly if you're concerned about personal privacy and security. Be sure to read the terms of the sites carefully so you understand who can access your DNA data.

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**CELEBRATE OUR LONG-TERM MEMBERS! (Compiled by Shawn Blair, President of CBS)**



**35+ Years**

- 2 John & Judy Blair VA
- 2 Lawrence Blair
- 7 Barbara Blair IL
- 15 Donald L Blair PA
- 28 Norma Jean Blair Gilmore MT
- 36 Elayne Orr WI

**30+ Years**

- 68 Bart & Virginia Blair CA
- 69 H Martell Blair CA
- 76 Faye L Blair GA
- 77 Julia Ann Blair CO
- 95 Jean Blair Baxi MA
- 136 Barbara Blair MN
- 144 Ann & Mark Jones MA
- 148 Martha Blair & Robert Harrison KY
- 150 Bruce Reynolds Blair NJ
- 207 Thomas Robert & Normajean Blair CA
- 211 Robin & Laura Blair CA
- 218 Shawn Blair ME
- 237 Blair Alan & Judith Leatherwood CA
- 240 Jennifer Cain & Paul Sparks OK
- 263 Robert E Blair Japan
- 267 Frances M Lloyd CA
- 268 Robert Charles & Patricia Blair HI
- 275 erin Presley Blair Ontario
- 276 Harry Leander Blair NC
- 284 Margaret Fritz Baker CA
- 294 Barbara Pixley IL
- 305 Martha B Bulkeley AZ
- 319 Georgianna Blair & Martin Fisher MD

- 328 John Clarence & Sandra L Blair NJ
- 343 Louise Hastrup CA
- 348 Timothy Blair CA
- 358 Dr. Timothy V Blair PA
- 370 Janet Blair Rhodes Vigezzi CT
- 394 Heather Blair & Brian H Pregger TX
- 395 Daniel Blair & Alice Jane Miller OH
- 407 F A Dale & Shirley Blair Nova Scotia
- 409 Stephen A & Ann Reich Blair OR
- 435 Patricia & Lloyd V Bliss WA
- 458 Linda L Wilgus OR
- 470 Jennifer Blair AZ
- 483 Nancy L Gulliford PA
- 493 Julia & Raymond Rhear TN
- 495 Hugh P Blair KY
- 497 Lynne Allison & James R Dolan NY
- 503 Ronald L Konya TN
- 518 Judith Ann & Manuel Bella Steinmetz CA

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**Clan Store – Extended Clothing Sale –  
50% off!**

**Spring and Festival Season is here!**

The Clan Store has a nice array of jewelry, genealogy books, stationery, CDs of Blair House, hats, official tartan and clothing for member purchase. We see purchases by members from other sources, but please keep in mind that the

items are the official CBS originals offered at deep discounts.

The Store still has a nice array of clothing items that we would like to sell at further discounts. Adult larger sizes have been popular so that inventory is shrinking. Adult sizes medium and small are abundant so we have plenty of supply for kids and smaller adults. As reported in the last newsletter, we plan to liquidate all shirts and find a different provider to fulfill clothing requests.

So, the 50% reduction in all prices continues – see the Store website at <https://clanblair.net/cbsmembers/shop>. Shipping fees do apply and you can stock-up for this next year’s festivals.

The following are examples of shirts available with a best estimate of sizes, which are mostly XL, adult small/medium and children’s sizes. The logos are out of date, but all reflect the Clan Blair Society heritage and Scottish history.

White Polo – Sale price \$9 plus shipping - Regular Member Price - \$18.

Size - Adult Medium

White & Blue Short Sleeved T-shirt - Sale \$6.50 plus shipping. Regular \$13.

Size – Adult Small and Medium

Children’s Size – Small, Medium, and Large

White Long-Sleeved Sweatshirts – Sale \$8.50 plus shipping - Regular \$19

Size – XL to 3XL

Multiple items can be ordered at once. I’ll do my best to accommodate in a single shipment

boxes/envelopes. If shipping costs exceed payment I will contact members directly to discuss.

CBS members please go to <https://clanblair.net/cbsmembers/shop> to shop and order. Questions can be forwarded to [vicepresident@clanblair.org](mailto:vicepresident@clanblair.org).

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**CLAN BLAIR SOCIETY – FACEBOOK**

**Join Clan Blair Society and gain access to [clanblair.org/member site](http://clanblair.org/member site)**

Clan Blair Society is active on Facebook, and we see many exciting messages and creations posted every day. The Bruidhinn editor is often on the Facebook pages and has pulled several messages and articles posted by visitors. We thank you for your posts and reports of Clan Blair and Scottish related activities.

Some visitors report crafting unique designs of Clan Blair logos, jewelry, shirts, and tartan. Unfortunately, these designs are not original or authorized by Clan Blair Society. The CBS Store is the only authorized source for these designs, and merchandise is available for purchase to members. Membership is only \$20 annually and members will find a wide array of information, references, history, books, genealogy guidance and the CBS Store.

The official Clan Blair Society logo designs are also displayed on the [clanblair.org](http://clanblair.org) website. Members should use the Facebook resource and share actively with your friends and family. We will post an invitation on the Facebook page to join and become a CBS member.

Questions can be forwarded to Jim Blair at [vicepresident@clanblair.org](mailto:vicepresident@clanblair.org).

**SEEKING HELP WITH MAILING OF NEWSLETTER**

Thirty-five CBS members receive the quarterly Blair Bruidhinn in paper form. Member Charlie Diman has kindly printed and mailed the newsletter to these members, but is now no longer able to perform this task. It is a 4 hour per quarter task and I'm seeking help from a member who could print the letter in black and white, fold, address and stamp. Expenses for the tasks are paid for by the Society. Please consider and let me know if you can help with this task.

Many thanks and Slaint'e! Jim Blair at [vicepresident@clanblair.org](mailto:vicepresident@clanblair.org). 303-795-9754

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# LATEST CBS ON FACEBOOK

# SOUTH CAROLINA REPORT

Maggie Blair



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(continued: South Carolina - Maggie Blair)



Here are some pictures from Gallabrae 2023 on May 26/27 in Greenville, SC.

We had a great time and were photographed by the Greenville Journal. My husband brought his new hurdy gurdy and played it for people walking by.

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**Scotland News Headline from 6-8-23 newspaper The National:**

**"WW2 GUNS, LOST TREASURE: EXPLORING THE HIDDEN WORLD UNDER SCOTLAND'S LOCHS"**



To see more, visit:  
<https://www.thenational.scot/resources/images/16866454.jpg?type=mds-article-962>

**FAMOUS BLAIR FATHER AND SONS**

(From Wikipedia)



**Francis Preston Blair Sr.** (April 12, 1791 – October 18, 1876) was an American journalist, newspaper editor, and influential figure in national politics advising several U.S. presidents across party lines.

Blair was an early member of the Democratic Party. From 1831 to 1845, Blair worked as Editor-in-Chief of the *Washington Globe*, which served as the primary propaganda instrument for the Democratic Party and was largely successful. Blair was an influential advisor to President Jackson.

Blair, despite being a slaveholder from Kentucky, eventually came to oppose the expansion of slavery into western territories. In 1854, in opposition to the Kansas–Nebraska Act, he left the Democratic Party and helped establish the Republican Party. Blair served as an advisor to President Abraham Lincoln during the American Civil War. In 1861, he was sent by Lincoln to offer command of a large Union army to Colonel Robert E. Lee, who declined, and instead joined the Confederacy.

After the Union victory, Blair became disillusioned with Radical Reconstruction, a policy promoted by many members of the Republican Party. He eventually left the party and rejoined the Democrats. His son, Francis Preston Blair Jr., was the party's nominee for vice president on a losing

ticket in the 1868 election. Blair died in 1876 at age 85.

His home, Blair House on Lafayette Square, Washington, D.C. across from the White House, is now used to host visiting heads of state and other guests of the president. It has been called "the world's most exclusive hotel."

Blair was born at Abingdon, Virginia to a Scottish-American named James Blair, a lawyer who became an Attorney General of Kentucky, and Elizabeth Smith. He graduated from Transylvania University with honors in 1811. He studied law but became a journalist.

He was president of the public Bank of the Commonwealth, which opened in May 1821 to provide relief for debtors.

In 1830, he was made editor of *The Washington Globe*, the newspaper that was the recognized organ of the Jacksonian democracy. He exerted a powerful influence on national politics. *The Washington Globe* was the administration's voice until 1841, and the chief Democratic organ until 1845, when Blair ceased to be its editor. He partnered with John C. Rives, and started a printing house, receiving profitable orders from Congress, including publishing the proceedings of Congress in *The Congressional Globe*, the precursor of the Congressional Record. During his time in Washington serving Jackson, Blair acquired in 1836 what later became known as the Blair House at Washington, D.C.<sup>[6]</sup>



Entrance to Blair House

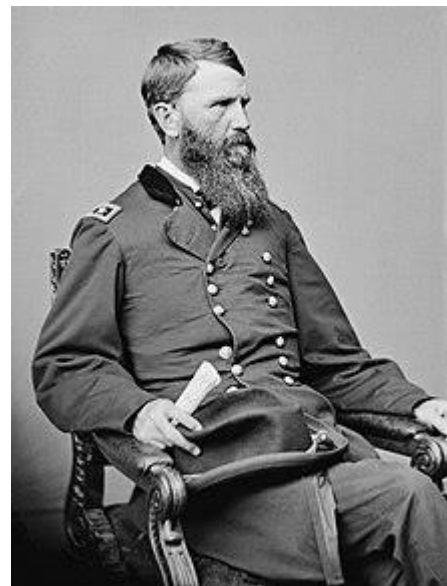
Preston Blair permanently established his residence in Washington, D.C. in 1836 after acquiring a home on 1651 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest. He later bought a large plot of land in Maryland and built a summer home there, in East Silver Spring.

Even though he held slaves as servants in his household, Blair became convinced after the Mexican–American War that slavery should not be extended beyond where it was currently allowed. By 1862, Blair had told his slaves that they could "go when they wished"; he later said that "all but one declined the privilege," choosing to stay on as servants.

After the Civil War, Blair placed all his political hopes and aspirations with his son, Francis "Frank" Blair, who was the 1868 Democratic vice-presidential candidate and became a U.S. Senator in 1871 before dying in 1875. Blair died the following year at his estate at Silver Spring, Maryland, at the age of 85.

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## FRANCIS PRESTON BLAIR, JR.



**Francis Preston Blair Jr.** (February 19, 1821 – July 8, 1875) was a United States Senator, a United States Congressman and a Union Major General during the Civil War. He represented Missouri in both the House of Representatives and the Senate,

and was active in preventing the State of Missouri from being absorbed into the Confederacy at the beginning of the Civil War.

In 1868, he was Horatio Seymour's vice-presidential candidate. Blair suffered a paralyzing stroke in 1872, but continued to be active in state politics until his death three years later.

Blair was born in Lexington, Kentucky. He was schooled in Washington, D.C. schools, later attending Yale and the University of North Carolina, and graduated from Princeton in 1841 and later studied law and graduated from Transylvania U. He practiced law in St. Louis with his older brother.

In 1845, Blair traveled to the West for buffalo hunting and stayed for a winter in eastern Colorado with his cousin George Bent in Bent's Fort, a settlement on the Santa Fe Trail. After the Mexican–American War started, he joined the expedition of General Stephen W. Kearny in Santa Fe, who then appointed Blair as an attorney general for the New Mexico Territory after it was secured. In collaboration with others, Blair developed an American Code of Law for the region and became a judge of the newly established circuit court.

Being more interested in politics than law, Blair came back to St. Louis in the summer of 1847. He became known for his views opposing slavery and strong advocacy of free soil politics, though he was a slaveholder himself. Blair served in the Missouri House of Representatives from 1852 to 1856. On January 14, 1858, he delivered a major speech describing slavery as a national problem, proposing to solve it by both gradual emancipation and the settling of freed slaves in South and Central America.

In the regular election of 1860, he was re-elected to the 37th Congress, serving in it as chairman of the important Military Affairs Committee. He resigned in July 1861 in order to become a colonel in the Union Army.

The Blairs were unwavering supporters of Abraham Lincoln during his rise to the presidency and years in office and in return enjoyed

his political patronage. In December 1863, Lincoln said, "The Blairs have to an unusual degree the spirit of clan. Their family is a close corporation..."

In the days following Lincoln's election as president, Blair was among the leaders of a new political movement in Missouri, the Unconditional Union Party, which advocated the use of its paramilitary *Home Guard*, if necessary, to prevent Missouri from seceding.



General Blair and his staff

Immediately after South Carolina's secession in December 1860, Blair, believing that the southern leaders were planning to carry Missouri into the movement. He personally organized and equipped a force of several thousand strong *Home* which had been positioned to seize the Arsenal.

Blair was appointed a colonel of Missouri volunteers in July 1862. He was promoted brigadier general of volunteers in August 1862 and then to major general in November. After winning re-election to the House of Representatives, Blair resigned his commission, but he retracted it at a request/order from Lincoln dated in April 1864.

In Missouri, Blair commanded a brigade consisting of the 13th Illinois Infantry, the 29th, 30th, 31st, and 32nd Missouri Infantry, the 58th Ohio Infantry, 4th Company, Ohio Light Artillery, and Company C, 10th Missouri Cavalry.



*Francis Preston Blair Jr., National Statuary Hall Collection*



Bust of Francis Preston Blair, Jr., by William Couper at Vicksburg National Military Park

At the close of the war, Blair, having spent much of his private money in support of the Union, was financially ruined. In 1866, like his father and

brother, he opposed the Congressional Reconstruction policy, and on that issue left the Republican Party.

Blair's consuming interest in politics kept him active and he served as Missouri's state superintendent of insurance until his death from head injuries after a fall on July 8, 1875 at the age of 54. He is interred in Bellefontaine Cemetery.



Francis Preston Blair and his wife Eliza Violet Gist at Maryland home, *The Silver Spring*

Francis married Eliza Violet Gist on July 21, 1812. He had three sons, Montgomery Blair (1813–1883), James L. Blair (1819–1852) and Francis "Frank" Preston Blair Jr. (1821–1875), and two daughters, Juliet Blair (1816–1819) and Elizabeth Blair (1818–1906). Montgomery and Francis became prominent in American politics. James, who participated as a midshipman in Antarctica's exploration and was later commissioned as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, made his fortune during the California Gold Rush, but died at an early age. Blair's daughter Elizabeth married Rear Admiral Samuel Phillips Lee and was a close friend of Mary Todd Lincoln.

After briefly supporting the Free Soil party, he helped to launch the new Republican party in 1854.

During the war, Blair served as unofficial political adviser to Lincoln.

William Ernest Smith, Professor of American History from Miami University, wrote in 1933 that Francis Preston Blair and his two sons, Francis and Montgomery, "are representatives of a longer period of influence in American politics than any other family except the Adams family."

The city of Silver Spring, Maryland took its name from Blair's estate.

In 1885, a new school at 635 I Street, NE in Washington D.C. was renamed the "Blair School" in honor of Francis P. Blair Sr.

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## MONTGOMERY BLAIR



**Montgomery Blair** (May 10, 1813 – July 27, 1883) was an American politician and lawyer from Maryland. He served in the Lincoln White House cabinet as Postmaster-General from 1861 to 1864, during the Civil War. He was the son of Francis Preston Blair. As a boy, Montgomery "often listened to the talk of his father and Andrew Jackson."

Blair graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1835, but after a year's service in the Seminole War, he left the Army, married Caroline Rebecca Buckner of Virginia, and began studying law at Transylvania University in

Lexington, Kentucky. Blair began to practice law in 1839 at St Louis, Missouri, working as a United States district attorney. After the death of his first wife, in 1844, he later married Mary Elizabeth Woodbury, daughter of Levi Woodbury.

After serving as United States district attorney (1839–43) and later as judge of the court of common pleas (1843–1849), Blair moved to Maryland in 1852 and devoted himself to law practice principally in the United States Supreme Court. He was associated with George T. Curtis as counsel for the plaintiff in the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case of 1857.<sup>[1]</sup>



*First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation of President Lincoln*

The Blairs, unusual for politicians from the border states, had abandoned the Democratic Party in the wake of the Kansas–Nebraska Act and had been among the founding leaders of the new Republican Party. In 1860, Blair took an active part in the presidential campaign on behalf of Abraham Lincoln. After his election, Lincoln appointed Blair to his cabinet as Postmaster General in 1861. While Postmaster-General, Blair instituted a uniform rate of postage and free delivery in cities. Blair also began the sale of money orders by post offices to reduce the mailing of currency to reduce post office robberies.

While the Blairs, as a family, were often characterized as conservative on the issue of slavery, Blair notably served as the defense counsel for Dred Scott when the enslaved African-American took his case to the Supreme Court in 1857. Scott was the slave of an Army doctor, who

had taken his enslaved servant along for prolonged stays in free territory.

Blair served as Postmaster-General from 1861 until September 1864, when Lincoln accepted an earlier offer by Blair to resign. Regarding Lincoln's action, Blair told his wife that the president had acted "from the best motives" and that "it is for the best all around." After he left the cabinet, Blair still campaigned for Lincoln's re-election and Lincoln and the Blair family retained close ties.

Differing from the Republican Party on the Reconstruction policy, Blair gave his adherence to the Democratic Party after the Civil War, along with his brother, who was the Democratic vice presidential candidate in 1868.



The Montgomery Blair mausoleum in Rock Creek Cemetery

After several years afflicted with "inflammation of the spinal membranes," he died at Silver Spring on July 27, 1883. The funeral services were held at Rock Creek Church, and he was buried at Rock

Creek Cemetery. In memory of Blair, the United States Post Office closed on July 30, 1883.

Blair's wife was Mary Woodbury, a daughter of Levi Woodbury. Together, they had one daughter, Minnie Blair. They had three sons, Woodbury Blair, Gist Blair, and Montgomery Blair Jr., all of whom were attorneys.

Montgomery Blair and Mary Woodbury Blair were the great-grandparents of actor Montgomery Clift.

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### LIBRARIAN REPORT

Elena Mc Crary

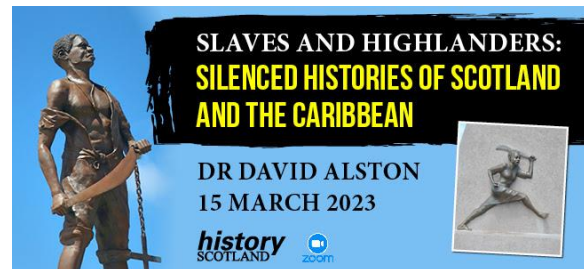
#### Librarian Report – Spring 2023

*“History is a merciless judge (Grann, 380).”*

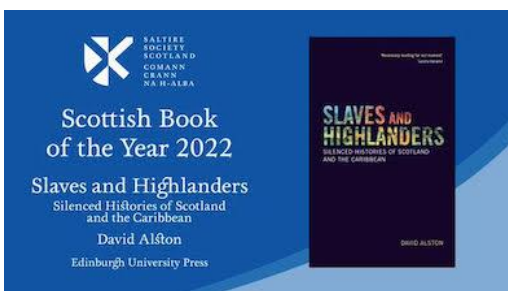
In my role as librarian, I am looking for interesting material to present to our members. Not only relevant topics but sources for genealogical searching.

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*Slaves and Highlanders: Silenced Histories of Scotland and the Caribbean.* I happened upon this title by Dr. David Alston and ordered a copy to review. It first came to my attention with an History Scotland announcement: “...Dr Alston outlines the methods available to recover these and other life stories from the silences of history. And he suggests that – on “the other side of silence” – there is a better approach to our difficult and shared past.”



Why this book is important: First, the author has spent 20 years tracing the history of an area where the narrative gives another dimension to the Highlands. Second, it not only won the History category, but the Scottish Book of the Year in 2022. Congratulations! Most importantly, it helped give voice to those impacted, the slaves (plus ancestors), and hopefully will help others understand this complex problem. “He did in-depth research and travelled to Demerara and Berbice to understand the landscape in 2020 (Alston, xvi).”



All quotes from the book are used with grateful permission of the author.

Because I am interested in history, I wanted to know more. “How did slavery bind the new colonies to an abhorrent form of human suffering?” How did the Scots and any Blairs play a role in slavery here and abroad? Who tried to stop it? Why reparations now and who is to pay?

A brief history: “In the 1440s, detailed maps gave rise to exploration along with new sea routes. Meanwhile, the Bubonic Plague had killed millions. The Portuguese adventurers who attacked African encampments and took captives back to Portugal changed history (Williams, 2).” “Slavery spurred capitalism through creating wealth and political power in Europe (Ford, 36).”

First, the colonies needed labor. And it appears that the “Northern Scots benefitted from a long, historical connection to the Americas (Alston, xv).” It was difficult to understand how someone being a victim of the “Highland Clearances,” could thus

turn others (African slaves) into victims (Alston, 211, 229).”

“Scotland’s economy was much less developed in the 1750s...Trade in tobacco and sugar (as well as cotton) had created a deep association with the two slave-based economic systems in the eighteenth-century Atlantic empire: Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina on the American mainland, and sugar islands of the Caribbean (Alston, 212).”

Where did this take place? Guyana. And, more precisely for the Blair connection, Berbice, Guyana. So, how did this develop? Dr. Alston’s lecture showed maps of the tracts of land owned, and by whom. In searching the book index, I came upon the name “Lambert Blair (Alston, 367) and immediately wondered who he was. The answer, “A presbyterian Irishman from Newry in Ulster who bought plantations with money from slave-trading (Alston, 124).”

“By 1799 Lambert Blair & Co owned seven plantations: Utile & Paisible on the west side of Berbice river; nos. 17, 18, 19, 20 and 37 on the west seacoast; and no 38 on the east seacoast. They also acquired sugar and cotton plantations in Demerara and Surinam.” (Alston 17-43).

“Blair is also a prominent surname in Ireland. These Blairs are primarily descended from Scots who settled in Northern Ireland in earlier centuries and were known as Scotch-Irish. Jack Richard Blair suggested, in a separate correspondence, that the Irish Blairs are an important part of our family. “The most intriguing mystery associated with the Blair surname is the existence in the 12<sup>th</sup> century of Blairs of Blairs in Ayrshire Lowlands and the Blairs of Balthayock in Perthshire Highlands (Blair, xiv).” If only they had named their sons I, II, III or Jr.

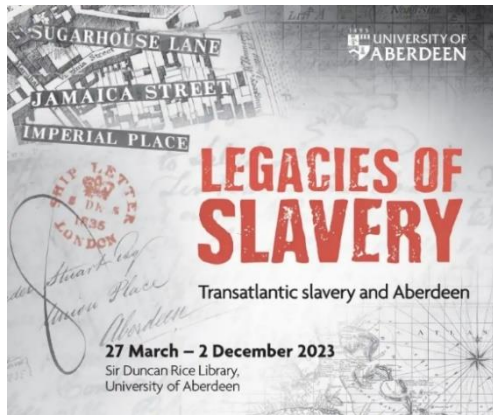


was mistreated and did not like “Scotchmen,” (as he called them), the elite in his youth. So, who pays in 2023?

What can we do today? We can learn about Juneteenth celebrated in the U.S. As well as acknowledge 23 August globally.

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/national-maritime-museum/international-slavery-remembrance-day>

[History Scotland has just announced this new exhibit.](#)



On display at the Gallery of the Sir Duncan Rice Library, on Bedford Road, AB24 3AA.

It is free and open Monday-Saturday 11am-7pm in term-time, 11am – 5pm in university holidays.

What I learned is that *Slave Studies* is a comprehensive topic – a global piece of history. My <https://ancestry.org/> searches (Census records) proved this.

Just look at the bookshelves on the topic.

No work is complete without a nod to those who provided insight. What started out as a introduction turned into a full-fledged search for answers. I would be remiss if I did not include a complete bibliography of the sources I searched, read, and took notes. We are, after all, searching for links to our own family histories, wherever that may take us.

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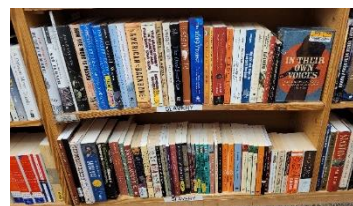
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## CALIFORNIA COMMISSIONER REPORT

Russ and Elena McCrary

“Earrach sona” (Happy Spring)

Gaelic, Solstice is ‘*Grianstad*’, literally ‘sun-stop’.

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### A *Post-Covid* Commentary

For those who do not know, we are volunteers. Russ, who loves genealogy, always talked with Dr. William Campbell Blair and that is how he encouraged us to take over representing California at events.

Then came news that changed all our daily lives.

**March 19, 2020**

**California governor Gavin Newsom issues a statewide stay-at-home order to slow the spread of COVID-19 instructing residents to only leave their homes when necessary and shutting down all but essential businesses.**

<https://www.cdc.gov/museum/timeline/covid19.html>

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We began 2017 with Tartan Day at Ardenwood in Fremont, CA. I still remember the feeling of

community. We also were recognized. Alas, The East Bay Scots no longer hold the event.

We had ended the year at the inaugural event in October with the Escalon Scottish Games 2019. I recently reached out to check if anything was in the works and received this message. “Unfortunately, at this point the group has disbanded thanks to Covid, and I don't really see us coming back together for anything in the near future!”

Did you know – “Ten of the first twenty confirmed [COVID-19](#) cases in the United States occurred in [California](#), the first of which was confirmed on January 26, 2020.” When we would have been celebrating Robert Burns.

What I learned along the way is that people turned to Facebook to communicate, connect, or share music. But also, that some communities carried on as if nothing happened.

While the St. Andrew's Society of Modesto brought us the Central Valley Highland Games & Celtic Festival each October, it was cancelled in 2022. While they may be working on 2023, only 2024 is currently on their calendar.

What this has done is changed our perception of groups. Gone are the handshakes and the hugs (except maybe close family). I miss this!

We liked to handout Scottish cookies & water, but the expense has us rethinking this. At \$5.99 for this box of cookies, we noticed costs for most everything has gone up substantially.



The Governor officially ended the emergency on 2-28-23. With that we entered the Smarter Plan:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/smarter/>

While the Dixon Scottish Cultural Association will be hosting an event, per their Chief, “lack of membership prevents full games.”

The other major change I have noticed in events, is the use of “Celtic.” Wikipedia defines it as “the term 'Celtic' generally refers to the languages and cultures of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, the Isle of Man, and Brittany; also called the Celtic nations.”

I have also seen a combination of Celtic Renaissance and Scottish events. All I can say is everyone seems to be having a great time.

What does this mean for state activities? It's that the larger organizations seem just fine. The Caledonian Club of San Francisco hosts the Pleasanton Games, and except for the initial year, did not alter that much. So, we say, “ get out and enjoy the fresh air, renew friendships, send us pictures, make us laugh, post something to Facebook from games while you are on the road.”

### California 2023 upcoming events to calendar

- Scottish Highland Games of San Diego – June 24-25, 2023, Brengle Terrace Park 1200 Vale Terrace Drive, Vista, CA 92084 <https://sdhighlandgames.org/>
- Monterey Scottish Games and Celtic Festival - July 15 - 16, 2023 (tentative), Monterey County Fairgrounds, 2004 Fairground Road, Monterey CA 93940
- **NEW** Scottish Fest - July 29<sup>th</sup> at the Dixon Fairgrounds, 655 South First St., Dixon, CA 95620. There will be Celtic bands, food,

and a whisky tasting. It is from 11-5 and admission is only \$10.

- Pleasanton Scottish Games and Gathering – Sept. 2 - 3, 2023  
<https://thescottishgames.com/>
- Fresno Scottish Gathering and Games – September 16, 2023, Kearney Park, 6725 W. Kearney Ave., Fresno, CA 93706  
<https://www.fresnoscottishsociety.com/>
- Central Valley Highland Games & Celtic Festival – October 2023, Stanislaus County Fairgrounds ??  
900 N Broadway, Turlock, CA 95380
- Seaside Highland Games – October 7-8, 2023 - Ventura County Fairgrounds  
<https://www.seasidehighlandgames.org/>

of you who do not know that is the town where “The Birds” was filmed. See photos below:



Elana and Russ McCrary at Bodega Bay with a photo of a Black Oystercatcher, while birding at Bodega Bay.

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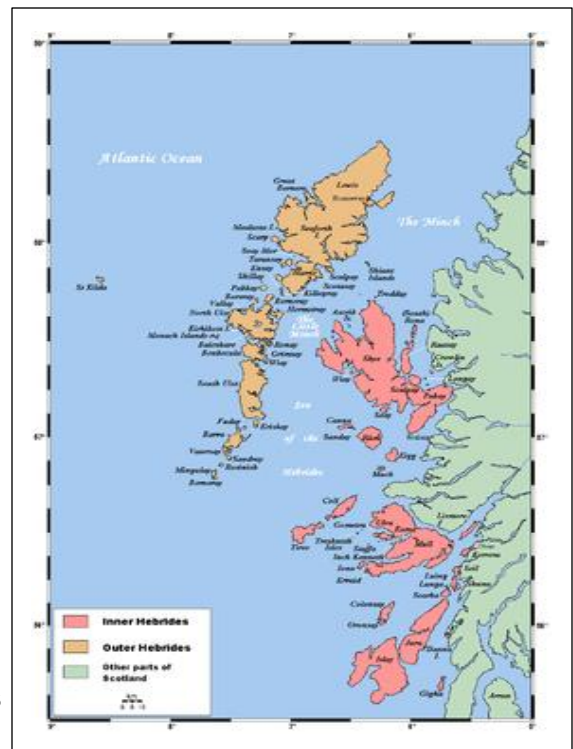
As for Russ and me – well, with no games to attend, we are off birding in Bodega Bay. I hear they have a pair of Bald Eagles with eaglets. And we hear they are getting ready to fledge. For those

### Scottish Islands (Wikipedia)

[Scotland](#) has over 790 offshore islands,<sup>[1]</sup> most of which are to be found in four main groups: [Shetland](#), [Orkney](#), and the [Hebrides](#), sub-divided into the [Inner Hebrides](#) and [Outer Hebrides](#).<sup>[2]</sup> There are also clusters of islands

in the [Firth of Clyde](#), [Firth of Forth](#), and [Solway Firth](#), and numerous small islands within the many bodies of [fresh water](#) in Scotland including [Loch Lomond](#) and [Loch Maree](#).

Of the remainder, several such as [Staffa](#) and the [Flannan Isles](#) are well known despite their small size.<sup>[2]</sup> Some 94 Scottish islands are permanently inhabited, of which 89 are offshore islands





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# CLAN BLAIR SOCIETY

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Blair of Blair

Blair of Balthayock

## William Campbell Blair

### Youth Award Nomination Form

5-6-2023

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 June 30.

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

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

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

Mailing

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



# William Campbell Blair

## Youth Award

4/14//2021

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 age 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 adventuring 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 June (6/30)
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 [vicepresident@clanblair.org](mailto:vicepresident@clanblair.org), or 1-303-795- 9754



Donald: "Have you ever seen one of those new machines that can tell when a person is telling a lie? "See one? I married one!"

Sandy became depressed and decided to end it all by hanging himself. However, his friend Donald came along in the nick of time, cut the rope, and saved his life. Sandy, true to form, sent Donald a bill for the cost of the rope.



**CLAN BLAIR EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS AND CHAIRS OF STANDING  
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President@clanblair.org

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Vacant - Blair Genealogy -  
CBSgenea@clanblair.org

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

**Clan Blair**

**Russell Mc Crary**

**29 Haven Place**

**San Ramon, CA 94583**

First Class Mail