The Spectator

The Quarterly Newsletter of Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg

Spring, 2005

From the President

Dear Members:

In this season of winter doldrums and the conclusion of the Super Bowl it is time to start planning for a new year of events for the Society. Last year's activities under the leadership of Wil Phillips were successful and pointed the way for the society. New ideas for activities are welcome and energetic members are needed to carry the ideas to success. All of our programs need to be planned and started now. Along with society activity comes some amount of work and expenditure of energy. I look forward to everyone becoming involved in their pet project and furthering the aims of the society.

New members are beginning to come into the society and activities will keep these members and attract others to join the society. Look now for new members for 2005. A repeat presence at the Festival in September 2005 would be a good step. Think now how you want to help the society and Scottish culture thrive in 2005.

Sermon over, check back in.

I will now introduce my Scottish Connection briefly. The name Newcomer is not Scottish. Surprise or gasp! The Scottish connections come in through

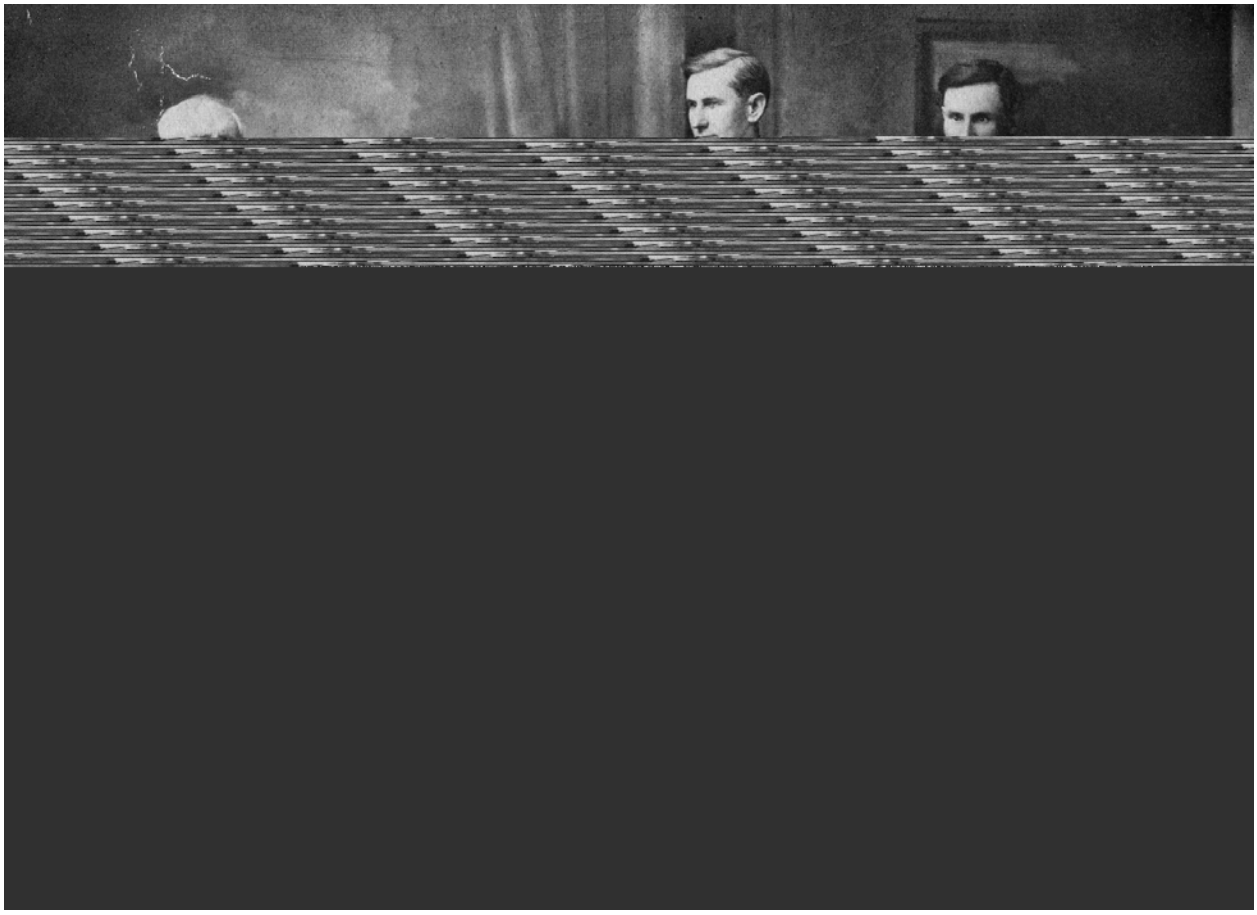
the female sides of the family. On my Father's side the Osborne's were Ulster Scots of whom not much is known. They were Protestants who we suspect came in the late 1700's and moved into the Ohio Territory where they lived a hand to mouth existence. After the Civil War contact with the extended part of this family is lost although I do have a picture of a brother-in-law with my Grandfather. There is also rumored to be a Wallace in the wood pile back in Scotland.

The Gunn connection is from my Wilson ancestors who arrived in Philadelphia in 1864 on the ***Phoenix***. They were fleeing the depression in Scotland caused by the American Civil War, which had closed the coal mines in Dumbartonshire. By 1864 starvation was looming, and one of the Wilson brothers was sent to America to check out employment. In a year all of the family came over, found coal mining jobs, saved money, and eventually worked their way to Rush County, Kansas in 1870 and claimed four conjoined quarters of land. After spending a winter in dugouts they built frame homes, and over the next few years battled prairie fires and the locust invasion. The menace of Indian incursions was not entirely over in Western Kansas at this time, but no problems of this kind harmed the family.

Never wanting to go to the mines again this was a chance to prosper and they became successful cattlemen, wheat farmers, lawyers, teachers, and bankers over the years. The Scottish accent finally succumbed with my aunt born around 1900. As long as the Wilson children all ran around the family farms and attended country schools in rural Rush Co. the Wilson kids spoke or understood lowland Scots and spoke with an accent.

The family took part in starting a Presbyterian Church in LaCrosse, Kansas, which was 7 miles east of the farms. Education was stressed and children all went to high school, as soon as one was established, and with some members going away to college, in a time when high school graduation was a goal.

Lynn Newcomer, President



From Left: Lynn Newcomer's great grandfather William Wilson, great grandmother Alice Wilson, grand aunt Priscilla Grumbkein, grand uncle A.W. Wilson, grandmother Agnes Langklin, and grandfather J. B. Wilson. Photo dated 1915.

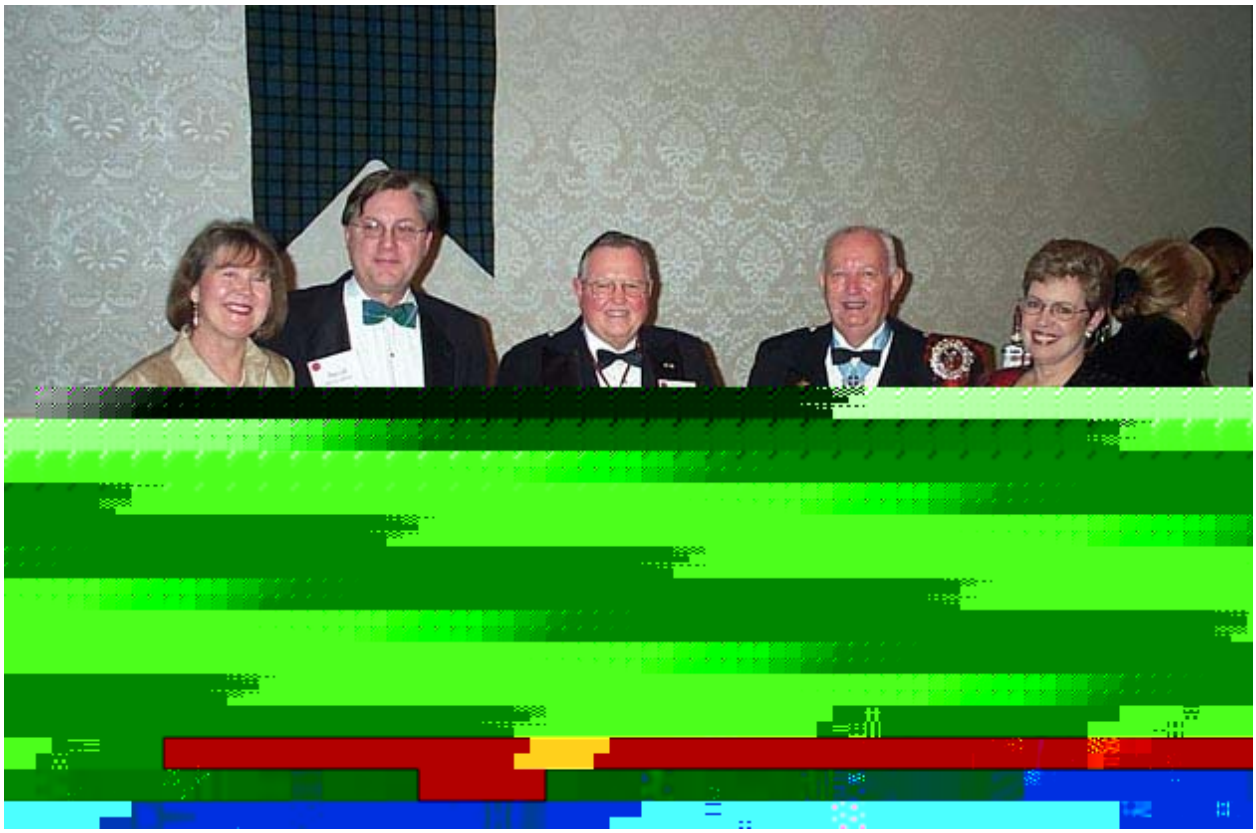
EVENTS

Burns Night Dinner

The January 22, 2005 Burns Night Dinner was held at the Raddison Fort Magruder Hotel and was very well attended despite the bitterly cold weather and slightly icy roads. The evening was a delight. Piper Kevin MacIntosh piped in the Haggis and Byron Adams did an outstanding ode and toast to the Haggis. After dinner the Strath James Pipe Band played for us on stage, and Howard Topp then spoke on the life and times of Scotland's immortal Robbie Burns. Rousing toasts followed to the President, the Queen, the Lassies and the Laddies. The Scot of the Year award was presented to Kent Brinkley for all he has done for the Scottish community. Our own Lynn

Newcomer played the sad 'Flowers of the Forest' tune in memory of David Borland and Walter Kennedy. Eight new members were recognized and welcomed to SAS during 2004: Jerry Dean Campbell, Michael Elmore, James W. Grant III, George Wilson Graham, William Allen Graham, John R. Maxwell, Robert L. Michael and Ernest Sims Shakelford. New officers for 2005 were announced: President Lynn Newcomer, Vice President Taylor Fraser, Secretary Jeff Mitchell, and Treasurer Ken Garrison. Outgoing Board members include Jim Anthony, Bill Monroe, John Sim and Jim White. New Board members include H. Layton Clark, Dave Lowery, Jim White and Robert B. Young IV. Our thanks to outgoing President Wil Phillips and best wishes to our new President Lynn Newcomer. The function ended with the signing of Auld Lang Syne.

Presidents Old & New, Wil Phillips & Lynn Newcomer



Distinguished visitors (above)

Toasting the Haggis (below)

Scot of the Year, Kent Brinkley (below)

Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg - Highlights of 30 Years
by Howard Topp, Past President

The following is taken from a speech made by Howard Topp several years ago. It outlines the founding of Saint Andrew's Society of Williamsburg, and should be of interest to all members. Thanks, Howard!

GOOD EVENING. WELL, WHEN BOB DAVIS CALLED ME AND ASKED ME TO PUT TOGETHER A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE FOUNDING OF SAINT ANDREW'S I SAID, "CERTAINLY, BUT WHAT IS THIS 'FEW WORDS'? BOB, I CAN'T SAY ***ANYTHING*** IN JUST A FEW WORDS!" SERIOUSLY, HE ASKED THAT I DESCRIBE THE FOUNDING OF THE SAINT ANDREW'S SOCIETY IN WILLIAMSBURG AND PERHAPS REMEMBER TWO OR THREE VIGNETTES ABOUT THE EARLY DAYS. WELL, WHERE TO

CEREMONY WE THOUGHT "SUITABLE." I SUGGESTED THE BURN'S NIGHT DINNER.

ON THAT JANUARY NIGHT, ROBERT ANDERSON STRUGGLED TO STAND FROM HIS WHEELCHAIR TO BE PRESENTED HIS MEDALS BY A ROYAL NAVY ADMIRAL IN FULL DRESS UNIFORM. IT WAS AN AWESOME MOMENT; THERE WASN'T A DRY EYE IN THE ROOM. LIKE SO MANY THINGS THAT HAVE OCCURRED OVER THE LAST THIRTY YEARS, IT WAS MADE POSSIBLE BECAUSE A SAINT ANDREWS SOCIETY MEMBER KNEW THAT SOMETHING NEEDED TO BE DONE.... AND DID IT. THANK YOU.

Photos From Taylor Fraser

Following are some good photos taken by Taylor Fraser during trips to Scotland in 1993 and 1997. Thanks, Taylor!

Elgin Castle, 1993. Taylor Fraser photo.

Braemer Castle, 1993. Taylor Fraser photo.

Craigiever Castle, 1993. Taylor Fraser photo.

Urquhart Castle & Loch Ness, 1997. Taylor Fraser photo.

78th Fraser Highlanders of Canada, 1997. Taylor Fraser photo.

Inverness, 1997. Taylor Fraser photo.

Latest on British Army Restructuring

According to UPI, on December 16 British Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon told Parliament that UK army regiments would face reductions in infantry, heavy armor and heavy artillery units but there would be increases in "specialist units." He emphasized "These...are not cuts." The proposed non-cuts will involve the abolition of Scotland's historical regiments such as the Black Watch, the King's Own Scottish Borderers, the Royal Scots, the Highlanders and the Argyll and Southerland Highlanders. These are to be integrated into a "super regiment" for Scotland. Reportedly 40 of the UK's infantry battalions will be non-cut to 36. This has caused some controversy in Scotland. Hoon's announcement resulted in a walk-out by Scottish National Party members after SNP Home Affairs Minister Annabelle Ewing was suspended from Parliament for calling Hoon "a back-stabbing coward."

Celtic Film Series

The Williamsburg Regional Library presents the Celtic Film Series in cooperation with the Saint Andrew's Benevolent Association (SABA) and the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians. The series explores the history, drama and quirky humor of Scottish and Irish films, or features themes about

those lands and their people. Programs are free and begin at 7 PM in the Williamsburg Library Theatre, 515 Scotland Street. Call (757) 259-4070 or check www.wrl.org for more information.

On Wednesday, April 13 the film will be *Ratcatcher,* 1999, set in Glascow. Bob Maccubbin will introduce the film.

Also at the Library

Howard Topp advises us that Scotland's "Battlefield Band" will be performing at the library on 29 March at 7:30. Adult tickets are $18. The theater is not all that big, so it may be a quick sell-out. Info: Call 259-7070 or see http://www.wrl.org/programs/concerts.html

Book Review: *Born Fighting*

There is an excellent new book that belongs on the bookshelf of every American of Scottish heritage. The book is by James Webb - ***Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America.*** Mr. Webb is the author of ***Fields of Fire*** and five other works of fiction. ***Fields of Fire*** (1978) is well-known to U.S. Marines and Vietnam vets. This new book is Webb's first non-fiction, and it is a stunning accomplishment. Webb is a warrior-poet and he writes with a burning pen that will bring tears to your eyes and a chill to your flesh as he describes the endless struggle of his people, our people, against tyranny and oppression, from Hadrian's Wall to the War Between the States to the settling of the American frontier and the fighting of all of America's wars. It is the story of a people who were born fighting and, even in defeat, refuse to surrender. This book thrilled me to the marrow and renewed my faith in the future of America. The February 2005 issue of ***Chronicles*** magazine has a good review of the book, by Roger McGrath, who calls it an excellent, fast-paced, well-written account of the history of the Scots-Irish people. Randall Wallace, author of ***Braveheart***, called it "an extraordinary book." Tom Wolfe called it "the most brilliant battle-flare ever launched by a book."

More Photos

Besides the latest photos taken at the Burn's Night dinner, http://www.msthomas.com/burns-night05.htm members may want to take a look again at the Scottish Festival photos posted at www.msthomas.com/scot-fest04.htm I've added a lot of very good photos

that were on a disc someone passed to Wil Phillips. Wil doesn't remember who it was but the photos are first class so I've posted them on the site. I'd like to give the photographer proper credit so if anyone knows who took these great photos please let me know.

Winter Luncheon

You are invited to attend our Winter Luncheon!

Monday, February 28th

at the

Port of York

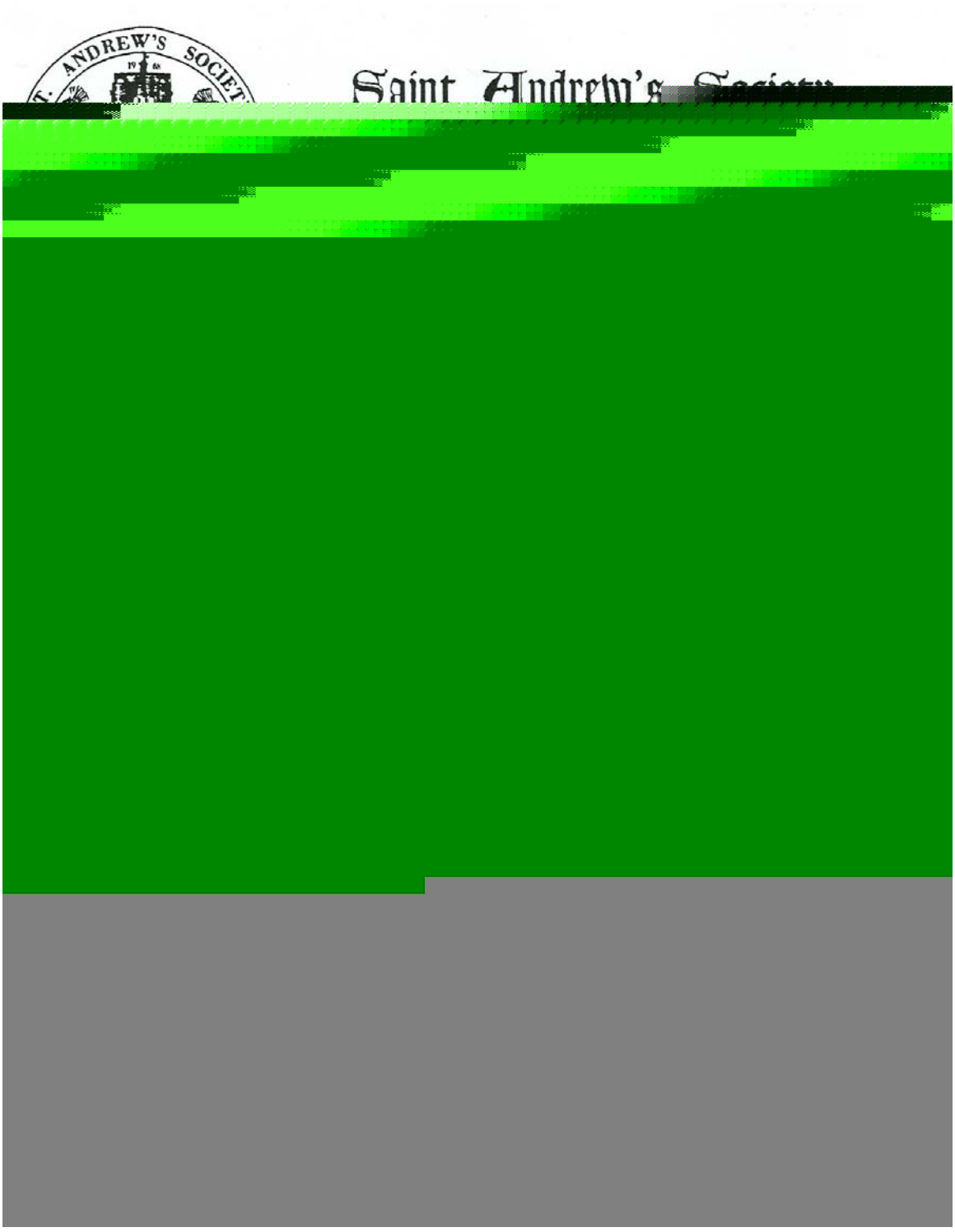
U.S. Coast Guard Training Center, Yorktown VA.

From 11:30 - 1:00

We will join the buffet line in the main dining room of the Senior Student Dining Facility at 11:45.

Menu: The special of the day with your choice of vegetables, soup, salad bar, hot bread, coffee / tea /soft drinks, and dessert bar.

We will be in the room to the left of the cashier so pay him first and then join us.
The meal will cost ***$6.50 cash*** and should be paid to the cashier, who will be at his desk. There is no tax but we will collect $1 per person for a tip.
Those planning to attend should call Jim White at (757)220-0275 by the 24th so I can let the Coast Guard know the approximate number coming. The Port of York is Bldg # 18. Parking may be a problem so I would encourage those coming to car pool. If parking lot # 5 is full, the road between the York River and Bldg #18 has parking places.
Directions: Take the Colonial Parkway toward Yorktown and turn right at the stop sign at the Battle Field. Stay on Moore House Rd (238) to the Coast Guard main gate. Tell the guard you are going to the Port of York and he will give you a visitors' pass. A map of the Center is on the back of the pass. If you're coming from Newport News, drive north on HWY 17, turn right on Cook Road (704), turn right on Moore House Road (238), and continue to the Coast Guard main gate. Tell the guard you are going to the Port of York and he will give you a visitors' pass. A map of the Center is on the back of the pass.
Please mark your calendar. April 6th is Tartan day and we will celebrate it at Swem Library in the early evening. More details later.

Aye, Jim White

Application for Membership