

*The Scottish West
March*

REIVER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CLAN LITTLE SOCIETY, NORTH AMERICA, LTD.



May, 1999

IN THIS ISSUE

**President's
Podium**

The Editor's Desk

Clan Little Video

**1999 Clan Little
Society, NA, Ltd.
AGM**

**Games and
Festivals 1999**

**Birth
Announcement**

**The Debatable
Lands**

Book Review

**Genealogy 101
OR
Everything You
Always Wanted to
Know About Finding
Your Ancestors But
Were Afraid to Ask**

From *The Greensboro (NC) Patriot*,
Wednesday, January 21, 1903: "At his
home in Lanesboro Township, Mr.
Merrimon Little after a short illness of
pneumonia, died last Saturday (10th).
Mr. Little, who was 76 years of age,
was well known in upper Anson and
Union Counties. *The Messenger-
Intelligencer* is informed by several
reliable parties that Mr. Little was, at
one time, a member of the famous
Jesse James Gang, the history of which
is well known to everyone. Just how
long he followed the daring James
boys, or why he left them, is not known,
as Mr. Little, of course, was always
reticent in regard to the matter. He,
however, imbibed some of the daring
spirit of his leader, as many of his
neighbors well knew, and some of them
to their sorrow. But whatever his past
may have been, we bow our heads and
say, 'Peace to his ashes.'"

With thanks to the Carolinas
Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 397,
Monroe, NC 28111.

PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

It is true that "time flies," and it hardly seems possible that my two-year tenure as Clan Steuart is almost over. While we always have intentions to make a difference in an organization, it is also true that the achievement of goals is influenced by many factors.

It had been our hope the Clan would enjoy a substantial increase in membership, the Bylaws would be revised and a strategic plan for the future of the Clan would be drafted. All of the above are still "works in progress" and we can only hope the future Clan leadership will continue to focus on these aspects.

I do want to take this opportunity to thank the Clan Officers, Committee Heads and Commissioners for their time and talents given to the Clan over the past two years.

I would like to encourage the entire membership to become more "involved" in the Clan and do not hesitate to share your ideas with the Board. After all - it is YOUR Clan.

The AGM will be in Michigan, and more details are in this copy of the Reiver.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve the Clan as its Steuart for the past 2 years.

From Debby and I,

Concedo nulli,

George B. Little

THE EDITOR'S DESK

Never fails... Just when I think I've got it all in order, something comes along to prove me totally wrong! This past January, Susan, the kids and I discovered that, due to an unfortunate but not unexpected death in the family, we were in possession of a sum of money that the executors of the estate was to be used as a down payment on a new house. (Just a quick update: Michael and Melinda are now a healthy, frenetic 22 months old, and doing their best to make mom and dad old and gray before their time!) So we started packing, found a realtor, found a house, found a buyer for the old house, found financing, closed the deal, and moved, all within 11 weeks! We're STILL digging out from under the cardboard boxes. So please, please, please forgive me for being so tardy with this edition of the Reiver. I plead extenuating circumstances.

On to more immediate issues: it is fast approaching membership renewal time! I've included a renewal form on the back page of this edition, complete with my new home address. Please take a moment to fill out the form, write your check, and mail it all back to me. My records show that we currently have 219 members in good standing, with more joining up on a regular basis. The annual renewal period runs from April 1 through June 30, so get cracking, campers! And in the event you need to get in touch with me for anything (like contributions to the Reiver, hint, hint, hint...), here are all the newest stats:

William Little
6410 Abisco Road
Port St. John, FL 32927
407-639-0012
littlewl@mindspring.com

Also be aware that we are due for elections of new officers this year. If there is anyone you would like to nominate for the position of Society President, Vice President, Secretary, or Treasurer, please send that person's name to George or any member of the Council, as long as that person approves the nomination. We will be distributing ballots before the AGM in July so that those of you who will be unable to attend the festivities will be able to vote by absentee ballot.

Many thanks to those of you who submitted articles to this edition of the Reiver. I hope your inputs will prompt other Society members to offer some of their news and stories for later publication. I would also like to hear from you regarding the Genealogy 101 article. If it's well received, I can make it a regular feature of the Reiver. Please let me know what you think!

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Send all submissions to: William Little
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email: littleb@palmnet.net

<http://www.geocities.com/MotorCity/2824/Little.html>
Courtesy Bryan Little of Richmond, VA

Clan Little Video

Border Heritage, Ltd. recently released a Clan Little video tape. The video has great scenery, lovely music, and gives an excellent history of Clan Little and the Border Reivers. The running time is 51 minutes. This video would make a great Christmas or birthday gift. The cost of the tape is \$25.00, \$5.00

of which will be donated to the CLSNA treasury. To order your copy, contact:

Ken Little
2600 E. Mason Lake Drive West
Grapeview, WA 98546
360-427-8994

1999 Clan Little Society, NA, Ltd. AGM

The 1999 Annual General Meeting of the Clan Little Society North America, Ltd. will be held in conjunction with the Saline Celtic Festival in Saline, Michigan, Saturday, July 10, 1999. The AGM will occur on Sunday, July 11, time and location to be announced on Saturday at the festival. Society Vice President Pat Little will be host for the CLSNA tent and the AGM. To get more information about the Saline Celtic Festival, call 313-429-4907, or visit the festival's home page at <http://salineceltic.org>. This site will give you a great deal of information on the location, events, music, and athletics planned for 1999, as well as photographs from the '98 festival. Make your plans to attend now, as time is running out!

Games and Festivals 1999

Want to know where all the games and festivals in your area are this year? Well, just point your web browser to <http://www.shirenet.com/Maclachliri/games.html>. This site has listings for more games than you thought were possible, along with loads of specific information about each game. The site is maintained by the Clan MacLachlin Association of North America, Inc., and is sponsored by the CMANA, Inc., in cooperation with COSCA, Clan Campbell, Clan MacNeil, and other organizations. Check it out!

Birth Announcement

Bryan Little of Richmond, VA would like to announce the birth of his nephew, Andrew Scott Little, born April, 17, 1999, at 6lb, 5oz in Alexandria VA.

Bryan states; "The first child in my generation, he now carries the family name Little for another generation. I can't wait until he's old enough to understand his lineage from the Scottish Borders. My late father would be very proud."

The Debatable Lands

Eric Robson and Stuart Hepburn of BORDER 2000 are making four 25 minute programs for television called "The Debatable Lands" which will go out in Autumn '98 in both England and Scotland. It is also intended they be shown in the USA and Canada on their educational channels. The film is introduced by Eric who accompanies George MacDonald Fraser on a journey around the region visiting various Reiver sites on the way. George, of course, is the author of 'Steel Bonnets', regarded as the most authoritative work on Border Reivers. This film will also be made available on video later this year.

Book Review

If you enjoy mysteries, be sure to check out these three books in the Sir Robert Carey mystery series. Written by P. F. Chishom.

A Famine of Horses
A Season of Knives
A Surfeit of Guns

These books are not to be missed. Essentially they are murder mysteries which take place in Carlisle in 1592. The story: a new March Warden has been sent to Carlisle to quell the lawlessness of the Borders and stop the Reiving activities. The books cover his dealings in and around the Borders, with vivid depictions of border life and many great characters. The stories are filled with Littles, Grahams, Armstrongs and nearly every Border Reiver family is mentioned somewhere.

They are great fun to read, and anyone with an interest in the Borders will find them very enjoyable. It may be fiction, but I've learned more about the Borders from these books than just about any other source. Just be sure to read them in the order above as they are chronological.

(Editor's note: Thanks to Society Treasurer Bryan Little for these last two pieces. This is the kind of participation I like to see!)

Genealogy 101

OR

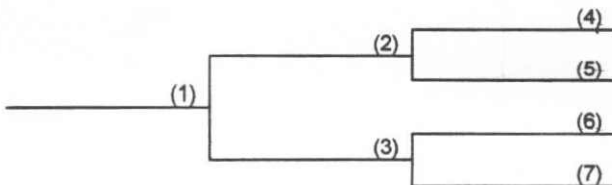
Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Finding Your Ancestors But Were Afraid to Ask

So you want to know more about your roots, do you? Want to find out if all those crazy stories your grandparents used to tell about their forbears are true, but don't know how to go about doing it? Truth is, it's really not that difficult. All you really need is the time and desire, and a basic set of tools that are available to anyone for next to nothing. What I propose to do in a series of articles in this and upcoming editions of the Reiver is lay out for you some of the fundamentals, give you some of those tools, and then open the floor for discussion.

In my role as Society Membership chair, I have had access to membership applications, and the comments new members wrote on them. When people wrote down their reasons for wanting to join the Society, many stated the same frustration: they wanted to know their personal histories, but don't know where to look. They seemed to hope that, given a few scraps of information, the Society (i.e. Pat Maddox) could produce a complete family tree, all the way back to the Western Marches. Well, it isn't quite always quite that cut and dried. So before you get frustrated that we can't provide all the answers, let's start looking into how you can find some of those answers yourself. I guarantee, you'll be surprised at how easy it is to get started. Stopping is another story entirely.... What I found (as has just about everyone else who's been bitten by the genealogy bug) is that it's immeasurably more fun and personally satisfying to do the research and make the discoveries yourself.

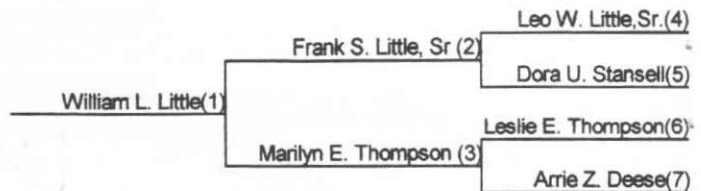
The first set of tools you will need will be a pencil, a piece of paper, a place to spread out, and your own memories. You'd be surprised at how much information you already have tucked away in your brain! What you'll need to develop is a method for recording and organizing that information in an intelligible and accessible manner. We can assume you know your full name, maiden name if you're a married woman, your date of birth, and where you were born. Write it down! You probably also know both your parents' full names, their birth dates and places, their wedding date and location, and, if they are deceased, the date and location of their deaths. Write it down! The same may go for your paternal and maternal grandparents, although some of the details might be a little sketchy.

So by now you've compiled information on three generations of your family history. That's a darn good start! The first thing you need to do with that information is put it in a form that is organized and readily useable. You'll need what's known as a pedigree chart. It's a graphical means of representing your family's lineage, and the relationships from one generation to the next of your ancestors. We'll start with a blank example:



Notice that for each of the horizontal lines in the chart, I've put a number in parentheses. That number will come in handy as you acquire more information about an ancestor, as you'll soon see. Also, keep in mind that as your information on ancestors from earlier generations grows, so will the size of the pedigree chart. All you need to do is work to the right, tacking on a generation's worth of branches to the tree as that information becomes known. By the time you're done, that chart will be quite large, believe me!

Now, you'll want to write the names of the people you just listed on the tree, in a very specific manner. Your name goes on the line marked by the 1. Your father's name will go on line 2, your mother's maiden name will go on line 3. Your paternal grandparents will go on lines 4 and 5 - your paternal grandfather on line 4, and your paternal grandmother on line 5. Your maternal grandfather will go on line 6, and your maternal grandmother on line 7. For the purpose of illustrating, I'll show you what the latest three generations of my own pedigree chart look like:



Now, step back a second and look at what you've accomplished: you've begun to organize the information you already know about your ancestors! What you've done in just a few minutes with minimal tools is at the very heart and soul of genealogy. It really isn't any more complicated than that.

Now, about those numbers. For each person on your pedigree chart, you will want to keep an information sheet containing all the details you can find about that person's life. You can link that information sheet with the person on the pedigree chart by that number. As I've already hinted, there are three events in most everyone's life that are usually well documented: birth, marriage, and death. Since humans learned how to say the words "City Hall", someone has wanted to write down records about everyone who gets born, gets married, and dies. And, they want to charge you a fee for it, but that's another discussion for another time. What you will want to do on your information sheets for each of your ancestors is record that information. It really doesn't matter what format you use on those information sheets, but let me advise you: be consistent! Design a form that you feel comfortable using, on which you can record all the data you find on that particular ancestor, and can be easily modified if necessary. Then make blank copies! Whenever you start recording new information about a recently-discovered ancestor, pull out a new sheet and go to it!

Now, I can hear you asking already: "Oh jeez, does that mean I'm going to have to go rummaging through some musty old archive in the basement of a courthouse somewhere?" Actually, it might, but that comes later. You haven't yet exhausted all your resources sitting right there at the kitchen table. What happens if you don't know a particular piece of information, like your grandmother's maiden name? If that person is still living, call him or her up! Tell him or her what you're doing, and then ask for that piece of data. I will be willing to bet that relative will give it to you in a heartbeat, and be more than happy to give you a whole lot more just for the asking! Living relatives are one of your greatest sources of stories and information, and I'll also be willing to bet that they'll give you more leads and pointers to documents than you ever thought possible. One author I read even went so far as to suggest that sitting down with an older relative and taping your conversation while taking notes is a good research method. Yes, but be cautious: ask permission first, and try to set up the situation so that it takes on the air of a chat among family members rather than a formal interview. Ask the questions that need answers, but let that relative talk! You'd be surprised at the results.

But what if you're the family elder, and all your forbears are gone? Time to hit that courthouse basement? Well, not yet. You might possibly still have resources right in your home that you may not have considered. You might have some old boxes in the attic or the basement filled with letters and papers that belonged to a parent. That's GOLD in them there boxes! Documents, pictures, letters, newspaper clippings: they all contain clues to your ancestry. Read them all carefully. Look on the backs of photographs - a hand-scribbled note could reveal vital data. Of course, birth, marriage, and death certificates, especially originals, are absolutely invaluable.

Another source you may not have considered: family Bibles. It's not so much done in Bibles any more, but Bibles printed in the first half of this century and in the 19th century dedicated several pages, usually between the Old and New Testaments, to birth, marriage, and death records. The owner of the Bible was tasked with writing down those events as a means for recording family history. So, pull out that musty old Bible you inherited from your great-aunt and take a look through it. You may be surprised at what you find.

In my next installment, I'll discuss what happens next, after you've run out of the "armchair genealogy" materials you didn't know you already had. We're getting closer to that musty old courthouse basement, but it's still a long way off. In the meantime, if you have any questions, or would like to share some of your favorite ancestor hunting stories and techniques, please drop me a line. If we share adventures and discoveries together, we all might learn a little bit more about who we are and what our origins are.

**CLAN LITTLE SOCIETY, N.A. LTD.
Membership Renewal Form**

The CLSNA fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30 each year. New members joining between April 1 and June 30 pay full rates, but their dues cover membership until Jun 30 of the following year.

Enclosed are my dues for 1999/2000:

Name:			Home Phone:	
Address:			Fax:	
City:		email:		
State:		Zip:	Birthdate:	

Family members living at the same address:

Spouse's name:		Birthdate:	
First Family Member:		Birthdate:	
Second Family Member:		Birthdate:	
Third Family Member:		Birthdate:	

If there are more family members to be included, please attach a separate sheet.

Full/Associate Member (age 18+) \$10.00:	\$
Full/Associate Member - Family (Parents and children under 18) \$15.00:	\$
OPTIONAL	
Contribution toward the search for our Clan Chief	\$
Other funds (please enter description: _____)	\$
Total:	\$

Do not write below this line. Membership Committee use only.

Bank/check #:		Date:		Amount:	
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Please return this form to:
William Little
6410 Abisco Road
Port St. John, FL 32927

Clan Little Society, NA, Ltd.
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Clan Little Society, NA, LTD.

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