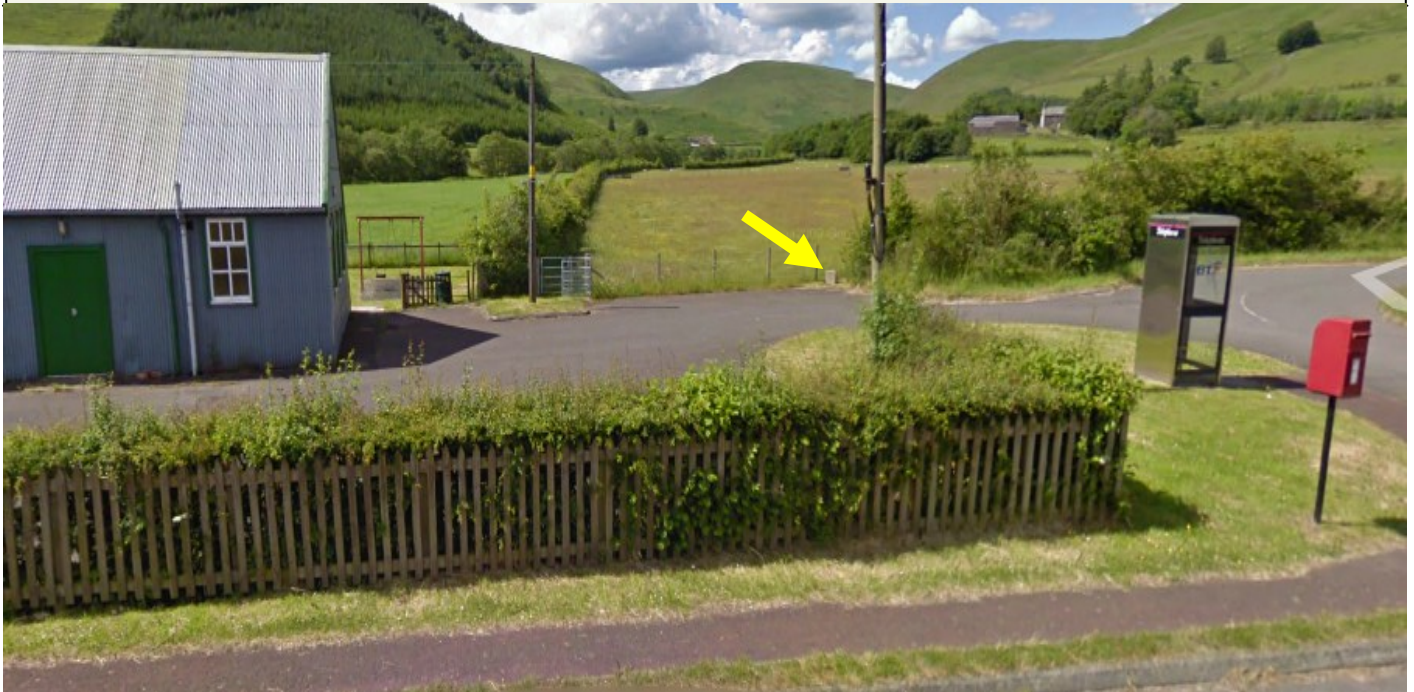




# REIVER

CLAN LITTLE SOCIETY, NORTH AMERICA, LTD.



## CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS LANDMARK?

Can you identify the subject of this map? This is a Google Streetview image of the West side of the A7 highway, in Southwest Scotland.

To get to this scene, start from the large bridge at the center of Langholm (sometimes called "The Muckle Toon"). Drive 8.5 kilometers North on the A7 highway to Ewes Hall, which serves as a local meeting place and is the site of weddings and similar gatherings.

Behind the mail box and telephone booth, at the back of the parking area, is a tiny stone that looks like a grave marker. You may have seen pictures of it. It is engraved with these words:

**IN THIS VALLEY OF MEIKLEDALE  
ONCE STOOD THE TOWER OF CLAN LITTLE  
IT'S *[sic]* SITE LONG SINCE LOST.  
ERECTED BY CLAN LITTLE SOCIETY, 2008.**

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## MEMBER PROFILE: JAMES CRAWFORD LITTLE



James Crawford Little, known to one and all as "Johnnie," was born May 22, 1922. He earned many degrees in medicine (MB Bristol 1947; DPM Durham 1954; MRCP Edin 1956; MD Bristol 1966; FRCPsych 1971). His specialty was psychiatry. He learned at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which was then part of Durham University. He was consultant psychiatrist at St James's Hospital, Leeds from 1959 to 1966, before moving to Dumfries to become Director of Clinical Research at Crichton Royal Hospital. In two influential papers published in the *Lancet* in 1963, and in a later book (Little, 1974), he advocated shifting treatment from mental hospitals to the general hospital to reduce the stigma for patients. As secretary of the Society of Clinical Psychiatrists, he worked for a more democratic profession.

With his wife Catherine, he produced a daughter (Alison) and a son (Crawford). In 1981, at the age of 59, he opted for early retirement, in part to care for his disabled wife. After being granted land on the Scottish Borders by the Duke of Buccleuch, he was proud to be known as Dr. J. C. Little of Morton Rig. His lovely garden and painting were his other passions (Kerr, 2007).

Although there is an area of Carlisle known as Morton Rig which is near the Scottish Borders, it is 33 miles South of Dumfries and is part of a big city. My assumption is that

Dr. Johnnie's lands were near Morton Wood, about 25 miles North of Dumfries and just North East of Thornhill.

In retirement, he started to do some research on his own ancestry and published a summary of his findings in *The Scottish Genealogist* (Little, 1988). As a result of that article, some Littles from around the world tried to prevail upon him to help them establish a Clan Society. (It cannot be called a Clan, unless it has an identified chief). He professed no interest in such a social group, and firmly explained that he was *only* interested in investigating his own roots.

The impending first-ever Gathering of the Clans and Families of South-West Scotland (Roots '93) was the trigger that finally helped the petitioners change his mind. In particular, A. Patterson Little III of America was persistent in encouraging Dr. Johnnie to be at the head of a new society. On St. Andrew's Day (November 30) of 1991, fifteen Founder Members from the United Kingdom and North America attended the inauguration of the Clan Little Society in Dumfries. In total, there were more than fifty members of the society from around the world at that time. Later, he designed and registered the official tartan of the Society: "Little of Morton Rig."

Today, the Clan Little Society, Scotland and Worldwide is going strong under the leadership of Ian Little and its sister organization, the Clan Little Society, North America, Ltd. has around 100 active members and many customers for its tartan and pewter products. There is also a busy wing of the clan in New Zealand.

Dr. Johnnie passed away of a heart attack on April 27, 2007, just before his 85th birthday.

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## THE “NEW HISTORY” OF THE LITTLES

*Most of the research for this story was done by Ann Stansbarger, a contracts manager for a California aerospace firm and a spectacularly cautious and thorough genealogist. All mistakes, overblown claims, and biases, however, are mine.*

*Jim Lyttle, Editor*

Recently, we have been learning more and more about our heritage through the investigations and data gathering of people like Jane Murtishaw, administrator of the Little Surname DNA Project, and Ann Stansbarger, genealogical hobbyist. Now we have up to date information on the history of the Littles of the Scottish borders that goes well beyond folklore and custom. This is indeed an exciting time to be a member of the Clan Little Society, North America, Ltd!

DNA research suggests that our ancestors are generally considered to be Celts who came from the Continent in multiple waves, especially at the time of Bronze Age. They likely came by way of France, but some may have come from Western Norway. Thus, there is still some hope for our claims of tracing back to Ingiald III in central Sweden. However, DNA typing shows that we are of the haplotype (common grouping of DNA mutations) called R1b, and more specifically L21. This pattern is very common amongst Western Europeans but is **not** the pattern usually found in Scandinavians, who carry an “I” haplotype, such as I1. As we now know, the Littles of the Scottish borders share a special haplotype pattern known as L193.

### Ayrshire



Surnames were not in use before about the year 1000, and the earliest record we have of a Little is Alan Little. Sometime before the year 1177, he received a grant of forest land on the south side of the river Ayr from the first Walter the Stew-

ard. This land was a considerable tract in the east of Kyle, extending from Dolcarnel-burn, which falls into the Ayr, to the top of Cairntable-hill and the boundary of Lanarkshire, and having the river Ayr for its northern boundary. Lanarkshire, by the way, is the land of the Crawfords (note that the towns of Crawford and Crawfordjohn are still there). The Crawford line descends from Thorlongus in the early 11th Century all the way to William Wallace’s mother.

After 1204, when Alan had converted to the monastic life at Melrose, the second Walter the Steward granted the land to the monks of Melrose (Chalmers, Caledonia: An historical and Topographical Account, Vol 6, p. 488; from Chart of Mel, No. 128). This property, located just east of the town of Ayr, can be seen as the beginning for us.

In 1296 and 1297 we have the mention of Eduard Littil, a nephew of William Wallace, fighting alongside him in the wars of independence. If Eduard was the son of Wallace’s sister, then he was a Crawford through his maternal grandmother and a Little through his father. He has been traditionally considered the founder of the Clan Little, and the evidence for this is discussed in a later section.

In 1313, John Litell served on an inquest at Lanark (George Black, Surnames of Scotland -- Bain, III, 1420). Thus, the Littles were still around the land of the Crawfords about a decade after William Wallace’s 1305 death.

### Little/Douglas



Sir James Douglas received a half Barony of Wester Kirk in 1321 from Robert I. His son, Sir William Douglas (of Dalkeith), received from King David II the lands of Eskdale and Ewesdale in 1341 and lands in Liddesdale in 1342. He became known as “the Knight of Liddesdale” and the “Flower of Chivalry.”

## LITTLES HISTORY ... CONTINUED

Ten years later, in 1351, Martin Litill witnessed a charter by William dominus vallis de Ledell (Liddesdale), granting the lands of Abirdowyr (Aberdour) in Fife to his nephew, James. This charter was later confirmed in the 31st year of King David II's reign, *i.e.*, 1361 (George Black, Surnames of Scotland – RHM, II, p 56) -- Sir William Douglas, Lord of Liddesdale issued this charter in 1351 from his castle at Dalkeith. He was subsequently killed by a kinsman in 1353. -- This information is from "An index drawn up about the year 1629 of many records of charters granted" (General Register Office, p. 81). Sir William's land was then inherited by his nephew, James Douglas of Dalkeith.

In 1358, Martin Lytil is mentioned in connection with the land of Cardvyn in Fife (George Black, Surnames of Scotland – ER, I, p 563). – Due to the proximity of Cardwan and Aberdour in Fife, George Black speculates that the Martin Lytil of 1358 and Martin Litill of 1351 are one and the same. – This information is from Publications, Issue 79, Volume 1, by the Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1817.

The estate of Morton was brought into the Douglas family in 1372 when James Douglas of Dalkeith married Agnes Dunbar. A later Douglas was created Earl in 1458 in time for his marriage to Joanna, the deaf and dumb daughter of James I. Thus a Douglas became the first Earl of Morton.

So far, we can see a genetic connection to the Crawfords through Eduard's mother, and the introduction of the lands of "Morton." Keep in mind that the founder of our modern Clan Society, "Dr. Johnnie C. Little of Morton Rig," was named James Crawford Little. Science seems to be helping us bring the pieces of this story a little closer together.

In 1376, no Littles were listed in the "Rent Roll of Douglas of Morton" for Westerkirk Parish, Dumfriesshire. However, the rent roll does not identify any listing for the parish of Ewesdale. Perhaps those pages, which would have included the lands of Meikledale, are missing from the Rent Roll.

In the same year, 1376, Adam Lityll was a tenant of Douglass of Morton, in the barony of Kilbucho, Peebleshire, in the 1376 Rent Roll. Source: (George Black, Surnames of Scotland – RHM, II, p. 16) . Black's source, "RHM, II," refers to the Registrum honoris de Morton: a series of ancient charters, Volume II. This is evidence that at least some of the Littles were still near Lanarkshire at this time.

In fact, as late as the 1700s, Adam Little and (later) his grandson William owned Winkston, a farm and manor house that was inherited from the former Provost of Peebles who had been assassinated in 1572 — from A History of Peebles-

shire Vol 2 James Walter Buchan, page 327. Clearly, there were still Littles in Crawford territory even then.

In 1398, Nicol Lital was one of the Earl of Douglas's supporters in the West March. He was listed along with several Glendowyn and Armstrong men taking an oath to uphold a truce between Scotland and England in 1398 (George Black, Surnames of Scotland – Bain, IV 512) and (Rymer's Foedera; Vol 8, pp 46-65; Oct – Dec 1398).

### Meikledale



Based on the 1398 oath, we know that the Littles of Meikledale were in residence alongside the Glendennings and the Armstrongs in the Eskdale and Ewesdale area of Dumfriesshire by 1398. The whereabouts of the Littles before 1398 cannot be proven, but the above evidence suggests that they had an early connection to the Douglasses of Dalkeith and Morton. The Douglasses of Dalkeith and Morton were descended from the Douglasses of Douglassdale, in Lanarkshire. The lands of Douglass of Douglassdale were on the Ayrshire/Lanarkshire border, near what is now believed to be the ancestral home of William Wallace. Once again, science is offering some support for the connection among early Littles, Crawfords, and Sir William Wallace.

In the late 1990s it was discovered that a seal of William Wallace, found on the "Lubeck Letter," referred to him as William 'son of Alan.' According to the 1296 Ragman Roll, Alan Wallace lived in Ayrshire. It is now believed William Wallace was a younger son of Alan, rather than a son of Malcolm, as previously believed. Given the seal evidence and a reference to Wallace's home as "Black Rock," some modern scholars now believe that William lived at Blackcraig, near New Cumnock.

## LITTLES HISTORY ... CONTINUED

## Eduuard Littil



It is always exciting for us, in the modern Clan Society, to uncover supporting evidence of Eduuard Littil. He has traditionally been considered the founder of the Clan, but the evidence has been weak. A poem (not a historical document of any kind, but a poem) mentions an Eduuard Littil and describes him as a nephew who fought alongside William Wallace. There is no suggestion, even in that poem, that he was in any way related to the Littles of the Scottish borders in the 14th to 17th Centuries. Thus, there is not even any **claim** (never mind evidence) that he founded the Clan Little.

We can forgive the Littles of old for wanting to associate their name with William Wallace in any way possible. And as lofty an expert as David Sellars (the current Lord Lyon, King of Arms) has said that we should accept oral tradition unless there is compelling evidence for an alternate explanation. On the other hand, we are modern scientific people and critical thinkers whose motto is *concedo nulli* (concede nothing). We do not want to base our claims solely on the literary musings of someone writing under the pseudonym Blind Harry (a common nickname for the devil).

That author weaved together a record of the folk history of William Wallace using three sources. First, he claimed to have studied the record of Wallace's life written by Father John Blair (identified by Dr. Johnnie as Robert Boyd), who was Wallace's boyhood friend and personal chaplain. We know that this book existed and was a reliable source, but there are no copies of it left, so we cannot know what parts (if any) of Blind Harry's story came from it. His second source of information was the oral history going around at the time that he wrote the poem, between 1470 and 1480. This is about 170 years after Wallace's death on August 23, 1305 and many generations after the events occurred—oral traditions would have been fuzzy about the details, to say the least. The third source is the author's pure speculation.

He often made up details to tell the story, to dramatize an event, or even just to create a line that rhymed. For example, he described Wallace winning a battle in great detail, but we now know that it was Robert the Bruce who fought and won that battle. He described other events that we know did not occur because the named protagonists were dead or, in one case, not yet born when they took place. Relying on this poetry as an authoritative source would be foolish.

However, our exciting new DNA and historical research is starting to lend credence to the idea that there were early Littles in the area of Lanarkshire, where William Wallace was operating. Also, because of their documented association with the Douglasses, there is every reason to suppose that the Littles might have migrated to the Dumfriesshire area near the Borders over the period from 1331 to 1398. This could explain the presence Alan Little's ancestors so far away from Ayrshire.

In 1426, two years after his return from exile, James I granted to "our beloved Simon Littill" (chief of the clan) tenure of the lands of Meikledale, Kirkton, and Sorbie in Ewesdale. Simon thus became the first Laird of Meikledale. The Clan Little of the Scottish West March went on to support the Stuart Kings through five reigns.

On 26 July 1530, James V came into Eskdale with a massive 'hunting party.' Tricking the leaders of the Armstrongs and thirty-two "*personis of the greitest of thaim namit Armstrangis, Elliotis, Littillis, Irvinis, with utheris*" into a parley, he hanged them out of hand. In 1569, a force of over a hundred men of Clan Little joined with the Earl of Morton in a raid on Stirling. In 1585, the Littles and others involved in that Stirling Raid were pardoned by James VI (commemorated by a memorial window in the kirk of Bentpath in Dumfriesshire).

At the union of the crowns in 1603, King James put down the continuing lawlessness on the border "with sword, noose and torch until hardly a building stood in the whole of Eskdale and Liddesdale." Many chiefs were hanged and those who survived were later ordered to sell out. Simon Little of that Ilk was chief of Clan Little at that time. His son Thomas' successor, David Little, registered arms in 1672 and was thus the last Laird of Meikledale. The lairdship passed to Thomas Beattie and David was given work as a groom at Windsor Castle. He had two sons: Simon Little of Nittyholm who had seven daughters, and Matthew (William?) Little who lived in Reading and 'went to sea' in 1745. Any descendants of Matthew have yet to be traced. Since then, the Littles have been one of the many armigerous (headless) clans of Scotland.

—end—



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**WHERE WAS THE CLAN TOWER?**

This map shows two possible locations of the tower of the Littles of Meikledale.

Meikle (pronounced *muckle*) means large, and dale means valley. Thus, the name Meikledale means, approximately, Big Valley.

A burn is a tiny river or creek. This particular burn runs from between the hills of Meikledale, to the South and then East, and into the Ewes River.

It stands to reason, although there is no evidence, that the tower stood at one of these locations. The peak of the Westerly (left) hill, marked as Location 1 on this map, would afford the best vantage point from which to see intruders.

On the other hand, the crest of the Easterly (right) hill, marked as Location 2 on this map, provided a larger plateau.

