



The Cromartie Reunion News

July 23, 2007

The President's Corner

Greetings from the Northern Virginia part of the Cromartie World. For some time, I have personally felt a renewed interest in our Cromartie Family and the Reunion. I attribute this to our President Emeritus Fred Butler's efforts to tie us closer together with an email network; to Scott Cromartie and the SRPC Trustees' effort to get the Church property transferred to a 501-3c non-profit organization; to Jasper Parham's search of the web for new family members; to Bob Cromartie's research in Scotland on William's ancestors and our clan affiliation; and projects such as the group that spent a day in January reestablishing our knowledge about structures, cemeteries and memorials in the vicinity of the SRPC and the more lonely projects of Amanda Gilbert to better document our Cromartie lineage and Ed Conley's work on our Jamestown connection, Stephen Hopkins. With this newsletter, I want to share several of these and other family news items because I think they will be interesting to you as well.

Plans for our 78th Reunion on the second Sunday in October, Oct. 14th, are well underway. We are excited to have Susan Cromarty from Australia as our speaker so please check out the "Reunion News" for more information about her, her topic and other information about the Reunion.

So sit back and enjoy the Clan News. Have a terrific summer and see you at the Reunion in October.

Tom Lennon

Stewart Cemetery Expedition - January 2007

The old church never looked better as five cousins gathered with a couple of neighbors to rediscover the Stewart Cemetery that had been a part of our family story since it began on the South River in the 18th century.

The site we were interested in had originally been granted to Thomas Devane in 1759 and purchased by William Stewart three years later. He gave the land to his son Charles in a will dated 1778. (See page 2)

Reunion Plans

Be sure you have the second Sunday in October, Oct. the 14th, marked on your calendar for the 78th Cromartie Reunion at the South River Presbyterian Church. Our speaker will be Susan Cromarty from Australia. She will tell us about our Cromarty cousins who took a left instead of a right turn and ended up on the other side of the world. Like us, Susan traces her Cromarty lineage to the Orkney Islands. She is editor of "Scots, The Journal of the Scots Heritage Society" (www.scotsheritage.net) and maintains a Cromarty website at www.clancromarty.net. She is an avid genealogist and has spent much time in Orkney. Susan has written a lot about Orkney and our Cromartie family and has been instrumental in Bob Cromartie's efforts to identify the ancestors of William Cromartie there. Susan reports she is excited about meeting her American cousins and that she has had a fascination with the Scots of the Cape Fear since seeing a movie about the Cape Fear many years ago. We look forward to hosting her for a couple of days prior to the Reunion and showing her our Cromartie and Scot heritage in the Region.

As in the past, we will begin registration at 10:30 a.m. The Program will begin at 11:00 followed by lunch on the grounds. Last year we agreed to continue having our lunch catered. "The Front Porch" in Elizabethtown, is scheduled to provide that service again this year.

Craig will send out the post card reminders about three weeks prior to the Reunion date. We will ask for an RSVP to better estimate our lunch needs.

Trustees' Report

Following our discussion at the last Reunion about the potential uncertainties of the ownership of the church property, the Trustees took the agreed upon actions. We submitted a request to the Presbytery to transfer title to a 501-3c non-profit corporation. The Presbytery has agreed to the transfer in principal and we have obtained counsel to draft the necessary papers. The work is being done by our cousin Mary Skinner, an attorney and an accountant. (See page 3).

The Stewart Cemetery Continued

In 1796 Charles Stewart sold two, two hundred acre tracts of land to James Cromartie. One of those tracts reserved one acre on which a church had been built (a portion of the present SRPC site - Luther Cromartie gifted the remainder in 1859) and a quarter acre for use as a "burying ground." This quarter acre parcel was "in the field known by the name of the Big Field" and is the site we now call the Stewart Cemetery. Family tradition has it that William Stewart's wife, Catherine Colvin, and two of their children are buried there. The story continues that William was a Loyalist who was forced to leave the area at the time of the American Revolution. Prior to doing so he walled in the cemetery, closing it off forever and it eventually passed into the Cromartie family possession.

In 1995, we celebrated the Bicentennial of the South River Presbyterian Church and during the preparation for that Reunion it was discovered that logging operations on the lands surrounding the cemetery had destroyed the brick wall around the graves. A neighbor, Edwin Thompson, was instrumental in helping the SRPC Trustees deal with the problem and was one of the neighbors that met us at the church in January.

The Trustees got the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources to investigate the site and it was subsequently registered with the Office of State Archaeology. The surrounding land owner, United States Steel and Carnegie Pension Fund, was notified. With some monetary restitution from the land owner and hard work by the Trustees, a granite marker and a chain and steel post barrier was placed partially around the cemetery to clearly delineate the ruins.

Our January objective was to rediscover the site so it remains in our consciousness. Scott Cromartie was our leader. He had relocated the site with the help of Edwin Thompson and we quickly found our way to the cemetery. Jasper Parham had obtained the Archaeological Site Report from the State Archaeology

Office. It contains much interesting information about the site and the 1995 correspondence between the Trustees, the State and the land owner. It was the reference for this article.

Using a picture in the Report, Jasper was able to uncover the granite marker from beneath a deep layer of leaf mulch. Another bit of information, contained in a letter written by Catherine Sloan in December 1994, sparked interest in two respects. Catherine wrote ".....some people have picked up numerous bricks, because they were handmade, and apparently by women, since the finger marks are so small." We had recently seen a similar brick from the chimney of the Alexander Cromartie house built in 1799, just up the road from the church. Could it have been the same brick maker? Its finger marks were so small that it was more likely those of a child and probably a slave.

The second thought raised by Catherine's note was how to protect the site from further vandalism and that was the point Scott made when he invited Edwin and a neighbor who lives on the dirt road that accesses the cemetery. Having friendly and concerned neighbors can be helpful in protecting the church as well as the cemetery.

After investigating the cemetery, we walked to a landing on the South River that was designated on the map as "Church Landing." It doesn't require much imagination to visualize scenes of the past with parishioners landing there to attend church services that were held in Gaelic until late in the 19th century.

From there it was lunch at the "Front Porch" in Elizabethtown and then off to find and clear the brush around the William Cromartie house site stone and the Peter Cromartie stone at the junction of Peter Cromartie Road and Hell Town Road.

All in all it was a wonderful day of reconnecting with our Cromartie ancestors, and most importantly documenting our rediscoveries for future Cromartie generations.

Trustees' Report Continued

A recent storm damaged the Church roof and some shutters. After assessing the age of the roof, we contracted a local roofer to replace it for around \$3000.00. The shutters are repaired.

Scott Cromartie, Trustee

Help needed We need your help. Each Reunion we pause for a moment in the program to honor family members that have died since the last Reunion. Please help us identify those family members by sending that information to Craig or Tom (See the list of officers for contact information).

More help needed Jasper Parham is a surfer par excellence; internet surfer that is. He is identifying new cousins on a weekly basis and adding folks to our email and snail mail lists. Those efforts are reflected below in our "Welcome to New Members" article. But that is only one aspect of his achievements. He identified a special and worthwhile project when he found Amanda Cook Gilbert. Amanda has been working long and hard on an ancestor report of the Cromartie Family. Building on the works of others, she is correcting and greatly extending our information about the Cromartie lineage. Her book is nearing 1000 pages and she needs help proofreading the copy. If you have ever written any report you well know how difficult it is for authors to proof their own work. Please contact Amanda and volunteer to proof your families' section of the book. She can be reached at aacook@consolidated.net. Your reward will be to get the first glimpse at an exciting addition to our knowledge base and knowing you helped make it happen.

Heraldry talk available Bob Cromartie's talk at the 77th Reunion entitled "The Cromartie Clan as a Sept of Clan Urquhart" was recorded and transcribed, courtesy of Fred Butler. If you would like a copy contact Fred at (910) 395-9326 or email fbutler@ec.rr.com.

Preserving our history Several members in the family email net have been discussing how to preserve family treasures, memories and information. Have you heard someone say, "I want to interview my elderly aunt because she's got amazing stories about the old days - but I keep putting it off." Another, sadder comment is, "Gosh I wish I had talked to my grandfather about his life before he passed away last year." And then there is the missing family Bible that had been handed down for generations but no one knows what happened to it and all the family records it contained. Many of us have come to realize that the greatest value of those precious things that define our history as a family can only be achieved if they are shared through a public institution dedicated to preservation. Here are some actions being taken by Reunion members to preserve our history.

Last year Fred Butler had the two hundred year old Alexander Cromartie Bible professionally restored and will place copies of the Family Record pages in several local libraries.

Tom Lennon placed copies of the Family Records from the one hundred year old Bible of Carl Lennon and Maude Cromartie Lennon in the Wanda Campbell Room of the Bladen County Public Library in Elizabethtown, and the Mother County Genealogy Society Research Room in Bladenboro's Community Center.

Fred purchased the remaining CD copies of Olivia Harvey's "Lamb Book" and placed them in the two research facilities mentioned above and at other facilities.

Jasper Parham donated a subscription of the "Scots" magazine to the Mecklenburg County Library.

A copy of Ed Conley and Margaret Calhoun's handouts on Stephen Hopkins was donated to the Wanda Campbell Room.

Looking for ideas on oral histories? Check out the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress toll free message line at 1-888-371-5848 or email vohp@loc.gov. Also see the Southern Oral History Program at info@sohp.org or call (919)962-0455 at the University of North Carolina.

Do you have any suggestions or stories to share? Please let us hear from you.

Surfing The internet has opened up many promising means of reaching out to our extended Cromartie family and for staying in touch. Bob Cromartie, last year's wonderful speaker talking about our clan relationships and Susan Cromarty, our speaker for this year are just two examples of that fact. We owe a debt of gratitude to David Lord and Jasper Parham for making these two connections. Over this past year, Jasper has proven to be a star surfer, adding new members to our contact list while stimulating interest in the Family and our Reunion. So thanks to all of you who cruise the net for the benefit of the Clan and a special thank you to Jasper and David.

Welcome to new members We extend a warm welcome to those new members on our mailing lists. We look forward to seeing you at the Reunion and getting to know you. If you know of other Cromartie family members that would like to be involved, please let us know their email or snail mail address. Thank you.

Jamestowne's 400th anniversary 2007

At our 76th Reunion, Cousin Ed Conley spoke about our Cromartie connection to the Jamestowne settlement. You probably already know about the Cromartie connection to the Mayflower through Ruhamah Doane Cromartie, 2nd wife of our ancestor William Cromartie. Ruhamah was descended from Stephen Hopkins, Pilgrim passenger on the Mayflower. But did you know that prior to his Mayflower voyage, Stephen, sailing to Jamestowne on the vessel Sea Venture in 1609, was shipwrecked in Bermuda. Stranded for 10 months, the passengers and crew endured great hardships and eventually, Hopkins and several other castaways built a small ship and sailed to Jamestowne. William Shakespeare's "The Tempest" is said to have been inspired by this event. How long Stephen stayed in Jamestown is not known but it qualifies us for membership in the Jamestowne Society. Thanks to Ed Conley and Margaret Calhoun for providing handouts that document this family history - the handouts were donated to our file in the Wanda Campbell Room mentioned above. Tom can provide copies for you.

Cromartie Reunion Officers

President - Tom Lennon
Vice President - Kelly Smith Ricketts
Recording Secretary - Sara Cromartie
Butler Honeycutt
Corresponding Secretary-Craig Barfield
Treasurer - Len Clark

If you have questions or suggestions about the Reunion please contact Tom at (703) 425-1538 or email tomdottyelen@att.net Also send Tom changes or additions to our email list.

We encourage the use of email to save mailing costs.

Please send address changes to Craig at 4200 Wingate Dr., Raleigh, NC 27609 or email craig_barfield@yahoo.com

Corresponding Secretary After 15 years of service, Craig Barfield has asked to be relieved of his Corresponding Secretary duties following our 78th Reunion. We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to Craig for his faithful service for all those many years. Your announcement mailings have been critical in keeping the Clan Reunion going and celebrating this our 78th gathering. Wow, what a record! Thanks so much Craig.

Stewart Cemetery Photo Album



The cemetery site consists of a low brick rubble wall, triangular in shape as indicated by the three cousins. The walls were approximately 60 feet on the sides and 6 to 8 feet in width. The State investigation was unable to determine the original wall height but uncovered an intact portion of one lower section. That section had five courses surviving and exhibited a very simple brick laying technique. Two bricks were placed end-to-end across the wall for a width of 18 inches and then side by side along its length. There appeared to be no variation between courses. The use of mortar was not evident.

No head stones or other grave markings have been found.

The stone marker was hidden beneath the leaves, but fortunately the archeological report had a picture that showed the stone in relationship to the large tree and the brick rubble. The marker reads "Catherine Colvin, First Wife of William Stewart and their two children are buried here c 1790. Erected 1995 by Trustees of South River Presbyterian Church.



The Bearing Tree and Stone



The Five Amigos

L to R Jasper Parham, Margaret Calhoun, Scott Cromartie, Fred Butler, photo by Tom Lennon.

Site of the Cromartie Reunions



Photo by Scott Cromartie, December 2006

The South River Presbyterian Church
Built in 1857 - 2007 Its 150th Anniversary
Located between Elizabethtown and Garland, North Carolina
It is on the left side of State 210, approximately one and a
half miles south east of the intersection of US 701 and State
210.