

A decorative border of Celtic knotwork, featuring interlocking loops and bands, surrounds the central text. The knotwork is rendered in a metallic, three-dimensional style with highlights and shadows.

A
Short History
Of
Clan Muirhead

Compiled by Larry D. Smith (a Muirhead Bard)



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A SHORT HISTORY OF THE MUIRHEAD CLAN



Historians have noted that the family of Muirhead was one of the ancient families of the shire (*i.e.* county), of Lanark.

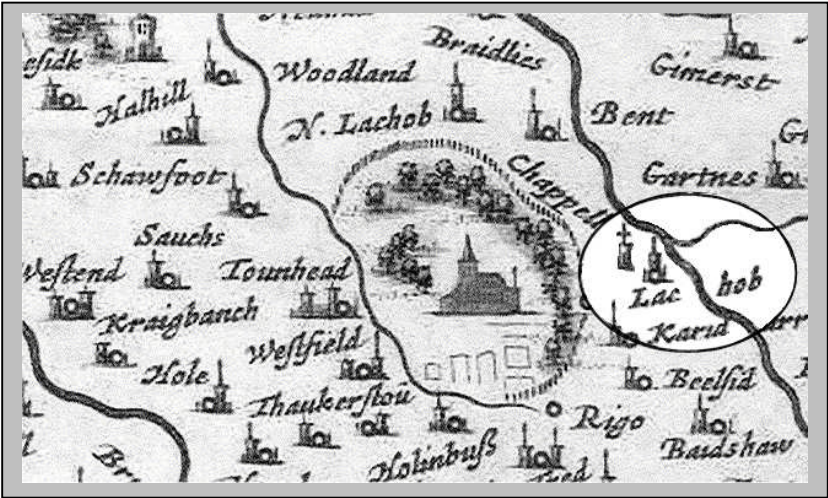
According to Alexander Nisbet, in his book, *A System Of Heraldry*, published in 1742:

“The Family of Muirheads of Lachop, or Muirhead of That-Ilk, has been always reputed one of the ancientest Families in all the Shire of Lanerk.”... “The Surname de Morehead, or Muirhead, is like other Surnames of the greatest Antiquity, local, taken from Lands, from whence either the Proprietor took a Denomination, when fixed hereditary Surnames became customary; or took an Appellation from the Lands, as soon as he obtained them; for it is a Maxim amongst Antiquaries, that ‘tis a sufficient Document of an ancient Descent, where the Inhabitant has the Surname from the Place he inhabiteth.”

It was in the valley of the Clyde River, on the southern border of the highlands of Scotland, to the west of Edinburgh, and midway between it and Glasgow, in the Parish of Bothwell, in the Clydesdale county or shire of Lanark, that the lands of Lauchope and Lauchope House were located. And it was the estate of Lauchope that was first associated with the name of Muirhead.



Photo of Lauchope House supplied by John Lindsay Morehead – Taken from 1925 Morehead family history in his possession.



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In order for us to flesh out a history of this “*Family of the Muirheads of Lachop*”, we should begin by identifying a starting point when the family first became known to reside in Scotland. One of the 16th Century heraldic rolls of arms, known as Forman’s Roll of ca 1562, included the arms of a man by the name of

Mureheide of Lauchope. But the family's origins may be found to have existed earlier than that.

Alexander Nisbet noted that:

“So much is certain, for the Antiquity of the Sirname and Family of Muirhead, that they have been fixed in the Barony of Bothwel, before the Reign of King Alexander II.”

{ King Alexander II's reign lasted between 1214 and 1249 AD. } But even Nisbet took the line farther back in time when he noted that:

“and so we may rationally, and without stretching Things, conclude, That the Muirhead Family were fixed, and Proprietors of the Lands of Muirhead, as far back as the Reign of King William, or sooner, for what we know, even up to the Time that Surnames began to be taken up, and Men began to call themselves after their own Lands; which, is agreed, was not the Custom generally gone into, before the Reign of King David I, Anno 1122

Alexander Nisbet had no factual evidence to substantiate his assumption that the Muirhead family should be dated to the early part of the 12th Century. He simply stated that the custom of taking territorial surnames began about that time. It should also be noted that Nisbet's account was not based on original research by himself. He basically transcribed, verbatim, *An Account Of The Family Of The Muirheads Of Lachop, Now Represented By Muirhead Of Bredisholm, As The Heir-Male*, a monograph which had been written by Walter Grosset.

The earliest public record of any person by the name of Muirhead was a deed of land granted by “*Archibaldus Comes de Douglas, Dominus Galovidiæ & Bothwel, dicto scutifero suo Willielmo de Muirhead*” dated 1393. That date corresponds to a tradition that dates from the reign of King Robert II { 1371-1390 }. Again, quoting Alexander Nisbet:

“The Tradition goes, and, as I had it from a learned and curious Antiquary, who was also a gentleman of great reputation and integrity, that the laird of Muirhead of That-ilk, de Muirhead, as I have often found them designed, in the time of king Robert II, got the lands of Lachop, and

others, for assaulting and killing a great robber that infested all that part of the country, by violent ravages and depredations, which he carried to a very insufferable degree; so that at length the government were obliged to take notice of him; and, by a public act, notified, "Thet whosoever should apprehend, kill him, or bring him to justice, should be rewarded with such and such lands." His name, the tradition tells us, was Bartram de Shotts: he was a terror to every body that resided near him, or who had occasion to pass east or west through those parts where he lurked, and had his haunts. The laird of Muirhead, at the time, was a bold, daring, intrepid man; he did not surprize him in his lurking places, but with a few in his company, to whose courage and valour he could well trust, came up, and in the day-time attacked him in that valley on the east-side of the kirk of Shotts, when, after a pretty smart encounter, the Goliath Bartram was slain on the place. The laird of Muirhead cut the head off this robber, which he carried streight to the king, who immediately, in the terms of the proclamation, ordered him a charter and infestment of these lands that were then, or soon after called Lachop; and gave him, as an additional honour to his arms, the three acorns in the seed, on the bend dexter; for crest, two hands supporting a sword in pale, proper; and the motto, Auxilio Dei, which is born by the family to this day."

There are certain public documents, such as deeds, charters and the like, which provide some clues to the history of the Muirhead family, but they are few due to the tragic history of Scotland's public archives. A comprehensive history of the family of the Muirheads, thusly, must be deduced partly from fact and partly from legend.

We might begin by taking a look at the surname itself. For purposes of this short essay, the basic form of the surname is presented as *Muirhead*. But throughout history and among the various families who claim descent from the ancient root, the name has variously appeared as: Moirheid, Moorehead, Moorhead, Mored, Morehead, Morheid, Mourheid, Muirhed, Muirheid, Muirheyd, Murehed, Murehede, Mureheide, Murhed, Murhede, Murheed, Murheid, Muyrheid, Mwirheid, Mwreheid, Mwrhed, Mwrheid, Mwrheyd and Mwrhied.

It is generally agreed that the family took its appellation from the land, there being a number of places named *Muirhead*. There are the hamlets of Muirhead in the parish of Kettle, district

of Cupar, in the county or shire of Fife, and in the parish of Liff, Benvie and Invergowrie in the county or shire of Forfar. There is also a village of Muirhead in the parish of Cadder in the northern tip of the county or shire of Lanark. It is in the vicinity of the latter village that this family is believed to have originated.

According to George F. Black, in his awesome work, *The Surnames Of Scotland - Their Origin, Meaning, And History*:

“the use of fixed surnames or descriptive names appears to have commenced in France about the year 1000, and such names were introduced into Scotland through the Normans a little over one hundred years later...” “The first people in Scotland to acquire fixed surnames were the nobles and great landowners, who called themselves, or were called by others, after the lands they possessed.”

The Family of *W*illielmo de *M*uirhead

At some time between the reign of King David I, at the beginning of the 12th Century, and the reign of King Alexander II, at the beginning of the 13th Century, a family came to reside in the valley of the Clyde River, in the vicinity of a village known by the name of Muirhead. The village of Muirhead was located in the Barony of Bothwell, which was under the rule of the Norman, David de Oliphard (*variously* Oliphant) during the mid-12th Century.

Whether the family of the 12th to 13th Centuries was descended from Norman ancestors is not known. It is quite possible that that was the case in view of the fact that historical references to any of its members do not appear until after the Norman Conquest of the Isles, and also because of the fact that they adopted the Norman convention of taking territorial-based surnames. It is known that the ancestry on the wife's side was French. They were perhaps fairly well-to-do, as was evidenced by the fact that the family came to own a substantial amount of land in that region. It prompted Alexander Nisbet to state that:

“The truth is, the family of the Muirheads must have been a set of people,

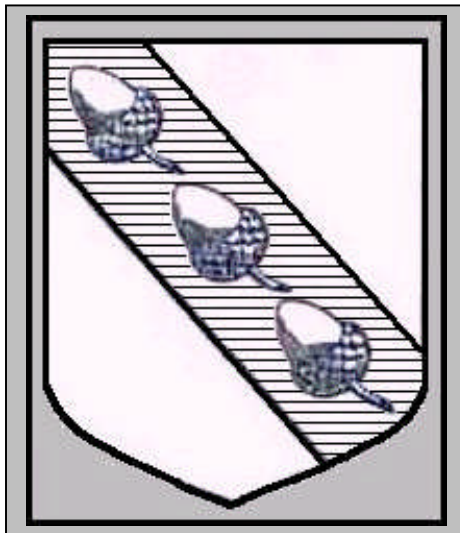
that since they never assumed the arms, or any part thereof, from their respective superiors or over-lords, as was very usual, the presumption must be, that they were seated a family, and fixed there before the Oliphards had the barony of Bothwell; and that they were the liberi tenentes regis et coronae, before the crown gave the superiority of the Baronia de Bothwel to the Oliphards: and so we may rationally, and without stretching Things, conclude, That the Muirhead Family were fixed, and Proprietors of the Lands of Muirhead, as far back as the Reign of King William, or sooner, for what we know, even up to the Time that Sirnames began to be taken up, and Men began to call themselves after their own Lands; which, is agreed, was not the Custom generally gone into, before the Reign of King David I, Anno 1122.”

During the reign of King Robert III, in 1393, the surname of Muirhead appeared in a public record for the first time. Archibaldus Comes de Douglas, earl of Galloway and Bothwell deeded to Willielmo de Muirhead “*his Lands of Muirhead, in Baronia de Bothwel*”.

The name of *William de Murehede* was signed by a man who witnessed a charter involving lands of the Cranshaws between the Earl of Douglas and Sir John de Syntoun, and which was recorded on 20 October, 1401 at Dunbar. Another charter witnessed by a *Sir William Muirhead* was recorded in 1407.

In Rymer’s *Fœdera Angliæ* of 1402 there is an entry naming *Dom. Willielmus de Muirhead, miles*. The latin term for Lord or

Dominus. for soldier, *miles*. It mentioned term, *ejusdem* compared to Scot phrase In turn, the that ilk”, in with a man’s that his the same as



Master was The latin term or knight, was should also be that the latin *dominus* might be the common “of that ilk”. phrase, “of when placed conjunction name meant surname was the estate he

owned. Therefore, this entry in the *Foedera Angliae* would have referred to William Muirhead as *Lord William of Muirhead, knight and owner of the estate of Muirhead*.

The Muirheads tended to become involved in the affairs of the Scottish government starting with this progenitor of the clan. In the year 1404, Willielmo de Muirhead was commissioned, along with Sir David Fleming, whom King Richard III called his 'blood relation', to act as emissaries to King Henry IV of England (or his commissioners). Their commission was to obtain the freedom of the Earls of Fife and of Douglas, who had been taken prisoner during the Battle of Homilden, in Northumberland, in 1402. Willielmo de Muirhead and David Fleming were also empowered to conclude a treaty of peace. The two groups of commissioners met on 06 July, 1404 at Pontefract. They agreed to a truce, which was commenced on 20 July and which would continue until Easter of the next year. It was also agreed that during the period of the truce, a congress should be held at Handerstank for the purpose of completing a more complete treaty. Despite the commissioners' efforts, the congress never took place.

Willielmo de Muirhead (*aka* Willielmus or William) is generally claimed to have been born circa 1380. He would have

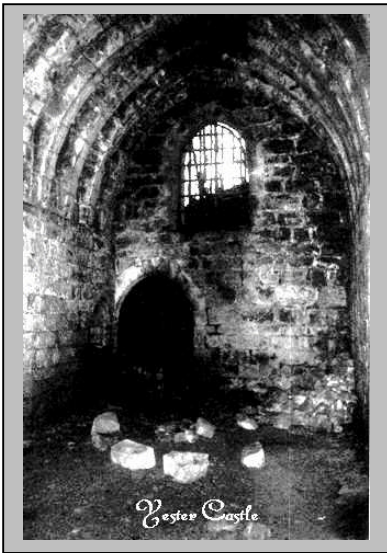


Photo provided by Mike Mackenzie. Used by kind permission - Spectre 2004

been thirty-four years of age when he married Jean Hay in 1414 at Yester, in Leithshire.

The wife of Willielmo de Muirhead, Jean Hay, was born circa 1379 at Yester Castle, seat of Clan Hay. This daughter of Thomas and Christian de Haya, and sister of Sir William Hay of Lochernard, has been variously referred to as Dame Jean Hay or Dame Diana Jane Hay. Her lineage is quite interesting; it can be traced fairly accurately back to Alan, Seneschal of Dol and Dinan in Brittany, on the western coast of France, born in the year 1012, and then on back through

the legendary mists of time to the kings of Troy, and on further back to the Biblical Adam and Eve.

As noted at the beginning of this essay, the first estate to be associated with the family of Muirhead is that of Lauchope where the newlyweds, Willielmo and Jean de Muirhead, took up residence. Lauchope was located a distance south of the village of Muirhead. It was situated to the southeast of the city of Glasgow.

Willielmo and Jean de Muirhead raised a family of four children: William (1415-), Andrew (1418-1473), Vedestus (1420-) and Janet (1422-). Of these four offspring, two married and became progenitors of large families, while the other two remained celibate and served the Church.

Andrew Muirhead, known variously as *Andrew de*



Durrisdere, became Bishop of the Diocese of Glasgow. Among other notable things, Bishop Andrew established the College of the Vicars of the Choir for the Cathedral of Glasgow, and supervised the

construction of the Provand's Lordship, the oldest building still standing in the city of Glasgow.

Vedestus Muirhead became the Canon of Glasgow and Rector of the Glasgow University.

Janet Muirhead, the only daughter of Willielmo and Jean de Muirhead, married Gavin Hamilton, heir to the estate of Orbistoun in Lanarkshire. Their marriage was one of the first in a long line of marriages between the Muirhead and Hamilton families.

The eldest child of Willielmo and Jean de Muirhead, William, also married a Hamilton: Mariota. Being the oldest son, William inherited the titles and estates of his father; and it would be his descendants who would carry the family name through the

centuries. William Muirhead was knighted by King James IV, thereafter taking the appellation: *Sir William Muirhead of Lauchope*. He was appointed to the position of Lord Clerk Register, but resigned from that position. William then served his king as Secretary of State and as one of the Lords of Council and Session. William and Mariota gave birth to two sons: John (1443-1513) and Richard (-1504).

Richard Muirhead, the youngest son of William and Mariota Muirhead, followed his uncles into the service of the Church. He was appointed Dean of Glasgow and also held the position of Lord Clerk-Register of Scotland under King James IV. Richard was appointed as one of the Lords of Council and Session

and also served as Secretary of State for a period of ten years. Richard participated in a delegation charged with finding a consort for King James IV. The enterprise resulted in the marriage of King James IV to Margaret, the daughter of Henry VII, king of England, and the ultimate joining of the two kingdoms.

John Muirhead, the eldest son of William and Mariota Muirhead, inherited the titles of *Laird of Muirhead and of Lauchope and Bullis*. John married Margaret Hepburn and fathered one son, John, before he gave his life on 09 September 1513, at the Battle of Flodden Field in defense of King James IV.

John Muirhead, the only son of John Muirhead of Lauchope and Bullis, the Laird of Muirhead who died at Flodden, married Margaret Borthwick. Their union resulted in the birth of two sons: James (1490-) and William (1520-). It has been claimed by members of the Stark family that John saved the life of King James III from the attack of a bull, and in appreciation, the king



The Battle Of Flodden, by Hans Burgkmair

granted him the name of ‘Stark’, meaning *strength* in Gaelic, to honor his valor. Only the youngest son, William, utilized the Stark surname, and became the progenitor of many Stark/Starke descendants.

The family surname and titles were passed on through the original line, eventually ending, eight generations later, with Captain James Muirhead who married Elspeth Fairly. They gave birth to two daughters, and the right to represent the ancient family devolved to the last male heir, John Muirhead of Shawfutte (1512-1592), whose son, John (1550-), purchased the Bredisholm estate.



Used with kind permission by Alan Dawson, Centre for Digital Library Research, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.

The chiefship of the family of Muirhead next passed through the descendants of John Muirhead of Shawfutte and continued four generations until it reached James Muirhead (1644-1719) who married Helen Stewart. When James died in 1719, there being no male heir to inherit the chiefship and titles of the Muirhead family, the honor went to a daughter, Euphemia.

Through Euphemia Muirhead’s marriage to Archibald Grosiert / Grosset of Logie, the chiefship passed into the Grosiert / Grosset family. The youngest of Archibald and Euphemia’s sons, James Grosset, made his living as a merchant prince of Lisbon,

Portugal. In the year 1754, James purchased the Bredisholm estate from his uncle, John Muirhead of Bredisholm (1676-1762). He thereafter joined the name of Muirhead to his own of Grosset to become James Grosset-Muirhead of Bredisholm. When James' only son, John, died in 1836, the chiefship of the Muirhead clan devolved to his uncle, Alexander's granddaughter, Miriam, who became heiress to the Bredisholm estate on 11 December, 1838. On that occasion she changed her surname to Grosset-Muirhead. With Miriam's marriage to Abraham Du Vernet, the chiefship passed into the Du Vernet family.

The only son of Abraham and Miriam, Henry, acquired the Bredisholm estate and titles upon the death of his father in 1844 and assumed the name of Henry Du Vernet Grosset-Muirhead. The chiefship eventually passed to Henry's eldest granddaughter, Emily Gertrude Lilius Du Vernet Grosset-Muirhead.

The Emigrant Muirheads

The chiefship of the Muirhead clan apparently ended when Emily passed on. But the family, by no means, died out. In addition to a number of family lines that continued to reside (and still do) in Scotland; certain families emigrated from their Scottish homeland to Ireland, to the Americas (from Canada to the Carribean Islands), to Australia, and even to Russia, where their descendants have multiplied and thrived. The reasons for the emigrations varied.

Circa 1630, Charles Muirhead settled in Northumberland County, *i.e.* the 'Northern Neck' of the Virginia Colony. His descendants would spread southward to take up residence throughout the Virginia Piedmont region and into North Carolina. They would also move westward into what is today West Virginia. Of Charles' descendants, three men would become governors (two for Kentucky and one for North Carolina).

John Muirheid and James Muirheid, were brothers and Covenanters who were punished for their religious belief. After spending time in prisons in Scotland, they were banished to the American Colonies. John and James arrived at the port of New

York in 1685. John Muirheid became the progenitor of a large American family. In 1706 John married Rebecca Bailey and they settled in New Jersey. From there, the descendants of John and Rebecca moved southward into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Others moved on southward, ending up in Mississippi. From there, descendants of John and Rebecca spread westward into Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas; and northward into Tennessee, Kentucky and Missouri. Very little is known about James after his arrival at America. Apparently he continued to reside in New Jersey because he presided at the baptism of his niece Rebecca, John and Rebecca's daughter, in 1719.

Some emigrants from Scotland left their homeland perhaps because of wanderlust and a desire to remove their families from famines and hard times. In 1610, King James I of England (*variously*, James VI of Scotland) established a colony in the northeastern region of Ireland that would become known as the Ulster Plantation. He encouraged the Lowland Scots to take up residence in that colony, and some of the Muirheads, including a man by the name of Thomas, chose to do so. In turn, during the 1700s, Ireland was struck by famines. Many of the Scots who had made Ulster their home, now as Ulster-Scots, emigrated from those new homes to travel across the Atlantic to the American colonies. They immigrated to the colonies of Pennsylvania and the Carolinas, which welcomed any and all newcomers to increase their frontier populations.

Robert Muirhead (a great-grandson of Thomas of Ulster) and his two nephews, Samuel Moorhead and John Moorhead (both sons of Robert's brother, John), chose Pennsylvania in which to settle. James Alexander Moorhead, a great-grandson of Robert's brother, John, made the decision to settle in North Carolina. Another of Robert's nephews, John Moorhead (a son of Robert's brother, William), chose to settle in South Carolina. Robert's descendants, for the most part, remained in Pennsylvania; those of Samuel and John moved westward into Ohio. The descendants of John Moorhead who immigrated to South Carolina tended to stay there, with some movement into Georgia. Some of James Alexander's descendants remained in North Carolina, while others moved westward into Kentucky and others of the mid-west.

Immigrants to the United States of America during the 19th Century included William and Agnes Muirhead, who made their new home in the state of Connecticut; and Robert Kirkland Muirhead, who made a home for his family in the state of Florida. Others, who came to the United States after the Revolutionary War made their new homes in Nebraska, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and other mid-west states.

During the 19th Century, a number of emigrants from Scotland decided to travel half-way around the world to make their new homes in Australia and New Zealand. After her husband, James Muirhead, died, Anne and a number of her children packed up and left their Glasgow home to settle in Australia. Alexander Reid and his wife, Mary (Muirhead), immigrated to Tasmania, an island off the coast of Australia. Robert Hunter Muirhead moved his family from Inveresk to Adelaide; their descendants flourished and thrived in South Australia. And lastly it should be noted that one family, that of George and Ann Muirhead, moved from their home in London, England to make a new home in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Our Enterprising Kinfolk

A number of the descendants of Willielmo de Muirhead have made significant contributions to society. Others have been blessed with an entrepreneurial spirit that has enabled them to succeed in their particular fields of interest. This section will highlight a few of those enterprising kinfolk.

William Shirley Karr 1909 ~ 1985

{ Descended from 1685 Covenanter immigrant, John Muirhead (1659-1725) } Aerial photographer.

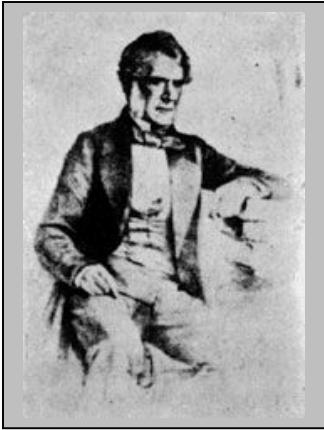
William Shirley Karr was born on 04 August, 1909 in DeWitt County, Illinois, a son of Frank Karr and Dottie Rose Muirheid.

William served in the US Army Air Corps in the 1930s. He trained as an aerial photographer. After his service, William

obtained employment with the Abrams Aerial Survey Corp., at Lansing, Michigan. He eventually worked his way up to Director in that company before co-organizing the Abrams Instrument Corp., in 1940 with Talbert “Ted” Abrams, the ‘father of aerial photography.’.

In addition to many other achievements, William Shirley Karr co-invented the Folding Pocket Stereoscope and a method for making mosaic maps. He died on 20 August, 1985.

Charles Morehead 1807 ~ 1882



Charles Morehead studied at Edinburgh and at Paris, where he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine. In 1829 Dr. Charles Morehead went to India. At Bombay, in 1845, he co-founded Grant Medical College, serving as its first Head and as Professor of Medicine. In 1881, Dr. Charles Morehead published the book, *Researches On The Diseases Of India In 1856.*

James Turner Morehead 1797 ~ 1854

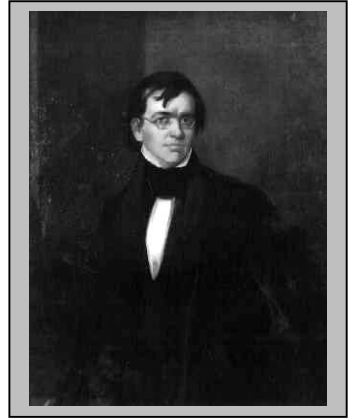
{Descended from the 1630 immigrant, Charles Morehead (1609-1692).} Governor, Senator

James Turner Morehead, son of Armistead Morehead and Elizabeth Latham, was born on 24 May, 1797 at Sheperdsville, Kentucky.

James studied law under Judges H.P. Brodnax and John J. Crittenden. He started his own law practice at Bowling Green, Kentucky in the year 1816.

In 1828 James was elected to the Kentucky state Legislature. Four years later, in 1832, he was elected to the position of Lieutenant Governor. James Turner Morehead succeeded to the office of Governor upon the death of Governor Breathitt on 21 February, 1834. James Turner Morehead was

Kentucky's first native son to be elected to the office of Governor. After serving as Governor until 1836, James served another term in the Legislature starting in 1837. Between 1838 and 1841, James served as the president of the State Board of Internal Improvements. On 04 March, 1841 Mr. Morehead was elected (by the Whig Party) to serve in the United States Senate representing Kentucky. He served in the Senate until 03 March, 1847.



Governor Morehead is notable for establishing the Kentucky Association of Professional Teachers. He also was instrumental in getting the Kentucky Common School Society established.

James Turner Morehead died on 28 December, 1854.

James Watt 1736 ~ 1819

{Descended from Willielmo and Jean de Muirhead}

Inventor

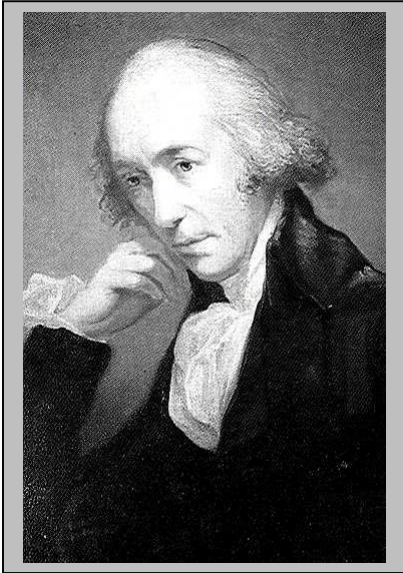
Most every child who has attended public school and taken science courses has heard the tale of how James Watt watched a kettle of water boiling. As the water boiled, the steam given off raised the kettle's lid. From that experience, so the story goes, the young Scotsman developed his theory on using the power of steam to produce motion.

James Watt was the son of James Watt Sr., and Agnes Muirhead. His great-grandfather on his father's side had been a Covenanter who died in a battle against the Marquis of Montrose. His paternal grandfather, Thomas Watt, was a native of Aberdeenshire and came to settle in Greenock, near Glasgow, where James' father was born in 1699. James' father made a living as a shipwright and merchant. He married Agnes Muirhead, a descendant of the Muirheads of Lauchope.

Agnes taught her son, James, reading. She also took James to Glasgow, where he learned and became interested in science by the influence of a relative, Professor George Muirhead at the

Glasgow University. James later took up the profession of instrument maker for the Glasgow University.

The tale that children learn in school is somewhat correct,



but not entirely. James Watt did not invent the steam engine. A crude version of an engine powered by steam had originally been invented by Thomas Newcomen in 1712. What James Watt did was that he took Newcomen's invention and improved upon it by developing the concept of using a condenser separate from the cylinder to conserve and re-use the steam. That was in 1765.

During the decade from 1765 to 1776, James worked at improving the steam engine

beyond the simple addition of adding the condenser. He developed the automatic regulator to maintain a constant speed of the engine's shaft.

The steam engine, as produced by James Watt, revolutionized industry. It made it possible to power factories on a large scale, that simply wasn't possible before. Coal mines could be dug deeper by using the steam engine to move the hoists to lift the coal out of the mines. The iron industry was able to shift from the expensive use of charcoal to the more economical use of coke because the steam engine provided a uniform and strong blast. All sorts of manufacturing processes which had to be done by hand could now be sped up and increased in volume by using steam engines. Throughout the Isles and across Europe and America, steam engine employing James Watt's improvements were being installed in flour mills, paper mills, breweries, spinning and weaving factories and so many other industries.

James Watt was finding the requests for his steam engines to be overwhelming before long. So, in 1776, he entered into a business partner-ship with Matthew Boulton, who owned an

engineering firm in Birmingham. The partnership produced over five hundred steam engines by the year 1786.

James Watt died on 19 August, 1819.

A Muirhead Miscellany

The Tale Of Flodden As Told By The Bards

The story of the Battle of Flodden Field has been told many times in verse over the years. It is no wonder. The battle has been called the last medieval battle to have been fought on the Isles. In a few short hours the most beloved of the Scottish kings and the best of the noblemen had departed this life. It has been said that every single clan and family in Scotland lost members that day. In some cases, the entire clan was virtually destroyed. The Muirhead clan could be included in the list of those which all but disappeared. But it was not completely annihilated, and generations continued to spawn generations, and here we are today, remembering and grieving for those that died on that fateful day in September, 1513.

A revered poem relating to the Battle of Flodden Field is titled, *The Laird Of Muirhead*. Written by Sir Walter Scott, it is believed to have been part of a larger work. The provenance of the poem states that it was part of 'a large Collection' of Scott's works 'belonging to Mr. Alexander Monro, merchant residing in Lisbon', Portugal, 'but supposed now to be lost.' It might have been in Lisbon, that J. Grossett Muirhead, Esq. Of Breadesholm, found the poem, and realizing it related to his own ancestors, 'extracted' it from the larger work; rather, he copied it alone without copying the entire poem. As noted in the 1861 note, by that time the entire piece, or Song, had become 'lost', and all that remains is this single fragment. The piece was communicated by Mr. Muirhead to a Mr. Herd, who made it available to be included in Volume III of *The Poetical Works Of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* Subtitled, *Minstrelsy Of The Scottish Border*, the third volume of poetical works by Sir Walter Scott was published in Edinburgh in 1861 by Adam and Charles Black.

The Laird Of Muirhead

Afore the King in order stude
The stout laird of Muirhead,
Wi' that same twa-hand muckle sword
That Bartram fell'd stark dead

He sware he wadna lose his right
To fight in ilka field;
Nor budge him from his liege's sight
Till his last gasp should yield.

Twa hunder mair of his ain name,
Frae Torwood and the Clyde,
Sware they would never gang to hame
But a' die by his syde

And wondrous weel they kept their troth;
This sturdy royal band
Rush'd down the brae wi' sic a pith
That nane could them withstand.

Mony a bloody blow they dealt,
The like was never seen;
And, hadna that braw leader fall'n
They ne'er had slain the king.

The Muirhead Clan Badge

In ancient times, a Chief wore in battle a distinguishing badge on his helmet, a device that his followers could recognize in the turmoil of action This is known as the *Crest of the Chief*, and appears at the top of his *heraldic achievement* (i.e. coat of arms). The clan badge generally takes the form of the Chief's Crest



surrounded by a Strap and Buckle Garter.

Anyone bearing the same name as a Scottish Chief is considered a *clansman* of the Chief, and has the privilege of wearing the clan badge to denote his clan allegiance.

An historic clan badge for the Muirhead Clan is not known to have existed. Indeed, even whether the original Muirhead family considered themselves to constitute a *clan* is questionable. In the absence of such an historic

clan badge, Raymond L. Morehead created one. The badge shown here is, therefore, an artistic representation of what the clan badge could have looked like.

The imagery of the badge derives from the poem of Sir Walter Scott, *The Laird Of Muirhead*, which begins:

Afore the King in order stude
The stout laird of Muirhead,
Wi' that same two-hand muckle sword
That Bartram fell'd stark dead.

The phrase, *two-hand muckle sword*, translates as ‘two-handed great sword’, similar (and possibly referring) to the famed Scottish sword, the *claidhmhichean-mhora*, or *claymore*.

The Killing Of Bartram Shotts

At the beginning of this booklet an account is given of the tradition of the *Laird of Muirhead of That-ilk, de Muirhead* (apparently referring to Willielmo de Muirhead dating to the time of the reign of King Robert II), killing and cutting off the head of Bartram de Shotts in the company of “*a few of his company, to whose courage and valor he could well trust*”. This account is one which can be believed without much effort.

There is another legend, though, which has come down to us from our ancestors concerning the killing of Bartram de Shotts, which is a little more fantastical.

Bartram was a robber, and a large one at that. He was associated with the parish in Lanarkshire known by the name of Shotts. The parish, according to a tradition, acquired its name from the Anglo-Saxon word *shot*, which meant a ‘plot’ of ground. The particular area in Lanarkshire which acquired the name of Shotts is claimed to have been a tract of land which Bartram, a pioneer in the wilderness began to cultivate. The tract, which by the Nineteenth Century had dwindled to the space occupied by the Church and cemetery of St. Catherine’s, therefore was known by the name of *Bartramshotts*, and the man became known as *Bartram de Shotts*.

Being tall, Bartram outmatched any rival and became the terror of the region. He took to robbing his neighbors and his exploits became so outrageous that the something had to be done to stop him. The local governmental officials placed a reward on his head, promising *a hawk's-flight of land* in exchange for the actual head of the terror. The Laird of Muirhead, perhaps being one of those neighbors who had experienced the robber's depredations, decided to make the attempt to gain the reward. The Laird of Muirhead knew that, to quench his thirst, Bartram frequented a well that sprang forth in a glen near the place known as Shottsburn. The Laird arranged a number of cart-loads of heather close by the well so as to provide a place of concealment. From behind the pile of heather, the Laird of Muirhead might watch the approach of Bartram, the giant. Bartram, coming upon the pile of heather by the well, considered it with a bit of suspicion, but eventually accepted it as non-dangerous, and resumed his use of the water of the well with ease. When the Laird of Muirhead saw that Bartram was not bothered by the heather pile, he hid himself behind it and waited for the next approach of the giant.

Bartram came to the well and stretched himself out flat on his belly upon the ground, as he was accustomed to do, so that he could place his lips on the surface of the water and drink. The Laird of Muirhead crept stealthily from his place of concealment, and with his broadsword gave the giant a blow across his hamstrings, rendering him unable to walk in a split second. Bartram immediately knew the misfortune that had befallen him, but gave an involuntary and spasmodic laugh as he twisted around to see who had crippled him.

"*Will ye laugh-up yet?*" Muirhead exclaimed. It was said that, when the prize was to be presented to the Laird of Muirhead, and the hawk was set loose to mark out the tract of land as the reward, the place where it alighted was given the name of *Lauchope* in reference to the phrase uttered by the Laird.

This has been only a very short history of the Muirhead Clan. A more complete history is being written by Larry D. Smith. It will include the information included in this booklet along with full genealogies of as many lines as possible.