

CLAN POLLOCK



CINNEADH POLLAG

POLLAG

A POOL OF INFORMATION

29 June 1986

MOTTO

Audacter et Strenue
Bold and Strong

Volume 1

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POLLOCK, POLLOK, POOK, POLK, POLKE, PAULK, POALK, POALKE, POULK, POOLKE, POGUE

"A person who takes no pride in the noble achievements of remote ancestors cannot expect to be remembered for his noble deeds by remote descendants."

Editor's Corner

This edition of the Pollag contains the last installment of the history of the Maxwell family. I hope you enjoyed the history and found it interesting. For those of you who missed episodes and want to read the entire history, at the end of this final installment, I have provided the name of a bookseller from whom you can purchase the entire manuscript.

In the May/June 1986 edition of The Highlander there is an article entitled "Dormant and Vacant Clan Chiefships." The article contains a list, revised in February 1986, by Sir Crispin Agnew of Lochnaw, Bt., Unicorn Pursuivant of Arms. The introductory paragraph is as follows:

"The following list gives the names of clans and families, who have had a chief officially recognized by the crown at some time. It cannot be considered as a definitive list, but is the product of research into the Lyon court Registers and other reference books. The Name & Style or title by which the chiefly family was known is given. The date in brackets (i.e. (1842)) is

the last date at which a chief is officially recorded; where there is no date this indicates that no reliable date of last recording is available."

The list contains two names of interest to us. One is "Maxwell, Earl of Nithsdale (1776)," and the other is "Pollock of that Ilk (1845)." This is the first reliable evidence I have seen which indicates that there was a "clan" of some kind, which was recognized by the crown, whose chief was Pollock of the Ilk.

A reminder -- dues for 1986 are past due. Sometimes these things slip our minds, especially when you do not receive a bill. But please, if you haven't sent your money to Rosemary yet, do so now. Use the dues slip at the end of this edition of the Pollag or a facsimile thereof.

New Members

It's always a pleasure to welcome new members to the clan. We have three new members to welcome this quarter. They are:

Bruce W. Pollock	2321 E. Beverly Rd. Milwaukee, WI 53211
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Ray J. Pollock	203 St. Eusebia St. Pensacola, FL 32503
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John R. Pollock	9610 Strawgrass Dr. Houston, TX 77064
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Ross I. Pollock	2906 Soway St. Houston, TX 77080
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Ray Pollock is my cousin and John is his son. Ross Pollock is the brother of Susan Keenan of St. Augustine, Florida.

Welcome to you all and we sincerely hope you will enjoy your clan membership.

The Maxwell History (Continued)

"At the Battle of Langside, Lord Herries commanded Mary's horse, who were almost all dependents and tenants of Lord Maxwell, his nephew." -- Editor's Note According to at least one source I have seen, John Pollock of Pollock, twelfth in descent from the first Robert, participated in the Battle of Langside on behalf of Mary, for which he was forfeited. The battle took place at Langside, which today lies in the environs of Glasgow, only a few miles north of what was the Barony of Pollock. If anyone has any additional information regarding his participation in the battle, please send it to me. -- "On the defeat of the Queen's army, he conducted her to his own house at

Terregles, where she rested some days. Thence she went to Dundrennan Abbey. There, in spite of his earnest entreaties, she persisted in throwing herself on the protection of Elizabeth, so he accompanied her to Carlisle.

On orders of Queen Mary, he went to London carrying letters to the English Queen, expressing her strong desire for a personal interview. Her request was declined. He acted as one of her commissioners at York and Westminster, and took an active part in the negotiations and intrigues for her restoration to liberty. With the view of accommodating matters between the two parties, a meeting took place between the leaders on each side. An agreement was reached whereby the Duke of Chatelherault would acknowledge the authority of the infant King. In turn the Regent became bound to get the sentence of forfeiture pronounced on Queen Mary's friends rescinded, and their estates restored. But at the convention which followed, the Duke showed a disposition to recede from his promise, and pleaded for delay in taking the oath of allegiance to the King. Upon this the Regent imprisoned him in the Castle of Edinburgh, along with Lord Herries, on whom he laid the whole blame for the Duke's vacillating conduct. They recovered their liberty shortly after the assassination of the Regent.

Lord Herries ultimately submitted to the King's government on the conclusion of the treaty of peace at Perth, 23rd February, 1573, between the Regent Morton, and Chatelherault and Huntly representing the Queen's party. However, he did take part with other nobles in the plot to deprive Morton of the office of Regent, and was appointed one of the council of twelve who were to assist the young King when he assumed the government. He attached himself to the party of Esme Stewart, Lord d'Aubigny, the royal favorite, who was created Earl and Duke of Lennox. The Duke made various unsuccessful efforts to effect a reconciliation between Lord Herries and his enemies before the Duke was sent out of the kingdom.

Lord Herries died suddenly on Sunday, 20th January, 1582, when going to an upper chamber in William Fowkes' lodging, in the time of sermon. He said before dinner that he durst not trust himself to go to the afternoon's preaching, because he found himself weak. Leaning to a wall, he fell down little by little, saying to a woman who followed, 'Hold me, for I am not weale.' His wife survived him ten years. They had issue four sons and seven daughters. William Maxwell, the eldest son, succeeded his father as fifth Lord Herries, and John Maxwell, the eldest of his eight sons, became sixth Lord Herries in 1603. Nothing worthy of special notice occurred in their history. John Maxwell, the seventh Lord Herries, as we have seen, succeeded as third Earl of Nithsdale, on the death of his kinsman Robert, second Earl, without issue, in 1667."

And thus ends the story of the Maxwells of Scotland. Their fortunes and misfortunes since 1667, I know not. I do know that today the title Earl of Nithsdale is vacant and Clan Maxwell has no officially recognized clan chief.

I hope you all enjoyed the history. A complete manuscript can be purchased by writing -- Scotpress, P.O. Box 778, Morgantown, WV 26505. Ask for "The Maxwells" from "The Great Historic Families of Scotland."

The Battle of Dryfe Sands

As we have seen in the history of the Maxwells, a clan feud developed from a series of disputes which occurred over a period of time between the Lords Maxwell and Johnstone. As did many of the feuds of that day it culminated in battle, the Battle of Dryfe Sands. The battle took place in December, 1593, and was one of the bloodiest in the annals of border warfare. Sir John Pollock of that ilk was killed while fighting for the Maxwell cause. The following account of the battle is quoted from a book by William McDowall entitled History of the Burgh of Dumfries published in 1873.

It was in the dead of the year when Lord Maxwell, as Warden of the West March, approached the Dryfe River in vicinity of the small town of Lockerbie in Annandale....

Maxwell, "as a matter of precaution, sent a reconnoitering company on before, under the command of Captain Oliphant. The ill-fated troop went to watch the enemy's movements, but was too rash and regardless of its own. When in the neighborhood of Bruce's ancient burgh, a numerous body of the Johnstones, led by James Johnstone of Kirkton, rushed suddenly upon Oliphant's men, and put many of them to the sword, the Captain himself falling in the fray. The rest fled to safety in the parish church, but it afforded them no protection. Fire was ruthlessly applied to the sacred building; and as the roof was formed of straw, which fed the destructive flames, the edifice soon became literally too hot to hold the refugees, and they were forced to surrender.

Thus the war opened in a manner that foreboded evil to the men of Nithsdale. Maxwell, however, on hearing of the disaster, hurried forward, hoping soon to eclipse it by a brilliant victory. Late of the 6th of December, 1593, he crossed the Lochmaben Hills with his army, encamping for the night on the Skipmyre heights, below which, at a considerable distance, flowed the Dryfe -- a river so called from the driving rush of its waters when swelled by rain.

Crossing it next forenoon, the Maxwells found themselves faced by the Johnstones, the latter of whom were strongly posted on an elevated piece of ground, which now forms part of the parish

glebe. This ridge is about forty feet high at its north end, and slopes gradually away southward: the Dryfe flowing at that time much further westward than at present, and leaving room on its left bank for the evolutions of the combatants. Sir James Johnstone possessed no small amount of military skill; and by disposing his men on this acclivity, he was able to force the Maxwells into an engagement on ground which the latter would never of their own choice have taken up. Their position was quite exposed, and they must either fight under serious disadvantages or commence a humiliating retreat -- an alternative which they never thought of resorting to.

Johnstone further strengthened himself and encouraged his men by some adroit preliminary maneuvering, which Maxwell, relying mainly on sheer force, failed to counteract. Had the hostile ranks closed on equal terms, and in a trial of strength alone, the likelihood is that Maxwell's high hopes would have been realized; but from the manner in which he was situated, and the mode of warfare chosen by the opposing army, he was never able to bring more than half of his men into action.

Johnstone initiated the fighting by sending forth some prickners to ride and make provocation. On went the horsemen thus commissioned, flaunting their pennons in the faces of their foe-man, hurling at them stinging epithets, if not material missiles, challenging them to come on if they dared, shouting the Johnstone's war-cry, 'Ready, aye ready!' as if to reproach the unreadiness of their opponents, and then riding back unharmed to their own ranks.

To be bearded in this fashion was more than flesh and blood of the Maxwell stamp could bear; and when the tormentors returned, repeated their exasperating conduct, and then exultingly retired, the Warden -- enraged at a time when coolness was specially needed -- sent a large detachment after them, who rushed forth impetuously, crying, 'Wardlaw! Wardlaw!' varied by 'I bid you bide, Wardlaw!' -- the well known slogan of the Nithsdale chief." -- Editor's Note. Wardlaw is the name of a hill in the immediate vicinity of Caerlaverock Castle. -- "This was the very movement which Johnstone had wished to provoke.

The retreating horsemen never thought of turning rein in a vain attempt to stem the torrent let loose upon them. Getting out of the way as rapidly as possible, they allowed it to be met by those who were standing ready to roll it back, and who did so. The Nithsdale detachment was received by a much larger body, and broken up; and its fragments, falling back, communicated to the main body of Maxwells a share of its own confusion.

This was the crisis of the battle. As yet, there had been nothing but skirmishing, with little bloodshed. If the Wardens army had stood firm when the Johnstones, in full force, charged

down upon them, the fortunes of the day might still have been redeemed. As soon as the Annandale men left the heights, they gave up all the advantages of their position -- only however, to improve the advantage given by the panic into which the Maxwells were thrown. The latter never recovered from the disorder caused by the repulse of their assailing troops; and when, consequent upon that mishap, they were visited with a general assault, they, after a brief but desperate resistance, gave way on all sides.

The Lairds of Lag, Closeburn, and Drumlanrig escaped by the fleetness of their steeds. Lord Maxwell was less fortunate than his brother barons. When resistance was useless, he retreated with the relics of his army from the field -- each of the fugitives going his own separate way, but most of them proceeding in the direction of Lockerbie, the victors following hard upon their track, and ruthlessly slaying all whom they overtook.

On the Holm of Dryfe, about half a mile below the old churchyard of the parish, were to be seen, till recently, two large bushes, called 'Maxwell's Thorns,' which commemorated this sanguinary battle and its sorrowful episode -- the death of the defeated nobleman. To the spot where these venerable trees 'scented the dewey air,' came the Lord of Nithsdale when the fight was over and hope was gone, no way eager to survive his disgrace, and easily overtaken by a young Annandale trooper -- the sanguinary hero of Biddes Burn -- who had resolved to capture, maim, or kill the enemy of his clan.

Some days before the battle, Maxwell, it is said, had offered a ten-pound land to any one who should bring him the head or hand of Johnstone; which caused his antagonist to retaliate by announcing that, though he had not a ten-pound land to give, he would bestow a farm of half that value on the man who should bring him the head or hand of Maxwell. Stimulated by this tempting offer, and also, perhaps, by hatred toward the Nithsdale men, which all the blood shed at Biddes Burn had failed to slake, William Johnstone of Kirkhill hurried after the fugitive lord, and struck him from his horse. According to one report, the unfortunate baron held out his hand, and claimed to be taken prisoner, even as he had in similar circumstances spared the life of the Laird of Johnstone; and, instead of his plea being heeded, the supplicating hand was cut off, and then he was slain outright.

Tradition, on the contrary, states that Willie of Kirkhill, after obtaining the ghastly sign-manual which attested his claim to receive a five-pound land from his chief, rode away, and that the wife of James Johnstone of Kirkton discovered Maxwell lying wounded, and beat him to death -- a story which we reproduce, though it seems to us highly improbable.

Soon after the battle, it is said, Dame Johnstone issued forth from Kirkton Tower, with a female attendant, for the purpose of seeking her husband, and also of giving relief to those who might have been left wounded on the field. Locking the gates with her own hand, and having the keys suspended to her girdle, she soon reached the precincts of the fatal spot, and there, in the dim gloaming, discovered the hapless warrior lying bleeding and faint under an old fir tree. On bending down to inquire his name and condition, the sufferer gasped out, 'I am the Lord Maxwell; succor me, or I die!' and caught his visitor convulsively by her garment. Thus appealed to, the Dame, cruelly dour, as if she had not had a drop of 'weeping blood' in her bosom, swung the ponderous keys by the cord which fastened them, and brought them down sheer on the head of the prostrate suppliant. Blow after blow of this kind, until the chieftain's brains were knocked out, formed the sole answer given by this fiend in lady's likeness to his cry for mercy; and she strode away from the mangled carcass mightily satisfied with her evening's work.

But this Annandale monster is, we believe, a mere creation of the fancy; and we notice the legend only to say that it is unworthy of credit. The likelihood is that Willie of Kirkhill, taking a lesson from the Kirkpatrick motto, made sure of his reward by cutting off the head as well as the hand of the prostrate warrior.

Slain he was, at all events; and the body of the brave lord, lying gory and mutilated on the banks of Dryfe, was a pitiful sight, had it been seen by eyes susceptible of pity; a chief of high descent, the head of a noble house, the representative of royalty, and in spite of his turbulent temper possessing many personal claims to respect and affection -- being 'of great spirit, humane, courteous, and learned' -- to be thus ruthlessly mutilated and slaughtered in his manhood's prime, was indeed tragical, and strikingly illustrative of the fury too often engendered by the Border feuds." --Editor's Note Lord Maxwell was born in 1553, so at the time of his death was but forty years old. --

"His followers suffered to a fearful extent. Never before had the Johnstones obtained such an opportunity of smiting their hereditary foes. Comparatively few of the Maxwells fell in the battle, but hundreds of them were cut off in flight; and many who escaped with life were cruelly wounded, especially by slashes in the face -- called proverbially, 'Lockerbie licks' -- marks of which they bore till their dying day. The fugitives were pursued as far as the Gotterby ford of the river Annan, in which numbers sank, and swelled the roll of victims. Altogether, not fewer than seven hundred of the Maxwell party perished in the disastrous battle of Dryfe Sands, the bloodiest of an internecine kind ever fought on the Border fells."

-- Editor's Note Other accounts of this battle state that most of the "Lockerbie Licks" were inflicted by men of the Johnstone forces on horseback. Upon overtaking a Maxwell soldier in flight, the riders swung their swords down toward the head of the hapless victim, inflicting a deep angular cut across the face. -- a Lockerbie Lick. --

Until next time,

Aye,

Bill

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