

# The River City Caledonian

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 1

NOVEMBER 2019



## New Members, New Society Year

We kicked off our Society year with the 2019 Richmond Highland Games/ Central Virginia Celtic Festival at the Racetrack grounds. Thanks to all the members who helped out at our tent. The threatening weather turned out not so threatening after all, thank goodness! We were glad to see several additions to our membership during this time—welcome to all new members!

We also want to welcome our new president, Alice Graham—it's great to get “new blood” into the leadership for 2020, and we look forward to a great Society year!

There will be a planning meeting Friday, November 6, 6:00, at Rare Olde Times, 10602 Patterson Ave, Henrico VA 23228. You are very welcome to come to the meeting and add your voice in planning our events for the coming year, as well as have a bite to eat. There will be a band that night, Instant Karma, if you'd like to stick around to listen after the meeting; they begin at 8:00.

A new Society year means annual dues are now upon us. Please renew by sending a check made out to Scottish Society of Richmond ( (\$20 for individual membership, \$35 for family membership) to:

Ann Terrill-Scholte  
6918 Woodrow Terrace  
Henrico, VA 23228

Folks reading this who are not members can download a membership application from our website [richmondscots.org](http://richmondscots.org)

### Next Event: Kirkin' of the Tartans

Come join us for the Kirkin' of the Tartans to be held at Bon Air Presbyterian Church on Sunday, November 24, at 10:00 (please arrive early!) And wear a bit o' tartan!

Address: 9201 W Huguenot Rd, Richmond, VA 23235

# History of the Kirkin'

by Todd Wilkinson

While the Kirkin' o' the Tartan service celebrates Scotland and Scottish heritage, it is a truly a Scottish-American custom. If one searches the Internet for information, stories abound of the Kirkin's roots being in days of the Act of Proscription, when the wearing of the kilt was banned in the Highlands - according to the legend, Highlanders hid pieces of tartan and brought them to church to be secretly blessed at a particular point in the service. Ask any Scot or Scottish expatriate about the Kirkin', and chances are you will be met with a questioning look and an admission of ignorance of this supposedly centuries-old Scottish tradition.

In his famous collection of Highland folklore, prayers, charms and omens, the Carmina Gadelica, Alexander Carmichael does list a prayer for the "Consecration of the Cloth", but no mention is made of it originating from the days following the '45 or being associated with outlawed tartan. Whilst making for a rather romantic legend, there seems to be no credible source for such a tale. The real history of the Kirkin' service is "All American", with a Scottish "twist".

The Rev. Peter Marshall, originally from Coatbridge, Scotland, was the pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington DC, and served as

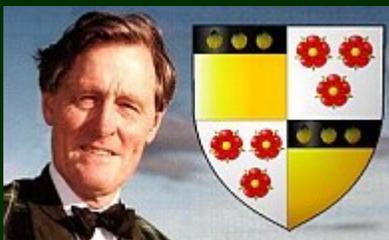
Chaplain of the United States Senate before his untimely death in 1949. Rev. Marshall is believed to be the originator of the Kirkin' o' the Tartan service. During the Second World War, Rev. Marshall held prayer services at New York Avenue to raise funds for British war relief. At one of the services on April 27, 1941 (although a May 1943 date is sometimes mentioned) Rev. Marshall gave a sermon entitled "the Kirkin' o' the Tartans" -and thus a legend was born.



## Clan Profile: Clan Graham

Some say the Grahams are descendants of the Graeme who commanded the armies of Fergus II in 404 AD. Others are equally convinced that they are of Norman descent, while yet others claim a Flemish or even Danish descent.

**James Graham**, the 8th Duke of Montrose, is the current "An Greumach Mhor" (Chief of the Grahams)



The official tartan of the Clan Graham Society is the Modern Montrose Graham. There is an alternative tartan, the Menteith Graham. This provision is made as a courtesy to the descendants of the Menteith Graham (peerage line is extinct). There is also an Ancient Montrose and Menteith tartan being an attempt to reproduce the colors of the older vegetable dyes.

Another tartan associated with Clan Graham is known as the Red Graham. This is the plaid worn by **The Great Marquis of Montrose** in 1650 when he was sent to the gallows. It was a **MacNaughton** who gave his red plaid to The Great Marquisto wear to the

gallows so at least Montrose would be spared the indignity of being paraded to his death dressed like a pauper. The "Red Montrose" is very similar to the MacNaughton tartan but the position of two colors has been reversed in the Graham.

Graham Montrose tartan, below:

