



CARR Clan of Central Florida

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Now that the summer of 2010 is past, and cooler weather approaches, the season of “the Games” and all “things Scottish” is upon us. But first, a reminder of “who the Carrs were and are” and with it, the issues of origin. The following is the “Carr” name genesis based on a compendium of authoritative references for the Carr’s (and other spelling derivatives of the name) since the 1200’s.

The great Clan Carr (widely spelled as “Kerr” but universally pronounced “Carr”) is historically well-remembered and regarded in Scotland was known as one of the most loyal and warlike clans of the turbulent Border territories, separating the land of the Britons from that of the Scots. Best described as a conflict between the mountain and plainmen, Scotland’s issue with Britain might best be couched in terms of freedom-loving highland people protesting the loss of freedom.

Most are unaware that the domineering Romans also had trouble with the freedom-loving, independent-minded Scots. It is little known that following the completion of Hadrian’s Wall in 122 A.D., that the Romans began a second wall some seventy miles north, but the freedom-loving Scots made short work of this effort to colonize them.

The Kerr history in Scotland began with the arrival on the scene of two Kerr brothers, Ralph and John around the year 1330. They took up residence in the Scottish lowland area, north of Hadrian’s Wall, 260 years after Britain’s Anglo/Saxon rulers were overwhelmed and defeated by William the Conqueror. In 1066, William brought a huge Norman army from France and defeated England’s King Harald at the “Battle of Hastings” along the south-east coast of England. The arrival of the two Carr brothers quickly established their influence throughout the border area where they built two, new well-defended castles. In the process they incurred the wrath of the British Crown, while also serving as protectors of Scotland’s soft underbelly, the border area facing Britain. Over the next six-hundred years, the Carr’s of Jedburgh piled fame and glory upon the Carr name as Scotland’s shock-troops, the first to rise to the defense of Scotland against never-ending nefarious British efforts to force Scotland to be “British.”⁽¹⁾ From this legacy comes the Kerr/Carr Latin motto, “Sero Sed Serio” which is literally, “Late to arrive on the battlefield but always in earnest.”

Naturally, your next question might be: “where did I come from and exactly how am I related to the historical Carrs of Scotland”? Genealogy is the obvious answer. For those of you just starting your inquiries, it’s a tough question, but with a little perseverance, over time the results can often times be among the most rewarding things possible (especially if you want to pass it along to others who follow you in future generations). Most helpful are the older members of your family, libraries, old newspapers, cemetery records, and (probably easiest today) your computer searches into genealogical databases – some of which are free.

A perfect example is someone who, after a decade of research in the Kerr/Karr/Carr lineage, had been unable to trace back before 1750 in the family history. Then this person discovered, just by chance in 2008, page 23 of the Goffstown News of June 1977. Near the town of New Boston, New Hampshire, the “Goffstown News” reported extensively on a John Karr who in 1735 was related in marriage to Lieutenant Thomas Smith residing in Chester. It was reported that Smith received a government land-grant in 1720. The article also reported that Karr and Smith had been kidnapped by local Indians while working their field (and were later released in 1734) and then went on to mention a host of other local people related to Karr and Smith by marriage and in business.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where can I get information about Scottish events in the United States?

There is a monthly newspaper published called ‘*THE SCOTTISH BANNER*.’ It has been around now for 34 years, and has an incredible amount of useful information about Scottish going-on in the United States and other countries of the world. The paper is sold by subscription, but also has a website with a lot of good information. See: www.scottishbanner.com . A second publication is “The Highlander: the Magazine of Scottish Heritage” a bi-monthly magazine.

What is a clan?

Traditionally, in Scotland, it is a formal gathering of people from nearby villages or towns in an area, who choose to associate for commercial, business, and/or offensive/defensive interests against others around them. These associations elected their “chieftains” who represent them. Clans are traditionally based on the concept of “strength in numbers.”

What is the “Sept”?

“Septs” are variations of the spelling of a clan name. This can also include other nearby Scottish clans (in Scotland or here in the United States), who do not have enough numbers or participants to form their own clan. These groups then choose to attach themselves to a larger clan. For instance, some of the Septs of the Carr Clan are those who spell their names Kerr, Carr, Kjar, Caer, Carrie and Cheara. Clan MacLeod of the USA includes almost 50 Sept names, many of whom have no relationship to the MacLeod Clan directly, with names such as Beton, Caskie, Harold, and Norrie.

What is the Carr Tartan?

There are actually three variations of the Carr Tartan which members of the Carr Clan (or derivatives of this Clan) can wear. Those who may not bear the Carr name, but are related by family ties, may also wear the Carr tartan. The three accepted Carr tartans are the Standard Carr Tartan, the Carr Hunting Tartan, and the Carr Ancient Tartan. The first tartan is a beautiful red & green pattern, while the hunting tartan is commonly also known as the “black watch” tartan of blues and greens. The Ancient Tartan resembles a faded version of the standard red & green design. All designs can be found on the Internet.

What if I am not Scottish but want to wear a kilt?

The American Tartan was recently introduced in the United States for all Americans who want to celebrate Scottish traditions through traditional dress but do not have a clan to which they belong. Also available are tartan designs now for anyone who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force.

Do the Carrs have a Clan Crest (insignia)?

Scotland recognizes the following Kerr Crest as that formally worn by either the Kerr or Carr Clans:

