

The Last Clan Battle Battle of Long Island: To Make a Villain

~ Submitted by Isaac Baird ~

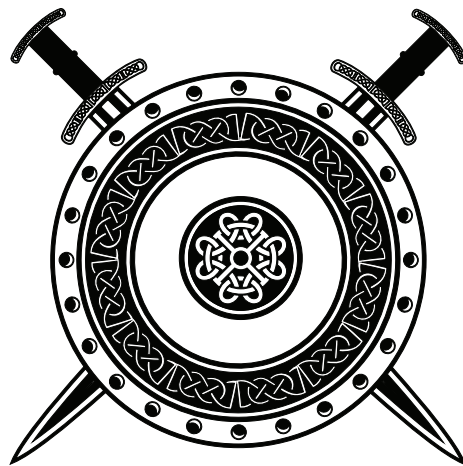
The following is a series of articles of Sir James Gardiner Baird of Saughtonhall and his role in the American War of Independence while serving in a Highlander regiment.

The unique aspect of war is that few engage battle with complete strangers. The opposing side must have not only wronged the other but also represent the worst traits in humanity. We can see this in modern warfare. Propaganda is considered an essential part of any war strategy. The same is true during the American War of Independence. All sides, Canadian, British, and American developed specific propaganda and the villains against which they were opposed. Sir James Baird of Saughtonhall, the leader of the 71st 2nd Battalion Highland Light Infantry, wrongly became a villain in American Propaganda due to his incredible success on the Battlefield.

It is important to stop here and deconstruct a few myths that have grown especially from Hollywood. The American forces lacked experience and discipline. They were not unified in either cause or ideology. Despite rewritten history where wealthy middle-aged landowners marched to war for freedom against tyranny and nobility, the opposite seems to have been true. The poor masses supplied the rank and file. Similarly, the British Forces were in no way experienced soldiers with limitless supplies.

They were raw recruits stranded months away across the ocean from their base.

The adage "History is written by the winners" could also be augmented that historians often write to create a specific narrative. They delete unwanted and unsavory characters depending on how it affects the narrative. Interesting characters, such as the American



William Alexander or General Lord Stirling for the American side, will be forgotten and vile new enemies, such as Sir James Baird for the British side, are created from honorable men.

It was August 1776. The 71st Highlanders, born and raised in the Gaelic speaking regions of Scotland and the sons of those that fought in Culloden,

followed their Clan Chiefs across the ocean to New York. One unit, led by Sir James Baird of Saughtonhall, comprised the Light Infantry Highlanders or an elite advance force of infantry skirmishers that eschewed 18th century battle tactics for guerilla warfare. Their leader learned their culture and language and in return the men pledged their loyalty to him. But that had not yet been on the battlefield and any training was minimal.

General Howe, Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces of North America, had seen this unit in action years earlier and knew of the Highlanders ability. A year earlier, Howe defeated the colonial resistance at Bunker Hill yet had suffered high losses to do so. Separated from Great Britain and without the means to readily replace troops, Howe needed to purchase victory cheaply as steep losses. Victory with heavy losses would lead to a defeat of war. For this reason, Howe evacuated Boston in an attempt to isolate the American forces in New England. He began to gather all of his troops outside of New York City.

For the American side, they unsuccessfully attempted to capture Quebec and were regrouping under General George Washington in New York. Both sides viewed this city as a key to winning. They began to build defensive positions on Brooklyn Heights and reinforced it with "a series of entrenchments and fortifications". With more than 10,000 soldiers encamped, the Americans were preparing for the largest battle the war would see.

Continued on page 4



Ceud Mìle Fàilte!

(100,000 Welcomes)

We welcome to our Clan the following:

Heather Baird Christiansen
Grapevine, Texas

Sean P. Baird
Cheyenne, Wyoming

Tate H. Baird
Mansfield, Texas

Tamara Ann Baird Potts
Madison, Alabama

Judy Herren Catanese
Shreveport, Louisiana

Karen Baird Scott
Helena, Alabama

Glenda Faye Earwood-Smith
Macon, Georgia

Barbara Allen Bergan
Leland, NC

Michael Robert Baird
Allentown, PA

Julie Baird Fagan
East Rochester, NY

Jeanne Baird McDermott
Syracuse, NY

Douglas J. Baird
New York, NY



Flowers of the Forest

George Franklin Baird Junior passed away October 7, 2012 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He is survived by his wife Mary Jeannette Howard-Baird, daughter Catherine Elizabeth Baird, son James Franklin Baird, and brother Charles Baird. He is buried in Rose Hill Memorial Gardens in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He was very proud of his Scottish heritage and he insisted on being married in the great kilt and handmade shirt and jacket of the pre-jacobite era. Our vows were said from

We welcome to our Clan continued...

Roxanna M. Baird
New York, NY

Henry S. Baird
Lewiston, ME

David H. Baird
New York, NY

R. Scott Baird
Rochester, NY

Allison M. Baird
Rochester, NY

Megan A. Baird
Quito, Ecuador

Beth Baird
Dalgety Bay, Fife, Scotland

Robert Gormley
Perth, Scotland

May Gormley
Paisley, Scotland

Laura Virginia Madison
Portsmouth, VA

the old book of common prayers with a bagpiper playing in the background. He was buried while a bagpiper played. He had many interests and was a member of Mensa. He retired after working over 30 years for the State of Oklahoma as a computer systems specialist. He was learning to speak Scots Gaelic when he died after already learning to speak Japanese. He played the recorder, trombone, drum, and bagpipes. He had many interests and read extensively about many different subjects. We would attend the local games whenever we could and while his health was good we would attend the local Scottish club meetings. He is greatly missed.

Kenneth Dalziel Baird, KLJ, KMLJ, KStTA, FSAScot (Edinburgh) Passed away peacefully at St Columba's Hospice, on April 16, 2014, Kenneth, only and dearly loving son of the late William Baird, Master Builder and the late Doris Ormerod and loving stepson of the late Hilda Baird (nee Radford). Service at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Murrayfield Avenue, Edinburgh, on Friday, May 2, 2014, at 10.30 am, cremation thereafter at the Cloister Chapel, Warriston Crematorium.

Published in the Scotsman
Publications on 24th April 2014
(Distributed in Scotland)



clanbairdsociety.com



Message from the President

Hello Baird Family,

We're just coming off a wonderful summer, full of highland games, terrific weather, and some great family reunions. Thanks to some of our loyal members, we were very well represented at a number of Highland Games this year. We had active Baird tents at about 15 games, and a quick glance at both the website and the Gryphon will give you a small taste of how well we were represented.

Our website continues to improve with the hard work and involvement of our webmaster, Linda Gee. A couple of the new features now are the ability to pay your dues online with a credit card, (through PayPal), and we will soon have a passworded "Members Page" where we will be able to add photos and notes directly posted by the members "in good standing" (dues paid). If anyone has photos or articles they would like to post prior to the page being finalized, please send them directly to Linda Gee at webdeveloper@clanbairdsociety.com, and she will add them while the "Members Only" page is finished and activated.

A quick reminder that this is the first edition of the Gryphon that will only be going "digitally" to those members that have shared their email addresses with us (about 80%). Printed copies will still be sent to those members without an email address, and of course anyone else that has let us know they preferred a printed copy. Also, a big thank you to Heather Snyder, the editor of the Gryphon, for all her hard work in giving us such a wonderful publication.

We have signed up quite a few new members over the summer, and again remind everyone of the membership incentives outlined last month

in the Gryphon, which will be in effect through the balance of 2014.

The Board is actively working on proposing some changes to the By-Laws, which is being done by the By-Laws committee headed up by Dr. Debra Baird, our first Vice-President. You will be receiving a separate communication on this area soon, which will discuss the proposed changes.

I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season.

All the Best,
Jim Baird, President



Branton Baird and our youngest Baird, ready for the opening ceremonies North Alabama Sottish Festival and Highland Games



Hearth lighting, Fergus Scottish Festival



Last Clan Battle Continued

Having suffered losses at Bunker Hill, General Howe, from advice from Sir Henry Clinton, decided to flank the American forces by going through the Jamaica Pass. Unfortunately for the Americans, they “neglected to defend the pass, believing it to be too far away.”^{iv} Historians attributed this mistake to General George Washington due to inexperience and issues of his troops operating as a unified Army for the first time.



Fig 1. The capture of Nathaniel Woodhull

This handed Sir James Baird the opportunity needed to strike decisively at the Americans. He received orders based on intelligence to lead his small unit through the Jamaica Pass under the cover of night. To create a diversion, the British force began a series of feints along the main front. American attention quickly shifted to the front. Then on August 27th at 2 AM, less than 2 months since arriving, Sir James Baird’s light infantry burst through the pass to the surprise of a small American post. Shock of this flanking move resulted in the American troops being “easily captured and all civilians nearby were detained.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Amongst those captured, was Brigadier General Nathaniel Woodhull of the New York Militia. He injured by multiple sword strikes time in the arm and head of which he later died.^{iv} How the injuries occurred is a matter of

historical argument. Originally, it was stated that the wounds were given by Sir James Baird for not saying “God save the King” but rather “God save us all.”^v This tradition, purported by Silas Wood, gained credibility. Years later the painter J.W. Dunsmore, in his painting the Capture of Nathaniel Woodhull, depicts the scene where Sir James Baird allegedly assaulted Woodhull with his highlanders behind him and Delancey, a British Officer, defended the prisoner. This original painting is currently in private ownership.

However later historians have come to doubt this as contemporary testimony showed the reverse actually occurred. According to Colonel Troup, he claimed Woodhull told him that while fellow prisoners

“the General told him he was taken by a part of light horse, under Captain Oliver De Lancey; that on being asked by sad Captain if he would surrender, he replied in the affirmative - provided that he would treat him like a Gentleman, which Captain De Lancey assured him he would; whereupon the General delivered his sword; and that immediately after, the said Oliver De Lancey, Jr., struck him; and others of his party, imitating his example, did cruelly cut and hack him in the manner he then was.”^{vi} The historian W. H. W. Sabine, argued against Sir James Baird committing this atrocity. He pointed to multiple evidences against this story. Additionally, the tradition of Sir James Baird committing this war crime would not surface until after the war many victories against the Americans.

This is not to say that Sir James Baird was not aggressive in fighting. In this war, all sides fought with extreme

aggression and all sides committed atrocities. But in this case, there is no specific evidence despite his rank as an officer that links Sir James to the act. Sir James Baird would be vilified in America for the next 50 years. In 2012, the US Congress would enact legislation to rename the Mastic Post Office building to the Woodhull Post Office Building noting the capture by Captain James Baird and his abuse from a “British Officer” that led to his death.^{vii} While the final bill that passed the US congress did not contain the biographical information, this miscommunication continues to show the far reaching effects of this propaganda. The Clan Baird Society should lead the way in scholarship and activism to preserve the good name of Sir James Baird.

At 8 am, the full assault began. The Americans discovered the enemy at the front and to the rear. With 32,000 British soldiers surrounding them, the day quickly led to a ferocious battle. With casualties mounting, the Americans” just simply ran, although here and there they fought hard.”^{viii} The American forces were quickly overwhelmed. Washington determined that the his troops needed to retreat to the Brooklyn Heights defenses. The day belonged to the British forces, and if not for two historical curiosities, the entire war could have ended that day.

The first historical curiosity is that of General Lord Stirling. William Alexander, the son of Scottish immigrants, travelled to England earlier in life where he attempted to press his claim as Earl of Stirling. This title would have granted him “significant title to coastal lands on the New England coast of the American colonies...”^{ix} Although denied that title, he was granted the title of Lord Stirling and used that title throughout the war in service of American side. He used his own money to support and raise his troops for the American cause despite insisting on the noble title. He went on to be a close confidant of General George Wash-

Continued on page 5



Last Clan Battle Continued

ington who referred to him as “Lord Stirling”. Clearly, he didn’t get the memo that nobility would be phased out of the new America. Despite being very active in the war, his death in 1783, and perhaps his inability to fit into the general American narrative, prevented his fame and notoriety today.

General Lord Stirling’s forces held their line against the British forces. He ordered 400 men (although now historians suspect the total number to be less than 300) to hold the line against the British while the resistance retreated. Stirling’s “400” charged the 71st Highlanders repeatedly only to have “their ranks thinned by musketry...” x 250 of the Lord Stirling’s men died in the fighting, but the American forces were able to retreat to defensive positions.

General Howe ordered his soldiers to quit the assault fearing increased loss of life. He saw the Americans surrounded on three sides and the backs to the river. However, his officers believed, as historians do today, that had he pressed he might have captured the entire American force and General Washington.

Washington did the unthinkable and retreated with his entire army across the river in the dead night. Upon waking in the morning, Howe discovered that the Americans escaped. Despite Sir James Baird and the 71st Highlanders setting up an incredible victory, one American born noble of Scottish descent fighting for the Americans and a one cautious military decision by the British military resulted in a continuation of the war.

The battle also created a new villain. Sir James Baird of Saughtonhall began a campaign of stunning victories unparalleled in this conflict. His success on the battlefield, in New York and a host of other battles, would deliver fear and loathing from the Americans. To be sympathetic to his accusers, and perhaps to explain why they singled him out, one must only imagine the

scene, in the heart of battle with Sir James Baird in the forefront, his sword unsheathed, shouting directions in an unearthly language while his troops, clansmen in loyalty, dressed in the kilt burst forth shouting their ancient Gaelic war-cries and rained death upon the land. His image would loom large after the war and he became a propaganda target which is still echoed today by some amateur historian groups in the US.

*To Be Continued:
Capture the Capital-Brandywine*



Highland Game Events

The 69th continuous year of the Fergus Scottish Festival and Highland Games took place in Fergus, Ontario, Canada on the 8th - 10th August. The weather was perfect and there was a great turn out with approximately 30,000 visitors. Highland dancing, Heavy events, Pipes and Drums competition and heritage



Dave Radley, who is President of the Fergus games and a fellow Baird through his mother.



displays being among the many things to do and see. A new Guinness World Record was set on Friday night with 52 cabers being tossed simultaneously.

Thirty six clans hosted tents with many more participating in the Lighting of the Hearth, during the Tattoo on the Friday night, the Clan Parade during the opening ceremonies on Saturday and the Kirkin’ of the Tartan on Sunday.

Clan Baird was there. The Clan tent was hosted by Anne Curwood assisted by her niece Melissa Hodder and Melissa’s boyfriend Ben Elst. The attached photo shows them with Dave Radley, who is President of the Fergus games and a fellow Baird through his mother. The Avenue of the Clans was packed all weekend and many people visited the Baird tent. Many copies of the Gryphon were handed out with a number of people interested in membership in the Clan Baird Society.





Highland Game Events

**North Alabama Sottish Festival
and Highland Games
October 4, 2014
Sharon Johnson Park
New Market, Alabama**

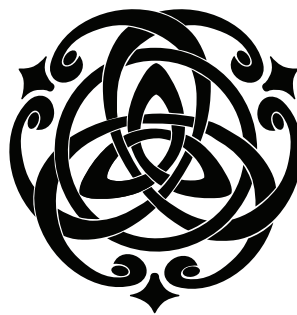
*Sponsored by the
Tennessee Valley Scottish Society*

The day was beautiful in North Alabama, with a high of 64 degrees, sunny skies and little humidity. The Border Collie demonstrations were the highlight of the day. Mr. Bill Colburn and his collies showed the highest standards of skill and instinct in herding sheep and ducks. The combined clans joined in the opening ceremonies parade, led by members of the Nashville Pipe and Drum group, and the assembled Bairds participated. Later, Cracker Jack the Baird Chihuahua entered the pet parade. Cracker Jack won 3rd most fierce in the William Wallace Category. His handler, Anna Ryan Ferguson (Debra Baird's granddaughter) was very happy with his first entrance in a competition.



Debra Baird, Marilyn Baird Stansbury in Opening Parade

Those helping with the tent from the Baird Clan were Debra Baird, 1st Vice President of the Society, Alton Wilson, her husband, Branton Baird, her son, Marilyn Baird Stansbury and Jayne Baird Elliott, Debra's sisters, and their husbands, Chris Stansbury and Larry Elliott. Avy Stansbury, Marilyn's and Chris's daughter, helped with hospitality in the Baird Tent and in the general festival.



Bairds who came by the tent were Jennifer Baird Gray, with her husband and two daughters. In fact, her daughters carried the clan banner in the parade. The youngest was dressed in her Baird Kilt, sent to her from her godfather in Scotland. Other Baird family members at the festival were Mary Lackey from Huntsville, Larry Walden and Mrs. Walden of Pulaski, Tennessee, and Virginia Beard Sloan and Mr. Sloan of Florence. Larry wore his Baird kilt and walked with us in the parade. The day was a great success, it was good to meet other Bairds and hear their stories.



clanbairdsociety.com

Interesting Bairds to Present

← from Past →

A Great Baird

In 2008, the BAFTA (British Academy Film and Television Arts) awards for six categories including Best Picture, Director and Original Screenplay. It also took home six Oscars. The film is plotted around three members of the an Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD or Bomb Disposal) team during the Iraq War. The film, while a critical success, was widely criticized by former



EOD. The subject matter of the film however does have link to the Bairds. In 2011, Staff Sergeant Korrey Baird, of the 633rd Civil Engineer Squadron of the US Air Force participated in the Wounded Warrior Bomb Suit Run Challenge. Staff Sergeant Baird, a veteran already of the war of Afghanistan as well as Iraq who served during the release of the film, trained for the mile long run complete with the 36.4 kg (80 lbs) bomb suit.

The race, sponsored by the wounded warrior program, featured bomb technicians from all branches of the US service including US Navy SEALs. All proceeds from the race went to support wounded veterans. That day in Virginia, suited layers of bomb protec-

Great Baird continues on page 7



Dualchas

CULTURE · TRADITION · INHERITANCE

Hi! I'm Erin Park, and in this space I will be talking a little bit about Gaelic, Highland, and Scottish culture and history. Feel free to send me any suggestions that you would like to see covered!

Among cultures of Western Europe, Scottish Gaelic work songs are unusual, and the most famous example of work songs are waulking songs. "Waulking" is the finishing process of making tartan: after the laborious process of preparing the wool and weaving the cloth, it then was "fulled" which made it softer and thicker. In Scotland this was traditionally done by women, but in Canada it was called "milling" and was done by both men and women. To pass the time during the long hours of work and to help keep the rhythm of pounding the cloth on the table (or trampling it with feet), the participants would sing. These songs were passed down through oral tradition and frequently added to with or created out of local gossip. For example, in the song "Hò ro, gur toil linn Anna," various community members and friends are quoted in the song, for example "Màiri Anndra then said, 'You will never get it waulked in your lifetime'" (i.e. at your slow rate). One singer led by singing or improvising the verses, and the other members of the group took over during the chorus. The chorus generally consisted of "vocables" or nonsense syllables; these were just there to carry the beat but had no meaning. An example of this is "Ho ro ho ì, hò ro nan" in the song "Gura mise tha fo mhulad"; and

these can often vary in different versions of a song. Waulking songs are just one part of a larger tradition of work songs, including spinning, milking, and rowing. All of these kinds of work had a particular rhythm, and so in addition to serving social and emotional purposes, these songs served a practical purpose in helping to keep that rhythm. While many work songs were created by those involved in the tradition, bards also wrote in this tradition without being immediately involved in it, which may explain some songs that do not immediately make sense in the social context (such as love songs to women). The work song tradition is a great example of how song was woven into the texture of everyday life of the Gael.



A Great Baird continued from page 6

tion, he ran. That a Baird serves as an EOD technician, the same as in the film, is an accomplishment all by itself. However, on that day, Staff Sergeant Baird did better. Having joined the military later in the life, the former small town American Football state champion turned US Air Force flight technician, at the age 32, ran the race against much younger elite special forces soldiers. He led the entire race and completed the race in 8 minutes and 44 seconds. He beat all of his competitors and ended only two seconds off of the military record.



Clan Baird Society Worldwide Financial Statement

Third Quarter 2014
July 1 - Sept. 30, 2014

Income:	
Dues Received	250.00
Misc Income	246.80
Donations	500.00
Quartermaster Sales	

Total Quarterly Income: 496.80

Expense:	
Advertising	195.00
President-Membership	
Vice President	
Secretary	
Treasurer	
Scholarships	1,000.00
Gryphon	545.08
Games	150.00
Awards, Trophies & Donations	

Total Quarterly Expense: 695.08

Net Income or (Loss) for Quarter: (198.28)

Cash in Bank - Last Quarter: 7,835.26

Cash in Bank/Available Funds: 7,636.98

Submitted by:
Robert G. Beard, Treasurer for Clan Baird Society Worldwide



**Clan Baird
Officers & Staff**

President James D. Baird
jim Baird 45@gmail.com
315-382-1702

1st Vice-President Dr. Debra June Baird
dbaird@centurytel.net
205-454-6852

2nd Vice-President Isaac S. Baird
iandsbaird@gmail.com
801-243-4077

2nd Vice-President Miller S. Baird
msbdu@earthlink.net
303-332-3122

Secretary Robert L. Baird
BAIRD3990@aol.com
734-604-2341

Treasurer Robert G. Beard, Jr.
beardrobert@msn.com
813-963-0251

Website Developer Linda Gee
webdeveloper@clanbairdsociety.com
248-477-8345

Gryphon Editor Heather Snyder
gryphon@clanbairdsociety.com
802-485-5541



**Newsletter
Deadlines**

February 2015 Issue
deadline is January 15th

May 2015 Issue
deadline is March 15th

August 2015 Issue
deadline is July 15th

**Please submit newsletter
articles to:**
Heather Snyder at
gryphon@clanbairdsociety.com

or mail to:
Heather Snyder
63 Northview Dr.
Northfield, VT 05663

Electronic file formats accepted are
Microsoft Word documents
Adobe Acrobat. Any photo images,
JPG, TIFF, GIF

**Any questions about The Gryphon
submissions please feel
free to call Heather
at 802-485-5541**



**Where you
can find us**

Finding Your Family Roots

We have other of Clan Baird Society
who are very knowledgeable in the his-
tory of Baird. Please email
info@clanbairdsociety.com
for more information.

**Check out our website!
clanbairdsociety.com**

