



A History of the Adirondack Pipes and Drums in Honor of its Sixtieth Anniversary in 2009

David Jones, 2008



1950 Band — Drum Major: Robert Waite
Pipers First Row L-R: Fred Hamilton, Earl Stott, Bruce Waite, Larry Cashion
Pipers Second Row L-R: Jack Donahue, Robert Kirkpatrick, John Kirkpatrick, Fred Harris
Pipers Third Row L-R: Bradley Wright, Robert LaCross
Drummers: William Jones, John Callahan
Drummers: William Kirkpatrick, Frank Vaughn, Wayne Harris



2008 Band — Back Row from Left: Stacia Burns, Nick Kirkpatrick, Peter Pofahl, David Jones, Jerry Cashion, Jeff Duxbury Jr., Larry Jeffords, Kilian Smith, Dick Merrill; Front Row from Left: Jeff Duxbury Sr., Gary Conrick, Mitchell Smith, Mary Merrill, Andrew Harrington, Ethan Burns, Cameron Hood, Anna Burns, Sharon Conrick, Tom Harrington, Josh Harrington, Andrew Moore, Jim Hood, Nate Duxbury

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Art Work

Art work appearing in this work are all pieces drawn by the late Jim Palmer for various band programs over the years.

Sources

Harris, Fred. *Highland Echoes A History of the Adirondack Pipes and Drums*.

Scrap Books created and maintained by Fred Harris, currently in safekeeping of Sharon Conrick.

The Pipe Majors of the band are memorialized on the side of a large, wooden sheet music shelving unit that as of this writing is housed in the Park Street theater. Only Hugh McInnis' name is missing.

Recorded interviews with Sharon Conrick, Jack Donahue Harold Kirkpatrick, and Tom Harrington, August-September 2008. Copies of the recordings were burned to CD and included in the band scrap book started by Fred Harris.

Jerry Cashion, email correspondence, August 2008

A box of old photographs and games programs found in the cellar of the Park Theater.

Photographs

There being no point to re-creating Fred Harris' albums digitally, only selected photographs from each decade of the band's history have been included here.

Boom

By 1949, the Baby Boom had begun. There was a “boom” when China and Russia had only recently acquired the “A-bomb”. There was to be a boom in the economy, as the United States quickly emerged from depression and war into being a great superpower. There was a much smaller boom in Fort Edward, New York, as the first bass drummer of the Adirondack Bagpipe Band set to practice.

Earl Stott and Larry Cashion were working at GE in Schenectady. They went to see a performance of the Cleveland Caledonian Pipe Band in 1949 and got excited about playing the pipes. They worked with Bill Monroe from Schenectady and convinced him to come to Fort Edward to teach them.

Earl Stott and his friends began to take lessons. According to Larry Cashion, one early recruitment effort involved telephoning one hundred people from the phone book who had Scottish last names! So the word got out and Bill Kirkpatrick showed up with Robert and John. Jack Donahue showed up as did Bruce and Bob Waite. Wes Cox and Brad Wright were drum-



mers, along with Frank and Mal Vaughn. There were a few more, including Fred Harris and Wayne Harris. According to Jack Donahue, without Earl Stott, there would have been no band. Earl had the commitment and the “dream”, to use Jack’s words.

Jack Donahue, band members 1949 through 1997, reports that it was Bill Kirkpatrick who donated the first set of pipes to the band, a set that may have been in his family. In fact, the band only had one set of pipes to start — the pipers would trade off each week for who got to practice on the pipes!

It is recorded that the founders of the band wanted to pay tribute to the highlanders that fought in the area in the French and Indian War. The band sought permission from the appropriate officials of the British military in Canada to

Chronology

1949, autumn – Band formed and permission acquired from Second Battalion of Black Watch to bear tartans.

1950, January – Judge Howard Glasbrook of Glens Falls draws up charter. Original name: *The Adirondack Bagpipe Band*

1950, 25th June – First parade, Hudson Falls, NY

1957—Competition at Schenectady—band took 3rd place playing *Charles Edward Hope Vere* and *The Piper of Drummond*.

1969 – First Adirondack Scottish Games held in Lake George

1973 – Band featured in Adirondack Life magazine

1975—First in series of 16 years of Scottish Games hosted by the band

1979 – 15 band members go to Scotland for three weeks to tour and compete in Grade IV level contests

1979 – Robert Burns dinner first held at the Grange on Nelson St.

2007, August – Band incorporated as a New York State Nonprofit

Album: 1950s



Parade, 1952

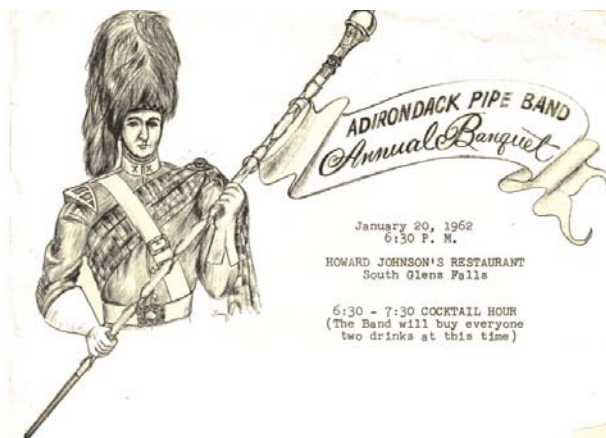


Performance during "Brigadoon" 1951



Post Card, Mt. Hope, 1957





wear the Royal Stuart tartan for pipers and the Black Watch tartan for drummers. A charter was obtained for the organization from a local judge. Instruction in piping and drumming was arranged through members of the Schenectady Pipe Band. Marching practice took place in a member's pasture, where an onlooker commented that the beginning marchers looked like laborers lumbering off to work.

Wives and mothers of the some members sewed kilts and uniforms, while other members sent to Scotland for their uniform. A story is recounted in Fred Harris' *Highland Echoes* of how they did not have material to serve as straps for the kilts and they improvised with roller skate straps. Jack Donahue reports that Bob LaCross' grandmother was a well-known expert seamstress and that they gave her a borrowed kilt from which to copy the pattern. Eight or nine band members wore these homemade kilts for several years.

After a season of practice and preparation, the band played at its first gig in Hudson Falls, NY in the spring of 1950 at the "Thistle Day" parade. Jack Donahue reports that this was one of his proudest moments.

The band grew through the 1950s. Practices moved out to a member's pasture in warm weather and in the A&P supermarket basement in Fort Edward. One story comes down that while practicing in a pasture one evening, one, then two, then a whole group of cows approached the wailing bagpipes. The pipers kept playing as the bovine investigators approached to eventually stop and nearly surround the group. Apparently

they were just curious. Jack Donahue reports that piper Bob Dixon from the Schenectady band, who played with the Seaforth Highlanders during World War I, really "snapped the band into shape". The core group from 1950 remained the principle players in the band for over a decade to come.

Banquet

On the evening of 2nd February, 1963,

Firsts

Tunes: *Lord Lovatt's Lament, The Barren Rocks of Aden, Highland Laddie, The Forty-Second*

Instructors: John Bissert of Troy for piping and Dan Slater of Albany for drumming

Competition Set: *Charles Edward Hope Vere / The Piper of Drummond.*

Competition: 1957

Highland Games Hosted: 1969

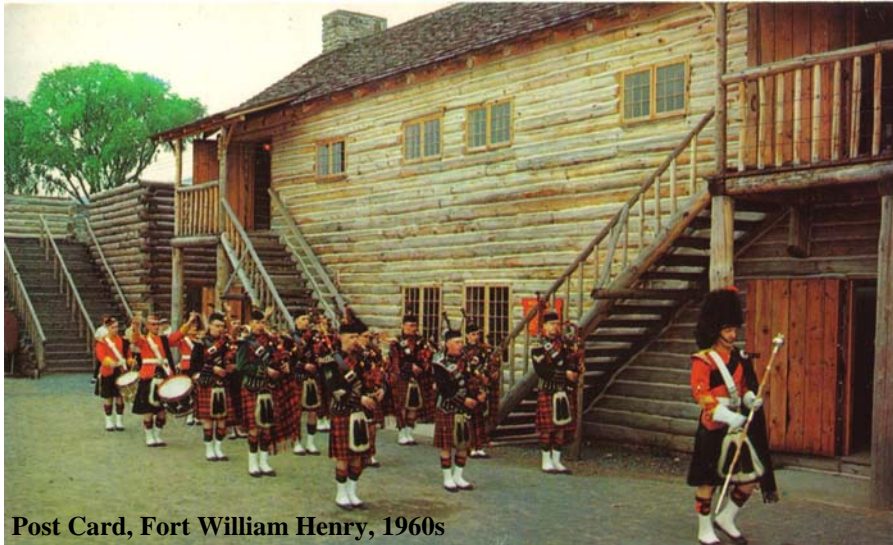
Robert Burns Night: 1979

Parade: Hudson Falls, 25 June 1950 "Thistle Day"

Female to play with the band: Beth Merrill, late 1970s

Pipe Major: Larry Cashion

Band Banquet: 1950



Post Card, Fort William Henry, 1960s

**Album: 1960s
And 1970s**



Adirondack Life
Magazine, 1973



*"From the lonely shieling of the misty island,
Mountains divide us and a waste of seas,
Yet still the blood is strong,
The Heart is Highland and we in dreams behold the Hebrides."*

1st ANNUAL **LAKE GEORGE**
SCOTTISH
GAMES

SATURDAY, AUG. 16, 1969

LAKE GEORGE ATHLETIC FIELD Games to Start
Promptly at 11:30 A.M.

FIELD EVENTS THROWING THE HAMMER TOSSING THE CABER

Highland Dancing Exhibition **Pipe Band Competition**
March, Strathspey, Reel

Highland Fling Strathspey and Reel O'Tullach Sword Dance SLOW MARCH INDIVIDUAL DRUMMING
Sailors Hornpipe Seann Trioblas DRUM MAJOR CONTEST

OPEN SOLO PIPING COMPETITION
March, Strathspey, Reel (Combined)

Adm. \$1.00 — Child \$.50

Sponsored By
LAKE GEORGE
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
and
ADIRONDACK BAGPIPE BAND



Pipe Majors

Larry Cashion 1949
Earl Stott 1950
Robert Kirkpatrick 1953
John Kirkpatrick 1958
Bob Davis 1960
Harold Kirkpatrick 1961
John Kirkpatrick 1962
Jerry Cashion 1965
Bob Davis 1967
David Moir 1974
Jack Donahue 1975
Harold Kirkpatrick 1977
Brian Green 1985
Harold Kirkpatrick 1988
David Jones 2007

the member could have attended the annual band banquet. The band would have bought you one drink during cocktail hour from 6:30 to 7:30, and you would have enjoyed an invocation by Jim

Palmer before dinner at 7:30. Jim was a local artist and band member for many years, serving as Band Manager in 1963. Jim did the artwork for the covers of the programs for the Adirondack Scottish Games for many years.

After a piobaireacht solo by Pipe Major Hugh McInnis, you would have enjoyed a harmony pipe duet by Jerry Cashion and Tom Kirkpatrick. Perhaps you would have won one of the door prizes. Mr. and Mrs. Edward Galloway and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Waite would have shown you some steps in Scottish country dancing. You and your colleagues at table may have discussed last year's successful band banquet. The annual evening's program was once again decorated with caricatures of the band officers expertly drawn by Jim Palmer.

Through the 1960s, the band had grown in membership, in musical expertise, and income. Annual events at that time included the Schroon Lake July Fourth parade, events in Ticonderoga, and in Lake George. In the mid-1960s, the band



played from time to time at Fort William Henry in Lake George. The band settled on a "constitution" in 1965, stipulating among other things that members had to be male and that the band was to consist of components of a Scottish military bagpipe band. By its 1970

season, the band earned \$2025.00 which, when adjusted for inflation, equates to around \$11,000.00 in 2008 dollars. Back in those days, the members divided the money between them at the end of a season.

Adirondack Bagpipe Band



Anniversary

"WE STARTED IN
1950 AND WE ARE
STILL GOING STRONG.
COME ON LADS AND
LASSIES, HELP US
CELEBRATE OUR
OCHTER MOD."



**"Come on Lads
and Lassies, Help
Us Celebrate our
Ochter Mod"**

Such ran a phrase on the program for the Adirondack Bagpipe Band 25th anniversary banquet in 1975 (They were counting from

1950). Jim Palmer was master of ceremonies. After dinner, you would have heard a bagpipe trio of Jerry Cashion, Dr. Kirkpatrick, and his brother Thomas Kirkpatrick. A "Bandsmen of the Year" award was given and Jerry Cashion accompanied the Highland Dancers. Tom Harrington printed up

1st ANNUAL

LAKE GEORGE SCOTTISH GAMES



SPONSORED BY
THE LAKE GEORGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
and
THE ADIRONDACK BAGPIPE BAND



Adirondack
Bagpipe Band

Saturday, August 16, 1969

LAKE GEORGE ATHLETIC FIELD

LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK



Souvenir Program





a fine brochure. Pipe Major Jack Donahue would have entertained the audience with a piping solo before the dinner broke off into Scottish country dancing with Betty and Ed Galloway. Band banquets and celebrations go back to the early days of the organization. The band is a social organization that benefits from the positive society of its members.

During the 1970s, pipers Hugh McInnis, Hamilton Workman and David Moir were principles in the group. *Adirondack Life* magazine featured the band in an article in 1973.

“Let the Games Begin!”

At the annual meeting in the autumn of 1971, the member would have heard the treasurer’s report. The member should have found himself impressed with the earnings, growth in membership, and activities. In 1969, the band teamed up with the Lake George Chamber of Commerce to host the “Lake George Scottish Games” at the Lake George Athletic field. Visitors could get in for a buck and enjoy a Highland Dancing exhibition and Pipe Band competition. The program reads that it was to be the ‘first annual’ such event and, indeed, the band and/or the Glens Falls Institute of Gaelic Arts resumed simi-

lar events in the area from 1975 through 1991.

Jim Palmer draw many of the program covers and band families all pitched in to organize piping and drumming competitions, parking, dancing events, concessions, venue, insurance, etc. By 1979, seventeen bands competed at the games from throughout the northeast. The band that year consisted of 22 active members with 10 piping and drumming students in training and advertised opening classes in the program to promote additional membership.

Putting games together is a monumental task. The band was joined by other organizations whose membership often overlapped: the Adirondack Highlanders, a dance group organized by Judy Cubbins in 1972 (which by 1980 with 25 members was as large as the band); the Glens Falls Institute (or “Academy”) of Gaelic Arts; the Adirondack St. Andrews Society (formed in 1980); Friends of the Adirondack Pipes and Drums. Games were held in several local venues,

[1950] Following practice sessions some members would gather at Corsall’s Restaurant in Fort Edward for coffee and a late snack. On one particular evening Earl Stott had brought with him a Scottish gentleman named William Munro. “Billy”, as he was affectionately called, was a former pipe major with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Invited to play a few numbers, Billy picked up his pipes and strutting back and forth, played one tune after another; marches, strathspeys and reels for almost half an hour with hardly a pause. Band members and patrons alike sat spellbound while being treated to a display of superb piping made all the more remarkable by the fact that Billy was well over 70 years of age.

- Recounted by Fred Harris in *Highland Echoes...*

Early 1970s ... Perhaps 1972



Matt Conrick's Wedding 1991





including the Washington County Fairgrounds, Queensbury High School Fields, and Crandall Park in Glens Falls.

At the 1980 games, there were 89 registered piping and drumming solo competitors and bands

competed in grades 2, 3, and 4. There were 110 dancing competitors registered! These annual events featured not only Scottish music and dance, but Irish dancing and traditional music. In July 1981, the *Post-Star* reports "Rain dampened the Gaelic festival several times Saturday, but it didn't dampen the spirits of several thousand people at East Field."

Dr. Kirkpatrick reports that the games only made money one year. The 1983 Games was competing ground for only 45 solo competitors in piping/drumming and 74 dancers. By 1987, the games faced tough competition themselves from other events, a sagging economy, and smaller numbers at the admissions gate. Only 36 dancers registered to compete that year, 35 solo pipers (a third of whom were in the band), and 13 drummers. The last Adirondack Highland Games was held in 1991. In a 1984 festival program, Dr. Kirkpatrick credits the Adirondack St. Andrews Society as having played a very key role to promoting the games. However, it is common knowledge that Dr. Kirkpatrick played a vital a role

[1970s] Ed [Galloway] was a piper serving often as drum major and was very active in band functions. As a native of Scotland and a relative newcomer to this country, Ed had a well pronounced Scottish burr and because of it, quite often took a good natured ribbing from band members.

Once when Ed was driving some band members to a parade, upon reaching their destination he stopped to inquire of a parade official just where the band was to assemble and what division they were in. "Eh?" the fellow said with a blank look on his face, clearly not understanding a word Ed had said. Ed repeated his question and received the same blank look and reply. "Eh?" After several attempts, which were accompanied by some snickers from the back seat, Ed shook his head and continued on as the fellows could not contain themselves any longer and burst out laughing. Finally, Bill McCarthy called out "Ed, you've got to learn to speak English!"

- Recounted by Fred Harris in *Highland Echoes...*

himself. Dr. Kirkpatrick served as games chairman for many years and was always instrumental in coordinating the events, including providing financial backing when necessary from his own pockets.

"No Kids, No Women, and No Doctors!"

Even after 20 years and even after most of the people involved in the event are no longer participants in either band, there is still a discomfort addressing the division in the band in the mid-1980s. Nearly identical versions of the story come to this writer from four sources: Dr. Kirkpatrick, Tom Harrington, Rich Leibold, and Jerry Cashion.

Tensions grew among musicians in the band arising from a variety of conflicts of interest, especially the goals and focus of the group.



From left to right: Ben Conrick, Sharon Conrick, Katie Welch, Beth Merrill, Chris Bowen, Matt Conrick, Bob Schiavoni, Brian Green, Fred Harris, Gary Conrick, Peter Hall, Dr. Harold Kirkpatrick, Matt Hall, in front of Dick Merrill, Peter Welch, Andrew Kirkpatrick and Donna Schiavoni.

THE ADIRONDACK PIPES AND DRUMS - JUNE 1987



Pipe band competition is a highly developed and important part of highland bagpiping, while parades provide income, advertise the band more publicly to promote additional jobs and recruitment, and include every musician in the band possessing basic proficiency.

Presented as incompatible goals, there was a series of disputes and a number of the band resigned. At one point, one of the men who were leaving the band announced his resignation and the creation of the new band. He growled that the new band would have “No kids, no women, and no doctors!”

In 1985, the split-off group gathered together some former members of the band and created another band, named the Galloway Gaelic Pipes and Drums in honor of the late Ed Galloway, who passed away in 1984. They received a grant of \$5,000 as startup money from the Sandy Hill Corporation. The Galloway band still performs in the area and has improved greatly since their start. Over the past decade, Adirondack has been unsuccessful in arranging collaboration with the Galloway band, though relations between the two bands remains cordial.

1990s

The band was very active, perhaps at its most active, in the 1990s. In 1996, the band ap-

peared at 18 performances (not including competitions). The competition band was performing in grade IV. The band was featured periodically in local newspapers and maintained a strong public presence.

Minutes from meetings in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s indicate “spirited discussion” over a number of issues. The introduction of black jackets into the uniform seems to have been a bone of contention. It is during this period that the military uniform gave way to a simpler, civilian style of dress (The last time military uniforms were worn seems to have been the

[mid- to late 1980s] *Harold Kirkpatrick, a long time band member and mentor was once asked at a very early age, what he wanted to do when he grew up, and without hesitation replied “I want to be a doctor and play the pipes”. After years of hard work and preparation, his dream came true and today he is a practicing surgeon and pipe major of the band. An example of his versatility became evident a few years ago just before a parade in Hudson Falls.*

Gary Conrick, just learning the bass drum, was driving his son Matt to the parade when he was forced to fill in at the last moment as bass drummer. Gary did not have a uniform yet but Dr. Harold Kirkpatrick quickly went to his van, dipped into some spare pieces of equipment, and came up with some essential parts of a uniform. All seemed satisfactory until it was discovered the hose was too large and kept sliding down Gary’s legs and there were no flashes or means to hold them up. With quick thinking and some ingenuity Dr. Kirkpatrick came up with the solution. Upon close examination Gary discovered the “flashes” were a pair of surgeon’s gloves that had been cut to fit around the leg and serve as the supporting elastic.

-Recounted by Fred Harris in *Highland Echoes...*

Jack Donahue reports that one of his favorite long-time annual band gigs was the Port Henry Labor Day parade. One time in the late 50s or early 60s, Jack reports that the pipe major was disappointed in some very bad playing. He stopped the band and had them start a tune he was sure they knew well: *The Barren Rocks of Aden*. Well, it was such a hit that that's all he had them play for almost an hour... *Barren Rocks of Aden, Barren Rocks of Aden, Barren Rocks of Aden...*

Some time later Jack was talking to a resident whose three-year-old was present for the performance. The father exclaimed that his son awoke from his nap humming the *Barren Rocks of Aden over and over and over...*

Recounted by Jack Donahue in a recorded interview in August 2008

1989 Joy Store Holiday Parade in South Glens Falls, though a note in Fred Harris' scrapbook indicates it had been a long time since they were worn). Another source of discussion seems to have been once again the degree of focus on competition. In an entry in the minutes in 1996, a motion to establish the band as a purely competition band was tabled and appears not to have been revisited. In 1997, a separate competition band entity functioned in the band and there was discussion of a name for this group. According to band minutes, they settled on the name "North County Highlanders", though it is unknown



whether they competed under that name.

The Pros

In an interview with this writer, Sharon Conrick brings two

important points to light about this band. Firstly, that it has a very long tradition as being a strongly family-oriented band. Whole families follow into the group: the Kirkpatricks, the Halls, the Durlers, the Conricks, the Thorpes, the Schiavonis, the Merrills, and Harringtons, to name a few.

A second point Sharon brings to mind is that the band has been the training ground for some truly excellent pipers and drummers. Brian Green (1980s-1990s) is a grade I piper serving as Pipe Major of the award-winning Manchester Pipe Band in Connecticut. Erin McCarthy (1990s) and Keegan Sheehan (early 2000's) are now a professional grade pipers. Peter Hall (1980s) is a master piper playing with the City of Washington pipe band. Andrew Moore (2000s) is currently a grade II drummer who has played with the Mohawk Valley Frasers and the Toronto Police Pipe Band. This strongly family-oriented organization has been responsible for the start of some truly excellent musicians. There is no doubt that more names have escaped this writer's research and apologies are offered for any left out.

21st Century

The first decade of the 21st century found the band experiencing one of its periodic contrac-

tions as one group of students reach college age and inevitably move away while a younger group getting training was just coming up.

The band moved its practice to the Park Street Theater from the Nelson Street Grange around 2004. The Park Street theater was destined for demolition in 1984 when Dr. Kirkpatrick purchased it to save it from the wrecking ball and restore it as a performing arts center. The theater's grand opening was held in April of 2006 and has been host to many events. Dr. Kirkpatrick donates use of the Park Theater to the band.

The band became a New York State not-for-profit corporation organized under Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501(c)(3) in 2007. The pros and cons of incorporating were discussed for some time before going through the process. Among the advantages of incorporation are access to grant funding for nonprofits, reduced nonprofit rates on postage and other services, exemption from paying tax, and legal and financial protections.

The band organized Celtic Arts Recitals in 2007-2008 with plans through 2009. These recitals continue the tradition set in the games of decades past when we partnered with other Celtic folk music and dance artists, though on a smaller



scale. Originally recitals were seen as fulfilling a need to give students a reason to practice in winter when there were no parades or games for which to prepare. The recitals take the form of a variety show in which piping, dancing, and other instruments are featured. The band holds some of these events at the Park Theater. Our partner in these ventures has been the Wild Irish Acres Dancers.

The band continues the tradition of Burns Night celebrations that date back to 1979, though they now take more the form of music and dance recitals than the full suppers of the past. As in the decades past, families form an important part of the organization. They donate their time and services and the group is very grateful: accounting, printing, graphic design and marketing, the list goes on. This year, the band started holding summer practice in City Park in front of the construction site that is Crandall Public Library.

The band continues the tradition of competition, though in 2008 the group did not have enough musicians to qualify to field a band. The reader will notice a history of conflict between competition and "street band". It was recognized



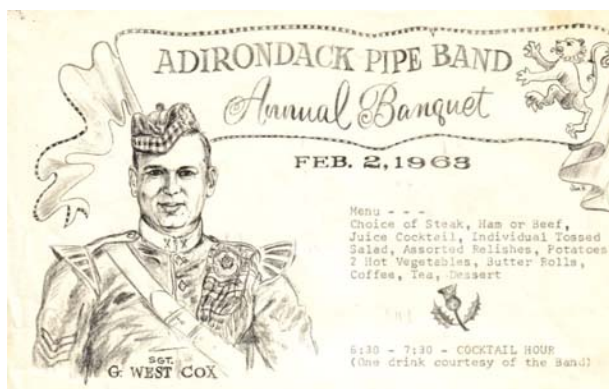
Jack Donahue reports that at one event many years ago, the traffic was so backed up that some spectators did not get to the parade until the pipe band was done. A young family approached him and said they loved pipes and would he play a tune for them? Jack asked the little girl her favorite song and she replied it was *Bonnie Lassie*. (*Bonnie Lassie* was a popular song on the radio at the time based on the theme for *Scotland the Brave*.) Jack replied with a wink to her parents that he didn't know that tune, but wanted to play one she might like. After playing *Scotland the Brave* for her, she just beamed and declared that she loved that song now even better than *Bonnie Lassie*!

-Recounted by Jack Donahue in a recorded interview in August 2008...

that this conflict was a threat to the stability of the group, so in the new bylaws in 2007 the band took steps to balance the focus of the group once and for all. Competition is important and it is part of highland piping. To be a successful band, we need to field a competition band if only to offer the opportunity to those musicians in the group who are interested and proficient. The band could lose out on some great musicians if it does not compete and competition can bring out the best in a musician. On the other hand, there is insufficient population in the area to field a competition-only band. Further, parades and other public performances bring in revenue, wider public exposure, and potential new recruits. In addition, in a band of mixed musical proficiency, public performances are open to the participation of just about everyone in the band, whereas competition would be limited to those few who reached a cer-

tain level. In the procedures currently agreed upon, a separate competition band exists within the band. There is a process to approve participants based on musical skill level. Extra practices are required and it was decided not to use substitutes, so if the whole "team" could not make a scheduled games, the whole band did not go. Our regular Tuesday night practice is dedicated to parade and performance tunes and the competition set is addressed only on a limited basis at those rehearsals.

Another significant change in the bylaws of 2007 pertained to membership. Membership had always been based on participation and musical proficiency. Traditionally, members were either "active" (meaning they met the attendance test of 50% of performances) or "honorary". Honorary members could not vote or hold office. New members were elected only by unanimous consent. The group experimented with taking attendance at practices and counting this towards membership and that proved simply too complex a task. There arose a controversy with the nomination of a musician who did not achieve unanimous consent for membership. The bylaws of 2007 established the classification "members" and "associates". Associates are students pre-



sumed to seek membership or are people who just help out the band. The “honorary” classification was dropped and membership is maintained through participation in 50% of events. Election of members is now by majority consent (instead of unanimity), while nominations can only come from the pipe major or drum sergeant.



In 2008-2009, the band has several projects. The band is working to increase the number of pipers by offering beginner lessons in a group format as it has done frequently in the past. It has a marketing plan in place, thanks to Mr. Troy Burns and his expertise, and will have at its disposal a set of ready-made marketing materials such as posters and brochures. Contact has been made with organizations like the village of Lake George and Fort William Henry with a view to arranging concert-style performances by the band.

Drum sergeant Tom Harrington and pipe major David Jones collaborate to produce a list of band sets for the group to work on through the winter months. The tune list is long enough to fill an hour program and Tom is teaching the group some new “tricks” to enhance our stage presence. An effort is also under way to write grants to fund

things like recitals, instructors, and uniforms.

For over thirty years, more than half of the band has been composed of adolescents. A consequence of this is that the organization experiences periodic con-

tractions and relies on instruction to continually feed new musicians into the process. Many of the adult musicians who have formed the core of the group for the past twenty years are reaching retirement age. To maintain the organization, it seems that well-organized instruction combined with extensive advertising and outreach will be more important than ever. In 2008, 57% of the principle pipe section is under 19 and another 28% are over 65. David Jones and Jerry Cashion have worked giving piping instruction through 2007 and 2008. Tom Harrington has carried the drumming instruction himself. In addition, the band offers scholarships to young pipers and drummers to attend events like the Invermark Piping Summer School.

The strength and longevity of an organization depends on the contributions and creative energies of its members. The group has been fortunate over the decades to have had the commitment of some very dedicated individuals. There is not space for all here, and no disrespect is in-

[At an early Burns Supper, c.1980] “*Following some traditional Highland dances performed by Laura Kirkpatrick, Maureen usher, Linda Chesney, and Patti Nesbitt – Rich Leibold, not to be outdone, decided to do his version of the Sword Dance. Not having his own sword and scabbard, he picked up a knife and fork from the table, placed them crosswise on the floor, and proceeded to perform the dance in his own inimitable style.*”

Recounted by Fred Harris in *Highland Echoes...*

tended to anyone left out, but a few of the largest-looming longtime contributors to the band are highlighted in the pages that follow.



THE ADIRONDACK PIPES AND DRUMS

DEC. 1989

Front row, left to right: Chris Bowen, Donna Schiavoni, Beth Merrill, Sharon Conrick, Joshua Gonyeau, Matt Conrick and Matt Hall.
Back row, left to right: Fred Harris, Gary Conrick, Dick Merrill, Ben Conrick, Bob Schiavoni, Harold Kirkpatrick, Andrew Kirkpatrick, Peter Hall and Brian Green.

Dr. Harold Kirkpatrick

In the fall of 1954, the band was short of pipers. Harold reports that his father Bill, who had shown no interest in having the younger boys join the band previously, now encouraged them to join up. Jack Donahue taught Harold, Jerry Cashion, and several other teenage boys in what



might be called the band's class of 1955. They met in the basement of the Durkee Hose Company on Tuesday nights. Harold learned out of the *Logan's Tutor*, a standard instructional series still used in the band, and the boys

hit the street the next summer.

In 1958, Harold, like so many other young players with the band, left for college. He remembers classmate John Goodnow especially, as he introduced Harold to more sophisticated piping. The Adirondack band kept to the basic tunes. Says Harold "We didn't have the slightest idea what a piobaireacht was." Harold returned to the area and played with the band through his summers off in college. In medical school, Harold played with the St. Andrews Pipe Band in Detroit. The band won almost every time it went out.

Dr. Kirkpatrick has been a driving force

in the Adirondack Pipes and Drums for most of his life. "Doc" is a brilliant piper and excels as a teacher. A very large number of his students have gone on to professional level piping.

Harold returned in the 1974 to find the band almost defunct. Members had been drawn away by other interests. He took on students and began participating again. Some considered him an "upstart" because he "wanted to do things fancy and do competition".

His name first appears as pipe major in 1961. Between 1977 to 2007, save for a brief period in the late 1980s, Dr. Kirkpatrick has been the pipe major. It is no exaggeration to state that the band has continued to exist for the past 30-odd years because of Dr. Kirkpatrick's efforts and sacrifice.

Dr. Kirkpatrick served as chairman of the Gaelic Festival / Adirondack Games. His personal financial sacrifice made the events possible. During the 1990s, Dr. Kirkpatrick owned an RV that the band used to attend games and competitions. Sharon Conrick reports that Harold even hired the young people in the band in summers at his East

"Through the years, Dr. Kirkpatrick has spent countless hours, for little or no compensation teaching the rudiments of piping to interested young people in the area. [...] Many excellent area pipers have benefited from Dr. Kirkpatrick's tireless tutelage. In addition to Erin [McCarthy], Brian Green, a Glens Falls graduate is currently pipe major of the Manchester Connecticut Pipe Band. [...] At present, Dr. Kirkpatrick is still turning out quality pipers. This summer his students have been placing in the top 5 (out of 30 or more participants) at competitions in the Northeast as well as Canada."

From a letter to the Editor of the *Post-Star* newspaper in 2002

Lake George House so they could be close by for performances and competitions.

Harold owns the Nelson Street Grange Hall, which served as the venue for practices and Burns Nights for over a decade. He renovated the Park Street Theater to serve as a performing arts center and, as reported in an article in the *Post-Star*, as “headquarters for the Adirondack Pipes and Drums”.

This writer has had the privilege to have had four years of tutoring with Harold. He is an excellent instructor who will not let the student slide into mediocrity. Doublings, taorluaths, crunluaths, whatever the embellishment, it must be right and it must be played when the music calls for it.

Harold has served in every capacity in the band. In addition to over 20 years as pipe major, Harold has been manager, treasurer, quartermaster, and sometimes he wore several hats at once. He is never fazed by periodic contractions in band membership or trees falling on his RV or leaks in the roof or whatever misfortune may present itself. He just goes on.

Harold reports that his proudest moment was probably at the Syracuse games around 1990. The band was playing in grade IV and the prizes were being announced. PM Ian MacLean, of the Schenectady Band, says aloud “There’s no way Adirondack can win”. Adirondack won!

In 2007, Dr. Kirkpatrick was honored by the band at its annual meeting with lifetime membership in the band in recognition of his crucial and continuing contributions. It would be impos-

sible to match Harold’s lifelong commitment to the band and the positive influence of his demand for quality.

Gerald “Jerry” Cashion

Jerry Cashion joined the band in 1955. Drafted into the Air Force in 1959, Jerry continued his piping career in the Air Force Pipe Band in 1960. He toured the world representing the United States. In 1961 he was chosen to be a Whitehouse

piper for John F. Kennedy, and in 1963 he played with the Air Force Pipe Band at the President's graveside.



As this writer sorted through piles of old documents and photos from the band’s past, few names continue to appear as frequently as Jerry’s. Jerry is playing in duets quartets at annual banquets in the 1960s. Jerry is playing for dancers at games in the 1970s and 1980s. Jerry is Pipe Major in the 60s. Jerry is band manager several times. Jerry has even played the Drum Major’s role in recent times. Jerry has played with the Air Force Pipe Band, the Adirondack Pipes and Drums, and with the Galloway Gaelic Pipes and Drums.

Jerry continues his piping performing for weddings and funerals as far away as Old Forge and Vermont. He has been giving lessons to new



students of the band in recent years. Jerry is an excellent piper who continues to play

an important role in maintaining the band.

Tom Harrington

Jack Donahue reports that drum corps were very popular in the '50s and that most towns had one. A young snare drummer with the *Vagabonds Drum and Bugle Corps* named Thomas Harrington became interested in the bagpipe band when Jack invited him to come listen one day in summer 1957. He was hooked. He had lessons with Ian MacLean of Schenectady.

Tom reminisces about the friendly family atmosphere of the band. They were an extended family to him, driving him to and from parades and practice. They were an extra set of parents. Parades and events were followed by picnics often enough. Families like the McCarthys, the Kirkpatrick's, the Palmers and the Vaughns all stick in his mind.

Tom reports that there was never a dull moment with the pipe band. One time, Jim Palmer had the bass drum strapped to his car on the way to a parade and it came unhooked and beat the car rolling down the next hill! Tom was surprised to find the band struck up to serenade him outside the church at his wedding in 1964. Tom is a top notch snare drummer who worked his way up to serve as band drum sergeant fre-

quently over the years. Wherever he lived through the 60s and 70s, Tom returned to play with the band often.

Tom joined the Galloway Band in 1985 when that group's focus met his own more comfortably. He returned to the Adirondack band in 2003 seeking something better for his grandsons. He regards the 2006 season to have been the high point of all 50 years with the band. That was the season his grandsons stood next to him in competition, playing at a high level and really making a difference. Tom serves at this writing as Drum Sergeant.

When asked what the future could learn



from the past, his conclusion would be to proceed with everyone on board and to take decisions collectively. Says Tom in summation: "It's a blast!"

Like Jerry and Harold, Tom forms one of the cornerstones of the band for his longevity and for the many fine drummers he has produced over 50 years. Tom brings an enthusiasm and indefatigable positive spirit to the band that cannot be surpassed.

Fred Harris

Fred Harris might rightly be called the band archivist. He maintained two large scrapbooks containing photos and newspaper clippings going back 50 years that were an important source of research for this work. He wrote a history of the band in the late 70s or early 80s that also served as a source for this work. Fred was a founding member and not only was a piper but served as Drum Major. He was a band member until the late 1990s. He was present at the band incorporation



meeting in July 2007 and the band was sorry to learn of his passing in 2008.

Jack Donahue

In the fall of 1949, Jack Donahue was practicing his pipes in his back yard when he was approached by the Methodist Minister who lived up the road. Reverend Russell explained that he was clipping his hedges and heard him playing and had a funny story to relate. The Reverend was from Scotland and had brought his elderly mother to America to live with them in her final years. The previous week, when the Reverend's wife came to take Mother Russell in from the porch, she was certain Mother Russell was losing her mind because she said she had been listening

to the pipes all afternoon! The Reverend was relieved, no doubt, to find that his mother was not hearing things and complimented Jack on his playing.

At a meeting to plan the centennial celebration of Fort Edward in early 1949, the organizing committee accepted Jack's suggestion to hire the Schenectady Pipe Band to perform at intervals throughout the day. Everyone enjoyed the pipes and Jack is quite certain that was the only pipe band in the capital district.

Several weeks later in September that year, Jack relates how he was passing the Manhattan Bar in Fort Edward and was drawn in by the sound of bagpipes. Seated listening enthralled to the player were Earl Stott and Larry Cashion. He sat down to listen and Earl explained how he was intent on forming a local bagpipe band. Through his contacts at GE, Earl knew members of the Schenectady Pipe Band and had arranged for lessons. Jack accepted an invitation to the October meeting of the band and played with the group until 1997.

Jack was a constant in the band for 45 years. He reports one of his favorite gigs was the annual Port Henry Labor Day parade. Among the high points in his experience were his first performance and the first competition in which the band participated. The massed bands is a thrill not easily forgotten.

Jack keeps in touch with the band. He was present at the meeting to incorporate the organization in 2007 and attends social gatherings from time to time such as the annual band ban-

quet. Jack Donahue was honored with lifetime membership and “Pipe Major Emeritus” status in the 1990s.

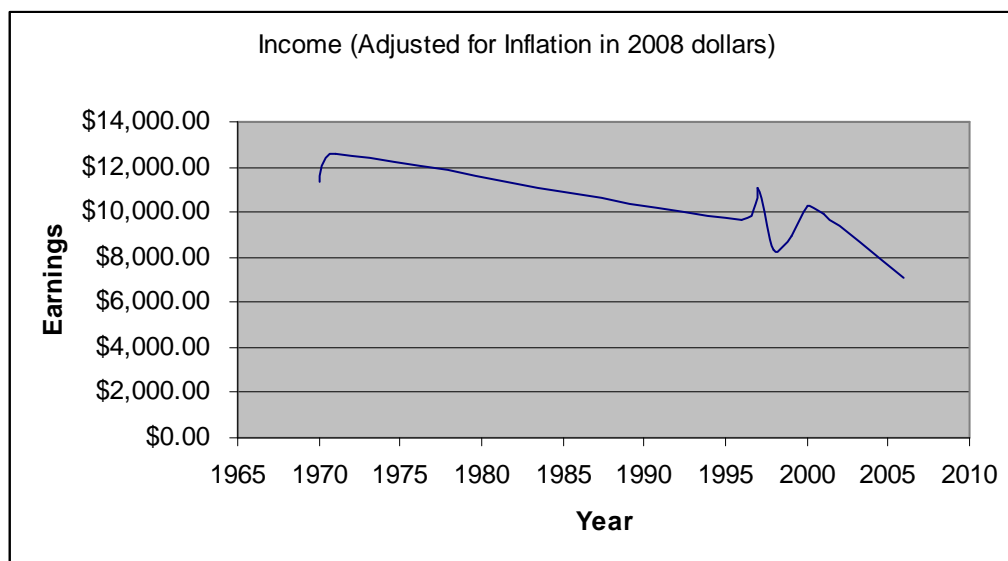


Statistics

Income

Income is reported at the annual meeting of the band. Until incorporation in 2007, the annual meeting was held in the autumn of each year and the fiscal calendar ran from October through September. Statistics on income are included here because income is one measure by which the band can monitor its progress over time. Since some of the records go back 30+ years, adjustments for inflation have been calculated to provide a clearer picture. There are gaps in the records.

Year	Income (Excluding prize money, etc)	Adjusted for Inflation in 2008 dollars
1970-1971	\$2025	\$11,307.60
1971-1972	\$2380	\$12,621.14
1996-1997	\$7050	\$9,638.06
1997-1998	\$8353	\$11,081.93
1998-1999	\$6400	\$8,359.68
1999-2000	\$7000	\$8,992.90
2000-2001	\$8250	\$10,316.62
2001-2002	\$8250	\$9,945.37
2006	\$6625	\$7,051.65



Statistics

Events

The band consistently averages 13-14 musicians per event, as seen in reports going back 30 years. The number of events varies from year to year and there has been a marked decrease in opportunities for performances as municipalities have cut back on funding events at which the band was often hired to play. In 2008-2009, the band is exploring increasing the number of concert-format performances and is preparing sets for stage.

Year	Total Events	Parades	Competitions	Staged Events
2008	14	10	0	4
2007	20	9	3	8
2006	21	10	5	6
2005	24	10	7	7
2004	21	11	6	4
2003	20	10	6	4
2002	22	11	7	2
1999		11		
1998		11		
1997		11		
1996		18		
1995		12		

Rosters

1949

Callahan, John
Cashion, Larry
Cox, Wes
Donahue, Jack
Hamilton, Fred
Harris, Fred
Harris, Wayne
Jones, William
Kirkpatrick, John
Kirkpatrick, Robert
Kirkpatrick, William
LaCross, Robert
Stott, Earl
Vaughn, Frank
Waite, Bruce
Waite, Robert

Joined in 1950

Lewis, Melvin
Munro, William
Vaughn, Malcolm
Walker, Bruce
Wright, Bradley

Joined Early 1960s

Alexander, James
Bernard, John
Cashion, Gerald
Cheney, Greg
Davis, Robert
Gorthey, Tom
Hoag, Robert
Kirkpatrick, Harold
Kirkpatrick, Thomas
McCarthy, William
McCarthy, William, Jr.

Ridell, Bill
Sherer, Henry
Stephens, Robert

Joined 1969

Cubbins, Bob
Dewey, Dave
Edwards, Peter
Garcia, Frank
Harrington, Tom
Keays, Jimmy
Moir, David
Moore, Ed
Ross, Don
Sparling, Reed

Joined 1970s

Palmer, Jim
Dennis, Charlie
Ramsey, Barry
Leibold, Rich
LaBelle, John
Fisher, Bill
Fisher, Todd
Kirkpatrick, Doug
Galloway, Edward

Members,

March 1978

Archembault, Tom
Barber, Joseph
Bonitatibus, Dan
Carota, Tim
Cashion, Jerry
Donohue, Jack
Edwards, Pete
Ellsworth, Bob
Erwin, Greg
Garcia, Frank
Green, Brian
Harrington, Tom
Kingham, Dave
Kirkpatrick,

Harold
LaBarron, Donny
LaBarron, Steve
Leibold, Rich
McCarthy, Bill
Merrill, Beth
Nelson, Mike
Ramsey, Barrie
Ross, Don
Sawyer, Ken
Waite, Robert
Welch, Mark

Joined late 1970s

Archambault, Tom
Bowen, Chris
Green, Brian
Hall, Peter
Kirkpatrick, Andrew
Merrill, Beth

Joined mid-1980s

Conrick, Gary
Conrick, Matt
Conrick, Sharon
Durrler, Dan
Durrler, Melinda
Gometz, JoAnn
Gometz, John
Hall, Matt
Hall, Peter
Kirkpatrick, Dan
Merrill, Dick
Merrill, Mary
Schiavoni, Bob
Schiavoni, Donna
Schiavoni, Heather
Thorpe, Katie
Thorpe, Matt

Thorpe, Patrick

Year	No. Pipe Section	No. Drum Section
1949	9	7
1959	10	7
1969	12 (estimated)	
1979	13	12
1989	16	
1999	20	
2009	14	10

2008 Members

Burns, Stacia
Cashion, Jerry
Conrick, Gary
Conrick, Sharon
Coon, Thomas
Duxbury, Jeff
Duxbury, Jeff, Sr.
Harrington, Andrew
Harrington, Josh
Harrington, Tom
Hood, Jim
Jeffords, Larry
Jones, David
Kirkpatrick, Harold
Kirkpatrick, Nicholas
Merrill, Mary
Merrill, Richard
Murdock, Michael
Pofahl, Peter
Roemantz, Sue
Schiavoni, Bob