



Of the many names which grace the annals of Scotland's history, there are none which shine brighter than that of the great William Wallace, the greatest patriot that Scotland has ever known. This illustrious soldier is remembered by Scots to this day for his courage and unswerving loyalty to the Scottish cause. The Clan Wallace has its origins in the mists of antiquity, descending from the Britons that inhabited the ancient kingdom of Strathclyde in Scotland. These people were known as the *Waleis*, and are known to be of the same stock as the Celtic settlers of Wales. By the 12th Century the Wallaces were well established in Scotland, with Richard *Walensis* possessing land around Kilmarnock.

The 13th Century saw Scotland succumbing to the overlordship of the infamous Edward I of England, after bitter disputes over the succession to the Scottish throne. As Edward tightened his grip on Scotland, the Scots realised too late that their bickering had resulted in their own subjugation. Edward demanded that the Scottish nobles swear their allegiance to him, but the Wallaces could not submit.

Sir Malcolm Wallace of Elderlie was executed for his impudence, along with his eldest son, Andrew. The English neglected his widow and to their folly, his other son, William Wallace. Upon hearing that his father's executioner, John Fenwick, was plundering his way to Dundee, Wallace planned to take his revenge. He met Fenwick in Lanarkshire, and slew his father's nemesis on the road. Then, when William's wife was murdered at the hands of English troops, he attacked and slaughtered the English garrison at Lanark.

The English atrocities continued with the treacherous execution of a number of Scottish nobles, including Wallace's uncle, under the guise of negotiations towards a peaceful settlement. As the followers of William Wallace grew, he formed a highly organised guerrilla militia who were the terror of every Englishman on Scottish soil.

Wallace went from strength to strength, laying siege to Dundee and then

shattering a superior English force at the Battle of Stirling Bridge in 1297. Wallace was knighted and was given the title "Guardian of Scotland", but his campaign fell prey to the same in-fighting that had precipitated the situation. Wallace was finally defeated at the Battle of Falkirk, although he managed to make his escape from the battlefield.

Eventually, Wallace was betrayed and was sent to London to be tried for treason. During his trial, he eloquently argued that since he had confessed no allegiance to the English king, then it was impossible for him to have committed treason against Edward I. The trial was soon shown to be the sham it was when Wallace was convicted of treason and then subjected to the grimmest fate that Edward could fathom. William Wallace was hanged, drawn and quartered and his body parts sent to the different ends of the kingdom. The Scots were ultimately victorious in their wars for independence, and the memory of William continued on.

The Clan continued to prosper, holding lands in Riccarton, Craigie, Cessnock and Cairnhill. The Clan Wallace crest is a mailed arm holding a sword aloft and the proud motto reads "Pro libertate" meaning "For liberty". The thirty fifth chief is Iain Wallace of that Ilk.

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