

# Stone ties Scotland to Alamo

By **Scott Huddleston** - Express-News

Web Posted: 04/09/2010 12:00 CDT



Jim Mather, Scotland's minister for tourism, places his nation's flag near the stone honoring the four known Scots who fought at the Alamo, which he said symbolizes an "unquenchable thirst for independence" shared by Scotland and the U.S. EDWARD A. ORNELAS/eaornelas@express-news.net

Most visitors at the Alamo know of Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie and other famous men who died in the predawn battle of 1836.

But a full, genuine account of the Alamo isn't complete without a description of John McGregor, one of four known native Scots who were there, playing his bagpipes.

More than 200 people, including Scottish dignitaries and Alamo descendants, dedicated a small monument Thursday to reinforce a bond between Scotland and the Alamo. The handcrafted Caithness stone, engraved to honor the four

Scots and other defenders of Scottish ancestry, will sit at the base of the Scottish flag, near the front door of the Alamo Shrine.

Jim Mather, Scotland's minister of enterprise, energy and tourism, said it symbolizes an "unquenchable thirst for independence" shared by Scotland and the United States.

Ellis Buchanan, a descendant of one Alamo defender, an Alabaman of Scottish descent, said people will see the stone by the blue and white flag and "know that the people of Scotland remember the Alamo."

He and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, who care for the Alamo, credited Robin Naysmith, Scottish government counselor for North America, for including the Alamo in Scotland Week — a time to honor Scottish

culture from April 3-10.

“My fifth-great-uncle, James Buchanan, died here, and that makes this place very special to me,” said Buchanan, 70, president of the Scottish Society of San Antonio.

Many Alamo defenders were Celtic, with lineage from Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, even if they were born in the States, he said. Best-known of the native Scots was McGregor, who was said to have played his bagpipes, often accompanied by Crockett on a fiddle, to lift spirits at the Alamo during the siege.

According to Alamo lore, McGregor “piped till the bitter end” of the battle, Buchanan said.

Birthplaces of at least 18 of the 189 named defenders are unknown or in dispute.

Such is the case of Lewis Johnson. Most references say he was born in Wales. His descendants say he was an Illinois native. They've asked the DRT to change a marker and brochures at the Alamo.

“It's a correction that needs to be made,” said Chris Johnson, a descendant living in Grants, N.M.

In his book “Alamo Defenders,” historian Bill Groneman listed Lewis Johnson's birthplace as “possibly Illinois Territory,” based on the family's information. The Alamo staff is researching Lewis Johnson's background.

Buchanan said the answer may be elusive.

“Some of those birthplaces are quite probably incorrect. Even though we know their names, most of them didn't get as much attention as Bowie and Crockett,” he said.

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