

Edgbaston. July 24 1873

My dear Eric. While you were yet in Scotland, I send you
the following "Extracts from The Genealogy
of the Irving Family" to which you
independently belong.

The eldest branch of Irvings of which we have
any reliable record is the Irvings of Bonshaw in the
county of Dumfriesshire, Scotland. In this scene of ancient
border warfare, they had been settled as early as the
12th Century, and here they are settled still.

In the beginning of the 14th Century, the Irvings ^{of Bonshaw} oc-
cupied the Tower of Woodhouse, which was still stand-
ing, though in ruins in 1842. To this Tower, came
Robert Bruce when flying from Edward 1st, with the
determination to assert his right to the throne of Scotland.
in 1306, and on leaving it, (to be soon after crowned at
Inverness,) he took with him one of the sons of the family, William
by name, and made him his Secretary - Bruce's
authority was short lived - he was totally routed at
Methven, near Perth and many who had taken up arms
with him were either executed or compelled to return to
their allegiance to the English Crown. Bruce, himself be-
came a hunted fugitive, being at one time actually pursued
by blood hounds. In this extremity, his faithful Secretary
shared all his hardships and dangers, in his long and
bloody struggle for the independence of Scotland, and when
that was achieved, received from the King the honor of

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Knighthood, and in token of his fidelity gave him
his own private coat of arms - viz: the three branches
of holly leaves - with the motto "Sub sole, sub umbra
vivens" - "floodship in the sun and in the shade". The
King also conferred upon him by Royal Charter the
more substantial reward of the Lower and Forest
of Drum, a hunting seat of the Kings of Scotland,
situated on the River Dee. The grant, by charter
under the great seal, still preserved by the family of
Drum, is in Latin, the English of which reads thus:

"To our beloved and faithful William de Irvine the
whole forest of Drum to be holden by him and his
heirs in free barony". By this right the Irvines
of Drum claim to be the first baronial house of
Scotland; that is: longest possessors of the same
estates originally held by baronial tenure from
the Crown.

The marriage of Sir William appears to have
followed the grant of the lands of Drum in 1323 -
according to manuscript in the Herald's college London,
he married Marjorie, grand daughter of Sir Robert
Keith, Lord Marshal of Scotland, whose wife
Margaret Haye was daughter of Gilbert de la
Haye, first constable of the family - His descendants

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therefore will hardly lack a martial ancestry -
himself the companion in arms of Bruce - his wife
the daughter of Sir Robert Keith, who fell at the
battle of Durham in 1346 - when King David was
taken prisoner - grand daughter of the "fiery
de la Haye" the devoted follower of Bruce, who
fought with him in victory and defeat and found
a widow's grave at the battle of Halidon Hill in
1333, and grand daughter of that Sir Robert
Keith who led the horse at Bannockburn and
died sword in hand at the battle of Dupplin in
1332.

The second son of Sir William Irvine of
Drum is recorded as a landed proprietor in
the Orkney Islands in 1369, and from him
was descended through eleven generations,
thoroughly authenticated your ^{great} Great grandfather
William Irving of New Works, the father of
Washington Irving, and of your ^{great} Grand mother
Van Wart's my mother -

When I visited Drum, the then Laird, then,
I think, in his 86th year, the father of the present

professor of Drum, after I had visited the summit of
the old Tower, met me himself, in a small armoury
and placed in my hand weapons which had been
wielded by the chiefs of the family in the struggle for
Scottish liberty, or in defence of the Realm - among others
in the battle of Harlaw - 24th July, 1431. against a highland
chief called Donald of the Isles ^{then in rebellion,} in which the son of Donald
and the Laird of Drum singly each other out by
their armorial bearings and encountered hand to hand
with such determined bravery that both were killed -
The Laird of Drum, "the Guide Sir Alexander" was buried
on the field and a Cairn was raised over his grave,
on the heather hills back of Drum, which still has
the name of Drum's Cairn - of which Miss Irvine gave
me a photograph - the following ballad paid a minstrel's
tribute of the period to his worth and valour.

"Guide Sir Alexander Irvine
The much renowned Laird of Drum -
None in his days were better seen
When they were bembled all and one -
To praise him we should not be dumb -
For valour, wit and worthiness -
To end his days he here did cum -
Dunbar's Ransom is Kennedy's loss."

When I visited Drum, which was I think about

twenty five years ago. I was accompanied by your
 father's brother, your uncle Irving, who posted out from
 Aberdeen, and simply, proposed to make a morning
 call. on presenting my card, however, as a "nephew of
 Washington Irving," the old Laird absolutely refused to
 allow us to leave, his daughter, he said, and second
 son, Charles, then visiting home from Australia, were out
 making calls, but would be in presently, and we must
 stay for the family dinner and evening at least - and
 calling his butler (an old family servant) to conduct us
 up the tower, he met us as he proposed in the morning.
 • Soon Miss Irving arrived who was very warm and frank
 in her greeting on hearing who we were, and Charles
 Irvine with a strong Australian red beard, giving
 us a hearty greeting. The dinner was charming, the
 walls hung with portraits of successors of the family, and
 a large picture, I remember, done by an artist of the
family, a young highlanded defending a lamb against
 the attempt of two large eagles to carry it off.

The main body of the house was built out from
 the tower about three centuries ago. ~~on the~~ and the
 late Laird improved the main floor of the tower,
 of which the walls are ten feet thick into a fine
 library - in this we took tea, and the old

to be made "Lady of Drum" - the song says four and twenty
 belted knights saluted him with clapp'd ^{and bended knee} beaver, as he
 rode forth from "the bonnie gates of Drum", but as he
 returned with the maid by his side, not one would
 give him salutation - the song goes on to say the Lady
 was installed and afterwards took grand airs and told
 the Lord "in you are dead and I am dead and with
 in grave are laid, they'll not know your dust from
 mine." The song book also contained the romantic
 history of Fair Helen - Helen Irvine of Kerconnel.
 which you can buy at Aberdeen for your boudoir.
 as a recollection of Scotland.

Here are near eight boxes of small writing
 which you may find it too tedious to
 read, but as the days must often be long where
 you are, and often tiring, and your Papa, who knows
 my writing, must have much leisure, perhaps he
 will help you to decipher them.

and now with much love to your Mother
 and Marion and yourself and kind regards
 to all from Chestburgh, I am very dear
 Love,

Your affectionate Grandfather W.

The drive from Aberdeen to Drum runs by the banks of the
 pretty river Dee and is beautiful - high up on cliffs overlooking the river
 is a cave, and at its mouth the figure of Rob Roy in kilt and tartan. ask

the post boy to point it out to you - and Drum Castle seen a mile before you reach it, in the distance