A Bit of Clan Gunn History:

Our ancestors were mixed in origin, the earliest known inhabitants of the area were the Picts, later mixed with Celts, Scots, Teutons, Normans, Norse and others. Practically without exception, the Highland Clans' chiefly lines claim descent from the Norse Vikings. Clan Gunn is no exception. The surname Gunn derives from Gun, Gunnar, or Gunni (depending upon the interpretation of the historian) who was a grandson of Sweyn, the Pirate of Freswick, whose family ruled the earldoms of Orkney and Caithness during the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries. The modern lineage and sept families stem from George Gunn, the Crowner of Caithness, born in the first decade of the 15th century and slain with several of his clansmen at the Chapel of St. Tears, near Ackergill, in July, 1478.

Clans have existed in many parts of the world, but it was in the Highlands of Scotland that the clan system developed most fully as a way of life. History tells us that clans fought amongst each other over matters of territory and pride. However, differences were put aside in a heartbeat to fight an enemy. And games or gatherings of the clans throughout the Highlands and islands of Scotland provided a chance for young Highlanders to choose their spouses and thus insure good will among the clans as well as participating in athletic competitions. During these gatherings, men, women and children would also share food and drink, tell stories, trade and barter for goods, play music and dance. The games and gatherings of today are probably much like those of yesteryear.

The clan system ended with the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie's Highlanders on the moors of Culloden, near Inverness, on April 16, 1746. Following this defeat, the English abolished the Clan system and until 1782 all weapons were forbidden to the Highlander, as were the tartans, clan dress, clan symbols and paraphernalia, clan music, Highland dancing, and gatherings. Even the bagpipe was forbidden as it was, and is today, considered an instrument of war.

In the early to mid 1800s, a program known as the "Clearances" was carried out with the stated object of "clearing the Highlanders from the land to make it fit for the raising of sheep". It was this program that was largely responsible for the scattering of the Highlanders to the far reaches of the world.

When King George IV toured Scotland in the 1820s (he was the first monarch to visit Scotland in 175 years), he and his court were adorned in full Highland regalia. Tartans blossomed everywhere, the Clans were revitalized and Clan societies were organized in an attempt to re-establish family ties.

The first Clan Gunn Society was founded in 1821 but drifted into the doldrums for the next century and a quarter. About 40 years ago the Clan Gunn Society was reactivated in Scotland and the United Kingdom. In 1969, in North Carolina, the Clan Gunn Society of North America was organized with membership open to all Gunns residing in North America.

For additional membership information and a membership application, contact:

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An Introduction to the
CLAN GUNN SOCIETY
of North America

The Clansman’s Badge

The Clan Motto: 
AUT PAX AUT BELLUM 
(Either Peace or War)
What is a Clan?

The Gaelic word ‘clan’ means children, and the central idea of clanship is kinship. A clan is a family and, at least figuratively, the father is the chief. Although many of a clan may be related by blood, the family was extended to all those who acknowledged the authority of the chief and accepted his protection.

Clan Gunn

Iain Alexander Gunn of Gunn, formerly of Latheron, Caithness, which provides a central repository; and fourthly, to engender pride of our Scottish heritage.

The Objectives of the Clan Gunn Society of North America:

1- to promote the spirit of kinship among our members;
2- to educate members in the traditions of our common heritage;
3- to preserve memorabilia representative of our members and their achievements by providing a central repository; and
4- to engender pride of our Scottish heritage.