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Kerr, John Hoare (1978-1984): Article 01

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Members of Note:

JOHN HOARE KERR OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

In this new series, noteworthy members of the Kerr Family will be featured in order that the readers might know more about current Kerrs and Carrs in the United States and Canada. The first to be featured is John Hoare Kerr, Kerr Family Association director from Newport, Rhode Island, and contributor of the better drawings to this publication. Also, he is one of the few members of KFA to have met Lord Lothian, Chief of the Kerrs.



A person of strong religious convictions, he lives a simple life with his family, believing "that God creates our destiny." He describes himself as a very happy person. His family ranges from his 90-year old mother, a descendant of Roman Catholic, Jacobite MacDonald chiefs who brought their followers to America after Culloden, and his sons, one adopted son, Spencer West, in India, and three blood sons by his wife, born Alethia Nevius Reeves. The sons are Ian Angus Nevius MacDonald Kerr, 21, active student and athlete at New York University, Colin Andrew MacKinnon Van Kirk Kerr, 16, a fine young artist who has studied at Phillips Andover Academy and Yale University, and Alan Alasdair MacMillan-Gates Kerr, 15, a true Border descendant in that he lives on horseback when he and his brothers are home on vacation. Alan and his brothers are the 13th or 14th generation of the family to live at Newport and New York City.

John Hoare's drawing has been unaffected by being switched from left to right handedness by officious educators of the 1930s & 40s, and his artwork continues unabated through his multiple careers as a senior foreign service officer (in India), museum director and curator, foundation official, and senior staff member with the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C.

He was educated at various eastern preparatory schools and at Yale University, the Boston Museum School, and abroad. He prefers life in New York City to any in the U.S.A., as do his sons who are related on their mother's side to many of the first Dutch families of Nieuw Amsterdam.

He and his cousin, Episcopal Bishop Robert Shaw Kerr of Vermont, with their second cousin, retired New York attorney William Kerr (all members of KFA), are the senior members of their branch of the Kerr family.

His family hailed from County Dumfries in Scotland. His great grandfather was graduated from Edinburgh University with a degree in law, and at one time his family extended from Scotland to America, and India, the Far East and Australia and New Zealand. The great grandfather practiced law in New Orleans, held large acreages of ranch land in the Republic of Texas, and also managed to live in New York.

John recalls that when the 11th Lord Lothian was British Ambassador in Washington negotiating WWII's Lend Lease Act with the U.S., President Roosevelt had appointed John's father, the late General Francis Rusher Kerr, as U.S. Chief of Export Control. John treasures WWI drawings of France by his father who was a young battalion commander in the American Expeditionary Force. In that family, the ability to draw passes from father to son, one teaching the other.