

MAJOR-GENERAL EDGAR ERSKINE HUME FRSE MD CBE (1889–1952):
SCOTTISH JACOBITE, ‘AULD ALLIANCE’ LEGATEE, KNIGHT OF MALTA
AND KENTUCKY COLONEL

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INTRODUCTION

Edgar Erskine Hume FRSE MD CBE (26 December 1889 – 24 January 1952) was an American physician, Major-General in the U.S Army medical corps, and a prolific writer of medical and family history books. He was also a native Kentuckian with deep and extensive family roots that enmeshed him in the local history of the Southern states of Kentucky and Virginia.



Figure 3 - Major-General Edgar Erskine Hume FRSE MD CBE (26 December 1889 – 24 January 1952) © Smithsonian Institution Archives

At the time of his retirement from the Army he was the most decorated medical officer in American history.¹ He has a significant number of US decorations and medals, many of them awarded to him multiple times: Distinguished Service Medal (three awards); Legion of Merit; Purple Heart (four times); World War I Victory Medal; Silver Star Medals (five awards); and Navy Bronze Star Medal.² The list of his foreign decorations is difficult to fit on one page, but includes Commander of the Order of the British Empire (UK); French Legion of Honour (Grand Officer); Officer of the Sacred and Military Order of Saint Maurice and Saint Lazarus (Italy); Serbian Order of Saint Sava (Grand Officer) and Serbian Order of the White Eagle (Commander); Russian

¹ Wyndham D. Miles, *A History of the National Library of Medicine: The Nation's Treasury of Medical Knowledge* (Washington: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1982), p. 259.

² He was also awarded the US Air Medal and US Soldier's Medal.

Order of Saint Anne; and Montenegrin Order of Danilo (Commander).³ Alongside a highly successful military career, he was also an energetic and enthusiastic member of many learned societies and fraternal and heritage organisations, including President General of the Society of the Cincinnati and President of the Association of Military Surgeons.⁴ He was a prolific writer on subjects as varied as family history, medical biography and history, and the historical records of fraternal organisations. He maintained a particular focus on the history of his own family, Scottish in origin and long-settled in Virginia and Kentucky.

THE HUME FAMILY

One of his most significant and revealing books is devoted to the history of his family, the Humes. In it, Hume says of his direct paternal ancestor:

George, second son of Sir George Hume of Wedderburn, Baronet ... came to Virginia as a result of his having, like his father and uncle, been convicted as a rebel. These members of an ancient Scottish Border family had been, to use the Scottish expression ‘out in the Rising of 1715’ and had fought in the Army of King James ‘to put the auld Stuarts back again.’⁵

The term ‘revealing’ is appropriate because the book not only shows Hume’s pride in his ancestry, but also his political and cultural sympathies. For example, Hume begins his book with an engraving of the impressive armorial bearings of the Humes of Wedderburn. A second significant image is also included; three arms holding cups and toasting the ‘king over the water’, the Jacobite pretender to the throne. In Hume’s lifetime this was Prince Rupert of Bavaria.⁶

³ Other awards include the British General Service Medal; War Cross for Military Valor (Italy); Silver Messina Earthquake Medal 1908 (Italy); Cross of the Serbian Red Cross; Serbian Merit Silver Medal; War Medal (Serbia); Montenegrin Gold Medal for Merit; Order of the Crown of Romania (Officer); War Cross (Greece); and War Cross (Czechoslovakia).

⁴ In addition to being a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain, and Member of the Dante Society of Italy.

⁵ Edgar Erskine Hume, *A Colonial Scottish Jacobite Family: The Establishment in Virginia of a Branch of The Hume of Wedderburn* (Richmond: Old Dominion Press, 1931), p. 10.

⁶ Hume, *A Colonial Scottish Jacobite Family*, cover.



Figure 4 - Armorial bearings of Hume of Wedderburn. Note the unusual privilege of having Supporters on either side of the shield (in this case eagles).



Figure 5 - Jacobite imagery of a toast to the king “over the water”, the royal Stuarts in exile.

Hume’s direct ancestor had three significance qualities – he was a Scot, he was a Jacobite, and he was a gentleman. George Hume, the Jacobite exile, used his coat-of-arms in his lifetime in Virginia, with the addition of a crescent, a common symbol for a second son (although not the standard Scottish practice, which is to add a coloured bordure around the edge of the shield).⁷



Figure 6 - Arms of George Hume (b. Berwick, Scot, 1697 – d. Culpeper Co, Va, 1760).

⁷ Edgar Erskine Hume, ‘A Colonial Scottish Jacobite Family: Establishment in Virginia of a Branch of the Humes of Wedderburn (Continued)’, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 38, no. 4 (October 1930): pp. 293-346.

This means that our General Hume was well-aware of his ancestry, his ancestor's status and the armorial bearings to which he was heir.

ARMORIAL BEARINGS

The fact that Hume valued all these attributes is abundantly clear in his life and actions. After World War I, while still in Europe, he petitioned the Lord Lyon King of Arms for a matriculation of arms. This is the process by which someone descended from ancestors with arms on record in Scotland can obtain a differenced version of the arms in their own name. Both Hume's descent and the correctness of his ancestor's usage of arms were confirmed by the Lord Lyon on 29 January 1921 when Sir James Balfour Paul approved these arms.⁸



Figure 7 - Matriculation of arms in name of E.E. Hume, painted by Mr Graham Johnston, Heraldic Artist to the Court of the Lord Lyon King of Arms in Scotland. The arms are officially recorded in the Public Register of all Arms and Bearings in Scotland.

Why Hume chose this moment to petition for a matriculation of arms is worth investigating. As a US citizen he was well outside Lyon's jurisdiction. In other words, the Lord Lyon would not have been able to grant him new arms, or arms *de novo*. However, having a Scottish ancestor would have brought him within Lyon's jurisdiction. In fact, as we have seen, Hume had a Scottish progenitor and that man had arms recorded in the *Public Register of all Arms and Bearings in Scotland*, an official record that had been in existence since 1672.⁹ As a Jacobite and an American Hume

⁸ Arthur Charles Fox-Davies, *Armorial Families* (Edinburgh: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1905), p. 1000.

⁹ Painted by Mr Graham Johnston, Heraldic Artist to the Lyon Office. The arms are thus recorded in the Public Register of all Arms and Bearings in Scotland (Court of the Lord Lyon King of Arms). Hume, *A Colonial Scottish Jacobite Family*.

might well have been forgiven for thinking Lyon's approval was unnecessary, but Hume was a 'legitimist', so to speak, who understood the importance of due process and proper form in these matters.



MAJOR EDGAR ERSKINE HUME, U. S. ARMY.

Figure 8 - The young E.E. Hume, depicted as a returning war hero in an article published in 1921.

He said of the matriculation process:

The arms were matriculated in the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland, in the Court of the Lord Lyon King of Arms by one of the descendants in America in 1921. Though required in terms of the Act of Parliament of 1672 this had not previously been done.¹⁰

His love of Scotland as an ancestral homeland is evident in his actions and the matriculation of arms was part of a pattern of behaviour that will become obvious as this paper progresses.

A 'GOOD' WAR

Hume also must have felt this to be the right time to establish his *bona fides* on the international stage. He had had a very 'good' war in the sense that he had established himself as a medical specialist of international standing and had acquitted himself very well by rendered good service to many poor wounded soldiers from a variety of different nations. In particular, he had been appointed Chief Medical Officer in Serbia in January 1919 (subsequently Commissioner there, was in charge of all the American Red Cross activity in the Balkans and with the Allied arms in Hungary).¹¹ All of this

¹⁰ Hume, *A Colonial Scottish Jacobite Family*, p. 29.

had been recognised formally with the bestowal of a staggering array of medals and decorations from his own country and ranging across foreign nations from Italy to Montenegro and Serbia. He even had the chance to meet Prince Rupert of Bavaria, the Jacobite Pretender to the Stuart throne. In short, he came home in 1921 a hero and was featured as such in local US medical and Kentuckian publications. In particular, the *Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society* produced a detailed 7-page feature on him.¹² It highlighted both his outstanding war record and his ancestry, which was considered to be of great local historical and antiquarian interest.

HERITAGE INTERESTS

Alongside an active ongoing military career, augmented by post-graduate study, he was an enthusiastic member of several US hereditary or lineage societies. This phenomenon began in the 1870s and 1880s, when many Americans expressed their desire to celebrate aspects of their ancestry in a fraternal setting by forming clubs and associations centred around shared heritage. For Hume this included – Sons of the American Revolution, Society of Colonial Wars in Kentucky, the Aztec Club of 1847, and the Society of the War of 1812. Pre-eminent among his memberships was that of the Virginia Society of the Cincinnati. This Society was unique among American lineage societies because it was begun by Washington (who became its first President) and his brother officers during the American Revolutionary Wars. It was thus the oldest and most prestigious fraternal body in the USA. Only one descendant of an original member could belong at any one time, making it highly exclusive and giving it the character of an hereditary honour. In fact, in France, it was always called the ‘Order’ of the Cincinnati. When it was organized in Paris on 4 July 1784, King Louis XVI pinned the first medals of the Society on those French officers who had assisted the fight for independence.

WORLD WAR II

Hume spent the 1920s and 1930s building skills in medical administration within the US Army and pursuing his historical interests. He was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1933. He also researched, wrote and published several books and articles. A full bibliography of his published works appears at the end of this article. Among them, nine books and several smaller articles were devoted to medical history, family history and the Society of the Cincinnati. Hume continued to write and publish right up to the US entry into World War II in 1942. Hume was active in World War II, which proved to be another ‘good’ war for him. In 1943, he was assigned to General Eisenhower’s North African staff for the invasion of Sicily. From July to August 1943, he acted as Chief of Public Health for Sicily, subsequently being promoted Chief of the Allied Military Government for General Mark Clark’s 5th Army’s Italian sector. In September 1943, Hume accepted the German surrender of Naples and, in May 1945, became Chief of the Military Government for the whole US zone of Austria.

¹¹ Kentucky Historical Society, ‘Major Edgar Erskine Hume’, *Register of Kentucky State Historical Society* 19, no. 56 (May 1921): p. 50.

¹² Kentucky Historical Society, ‘Major Edgar Erskine Hume’, pp. 48-53.

In June 1949 General Hume was appointed Chief Surgeon of the Far East command under General MacArthur in the Korean War and surgeon on the staff of the Supreme Commander for Allied Powers. In July 1950, he became Director-General of Medical Services in Korea, a position he held from MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo until the end of the Allied occupation.¹³



Figure 9 - E. E. Hume takes the salute at Germany's surrender in Italy in January 1945 standing alongside Crown Prince Umberto and Lt. Gen. Clark.

Thus, his career continued to prosper amazingly, based on evident great skill as a medical administrator and practitioner. The other half of his existence likewise flourished. Italy in particular proved to be a most fertile ground for the pursuit of Hume's private interests. In particular he fostered a warm friendship with Crown Prince Umberto, the heir to the reigning King Victor Emmanuel (who would himself reign for 34 days, from 9 May to 12 June 1946). When Hume took the salute at Germany's surrender in Italy in January 1945, he stood alongside the Crown Prince and Lt. Gen. Clark.¹⁴

Another sign of Hume's growing international prestige was evident upon his return to the US in 1951. Retired with the rank of Major-General, he became President General of the Society of the Cincinnati. In this role he presented its hereditary membership Insignia to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.¹⁵

¹³ United States Congress, *Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the ... Congress* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1952), p. 531.

¹⁴ 'Crown Prince Umberto of Italy with Lt. Gen. Clark and Brig. Gen. Hume in Italy in January 1945', The Nation WWII Museum Digital Collection, accessed 14 February 2021. At <https://www.ww2online.org/image/crown-prince-umberto-italy-lt-gen-clark-and-brig-gen-hume-italy-january-1945>.

¹⁵ International Churchill Society, 'Winston in Washington', Churchill Bulletin, published April 2019. At <https://winstonchurchill.org/publications/churchill-bulletin/bulletin-130-apr-2019/winston-in-washington/>.



Figure 10 - Major-General E. E. Hume as President General of the Society of the Cincinnati presents its hereditary membership Insignia to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

To return to Italy during World War II, Hume's increasingly close links to its royal family offered him the opportunity to pursue two cherished ambitions. In 1940, before the war, he had published a book in praise of the medical work of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. Hume had, no doubt, encountered the Order during WWI because it operated several field hospitals and medical facilities in the Balkans and Central Europe. He may also have been familiar with the Order thanks to its role in Jacobite history. He mentions these in his book about the Order's medical history.¹⁶

CROWN PRINCE UMBERTO

During his brief reign as King of England and Scotland, James II's natural son, Henry Fitzjames, and his nephew, Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton (Charles II's natural son), visited the Grand Master of the Order of Malta, Fra' Gregorio Carafa in 1687. Fitzjames was James's natural son by Arabella Churchill and younger brother to James Fitzjames, Duke of Berwick. These two natural sons of James II have sometimes been mistaken with one another in their respective standing towards the Order of Malta. Henry Fitzjames was just fourteen years old when, on 5 December 1687, he was presented by Grand Master Carafa with the cross of the Order as a postulant. Fitzjames impressed the Inquisitor of Malta and Apostolic Delegate as 'a zealous son of the Catholic Church with an evident vocation for the Order of St John'.¹⁷ This was part of a hoped-for restoration of the Order in England by the Roman Catholic monarch, King James. At James's request, Henry Fitzjames was received into the Order of Malta with the rank of Bailiff Grand Cross and invested with the titular dignity of Grand Prior of England.¹⁸

¹⁶ Fra Ludovico Chigi-Albani, 'Preface', in *Medical work of the Knights hospitallers of Saint John of Jerusalem* by Edgar Erskine Hume (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1940); Aldo Castellani, 'Preface', in *Medical work of the Knights hospitallers of Saint John of Jerusalem* by Edgar Erskine Hume (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1940). See review of this book by Loren C. MacKinney, *The American Historical Review* 46, no. 4 (July 1941): pp. 857–858.

¹⁷ D. F. Allen, 'James II in pursuit of a pirate at Malta', *The British Library Journal* 16, no. 2 (Autumn 1990): p. 115.

How familiar Hume was with these events is difficult to judge, but he himself achieved a surprising parallel with young Fitzjames when both he and his son, Edgar Erskine Hume Jnr., achieved membership of the Order of Malta. It is a lazy assumption to think of all Jacobites as being Roman Catholic because King James had been of that faith. General Hume was Episcopalian, or what the British world would call a High Church Anglican. We know this because he maintained a life-long association with St George's Episcopal Church, located in Fredericksburg Virginia, where he was a parishioner. His membership of the Order of Malta was remarkable on several levels. First, he was Protestant (albeit Anglo-Catholic), not Roman Catholic; second, he was American (at a time when the Order's presence in the USA was slight) and, third, it required him to leverage his close association with Crown Prince Umberto of Italy.

General Hume clearly relished membership of the Order of Malta and harboured dynastic ambitions for his son also to become a Knight of Malta. This constituted a delicate negotiation. At this time during the war in 1943 his son was an officer in the US 8th Army. Joining the Order of Malta required a regular proposal signed by two Knights of Malta. Hume confessed this aspiration to Major Francesco di Campello, *aide-de-camp* to the Crown Prince and also a knight of Honour and Devotion.¹⁹ Campello made sure that, at the end of the first meeting between Crown Prince Umberto and the American general, it was the Prince of Piedmont who proposed the longed-for appointment of Hume's son to the Order's Grand Prior, Fra' Carlo Maresca dei Duchi di Serracapriola. From that moment on the Crown Prince had a powerful ally and it was largely due to Hume that the deadlock was overcome in achieving US military participation in the war in Italy, following the fall of Mussolini and the fascists in June 1943.²⁰

¹⁸ D. F. Allen, 'Charles II, Louis XIV and the Order of Malta', *European History Quarterly* 20 (1990): pp. 323-40; Allen, 'James II in pursuit of a pirate at Malta', p. 115.

¹⁹ Campello is mentioned in Lionel S. B. Shapiro, *They Left the Back Door Open* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1944), p. 182. This book is a chronicle of the Allied campaign in Sicily and Italy.

²⁰ Campello's own account is contained in his book: Francesco di Campello, *Un principe nella bufera: Diario dell'ufficiale di ordinanza di Umberto 1943-1944* (Florence: Le Lettere, 2012). He also confirmed the favourable impact of Hume's subsequent 'very strongly favourable' report: Paolo Mieli, *I conti con la storia* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2013); 'L'atmosfera malsana dell'Italia di Badoglio: Gelosie, meschinità, ripicche nel Regno del Sud', *Corriere della Sera, Cultura*, accessed 14 February 2021. At https://www.corriere.it/cultura/12_ottobre_16/mieli-atmosfera-malsana-italia-badoglio_491944e0-178c-11e2-834a-587475fb3e23.shtml.



Figure 11 - Armorial bearings of Major-General Edgar Erskine Hume, Comte de Chèrisky, Bailiff Grand Cross of the Sovereign Order of Malta. ‘Hume sono di origini scozzesi e il titolo Conte di Hume de Chèrisky ‘Francia’’ (Hume is of Scottish origin and holds the title Count of Hume de Chèrisky [France]). Quartered, in the 1st and 4th Vert a lion rampant Arg.; 2nd Arg. three parrots Vert placed 2-1; 3rd Arg., a cross engrailed Az.; a chief of religion of the Order Malta; all on the Maltese cross and surmounted by the coronet of a count. crest: a unicorn head Arg. armed and maned Or. Motto: ‘Remember’; ‘True to the End’. Source: Libro d’Oro, 13th edition, Vol. 14 (1962-1964), p. 713.

As a result of his elevation into the Order, Hume’s armorial bearings took on a dramatically new and impressive form, being augmented with the heraldic privileges of a Bailiff Grand Cross of Honour and Devotion of the Sovereign Order of Malta.



Figure 12 - Watercolour portrait of Edgar Erskine Hume, by Italian artist Giulio Falzoni (1947). Official US Army portrait in oils at the American Revolution Institute.

There is some sense of Hume's level of self-satisfaction in the 1947 watercolour portrait of Edgar Erskine Hume by Italian artist Giulio Falzoni.²¹ It was painted in Florence and its central symbolic messages are further supported by another later official US Army portrait at the American Revolution Institute.²² Two striking features of the images are, first, the armorial seal ring worn by Hume. Second, is the fact he is wearing a medal ribbon denoting a Bailiff Grand Cross of the Order of Malta. This does not appear in later post-war photographs of General Hume, I suspect because it is contrary to US Army dress regulations. Both items represent his great pride in ancestry and formal recognition via Orders and Decorations.

Jacobitism was (and, to a much smaller extent, is) the political movement that tried to put the Stuart kings back onto the thrones of England, Scotland, and Kingdom of Ireland. The movement took its name from the Latin form *Jacobus* of the name of King James II and VII. As we have seen, Hume's direct ancestor was exiled to Virginia as a punishment for his participation in the 1715 Jacobite uprising.²³

In October 1944, when Germany occupied Hungary, Prince Rupert of Bavaria's wife and children were captured, while he, still in Italy, evaded arrest. They were first imprisoned in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp at Oranienburg in Brandenburg. In April 1945, they were moved to the Dachau concentration camp, where they were liberated by the United States Army.²⁴ On 26 August 1944 the American military governor of Tuscany, Major-General Edgar Erskine Hume, met with Prince Rupert of Bavaria. They had known each other many years before in Munich after World War I. Rupert would have travelled to Rome immediately, but in September he became sick; he was now 75 years old. He spent a month in a clinic in Florence where he was visited twice by his nephew-in-law, Crown Prince Umberto of Italy. Then on 1 November, General Hume drove Rupert to Rome. He stayed at the Palazzo Quirinale, the official royal residence, and had an audience with Pope Pius XII.²⁵

²¹ 'Gen'l E.E. Hume, Military Governor of Rome', catalogue number 1947.4.1, Edgar Erskine Hume Collection, Kentucky Historical Society. Available online at <https://kyhistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/359EA5D5-D8B1-493C-B3C8-781130859471>.

²² 'Edgar Erskine Hume (1889-1952), 15th president general, 1950-1952', Presidents General, The Society of the Cincinnati, completed 1944. Available online at <https://www.societyofthecincinnati.org/presidents-general/>.

²³ Allan I. Macinnes, 'Jacobitism in Scotland: Episodic Cause or National Movement?', *The Scottish Historical Review* 86, no. 222 (October 2007): pp. 225-252.

²⁴ Erwein Freiherr von Aretin, *Kronprinz Rupprecht von Bayern: Sein Leben und Wirken* (Basel: Weiß-bläue Hefte 4, 1948); Robert S. Garnett Jr., *Lion, Eagle, and Swastika: Bavarian Monarchism in Weimar Germany, 1918-1933* (New York: Garland, 1991); Kurt Sendtner, *Rupprecht von Wittelsbach, Kronprinz von Bayern* (Munich: Richard Pflaum, 1954); Jack Sweetman, *The Unforgotten Crowns: The German Monarchist Movements, 1918-1945* (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, 1973); Dieter J. Weiß, *Kronprinz Rupprecht von Bayern: Eine politische Biografie* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 2007).

²⁵ Noel S. McFerran, 'The Royal Family, the Nazis, and the Second World War', *The Jacobite Heritage*, accessed 14 February 2021. At <http://www.jacobite.ca/essays/ww2.htm>.

The incident is significant in that it reveals Hume's keen interest in the Jacobite Pretender, in addition to his key placement as the linchpin between the American occupation force in Italy and its royal family. Hume profited from this position in a most unexpected way, but one that conforms with general trends in his life. He knew the deeper history of his family, in addition to that of his personal branch in America. Among other things, his ancestors had been active participants in the 'auld' alliance between Scotland and France in the Middle Ages.²⁶ In particular he knew about a French noble title that had been accorded to an early Hume in France by its king – the French count-ship of Chérisy-sous-Montréal-en-Bourgogne. Hume now claimed to be the heir to that title, in right of a younger brother of his immigrant ancestor's 6th great-grandfather, George Hume (b.1458), a Scottish officer in French service who was granted the count-ship, upon his receiving letters of naturalisation in France in June 1534 (along with the lordships of Savilly and Villedieu).²⁷ The first Hume count was a second son of the Baron of Wedderburn in Scotland and the family then held the title for seven generations, until the last Count, Louis-Thomas de Hume de Chérisy, died childless in 1793.²⁸

Hume had made detailed reference to this title many years before in his published family history, saying:

There is an hereditary honour ... which of right belongs to the heir male of the Humes of Wedderburn. In the sixteenth century George, younger brother of Sir David Hume of Wedderburn who fell at the battle of Flodden, went to France with his kinsman Robert Stuart, Seigneur d'Aubigny, Marshal of France and, having served for a long time in the Company of the Twenty-four Gentlemen of the Scottish Guard (*la Compagnie des 24 Gentilshommes de la Garde Ecossaise*), obtained from King Francis I, letters of naturalization under the names and arms of Hume in June 1534, all without losing his status as a Scottish subject. This was registered in Dijon on November 13 following, together with the title of Count de Hume de Chérisy, he having acquired the lands of that name in Burgundy.²⁹

This appears to have impressed Crown Prince Umberto. The published Hume genealogy asserts that this title was granted to 'heirs male whatsoever', a Scottish term indicating that it can be inherited in default of heirs male of the body by going back up the genealogy to the ancestors of the grantee and then back down the senior surviving male line.³⁰ The direct male line of the grantee of the count-ship was exterminated at the

²⁶ 'The Auld Alliance', *Historic UK*, accessed 14 February 2021. At <https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofScotland/The-Auld-Alliance-France-Scotland/>.

²⁷ 'Georges de HUME', Geneanet, accessed 14 February 2021. At <https://gw.geneanet.org/wailly?lang=en&p=georges&n=de+hume>.

²⁸ 'Louis Thomas de HUME de CHÉRISY', *Geneanet*, accessed 14 February 2021. At <https://gw.geneanet.org/wailly?lang=en&p=louis+thomas&n=de+hume+de+cherisy>.

²⁹ Hume, *A Colonial Scottish Jacobite Family*, p. 153.

³⁰ William Everett Brockman, *Early American history: Hume and allied families* (Minneapolis: William Everett Brockman, 1994), pp. 25-26.

French Revolution. Unfortunately for Hume, French titles were attached to landed estates (much like Scottish feudal baronies were until 2004), rather than to dynasties (in the way of British peerage titles). His claim was, therefore, spurious. But what happened next was remarkable. Hume persuaded Crown Prince Umberto to sponsor a royal Italian grant of the title of *Conde di Hume de Chérisy* in the Kingdom of Italy in 1944 (when General Hume was serving as a military governor).³¹ In fact, this ‘grant’ was described by the King of Italy as a ‘rehabilitation’ of the original French title, in the Kingdom of Italy by its sovereign ruler. Thus, Hume obtained a genuine aristocratic title, from a reigning sovereign entitled to grant such titles, and all framed within a narrative that emphasized the antiquity and French-ness of the honour.

The acquisition of a European aristocratic title by a serving US Army officer did not pass without mention in the US Senate. In 1947, it was the subject of debate, regarding the ability of US citizens to accept and use European titles of nobility. There was also some discomfort regarding the circumstances of Hume’s acceptance of the Italian honour and the potential conflict of interest it represented on the part of the general.³² A subsequent edition of the Italian nobility register, the *Libro d’Oro*, or golden book of the nobility recorded that ‘Hume is of Scottish origin and holds the title Count of Hume de Chérisy [in France]’ (*Hume sono di origini scozzesi e il titolo Conte di Hume de Chèrisy ‘Francia’*).³³ This whole extraordinary story is what explains the appearance of the aristocratic coronet of a French count on top of Hume’s shield of arms in his full achievement as a member of the Order of Malta.



Figure 13 - Bronze bust of E. E. Hume sculpted by Italian artist F. Marinelli (1946).³⁴

³¹ ‘Treaties of Peace with Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary: hearings before the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations’, Eightieth Congress, first session, 4 March – 6 May 1947 (Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1947), pp. 159-161.

³² ‘Treaties of Peace with Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary’, pp. 159-161.

³³ Collegio Araldico, *Libro d’Oro* (Rome: Collegio Araldico, 1962-1964), p. 713.

³⁴ ‘Edgar Erskine Hume’, catalogue number 1946.2.15, Edgar Erskine Hume Collection, Kentucky Historical Society. Available online at <https://kyhistory.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/FECAB05E-4901-4230-B41F-564955973737>.

Obviously proud of his achievements, Hume's time in Italy inspired the commissioning of several artworks in celebration of his attainments. One striking example is the bronze bust sculpted by Italian artist F. Marinelli 1946.³⁵ On closer inspection it is possible to observe two features of great significance. First, around his neck Hume wears the badge of a Bailiff Grand Cross of the Order of Malta. Second, he has the medal of the Society of the Cincinnati pinned to his breast. Both are infringements of the US Army uniform rules.

The gravestone of Hume's son, Edgar Erskine Hume Jr., contains no French count's coronet or Order of Malta badge, but just the undifferenced arms of the 'Hume of Wedderburn' family. By the end of his life, Hume claimed to be the heir to these arms as the head of the senior surviving branch of the Humes of Wedderburn. Perhaps he died before he could make a formal approach to the Lord Lyon, but certainly his son lies buried under the arms in all their glory in Frankfort Cemetery, Kentucky.



Figure 14 - Grave stone of Edgar Erskine Hume Jr. at Frankfort Cemetery, Frankfort, Franklin Co., Kentucky, USA. Note: no count's coronet or Order of Malta, just the undifferenced arms of 'Hume of Wedderburn'.

His Jacobite ancestor, Sir George Home, 10th feudal Baron of Wedderburn, had been attainted (his estates forfeited by rebellion), on 17 September 1719. His estates were confiscated, but they had already been mortgaged in order to support the Old Pretender. A distant relation, Ninian Home of Billie, bought up the debts. This action meant that the Crown could not take possession of Wedderburn, and thus Ninian got them himself.³⁶ General Hume had this to say about the matter:

³⁵ 'Edgar Erskine Hume', Kentucky Historical Society.

³⁶ *Case on the Part of Sir Hugh Hume Campbell of Marchmont, Baronet, in relation to the Claim of Francis Douglas Home, Esquire, to the Titles, Honours and Dignities of Earl of Marchmont, Viscount of Blazonberry, Lord Polwart of Polwart, Reidbraes and Greenlaw* (Westminster: Spottiswoode & Robertson, 1843), p. 76; Henry Drummond, *Histories of Noble British Families* (London; William Pickering, 1844), p. 25; Henry Drummon, *History of Dunbar Hume and Dundas from Drummond's Noble British Families* (London: William Pickering, 1846), p. 25.

The ‘older branch of the House of Wedderburn’ mentioned in the proceedings of the case before the Committee of Privilege of the House of Lords was shown to be that of the descendants of George Hume, second son of the forfeited Laird of Wedderburn who came to Virginia in 1721. The possible rights of the Virginia family in this connection are mentioned in many works on Scottish genealogy ... There can be no question that the eldest male descendant of George Hume of Culpeper County, Virginia, is the heir male of the Humes of Wedderburn. A glance at the chart shows this. He however could have no claim upon any of the estates of the family since his ancestor was excluded from the succession by Ninian Home of Billie when he made the new entail in 1733.³⁷

This means that General Hume could not aspire to take on the ancient territorial title ‘of Wedderburn’. As he explained:

As for the Wedderburn lands, Ninian Home obtained them in a manner legal under the law of his time, and having possessed them, made the new entail as he pleased, and it pleased him to omit therefrom George, the second son of the forfeited Laird, so that none of his descendants in America have now any claim to them. So the senior member of the Virginia family must be content with being *jure sanguinis* male representative of Houses of Wedderburn and Marchmont.³⁸

He was certainly the senior surviving male descendant of the family, but it is uncertain if he had any right to the eagle supporters on either side of the shield that had been used by the old barons of Wedderburn.



Figure 15 - Memorial to George Home at St George’s Episcopal Church, Fredericksburg Virginia. The plaque was placed here in May, 1938 by Col. Edgar Erskine Hume (dedicated June 26, 1938).³⁹

³⁷ Hume, *A Colonial Scottish Jacobite Family*, pp. 144-145.

³⁸ Hume, *A Colonial Scottish Jacobite Family*, p. 152.

Another revealing memorial is that at St George's Episcopal Church in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The plaque was placed there in May 1938 by Col. Edgar Erskine Hume (dedicated 26 June 1938). It shows his pride and ambition to cement his dynastic place in local history on the cusp of the undreamt-of opportunities on the world stage that would be offered by World War II and Italian occupation.⁴⁰ Significantly, it also includes the 'Hume of Wedderburn' supporters, suggesting that General Hume had discovered his ancestor's possible right to them by inheritance (and consequently his own), sometime subsequent to his 1921 matriculation of arms. Incidentally, there are also present Jacobite white roses and the badge of the Society of the Cincinnati.

CONCLUSION

Why did I include the term 'Kentucky Colonel' in the title of this article? In 1913, Governor McCreary of Kentucky (Hume's home state) issued Hume with a Commission as Honorary Aide-De-Camp and Colonel on the Governor's staff. The position still exists today and is described as being the 'highest title of honour that can be bestowed in the Commonwealth of Kentucky'. I think it's significant in Hume's story because it was the very first honour he received in his life, immediately after graduating from Johns Hopkins medical school.⁴¹ It was thus the base on which so many other outstanding achievements were built.

³⁹ 'Plaques of the Church – George Hume', *St. George's History*, accessed 14 February 2021. At <https://history.churchsp.org/plaques-of-the-church-george-hume/>.

⁴⁰ 'Plaques of the Church – George Hume', *St. George's History*.

⁴¹ Kentucky Historical Society, 'Major Edgar Erskine Hume', p. 48.