



Suzanne DeChillo/The New York Times

There was no need to close the streets to traffic for the first Tartan Day Parade yesterday: it mustered only about 100 participants.

# Tartan Day Parade Makes Humble Debut

## Scottish-Americans in New York Seek More Visibility With a March

By SUSAN SACHS

In a city where the ambition of just about every ethnic, immigrant and religious group is to block traffic for a few hours and hold its own noisy street parade, it must be said that the Scots have been laggards.

Some might say they have been self-effacing to a fault, as other men in other parades brazenly wear tartan kilts and play the bagpipes with barely a nod of recognition to the Scots, who share their tradition.

Even yesterday, at what was billed as the first annual Tartan Day Parade, Scottish-Americans displayed a modesty rarely witnessed in the boisterous, quarrelsome world of New York City national-day parade organizers.

The whole Scottish march, which started at the British Consulate on 51st Street and Third Avenue and ended 10 blocks away, across from the United Nations on First Avenue, lasted 30 minutes.

Only about 100 people showed up, one-third of them musicians from the Emerald Society, a fraternal organization for police officers of Irish roots, and an additional 10 or so who work

of Scottish-American events of this sort around the country, wore his own dark-blue-and-green kilt, tartan plaid knee socks and a black tam-o'-shanter trimmed in red.

He also carried a tall gold staff, but he was hardly the most colorfully dressed person in the parade. A few of the bagpipers had green shamrocks tattooed on their knees. All wore tall bushy hats, and the police pipers had flaps of fur hanging from straps around their waists.

Alan L. Bain, the president of the American-Scottish Foundation and the owner of a Manhattan real estate services company, said Scots have taken so long to start their own parade

the very city they helped settle in the 17th century.

"I think a lot of people don't understand the difference between the British, the Scottish, the Welsh and the Irish," Mr. Bain said.

He said he hopes that holding a Tartan Day Parade each year might help make the distinctions clearer, although he was quick to add that Scottish-Americans do not aspire to challenge the Irish and their St. Patrick's Day Parade dominance. "The Irish," he said, "do it very well."

The date for the parade was chosen to coincide — almost, but not quite — with the anniversary of the Declaration of Arbroath, April 6, 1320. The declaration, said Mr. Bain in a rare flash of boldness, was a plea by the Scottish nobility to the Pope to preserve their independence "from British marauders."

The brief early morning parade was generally a calm and modest affair, although some marchers were heard to grumble about being consigned to the sidewalk, where they had to dodge dog-walkers and bus shelters.

Laden with bagpipes, musicians kept politely to the sidewalk.