

October 2019

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the Sandhills

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of local
doppelgängers



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Golf's Walking Tour
Outlander in the Sandhills

The *Outlander* Connection

A Sassenach and Scotsman in the Sandhills

By GAYVIN POWERS





On Samhain in the Scottish Highlands, mist encircles standing stones, a low hum buzzes through the air, and time, as we know it, ceases to exist. Otherworldly happenings are whispers of apparitions like strangers out of time—common when the veil between worlds is close.

As worlds and times merge in history and literature, a Sassenach, otherwise known as an “Outlander” in Scotland, is an English person who is someone not to be trusted. The world between fantasy and real life couldn’t be closer for local residents than with the fourth and fifth books of the famed Outlander series, bringing adventure and history to 18th century Colonial North Carolina.

Diana Gabaldon, author of the Outlander book series that led to the popular STARZ television show (the fifth season this fall), lets her creativity go wild over the pages, entwining historic Scottish and American Colonial legend, history and love like a Celtic spiral that moves endlessly through time. Outlander feeds imagination, especially if a person enjoys being present at historic events. Couple that with an enduring love between Claire, a time-traveling World War II doctor, and Jamie, a brave 18th century Highlander on the run. Moments sizzle between the pages and onscreen with the undeniable chemistry between Claire and Jamie that has led to over 25 million books sold worldwide and over 1.5 million viewers on STARZ.

The books and show are tantalizing and intriguing. It’s alluring to be present in a historic moment. It’s beguiling to watch Claire and Jamie’s continuous risks and consequences unfold as their best intentions to right history lead them to the point of an arrow, barrel of a gun, burning at the stake and more. All the while, it’s seductive to watch their tantalizing love transform across time and place.

Despite their bond, Claire doesn’t start off her harrowing adventure as a willing oracle to history, or wife to Jamie. The first book is set six months after World War II ends. While on honeymoon, with her 20th century husband in the Scottish Highlands, Claire hears the haunting call of the stones at Craigh na Dun. This is the magical site of pagan rituals during Samhain. Unable to resist the temptation, Claire touches a stone and is transported 200 years into the past, just before the uprising of Bonnie Prince Charlie.

At first, her rational mind tries to catch up with her irrational situation. She thinks that she stumbled upon a re-enactment of the British Dragoons against the Scottish Highlanders—until a bullet whizzes past her.

All of this has Claire questioning herself and her surroundings. When her new reality sets in, she’s quite unhappy about the mystical arrangement. Fortunately, the MacKenzie clan saves her from the clutches of “Black Jack” Randall, a sadistic British Dragoon officer. To protect her and utilize her skills as a healer, the MacKenzie clan keeps her as a “guest” at Castle Leoch.

Desperate to return to her 20th century husband, Claire makes several attempts to escape. She tries to return to the magical stones at Craigh na Dun and is captured, once again, by Black Jack Randall.

Worried about what Black Jack will do with Claire, it takes all sorts of coercion, calculation and fighting by the MacKenzies to free her. Since Jamie knows all too well about Randall’s cruel behavior, the MacKenzies hatch a plan to wed Claire to Jamie so that she is officially under their clan’s protection. In order to survive her circumstances, Claire unhappily agrees to marry Jamie.

After the wedding, Claire’s lack of bridal excitement isn’t lost on Jamie or anyone else when a woman questions him:

“Why, what’s the matter wi’ the poor child?” she demanded of Jamie. “Has she had an accident o’ some sort?”

“No, it’s only she’s married me,” he said, ‘though if ye care to call it an accident, ye may.”

OUTLANDER



What starts out as a marriage of survival turns into a marriage of trust, loyalty and love. Over time, there is an intimacy and playful banter that develops between the husband and his unwilling, at first, wife. During one of those moments in Book 1, Claire asked Jamie how he knew that he wanted to marry her:

"Because I wanted you." He turned from the window to face me. "More than I ever wanted anything in my life," he added softly.

I continued staring at him, dumbstruck. Whatever I had been expecting, it wasn't this. Seeing my openmouthed expression, he continued lightly. "When I asked my da how ye knew which was the right woman, he told me when the time came, I'd have no doubt. And I didn't. When I woke in the dark under that tree on the road to Leoch, with you sitting on my chest, cursing me for bleeding to death, I said to myself, 'Jamie Fraser, for all ye canna see what she looks like, and for all she weighs as much as a good draft horse, this is the woman.'"

I started toward him, and he backed away, talking rapidly. "I said to myself, 'She's mended ye twice in as many hoisers, me lad; life amongst the MacKenzies being what it is, it might be as well to wed a woman as can stanch a wound and set broken bones.' And I said to myself, 'Jamie, lad, if her touch feels so bonny on your collarbone, imagine what it might feel like lower down...'"

He dodged around a chair. "Of course, I thought it might ha' just been the effects of spending four months in a monastery..."

Claire, a head-turner and far from a draft horse, gives as good as she gets. While she marries Jamie out of survival, ultimately, he marries her for love and desire. His devotion to her and his passion lead to a trust that she's never known before. The banter and intimacy that comes out of their distressing near-death experiences bonds these two time-crossed lovers.

Every place Claire and Jamie travel in the late 1700s is a new adventure. They go from the stone rings and enemy forts in Scotland, to the court of France, to crossing the Atlantic (only to become castaways), and to homesteading a new life in Colonial America. Everywhere they go is a hotbed of intrigue and political turmoil, risking their families' survival.

Dreams of Autumn, the fourth book in the nine book series, finds promises of hope and prosperity in the New World—something that has evaded Claire and Jamie throughout their journey together. Colonial North Carolina is the setting of this hopeful new beginning. The actual Scottish migration during this time period can be seen throughout the Sandhills, particularly Aberdeen, New Bern, the Appalachians, Wilmington and more. They journey through Roanoke Island, home of the first British settlers and the Lost Colony. On Roanoke, Claire finds another set of standing stones, like those in Scotland, showing that the mystical, haunting powers of Scotland are very much alive in the New World. Despite the undercurrent of otherworldly happenings, it looks

like the couple may get some peace at last. Or will they?

Colonial America is on the brink of the Revolutionary War. Claire is still a feminist doctor with a sailor's tongue, healing locals while fighting a gender bias against her advanced medical skills. Jamie is still a man that every man wants to be and every woman (and man) wants to be with. He's trying to remain true to his Scottish family and friends in the Colonies, who are rising up against the British, while remaining loyal to the British Crown that granted him 10,000 acres in North Carolina at the fictional "Fraser's Ridge."

Last season ended on a hopeful note with Brianna, their daughter, reunited with their new son-in-law Roger MacKenzie and their grandchild. *The Fiery Cross*, the fifth book and upcoming season on STARZ this fall, begins with Colonial America on the verge of war and the British trying to snuff out the revolt. Claire knows that the American Revolution is only a couple of years away and is trying to prepare for it. Jamie is charged with an impossible task: leading a militia to wipe out the Colonial rebellion—headed by his Scottish godfather—or betray an old loyalist friend and the British king. Either way it could cost him everything.

The dilemma Jamie and Claire face is the same one that many people's ancestors encountered when family members were pitted against each other in a world of divided loyalties. All the while, they're dealing with the everyday issues married couples have, finding ways to stay together despite the challenges of the outside world. Conflict and the threat of war surround these new immigrants as they form friendships with the local Cherokee and Mohawk Nations, pirates, Loyalists, trappers, settlers and more. All the while, the reader experiences the foundational beginnings of the United States as seen through Claire's modern eyes. Her views are sometimes countered with Jamie's practical Scottish nature that softens with his love for, and trust in, his wife.

The provocative moments between Claire and Jamie, the impossible situations they face, how history intervenes, and how they try to make the world better based upon their honorable but flawed personalities entice the viewer. Whether they're trying to change the outcome of Bonny Prince Charlie's uprising, attempting to protect the Scottish clans while in France, fleeing to the Americas, or saving their daughter, these two characters may not always agree, but they find a way to come back together.

Their enduring devotion is embodied in *The Fiery Cross* when Jamie speaks to Claire:

"When the day shall come, that we do part," he said softly, and turned to look at me, "if my last words are not 'I love you'—ye'll ken it was because I didna have time."

Locations:

The rich history and timeless love affair between Claire and Jamie has inspired many people to travel to Scotland to visit some of the sites that animate the books and to see where the scenes were filmed. Fans were hopeful that *Dreams of Autumn* and *The Fiery Cross* would be shot in North Carolina, but the producers chose their own film studio, Wardpark Studios in Cumbernauld. Even though fans will have to travel to Scotland to see the film locations, they'll be happy to know there are plenty of sites to visit in North Carolina that retrace the inspiration for the fourth and fifth books. Some of the key locations in the books and television show, Seasons 4 and 5, are located in the following places:

FRASER'S RIDGE—BLOWING ROCK AND BOONE

This fictional 10,000 acres is where Claire and Jamie pin their hopes for the future of their family. Galdabon has been quoted as saying that Fraser's Ridge is located "up near Boone and Blowing Rock" on the Yadkin River. Many people also believe that Grandfather Mountain is a key landmark in Fraser's Ridge.

ROANOKE ISLAND — OUTER BANKS

Claire discovers a set of standing stones like the ones in Scotland at Craigh na Dun.

RIVER RUN — FAYETTEVILLE

The fictional plantation of Jamie's Aunt Jocasta at Cross Creek is on the banks of the Cape Fear River. Outlander's fictional River Run "eventually became part of Fayetteville. Were there any Cape Fear River plantations at the time Jamie and Claire showed up at the fictional one belonging to Jocasta Cameron? Yes. But just two, said Fayetteville historian Bruce Daws after consulting a 1775 map," according to the *Fayetteville Observer*.

PORT OF WILMINGTON

This is the location where Jamie and Claire are invited to the theater by Governor Tryon as well as introduced to a young Colonel George Washington and his bride, Martha. Claire lets Jamie know that Washington will be the first president of the United States. It isn't all encores and roses — their daughter Brianna has a secret handfast ceremony with Roger, only to be brutally attacked by the soundrel Stephen Bonnet.

TRYON PALACE — NEW BERN

Tryon Palace was the home of the Royal Governor William Tryon, Colonial North Carolina's eighth governor from 1765-1771, a historical figure fictionalized in *Drums of Autumn*. He's the person who grants Jamie 10,000 acres of land, even though they both know that the British land grants are only for Colonists who are Protestant British... and Jamie is a Catholic Scotsman. This secret could be his undoing if Jamie's background is revealed to the British Crown in Book 5/Season 5.

ALAMANCE BATTLEGROUND STATE HISTORIC SITE — BURLINGTON

"On May 16, 1771, nearly 2,000 backcountry farmers, who called themselves 'Regulators,' confronted the 1,000-man royal militia of Colonial Governor Tryon. Dishonest sheriffs, illegal fees and heavy taxation led the farmers to call for regulation of public officials. These so-called Regulators were mentioned in *Drums of Autumn* (on which Season 4 is based) and more prominently featured in *The Fiery Cross* (on which Season 5 will be based) when their discontent erupted into the ill-fated Battle of Alamance. The battle is the central theme in *The Fiery Cross* and was, arguably, one of the most important battles of Colonial North Carolina that created tensions that helped spark the American War for Independence," according to the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

The DNCR has additional locations relevant to Outlander including:

BRUNSWICK TOWN/FORT ANDERSON, WINNABOW, NORTH CAROLINA

Mentioned in *A Breath of Snow and Ashes*.

BATH, NORTH CAROLINA

Stephen Bonnet, a notorious pirate in *Drums of Autumn*, is inspired by Stede Bonnet, who had ties to Bath.

EDENTON, NORTH CAROLINA

Mentioned in *Drums of Autumn* and *The Fiery Cross*.

HALIFAX, NORTH CAROLINA

Mentioned in *Drums of Autumn* and *The Fiery Cross*.

GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN STATE PARK, LINNVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Estimated location of the fictional Fraser's Ridge.

CAPE FEAR HISTORICAL COMPLEX, FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

The epicenter of Scottish migration during the Colonial era. Fayetteville was once known as Cross Creek, mentioned in *Drums of Autumn* and *The Fiery Cross*.

North Carolina's Outlander connections



DISMAL SWAMP STATE PARK, SOUTH MILLS, NORTH CAROLINA

This is a backdrop for many settings in *An Echo in the Bone*, the 7th book.

HOUSE IN THE HORSESHOE, SANFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

This was not in the books, however, in season 3, *Voyager*, it's where they encounter the dangerous Stephen Bonnet.

Additional Sites:

Town Creek Indian Mound, Mt. Gilead, North Carolina
Haw River State Park, Browns Summit, North Carolina
Fort Dobbs, Statesville, North Carolina
Stone Mountain State Park, Roaring Gap, North Carolina
Vance Birthplace, Weaverville, North Carolina
Chimney Rock State Park, Chimney Rock, North Carolina
Gore State Park, Sapphire, North Carolina

Events:

FRASER'S RIDGE HOMECOMING, FERGUSON, NORTH CAROLINA

A four-day Outlander-themed event at Leatherwood Mountains Resort, Thursday, Oct. 3 – 6.

NEW YORK COMIC-CON 2019

Outlander will be taking center stage. Cast appearances have yet to be confirmed. Thursday, Oct. 3 – 6 at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York

OUTLANDISH HILLSBOROUGH

Ayr Mount Historic Site, Hillsborough, North Carolina, Friday, Oct. 11 – 13. Weekend event to celebrate the Outlander series. "Step Through The Stones" Sunday, Oct. 13, at 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

DISCOVERING TRYON PALACE — OUTLANDER HOME AND HEARTH, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA

Saturday, Oct. 19 and Nov. 16 at 9:15 - 10:30 a.m.

GALAXY CON — LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Nothing like Thanksgiving with Dougal MacKenzie ready to pour a drink and steal your wife. Dougal MacKenzie, played by Graham McTavish, will be there with more actors to be announced. Friday, Nov. 22 at 10 a.m. – Sunday, Nov. 24 ending at 8 p.m.

THE LAND CON — PARIS

Feel like fleeing the country and going to France like Claire and Jamie in Book 2? Try Paris and see Sam Heughan (Jamie Fraser), Cesar Domboy, David Berry, Ed Speleers, Sophie Skelton, Richard Rankin, John Bell, Steven Cree. Saturday, Nov. 30 - Sunday, Dec. 1. P.S.

Gayvin Powers, author and writing coach at *Soul Sisters Write*, just finished her latest middle grade adventure book set on Roanoke Island. She can be reached at helloworld@gayvinpowers.com.