Volume 56, No. 2 Visit us at www.MacDougall.org

**Sept 2022** 

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Y-DNA of the Sons of MacDougall of Lorn
- Galloway Traditions

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### Scotland's Thistle Emblem

The thistle emblem of Scotland was first depicted on a silver coin minted in 1470 by James III, King of Scots. It bore what is believed to be the image of the spear thistle, one of several varieties of thistle found in Scotland. It is displayed here on a 1602 Silver Thistle Merk from the reign of James VI.



Centuries later, this hardy survivor continues to thrive and support other species. Its distinctive fluffy purple flowers atop a spiny ball provide nectar to butterflies and nourishing seeds to goldfinches.

Legend has it that a party of Norsemen was creeping up on a

Scots' encampment when one of them stepped on a thistle. His shrieks are said to have warned the Scots to defend themselves and repel the attack. Well, that is what the legend tells us about the origin of this distinctive symbol of Scotland, but no one really knows.





**Photo credits:** Thistle bloom - Source Bob - https://www.inaturalist.org/photos/211250731 Thistle clump - Source Akinom - Own work, CC BY 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3767094

Silver Thistle Merk - https://www.amrcoins.com/coins-for-sale/G-0099-HS05/

### **President's Report**

Our tents at Highland Games are great places to meet your fellow Clan members. Even though fall is arriving, there are still several chances to get in a visit before the season wraps up. Check www.macdougall.org/events to see what may be upcoming in your area.

After a rocky couple of years, it has been good to be back out on the field and spend time together. The Grandfather Mountain Highland Games were a real joy this year! Everyone seemed in good spirit and enthusiasm was high. The number of new members joining the Society was, to



anyone's memory, a record-breaking achievement with several voicing a desire to become actively involved in the work of the Society.

That sentiment has become a trend lately, with several members stepping up to fill vacant State Representative positions. They are Jennifer MacDougall in Colorado, Shelly MacDougall-Trembly in New Hampshire, Brian Trotter in North Carolina, and Benjamin Dowdell in Ohio. Oregon State Representative Christopher McDowell has also been promoted to Northwest Region Commissioner, expanding his responsibilities to include oversight of Washington and Idaho in addition to Oregon. This is exciting progress in the growth of our organization! Several other areas remain in need of motivated leadership if you'd like to get more involved.

Planning has now officially begun on the 2024 Clan Gathering in Oban, Scotland. We expect to have firm dates to share in the October issue of *The Raven*. For now, you can be begin thinking about trip planning. You won't want to miss this wonderful event!

Inside this issue, you will find an article for those males among us who are fortunate enough to bear the MacDougall surname, in all its variant spelling. Society member Edward Sweeney presents an incredible opportunity to take part in a fascinating Y-DNA Project that will increase our knowledge of the spread of the Chiefly line.

Lastly, there are 103 members who have yet to renew their active membership by making their annual contributions for 2022. Reminder letters will be sent soon. I hope you all will choose to continue your Society membership for another year. Together, we have made quite an impact this year and we can continue this momentum by sticking together. Contributions must be received by December 31, 2022. If you are unsure of your status, contact Membership Secretary Valerie McDougall at membership@macdougall.org.

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# In Search of the "Sons" of MacDougall of Lorn

#### By Ed Sweeny

Somerled is known to have fathered sons whose descendants went on to found the Clans Donald, MacDougall, and MacAllister. Dougall MacSomhairle (1164-1207), the first chief of Clan MacDougall was a King in the (Hebrides) Isles and eldest son of Somerled and his second wife Ragnhild Olafsdottir. As the eponymous founder of the Clan MacDougall, Dougall did what all fathers do – in his Y-DNA he passed along a part of himself and of his paternal ancestors to his sons. The key to paternal lineage is found in Y-DNA that is solely passed between fathers and sons.



MacDowall

This is the story of how our Y-DNA can reveal details of our paternal ancestors and ancient homelands, including our relationship with the Clan MacDougall.

#### How does DNA work?

Each of us have 22 pairs of chromosomes made up of DNA that we received from both our mother and father which, among other things, determine our eye color, hair color, height, and other features and talents passed along by our parents. We also inherit a 23rd pair of chromosomes from our parents which determine our biological sex. Our mother provides one of her X-X chromosomes. And our father provides either his X or his Y chromosome. When a child inherits their mother's X chromosome and their father's X chromosome, they develop female organs and features. Those who inherit an X-Y combination develop as a male.

#### How is DNA helpful in determining paternal lineage?

This wonderful process means that the Y-DNA contained in every man's sex chromosome is made up of portions of their father's Y-DNA; which contains portions of his father's – his paternal grandfather's – and all of his paternal ancestors. Every few generations or so, at random times, the Y-DNA that a boy inherits from his father includes a noticeable mutation. With the help of advanced testing, cataloging, and aging technologies, Y-DNA mutations, from our most recent to our most ancient paternal ancestors, can now be charted like a

roadmap.

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### Sons of MacDougall (cont)

Relying on this Y-DNA testing technology, Professor Bryan Sykes of Oxford University in 2005, was first to notice that a large sample of Argyll and Highland MacDonald, MacDougall, and MacAllister men, who had proven pedigrees back to one of the sons of Somhairle Mac Gillebride (Somerled), also tested positive for the Y-DNA marker known as YP326. Geneticists at the ClanDonaldUSA DNA Research Project have tested the Y-DNA of several thousand men over the last 15 years and have verified this finding. They have further charted the various genetic branches that mutated from YP326 down through the subsequent centuries, and they have correlated particular mutations within the recorded pedigrees of groups such as the MacDonalds of Glengarry, Keppoch, Dunnyveg, Sleat and more. Accordingly, many of today's MacDonald Y-DNA testers who were previously unaware of their heritage are, for the first time, being matched to their DNA cousins, and learning of their unique Clan and homeland affiliation.

#### The MacDougall Y-DNA line

One of the mutations descending from Somerled's YP326 marker is a mutation called YP5543. In 2019, along with my partner Alasdair MacDonald, lecturer in genealogy at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, we formed the MacDougall DNA Research Project with the goal of testing the Y-DNA of men bearing the surname MacDougall, or a variant spelling of the surname, and charting their Y-DNA mutation patterns. Our hypothesis was that YP5543 was indicative of men who were blood descendants of Dougall. We aim to do for MacDougall men, what the ClanDonaldUSA DNA Project has done for MacDonald men.

Heretofore, it was thought that the male bloodline of Dougall had disappeared due to declining male births and early male mortality. Our esteemed Chief, Madam Morag MacDougall of MacDougall and Dunollie, is the daughter of Madame Jean Louisa Morag Hadfield, sister of our 30th Chief Madame Coline MacDougall, who was the daughter of our 29th Chief. Furthermore, the present-day heads of the MacDougalls of Lunga and Gallanach, well chronicled branches of the main Clan line, are also descended from MacDougall daughters.

To date our research project has tested the Y-DNA of over 300 MacDougall men. It has uncovered 46 individuals who have tested positive for the YP5543 mutation. One of them traces his paternal pedigree back to the MacDougalls of Gallanach, who descend from Duncan of Dunollie, the 16th Chief of Clan MacDougall, who descended from Somerled and Dougall. 37 of these men are descended from ancestors who emigrated in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries to the east coast of the USA and Canada, as well as to Australia and South Africa. Only 9 of this small group were born in the UK. In many of these cases, the project has been able to trace the paternal line of these men back to their Scottish MacDougall ancestors and to their ancestral villages and towns.

### What of the other 250 or so MacDougall testers who did not test positive for YP5543?

We are passionate about helping all male MacDougall testers to connect with their DNA cousins, share their family trees, and discover their family connections and ancestral roots. For those MacDougall men who do not test positive for YP5543, we compare their Y-DNA test results to those of other testers and we group each man with others to whom they are

### Sons of MacDougall (cont)

most closely related. We encourage our Y-DNA Project members to share their family trees, the names of their most distant paternal relatives, and their ancestral birthplaces. Thus far our project has connected many members who are descended from MacDougalls in Perthshire, Stirling, Barra, Mull, Easdale and Makerstoun.

#### Does this mean that these 250 or so men are not MacDougalls?

Not in the slightest. Clan MacDougall has always been comprised of individuals who were blood descendants of Dougall as well as close kin and others who were integral to the Clan. Scotland's switch from ancient patrilineal naming to surnames has always complicated genealogical prognostications and led to error and confusion. DNA doesn't lie. Over the centuries many men acquired their MacDougall surname (or other surnames for that matter) by virtue of their close affiliation with the Clan, as neighbors, tenants, and clan allies, or as spousal cousins, adoptees, and the occasional illegitimate liaison. This is the same for all Scottish Clans.

#### Who can participate in the Clan MacDougall DNA Research Project?

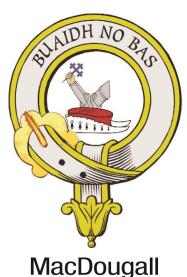
Any man surnamed MacDougall or having a derivatively variant spelling of the MacDougall surname can apply to participate in the study. The Project will purchase a Y-DNA test, at our expense, and we will provide all accepted applicants with the interpretation of their results. For individuals whose initial results appear to indicate that they might prove positive for YP5543, we will then fund further testing and analysis. The DNA results (all personal information is hidden) are available for our project members to see on the MacDougall Project page of the FamilyTreeDNA testing site.

We are seeking to expand the number of participants in our Clan MacDougall DNA Research Project. The Application Form to participate in the study is found online at macdougalldna.org.

Our goal is, that through our work, we help to build stronger bonds between all members of our MacDougall Clan and introduce newer members to their ancestral heritage. We are grateful to the Clan MacDougall Society of North America for showcasing our work and while there is no cost to applicants to join our MacDougall DNA Project, we would strongly encourage DNA test applicants to support the Society. Details of how to do that can be found at https://macdougall.org/ presidents-message/ and at https://macdougall.org/donationForm/donationForm.html

#### About the author

Eddie Sweeney was born and adopted in Glasgow, Scotland. Sweeney is his adoptive name. With the help of DNA testing and genealogical research, he discovered the identity of his McDonald birth mother and McDougall birth father. Fueled by the impact of his family discoveries and his McDougall paternity, he co-founded and is the sole sponsor of the MacDougall DNA Research Project as well as co-administrator of the FamilyTreeDNA.com MacDougall Group. These projects jointly aim to help MacDougall, and derivatively named men, uncover their paternal DNA heritage and build a strong community of MacDougall kinship. Sweeney is a retired senior executive of a Fortune 500 Technology company and, with his wife and family, lives in California and Edinburgh, Scotland. He is



### Sons of MacDougall (cont)

currently completing his master's degree in Genealogy, Paleography and Heraldry at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow and is a proud supporter of all things MacDougall.

A Note from the editor - Our next issue of The Tartan will bring you an article by another member of our Society about The McDowell Surname DNA Project.

### **Gaelic Traditions of Galloway**

By Tòmas MacCòmhghan//Thomas Ashby McCown

I had hoped to read, toward the completion of the 2015 celebration of our Society's 50th year, two Gaelic poems: Dierdre's presumed praise of Loch Etive, *Glean Measach Iasgach Linneach*, and William Niel's vision, *Sealltainn thar Chluaidh*. Reading both a song of Argyll and a song of the southwest of Scotland was to stress the Gaelic heritage of both of our Clans. However, we spent so much time that evening in warm and humorous recollections of our Society's history that it seemed best to move directly into Richard VanValkenburgh's closing ballads. I would like in this article to make some amends for the omission of that evening and revisit our Galloway Gaelic tradition.



### Gaelic Language and Poetry in Galloway

Glean Measach lasgach Linneach is part of an important medieval collection, Deirdre and the Lay of the Children of Uisne. These poems would have been sung in the halls of Dunollie and Dunstaffnage from the 13th century, and perhaps before. Sealltainn thar Chluaidh, on the other hand, is a modern Gaelic poem, though written by a poet with a great interest in the historical Gaelic of his adopted home, Galloway. William Niel, though a Gaelic learner, was a modern Gaelic poet and scholar. He was a devoted collector of Gaelic placenames and an advocate for the ancient role of Gaelic in the southwest of Scotland. It is said that his interest in Gaelic was inspired by the conversations he heard among fishermen from the Hebrides calling at the harbor at Ayr. The sea has been critically important to the communication and commerce of Gaelic speaking, indeed Celtic speaking, communities over the ages. The focus of the poem is homecoming over the North Channel into the calm waters of the mouth of the Firth of Clyde, between the isles of Arran and Suibhne's chair (Ailsa Craig).

I chose a modern Galloway Gaelic poem to read at our Gathering because there is only one extant poem in the Gaelic of Galloway, and I did not know of its existence in 2015. The poem is entitled *Òran Bagraidh*, and is believed to deal with the murder of a young noble of a powerful Galloway family, the Kennedys. It was collected in the early 18th century in North Uist. The poem now has a webpage, https://www.oranbagraidh.com/,

where the poem can be read or heard as a song. The arrangement is guite nice.

#### The Rise of Gaelic in Galloway and Southwest Scotland

Galloway, with nearby areas like Carrick and Ayrshire, formed a major Gaelic speaking region of what is now Scotland. At its height the region expanded to include all of southwest Scotland. The area was characterized by not only a distinct language, but a distinct legal, social and political structure. It has been estimated that these characteristics lasted more than six hundred years, although Derick Thomson in *The Companion to Gaelic Scotland* would say a thousand. There are, however, no surviving documents written in the Gaelic of Galloway. Evidence that Gaelic was extensively used in Galloway can be seen in place and family names like Macdowall, McDowell, and Mcdoual, and in references to the Galloway speech and society in surviving documents written in other languages. Aside from *Oran Bagraidh* we do not, however, have examples of the rich culture of Galloway that Gaelic stories, poems, songs, and history provide us for other areas of Scotland.

It is not known when Gaelic first became a major tongue in Galloway. Gaelic broadly means those dialects or sublanguages related to the classical native Irish language. The Romans wrote of Scoti raiding across Hadrian's wall. By Scoti the Romans meant Irish, and these raiders would have spoken Gaelic. Ireland is only some 20 miles across the North Channel from the Rhins of Galloway. There would have been communication between the two adjacent regions from time immemorial, although this does not prove that there were extensive Gaelic speaking communities from time immemorial. The Mull of Kintyre is but 12 miles from the Antrim coast and it is well attested that a Gaelic speaking community was thriving on the coast of Argyll in the 6th century. Scholars once believed that Gaelic arrived in Galloway from Ireland at around the same time by the same means as an assumed immigration from Ireland brought Gaelic farther north to Argyll – around the 5th or 6th century AD. There is, however, no archaeological evidence for an Irish migration to Argyll in that period and probably the best that can be said is that there were thriving Gaelic speaking communities in Argyll at that time. Examination of the density of Gaelic placenames once led some to contend that Galloway, particular the Rhins of Galloway, was an early Gaelic speaking region, but this is now generally considered uncertain.

Galloway roughly means the land of the Gall-Ghàidheil. In Gaelic, Gall means "lowlander" or "foreigner" and came to denote someone with Scandinavian ties. Gàidheal means Gael, or a Gaelic speaker. Gall-Ghaidheil then is a Gaelic speaking foreigner, especially one with Scandinavian links. Scandinavians, or their relatives, were thick off the coasts of Scotland and Ireland from the 9th century on. Scandinavian raiders' first sacked Saint Columba's monastery on the Isle of Iona in 795. The *Gall-Ghàidheil* appear by name in the Irish annals in 856, noting a great war of the king of the southern Ui Nèill, who was supported by Gall-Ghàidheil. Later that year the annals record that the king of the northern Ui Neill defeated, with great slaughter, the Gall-Ghàidheil near Strabane.



MacDowall

In the early 10th century, to facilitate trade, Scandinavians established the towns of Waterford, Cork, Dublin, Wexford and Limerick in Ireland and also sought to establish minor kingdoms across the sea in Scotland. They, particularly the powerful family *Uì Ìomhair*, adapted nimbly to the Gaelic speaking culture. Amhlaibh (Olaf) Cuaran, of this family and king of Dublin from 945 to 980, commissioned Gaelic panegyrics (elaborate praise poems) in his own honor, of which at least one is extant, and doubtlessly Norse panegyrics as well. His and perhaps the Irish high king Brian Boru's grandson, Amlaíb mac Sitriuc, claimed at least for a while to be king of several places including the hilly Rhins on the west coast of Galloway across the North Channel. Although initially these mixed Norse-Gael were subject to the influence of both Nordic and Gaelic traditions, the Gaelic influences predominated in time and the people began to be called the Foreign Gael, the *Gall-Ghàidheil*. Whatever the presence of Gaelic in southwest Scotland there might have been before their arrival, it was certainly strengthened by the emergence of the *Gall-Ghàidheil*. To the best of our perception, the language that emerged in Galloway was not identical to, but a close cousin of, the Gaelic spoken around the Irish Sea and North Channel.

By the reign of Prince Fergus of Galloway, *Rìgh Gall-Ghàidheil* or "King of the Foreign Gaels", in the mid-12th century Gaelic was the dominant language and tradition in the southwest of Scotland. Its influence continued to be strong during the time of Fergus' sons, grandsons and great grandsons, the ruling Lords of Galloway. There were, however, other languages of various strengths that coexisted in one form or another in areas of Galloway during this period: Norse; some form of Brythonic, the presumed indigenous Welsh-related language of the area; perhaps some Scots; and of course Latin as a documentary language. There were grants of lands to those of non-Gaelic speaking heritage throughout this period, and one might suspect that the administrative language of Galloway might have shifted, particularly after Fergus' death in 1161, to Scots. Newcomers, however, still needed

to accommodate the embedded Gaelic culture and laws of the area. Even as late as 1373, Archibald "the Grim" 4th earl of Douglas found it prudent to appoint a recent local Sheriff of Wigtown, Sir Fergus MacDowyl, a leader of a prominent local Gaelic kindred, as his local officer in Wigtownshire, the western half of Galloway.

### Galloway

Nine centuries years ago our ancestor Prince Fergus ruled greater Galloway, a land larger than the Galloway of today.



### The Gaelic Laws of Galloway

This mixture of other cultures, however, must be measured against the extensive use of Gaelic at all levels of society and the importance of the Gaelic Laws of Galloway in the political, commercial, and social life of the region. The Gaelic Laws of Galloway were an oral code, transmitted and administered in large part through the medium of Gaelic, as were the laws in other Celtic regions. In Ireland, the Brehon code, or Law of the Judges, was apparently in use for a couple thousand years. It was a set of rules transmitted orally and with decisions made by judges or judicial administrators who had committed the code to

memory. In Ireland, however, the laws began to be written down before or in the middle of the first millennium. This did not happen in Galloway.

There are descriptions of individual acts and decisions under the laws, but no written corpus of the law. Some features of the law can, however, be deduced from surviving accounts. The law, for example, provides for Kenkynnol, in the Irish *Ceann cinèil*, or a head of kindred. A head of kindred could be granted but this was independent of any granting of a title, like Earl, over land. Fergus was *Rìgh Gall-Gàidheil* or king of the *Gall-Gàidheil*, not king of a piece of land – although presumably king of the *Gall-Gàidheil* in a presumed area. Granting of Kenkynnol did not follow the Norman practice of primogeniture (inheritance by a first born) or even pay much attention to the difference between legitimate and illegitimate children. There are a number of instances in which the title over land and the designation of head of kindred, united in a parent, are divided between children or designees.

#### The Role of Kindreds in the Gaelic Laws of Galloway

As in other Gaelic lands, the choice or election of an effective leader from and by the close kin of a leading family may also have occurred in Galloway. The Scottish king would often confirm the granting of *Ceann cinéil* but was not in a position to grant it himself. The laws of Galloway were administered by officers of the lord, and they had the power of summary judgement. We do not know if the officers, or "sergeants", formed a distinct group within the society. They appeared to have special rights such as to receive hospitality when making their rounds among the kindred. Under the law, damages were pecuniarily settled, that is by payment, often in the form of cattle, rather than through physical retribution. It is not clear to what extent the kindred were financially responsible for settling damages caused by one of their members, in the event that the member could not settle himself, as was typically the case in Gaelic societies.

#### The MacDowall Kindred in Galloway

The MacDowalls were among the leading kindreds of Galloway. One scholar, Richard Oram, suggested that the MacDowalls became the foremost of the kindreds after the death in 1234 of their relative, Alan of Galloway, the last Lord of Galloway. In 1235 his lordship was divided up

among his three inheriting daughters. Another scholar, Alistair Livingston, contends that this happened after Edward I's disposition of the MacDowall relative, King John Balliol, in 1296, with their prominence lasting even after the establishment of Douglas power in the mid-fourteenth century. MacDowall status during this period was supported by their descendant position in the dynasty of Prince Fergus of Galloway, a prominent status that would have been acknowledged in this Gaelic culture with or without documents. In a complementary fashion, the stature of the MacDowalls was important in maintaining Galloway's distinctive Gaelic identity. When Archibald "the Grim," the Black Douglas, sought to replace the code of Galloway with Scots law in 1385, the MacDowalls were able to thwart, at least partially, this plan ensuring that many of the ancient laws continued to apply in Galloway until 1426. The Scottish



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parliament formally abolished the last of the traditional laws of Galloway and Carrick in 1459. Cases of local importance, however, would probably have continued to be settled in the old manner for years after the formal abolition.

#### The Importance of Gaelic in the Politics of Galloway and Southwest Scotland

It is necessary to understand its language and culture to fathom Galloway's independence from the rest of Scotland during some of the most turbulent periods of Scotlish history, in particular the Scotlish Wars of Independence. It is important to note that the marriage of Alan of Galloway's daughter, Dearbhfhorghaill (Devorguilla), to John Balliol brought the Balliols within the inheritance of Prince Fergus as did the marriage of Prince Fergus' granddaughter, Marjorie, Countess of Carrick, to Robert Bruce of Annandale. Both families would later compete for the throne of Scotland from 1284 until 1357. The interesting politics of these centuries is, however, best handled in another essay.

#### The Decline of Gaelic in Galloway

The use of Gaelic in the far southwest of Scotland was probably in sharp decline by the end of the 15th century although there is evidence for its use for another hundred years. By then the language had been, however, core to the society of southwest Scotland for perhaps 600 or 1000 years, depending on your sources.

The Scots language effectively became the language of administration and commerce. Scots was, however, eventually subject to its own persecutions. William Neil, the Gaelic poet cited toward the beginning of this essay, relates that he was whipped by school authorities at Ayr Academy in the 1930s for speaking his native language, Scots, just as many Gaelic speaking children were for speaking their native tongue on school grounds.

**Note:** Papers which I found particularly useful in preparing this article:

Clancy, Thomas Owen, "Gaelic in Medieval Scotland: Advent and Expansion", Sir John Rhy's Memorial Lecture at University of Glasgow, Read March 14, 2005.

Black, Ronnie, "Òran Bagraidh and Willie Matheson," presented at New Galloway Conference.

Oram, Richard, "Kindreds and Ceathramh; Gaelic social and economic structures in Medieval Galloway."

MacQueen, Hector, "Galloway Gaelic: Law and Society." Presented at the CatStrand Conference. Available on YouTube

McWhannell, D.C., "Gaill, Gàidheil, Gall-Ghàidheil and the Cenèla of Greater Galloway", (p 81ff) Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society, Volume 87. 2013.

Livingston, Alistair "The Expansion and Contraction of Gaelic in Galloway" [Draft 24 February 2011].

Livingston, Alistair, "Gaelic in Galloway: Part One-Expansion." Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society Third Series, Volume 85, 2011.

Livingston, Alistair, "Gaelic in Galloway: Part Two - Contraction."



### Clan MacDougall Society of North America



### Reference information for Society members

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### **About Your Society**

As a registered 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit, CMSNA depends on the financial contributions of our members to fulfill our "literary, historical, and educational" purposes. The Society connects 750 clanfolk like you who want to celebrate, share and preserve our proud legacy. We rely on volunteers and no one receives compensation for their efforts.

### The Value of Membership

Membership is rewarding and loyalty is widespread. More than 40-percent are 25-year contributors and nearly 300 have become Life Members. Your contributions are tax deductible in the U.S. Membership is on a calendar year basis and members must make a minimum yearly contribution of \$25 by December 31st to remain active. Life Memberships are also available. The minimum contribution only covers our basic operating expenses and allows you to enjoy our popular newsletters and special Society events that help build lasting relationships. Contributions in excess of the \$25 minimum make a significant difference in our funding for scholarships, historic site preservation and new programs. Please consider contributing above the minimum, because there's so much more we can accomplish.

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