



The Raven

Monthly Newsletter of the
Clan MacDougall Society of North America



Happy Beltain By Misha Lowther



Beltane (or Beltain) is known as the Gaelic May Day festival. It is held on May 1 or about halfway between the spring and summer equinox which historically can fall anywhere between May 1 and May 8. It is widely observed in Scotland, Ireland, and the Isle of Man. Also known as Cetshamhain (or the first of summer), this celebration marks the time for cattle (livestock) to be driven out to summer fields. Special bonfires were kindled of which their smoke was said to have protective properties and encourage growth. To take advantage of these special properties, people and their cattle or livestock would walk around and in between the bonfires and sometimes leaping over the smaller flames or embers for healing and protection. All household fires would be doused and re-lit with the fires from Beltain bonfires. These bonfires would be accompanied by a feast for celebration and would last long into the night, often times until dawn. Doors, windows, byres and livestock would be decorated with yellow May Flowers. Although Beltane celebrations had largely died out by the middle of the 20th century, it has been revived in many places as a cultural event.

The largest Beltane celebration is now held every year on Calton Hill in Edinburgh. The modern day festival begins with the parade lead by the May Queen and the Green Man. It includes a wild mix of drums, fire and physical theatrical performances on April 30. What a sight to see! It carries on into the early hours of dawn on May 1.

Beltane roughly translated means “bright fire.” It has historically been celebrated in many ways

across the British Isles as the beginning of summer. It is one of four seasonal festivals and was a chance for communities to come together and celebrate the changing of the seasons. The public fires of Beltain in Edinburgh remained unlit until the modern festival known today was started in 1988. A small group of enthusiasts led by one Angus Farguhar, then a member of the industrial music group, Test Dept, and with the support of the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh.

Whether you light a bonfire to celebrate the changing of the seasons, or sit back and sip a dram of Scottish whisky, we wish you a prosperous and beautiful summer in 2021. Happy May Day!

Sources:

[Wikipedia - Beltane](#)

[Historic Environment Scotland](#)

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Editor's Note: Beltain is often mispronounced by English speakers. Here is an [audio guide](#) to several different dialects.

General Irvin McDowell

Born in Columbus, Ohio on October 15, 1818, Irvin McDowell is most well known for his service in the United States Army during the American Civil War. In 1838, McDowell graduated twenty third in his class from the United States Military Academy at West Point. He fought in the Mexican American War, advancing to the rank of Assistant Adjutant General for the Army of Occupation. As conflict in America reached a boiling point and broke into Civil War, McDowell was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General quickly.

McDowell was placed in command of the Union army guarding Washington, DC, which was heavily encouraged to go on the offensive against the Confederacy. In July 1861, McDowell planned an offensive attack to cleave the Confederate Army near Bull Run, Virginia. The First Battle of Bull Run, also known as First Manassas, was the first major land battle of the Civil War. Unfortunately, McDowell's planned attack was unsuccessful, leading to a Union defeat at the First Battle of Bull Run. Poor execution of McDowell's plan and exhaustion of the soldiers led to a panicked retreat and approximately 2,000 casualties on each side.



Additional struggles mired McDowell's command through the war, damaging his reputation in the eyes of peers and politicians alike. Following a second defeat at the Second Battle of Bull Run, he was relieved of his command by President Lincoln upon his request. A military investigation was called to look at McDowell's actions at both the First and Second Battles of Bull Run. While he was cleared of any misconduct, McDowell's reputation suffered greatly. President Lincoln still trusted him as a commander, but couldn't contend with the opinions of McDowell's fellow soldiers. McDowell remained unassigned until 1864, when President Lincoln assigned him the command of the Department of the Pacific. McDowell remained in California, retiring from the military in 1882 to serve as the commissioner of park of San Francisco. He died on May 4, 1885 and is buried in the San Francisco National Cemetery.

Source:

[Ohio History Central](#)



Forever embraced as the mumbling, bumbling Aunt Clara on the *Bewitched* (1964) television series, endearing character actress Marion Lorne had a five-decade-long career on the stage before ever becoming a familiar TV household name.

Born Marion Lorne MacDougall on August 12, 1883 (other sources list 1885 and 1888), she grew up in her native Pennsylvania, the daughter of Scottish and English immigrants. Trained at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York, she appeared in stock shows, and was on the Broadway boards by 1905. She married English playwright Walter C. Hackett and performed in many of his plays throughout the 1920s and 1930s, including "Hyde Park Corner" and "The Gay Adventure". They at one point settled in England where they co-founded the Whitehall Theater. It was there that Marion began to sharpen and patent her fidgety comedy eccentrics in such plays as "Pansy's Arabian Knight," "Sorry You've Been Troubled," "Espionage" and "London After Dark". Upon Hackett's death in 1944, she returned to the States and again, after a brief retirement, became a hit in such tailor-made stage shows as "Harvey".

Marion made a definitive impression via her movie debut at age 60+ in Alfred Hitchcock's immortal suspenser *Strangers on a Train* (1951) as murderer Robert Walker's clueless, smothering mother. Surprisingly Hollywood used her only a couple more times on film after that auspicious beginning -- a grievously sad waste of a supremely talented comedienne. Marion wisely turned to TV instead and proved a dithery delight in such sitcoms as *Mister Peepers* (1952) and *Sally* (1957), gaining quirky status as well as part of the comedy ensemble on *The Garry Moore Show* (1958).

It was, however, her role as Elizabeth Montgomery's befuddled, muttering, doorknob-collecting witch-aunt on *Bewitched* (1964) -- whether bouncing into walls or conjuring up some unintended piece of

witchcraft -- that put a lasting sheen on her long career. For that role she deservedly won an Emmy trophy for "Best Supporting Actress" -- albeit posthumously. Montgomery accepted her award. Sadly, Marion succumbed to a heart attack on May 9, 1968, just ten days before the actual ceremony. Elizabeth Montgomery gave a touching acceptance speech on her behalf.

Source: **IMDb Mini Biography** by Gary Brumburgh

Raising of the Clans



The Grandfather Mountain Games will be taking place July 8-12, 2021 in North Carolina. On May 1, 2021, the Raising of Clans took place through a YouTube video compiled through the winter.

Historically, raising the clans was something done before battle. You can see a recreation of this phenomena on the popular Starz show, *Outlander*, Season 5. Jamie Fraser, the title character, lights the cross to call the men who swore him loyalty to action. This call to action was transformed into the Torchlight Ceremony for the Grandfather Mountain Games. Instead of a call to battle, it now serves as a sort of roll call for the Games and signals the start of the festivities. The YouTube video for Grandfather Mountain features different Clans offering tidbits of their history and welcoming all to the Games season!

New Members

John Towery
Spanaway, WA

Walter Mabee
Simcoe, ON

David Johnson
Summertown, TN

Jane MacDougall
Port Arthur, TX

Johnny McDougal
Murray, KY

Linda Thomas
North Port, FL

Steven McDowell
Hazel Crest, IL

A hearty welcome to you all!

New from the Draper's Shop



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The Lorn Tweed was developed from an original designed created by local artist Jennifer Shaw, who is also a Dunollie volunteer. Jennifer's design was inspired by the colours of the Firth of Lorn, the view from Dunollie Castle and the shape of the precious iconic Brooch of Lorn, a signature piece from the Dunollie Collections, linking the MacDougall Clan history to Robert the Bruce.

The tweed fabric is a beautiful Scottish 10 - 11 oz worsted lambswool spun tweed, designed and produced by The Isle Mill in Keith, Scotland. We have limited quantities of fabric available for our first weave so make sure not to miss out.

This material is only available from The Drapers Shop. If more than one metre is ordered, the fabric will be supplied in one continuous metre. (£68 pm)

GMHG Online Ticketing Information Update



The option to purchase tickets online will remain available until May 15th. Should you fail to order by then, you may still purchase General Tickets day of, on the Meadow. (The 4 day pass will not be available for purchase on site) If you have any questions, please call (828) 733-1333 or **email** the office.

Thanks!
The GMHG Team!



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Upcoming Events

Mountain State Scottish & Heritage Gathering

May 29, 2021
Doddridge County Park
West Union, WV

Ohio Scottish Games & Celtic Festival

(Virtual Event)
June 25 - 26, 2021

Grandfather Mountain Highland Games

July 8-12, 2021
Linville, NC

Submissions

Persons wishing to submit articles, photos, or items of interest to our newsletters may contact:

Lindsay Davis

Editor

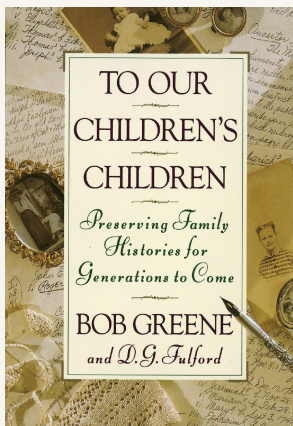
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Highland Cow Among the Thistles by BebesArts.

[Click image to purchase.](#)

Book Recommendation

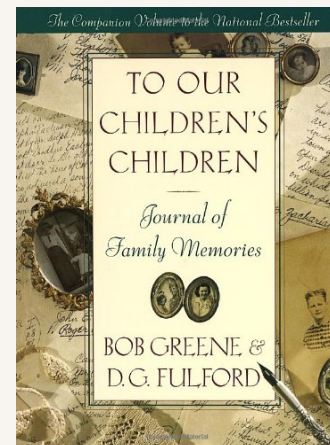


When beginning to compile your genealogy, one of the best places to start is by having substantive conversations with your elders. These books are very helpful in knowing what to ask to elicit authentic answers. Both are excellent resources and the publisher's description illustrates the distinctions of the two volumes well.

"First there was **To Our Children's Children: Preserving Family Histories for Generations to Come**. A collection of over one thousand evocative questions, the book offered a very personal, human approach to genealogy, awakening readers to the possibility of creating a family history through the simple act of remembering.

From this book, hundreds of thousands of individuals have learned the value of passing on family treasures made of words. However, readers kept asking Bob Greene and D.G. Fulford for a version of the book with room to record the answers.

The **To Our Children's Children Journal** is just that: a handy and beautiful journal posing 365 questions (one for each day of the year), with ample space for families to write their own answers. Approachable, enjoyable, and thought-provoking, the Journal is a pleasure to read and to ponder--something that, once completed, will become a lasting part of any family's history, to be put on the bookshelf and treasured for generations to come."



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