



MacDougall

Why We Are Together

Walter M. Macdougall



MacDowall

The clearest statement of intent and mission for the Clan MacDougall Society of North America appears on the certificates originally issued to new members. This statement proclaims that the recipient is a member "...of the Society which joins those of this name and septs and brings their proud heritage of good Scottish Ancestry and all it implies to help in building a better world."

That there were two "heritages" involved in the growing membership is quite clear. In an article appearing in *The Tartan* in the Spring of 1967 (Vol. 1, 4, p.5), one finds the following observation: "At the moment it is not apparent what the relationship is between the MacDougalls of Lorn and the MacDougalls of Makerstoun." (This question was not unimportant as the principal founders of the Clan MacDougall Society were descended from the MacDougalls of Makerstoun and thus from the Galloway Macdowalls.

The question remained unresolved within the Society as late as 1970–1971 when *The Tartan* carried a three part article the first installment of which was entitled "Lorn vs. Makerstoun." This series concludes in regard to the relationship between the MacDougalls of Lorn and of Makerstoun that: "Perhaps one day genealogy may solve the riddle on which history is so mockingly silent."

While there are still questions on specific genealogical relationships, the following facts are clear: The MacDougalls of Makerstoun descended from the Macdowalls of Garthland who in turn represent the Ancient Lords of Galloway, a royal lineage long prominent in the history of Scotland.



Chief Fergus Macdowall with grandson Garnett

There are interesting genealogical connections between the Macdowalls/MacDowells/MacDougalls of Galloway and the MacDougalls of Lorn. However, they are distinct both historically and by present official recognition by the Lord Lyon. Both are headed by their own hereditary chiefs who bear their own arms and title. What is of equal importance to this account, both have their own heritage and distinctive roles in the history of Scotland. There existed, especially during the so called "Wars of Independence," an alliance between the two royal houses of Lorn and Galloway against common enemies.



The leadership and membership of the Clan MacDougall Society has dealt with the issue of dual representation in various ways. The most flawed assumption has been that the Macdowalls/MacDowalls/Macdowells/MacDowells were, by virtue of their surname, a “sept” of the MacDougalls of Lorn. If a person's genealogy is that of the Galloway MacDowalls (however spelled), or branches thereof, then this is not the case. A second mistaken view has been that the appearance of MacDougall/Macdowell surnames in Galloway simply represented displaced families from Argyll. Perhaps the most prevalent method of dealing with the dual heritage within the Society's membership was to adopt a policy of “the less said about this situation the better.”

The major issue involved in the latter “solution” lies in the fact that by following such policy, a Society dedicated to bringing to its membership “the proud heritage of good Scottish ancestry” was participating in submerging the heritage of a considerable portion of the membership.

This issue became focused during the Society presidency of Walter M. Macdougall. An obvious solution was to encourage the Macdowalls/MacDowells to form their own society. Considering the fact that many of the leadership as well as the general membership in the Society were MacDowells (however spelled) with Galloway genealogies, President Macdougall argued that such a solution would simply create two weakened clan societies. He strongly urged that the old, historical alliance between the

MacDougalls of Lorn and the Macdowalls/Macdowells of Galloway be “re-instituted” and that the Society continue in common purpose and in recognition of the two rich heritages involved. This proposition was supported by Madam Coline MacDougall of MacDougall and by Fergus Macdowall of Garthland the two Clan Chiefs directly involved.

The solution, therefore, became one of recognizing that the Society represented two Clan families and that it did so in common purpose and in recognition of two rich and goodly heritages. In 1983, Fergus Macdowall of Garthland wrote a two part feature on the MacDowalls of Galloway for *The Tartan*, and the Society's Board of Directors voted Fergus Macdowall first Honorary Vice President and then Honorary President of the Society taking a place along side of Madam MacDougall of MacDougall. The Clan Crest of the Macdowalls of Garthland (and senior line of all MacDowalls of Galloway) along with that of the MacDougalls of Lorn appeared on the letter head of the Society and upon its brochures. The aim of this alliance was most recently celebrated in the Society's publication of *The MacDowalls*.

In summary, the rationale for joint representation of two Clan families by the Clan MacDougall Society of North America rests in the conviction that the purposes of both can be better served by their combined strength and through a joint celebration of two heritages which have interconnections at many points.