



THE CLAN MACDOWALL

The MacDowalls of Galloway are a distinct and separate clan, sharing deep connections and a historic alliance with Clan MacDougall. They originated in Galloway in what is now southwest Scotland as kindred descending from Duegald, founder of the family and a grandson of Prince Fergus of Galloway. Descendants of Fergus include the ancient Lords of Galloway, a lineage prominent in Scotland's medieval history and in Ireland and the southern Hebrides islands. They became a powerful influence, founding abbeys and priories, and became prominent in Scottish and English politics and commerce. The principal seats of our Clan were Garthland, Logan and Barr Castles. Professor Fergus D. H. Macdowall of Garthland is current Chief of the Name and Arms of MacDowall.

The many interconnections between the MacDowalls and the MacDougalls are often a bit confusing. Prince Fergus was a contemporary of King Somerled of Argyll and the Isles. During the Scottish Wars of Scottish Independence, the Macdowalls of Galloway and MacDougalls of Argyll fought as close allies against Robert Bruce. Soon afterwards, circa 1370, the Clan MacDowall branch, called the MacDougalls of Makerstoun, was established in southeast Scotland by Sir Fergus MacDowyll, of the family of the Macdowalls of Garthland. The MacDowalls/Macdougalls of Galloway and Makerston, and the MacDougalls of Lorn in Argyll share many of the same surnames and spellings.

Duegald was killed in a battle in 1185 and for the next century his family descendants were known as the Macdougalls in Galloway (with their name spelled with a lower-case letter "d"). The name came from adding the Gaelic prefix "Mac" meaning "son of" to his name, as did the MacDougalls of Lorn in Argyll. Their shared original Gaelic name of Mhic Dhùghail ("Mac Dou gall") meaning "son of the black stranger" was an early Gaelic term for people of Norse descent.

Many spelling variations of MacDowall have evolved, with or without Mac or Mc. Most were attempts to phonetically translate the Gaelic name into Scots or English, such as

Macdowel, McDowell, Macdowall, McDoual, and many more. The migrations of the family to Ireland, North America and elsewhere also contributed to the variations.

Origins in Scotland

This is only a brief summary. See the Sources of Further Information to learn more.

History suggests that Gille, the native Governor of the Western Isles under Norse suzerainty (a form of domain or authority) about the year 1000, was a great grandfather in the male line of Prince Fergus of Galloway.

Fergus of Galloway (about 1096-1161) was a prominent figure during the reign of David I of Scotland and divided his principality between his two sons, **Gilbert** and **Uchtred**. One of Uchtred's sons, hence a grandson of Fergus, was Duegald. Fergus is said to have spent time in the feudal court of King Henry I of England, who wanted to replace the competing clan system of governance then in use by the Gaels in southwestern Scotland. In approximately 1124, Fergus married Elizabeth, a daughter of King Henry I of England and at some point, became ruler of Galloway, a borderland coveted by both Scotland and England. Upon his death, his elder son Uchtred became the feudal lord of eastern Galloway while his brother Gilbert ruled the western half until killing Uchtred in 1174 and taking it all.

In 1185 Uchtred's sons, Roland and **Duegald**, avenged his murder and reconquered all of Galloway assisted by the feudal King of Scots, William the Lion. Roland became the second Lord of Galloway. His brother, Duegald, was killed in a battle but his descendants became the Macdougalls in Galloway. The family name was written as Macdougall until 1292-6, when it first appeared on the Ragman Roll Oath of Fealty as "mac Dowilt" and "Macdowald" instead of Macdougall and was pronounced "mock dool." In 1295, Duegald's lineal successor Dougal Macdougall of Gairachloyne was granted a confirmatory charter to much of the Galloway lands by his Baliol fourth cousin, King John I, whose grandfather had been the last Lord of Galloway.

King Robert I (Robert the Bruce) invaded Galloway a decade later in 1306, devastated their lands, and forced them into exile among the "**Disinherited**," although Dougal and his heirs of two more generations often continued to lead the defending forces of Galloway in the name of the Baliol Crown of Scotland. The Clan managed to make peace

and return to Galloway after Dougal's death in 1328. The Clan's new leader Duncan Macdowall, a surviving son of Dougal, took up arms in 1339 to support Baliol against King David II, Robert Bruce's heir. By 1342 Duncan and his kindred had again made peace with King David. As comrades in battle during the "Scottish Wars of Independence," they fought at the Battle of Neville's Cross in 1346 and were with David when he was captured and placed in English captivity. Duncan was later returned to Scotland in a prisoner exchange.

About 1370 Sir Dougal's fourth grandson, **Sir Fergus Macdowyll of Makerstoun and of Garthland** inherited the feudal Barony of Makerstoun near Kelso in southeast Scotland from his Fraser mother. There he established the **Makerstoun cadet branch** (a lineal line started by a younger son not the first-born heir) which later adopted the spellings of "Macdougall" and "Makdougall." This lowland derivation accounts for the name Macdougall being in common use in a southeastern Borders area so distant from the Highlands, the primary base of the MacDougalls of Lorn in Argyll.

After these beginnings, the family grew to play a role in Scottish government and commercial life for centuries, although many MacDowalls began to emigrate to Ireland and Europe. Generations later, many of the Irish members moved on to settle in North America, particularly after 1700.

In 1987 **Professor Fergus Day Hort Macdowall**, the Clan Chief, re-matriculated Arms at the Lyon Court of Scotland as the Laird and Baron of the feudal baronies of Garthland and Castlesemple, Chief of the Name and Arms of MacDowall. He retained the site of **Garthland Castle (1211)** at Garthland Mains near Stranraer, Wigtownshire, Scotland, and the substitute estate of Garthland with seat at **Barr Castle** near Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire, Scotland. In 1987 he designated the official spelling of the Clan name as "Clan MacDowall" in honor of the capital "D" spelling of most of our clansmen today.

Sources of Further Information

1. An excellent 8-page color booklet entitled "*The Clan of the MacDowalls of Galloway*" is available for download in PDF format from the Clan MacDougall Society of North America's website, at <http://www.macdougall.org/files/TheMacDowallsHandoutedit04302010.pdf>

2. Informative books about Clan MacDowall are displayed in the Book Pages in the Heritage Section of the Clan MacDougall Society website at <https://macdougall.org/other-resources/books/>
3. *The MacDowalls* a book by Prof. Fergus D. H. Macdowall, our Clan Chief and Editor-in-Chief, and contributing writers became available in 2009. Its cover is the new MacDowall tartan pattern.

Chapters include the ancient history in Galloway; the Macdougalls of Makerstoun cadet branches; castles, abbeys and other structures relating to the Macdowalls in Galloway; emigration, settlement and prominent MacDowalls of North American history; and emigrations of families to the Netherlands, Sweden and Russia.

Sources for this book are also found at <https://macdougall.org/other-resources/books/>. Profits from the sale of this book are held in Trust by the Clan MacDougall Society to be used for promoting the heritage of Clan MacDowall.

**Discover and celebrate your MacDowall heritage by joining
Clan MacDougall Society of North America**

Clan MacDougall Society, which includes the associated clan family MacDowall, is a U.S. registered 501c3 non-profit whose purposes are literary, educational, and historical. Clan MacDougall's current Chief, Madam Morag MacDougall of MacDougall, is an Honorary President of the Society, as is the Chief of the Name and Arms of MacDowall, Fergus D. H. Macdowall of Garthland.

The Society promotes and supports:

- The study of Scottish heritage and Clan MacDougall and Clan MacDowall histories.
- Preservation of our historic sites in Scotland.
- Educating the public about Scottish cultural traditions by participating in Highland Games.
- Creating connections and a sense of belonging among its members through fellowship, newsletters, website (www.macdougall.org), and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/groups/262542704399201).

Membership in the Society is open to all persons and their descendants who support Clan MacDougall or Clan MacDowall and the families historically associated with these two clans.

Information on membership is available at www.macdougall.org