



The TARTAN



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Clan MacDougall Society of North America

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Music of Edward MacDowell
- Annual General Meeting

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The Music of the Gaelic Soul: the Legacy of Edward MacDowell

by Jennifer Kenway

The mists of the dawn were just clearing deep in the glens, and already the world was up and about. Song birds flitted from tree to tree, chirruping their joy to the early morning sun. Echoing their feathered neighbors, ancient tunes could be heard in home after home, as women stoked peat fires with prayers and songs.

Music was an integral part of the life of the Celtic people. Music is, as they still say, in their very bones. From the Gaelic Highlands of Scotland to the glens of Ireland, the culture was much the same. Songs were the very stuff of life, set to the music of the Celtic soul.

The song of the stoking - the song of the plowing - the song of the reaping - the song of the smooing of the peat fire - the song of protecting - the song before traveling. These and many, many more shared verses of Irish and Gaelic poetry, set to their local music, providing the literal tempo of their lives. Songs were used as blessings and as prayers, as methods of story telling, and as a way of recording their history. Itinerant song-bringers, story tellers, poets, and professional musicians shared more from afar.

Artistic talents were highly respected in Celtic culture, and those who possessed them were the honored guests at many a Gathering. They sang and played music, often on a harp, shared poems and ballads, and told the stories of the Clan round the hearth, sharing the glory of the ancient tales for young and old to hear.

This tradition of respecting the arts continued on, generation after generation. It traveled with the Clans as they migrated to places like Canada, Australia, and the United States. Their descendants went on to make lasting impressions in the artistic world as they shared their talents. An excellent example of these talented, creative descendants can be seen in the life and work of the American composer, Edward MacDowell.

Edward MacDowell (cont)



**Edward MacDowell -
photographer & date
unknown**

Edward was born on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in New York City on December 18, 1860. He was the third son of a milkman and a mother who created a close-knit and loving home. It was from Edward's mother his own love of music was to spring. A look back at the MacDowell family line may give some insight into why Edward's mother so loyally supported her son's immense talent.

Edward's great-grandfather, Alexander, had migrated from Scotland to Belfast, Ireland, and there married Ann McMurran. Their son, also named Alexander, immigrated to New York City in the early 1800s, where he met and married Irish countrywoman, Sarah Thompson. Both Alexander and Sarah were devout Quakers, aligning their way of life with their strict religious faith. Their sensitive son Thomas showed obvious drawing and painting abilities, but those talents were to be flatly denied flourishing in their home.

Thomas married Francis Knapp in 1856, a woman of English ancestry. Thomas' son, Edward, would prove to have inherited his father's artistic abilities. One can

surmise, given his own father's inability to pursue his artistic dreams, Edward's mother decided a different future would be open to their son. In her home, his budding musical talent would be encouraged and celebrated, not belittled or restricted.

A poor family, the MacDowells took on boarders in their home to supplement their meager income. One of their boarders, Juan Buitrago, was a Columbian pianist who became young Edward's first formal piano instructor. Through Buitrago's connections to the wider world of music, MacDowell was able to become acquainted with some of the most influential and well-known musicians of the day.

Those connections soon proved helpful. In April of 1877 at only 16 years of age, Edward travelled with his mother to begin his higher level musical training in Paris, enrolling in the elite Paris Conservatoire. Under the tutelage of famed piano instructor Antoine François Marmontel, Edward began to learn the specific techniques of his chosen discipline. So very talented at such a young age, Edward seemed to have the common "artist's temperament", and was often melancholy. Paris proved a difficult environment for him in many ways, but he persevered in his studies dutifully and progressed as a musician under his mother's watchful eye.

A multi-talented young man, Edward sometimes found himself distracted from his musical pursuits, and - inheriting his father's artistic ability - at times sketched the elements of life which interested him. In fact, one sketch which caught the eye of an eminent painter at the Ecole de Beaux Arts almost led Edward to a career in art. Although offered a three year course in art, completely paid by the artist who had been shown the sketch, Edward finally made the decision to focus on music instead. A difficult decision for the family, but no doubt

Edward MacDowell (cont)

the right one, as Edward would soon rise to the top ranks of his profession.

About a year into his studies in Paris, in the summer of 1878, Edward had the opportunity to attend an incredible concert of Tchaikovsky's music with pianist Nikolai Rubinstein. He was captivated as he listened to one of Tchaikovsky's concertos, and was immediately inspired beyond what Paris had given him. Leaving the concert hall, Edward told his mother "I can never learn to play like that if I stay here."

The concert became a major element of inspiration for Edward, eventually prompting a move after only two years in Paris; instead he went to Germany for further study. Edward entered the Frankfurt Conservatory in 1879, studying piano performance and composition. While in Frankfurt, Edward made the acquaintance of acclaimed composer Franz Liszt. Impressed with the both the piano playing and musical understanding of the young MacDowell, Liszt encouraged him to pursue piano composition, and not to solely focus on a concert career.



**Edward and Marian MacDowell -
Photo Courtesy of
MacDowell.org**

Edward heeded Liszt's advice, and shifted focus away from public performance in favor of musical composition. Like many composers and performers of his day, he began to provide private instruction for hopeful musical students, teaching at the Darmstadt Conservatory. Edward held the teaching position for a year before resigning, but decided to continue to take on private piano students into his studio.

One of those talented students, Marian Nevins, would find her teacher more than fascinating. The feeling was mutual, and Edward and Marian soon fell in love. Edward returned to the States briefly in 1884, and the two were married. Marian would become Edward's most ardent and loyal

The Clan MacDougall Society of North America

President:	Kyle Jones president@macdougall.org
President Elect:	Chris MacDougall presidentelect@macdougall.org
Tartan Editor:	Scott MacDougall editor@macdougall.org
Associate Editors:	Malcolm MacDougall mpmacd@yahoo.com John McDowall john.d.mcdowall@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Barbara Osgood treasurer@macdougall.org

For more information: www.macdougall.org



MacDowall

Edward MacDowell (cont)

supporter, helping to soothe the often short temper of her composer husband.

Due to financial hardship, the MacDowells relocated to the States again in 1888, settling down in the Boston area. At that time, Boston was the center of American piano concert culture, and for a while, the MacDowells were right at home. The next ten years would see Edward compose his most well-loved works, including his Second Piano Concerto in D, and his Keltic Sonata for Solo Piano. These compositions, and many more to come, were but a taste of the talent which would lead Edward MacDowell to become one of the most important composers in the American musical canon.

MacDowell's 1889 New York City performance of his Second Piano Concerto in D Minor established him as both composer and pianist on the American circuit, and the piece as one of the most enduring and beloved of its kind, even to this day.

MacDowell was unique in his time for the exploration of his Scots-Irish ancestry in his musical compositions. Considered by many scholars to be the finest of his piano compositions, MacDowell's "Keltic Sonata for Solo Piano" stands to this day as an exquisite example of Scottish and Irish influences in piano works.

The three Movements of the piece tie in with the Irish Celtic myth upon which the composition was based: the story of Cuchullin, from the iconic Ulster Cycle. The piece opens with the movement entitled "With Great Power and Dignity", continues in the second movement, "With Naive Tenderness", and concludes in the third movement, aptly entitled "Very Swift and Fierce". The influence of his Irish-Celtic roots can be felt in the musical themes of the works, as well as their poignant, often passionate, at times fiercely sweeping musical refrains.

The secret of MacDowell's ability to compose so prolifically and with such passion seems to lie in his very Celtic connection to the peace of the land upon which he and Marian resided. In fact, it was this very peace and tranquility which inspired Edward to share the secret with other artists.

In 1896, the MacDowells had purchased an abandoned farm, called Hillcrest, in the idyllic New Hampshire woodland near Peterborough. The farm was to become a haven for Edward, whose personality and temperament were not ideal for the stresses and strains of the artistic circuit.

Edward's style of composition was lyrical, thematic, and tended towards the Romantic. The



The Hillcrest Farm, home of the MacDowells
R.D.Carley, photo - Courtesy of MacDowell.org

Edward MacDowell (cont)

influence of history, culture, and especially of nature and natural elements could be easily felt in MacDowell's compositions. Aptly naming them after the feelings they elicited, Edward released such compositions as his "Indian Suite, op. 48" (1896), arguably his most famous orchestral work, and his "Woodland Sketches, op. 51" (1896). Two of those "Sketches", "To a Water Lily", and "To a Wild Rose", are still well known staples of piano repertoire to this day.

Later 1896 also saw Edward established as the head of the newly established Music Department at Columbia University. For nearly two years, without an assistant, MacDowell would bear the responsibility of creating the entire new Department alone. He was administrator, teacher, director of an all-male choir, a separate glee club. All in addition to continuing to compose musical pieces.

This lifestyle was not in keeping with Edward's need to maintain a peaceful life. Edward much preferred composing at Hillcrest, and seeing how good the peace of the area was for him, Marian had a private cottage built for him near the farmhouse, where he could compose in a truly ideal setting.

In 1904, Edward was amongst the first seven Americans to be honored with membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters. A truly prestigious award, and one which is continuing its long tradition of honoring excellence in many disciplines even today, the honor would prove to give only brief joy to Edward. In true keeping with the ups and downs of many artistic lives, 1904 proved a year of both great acclaim and great despair.

MacDowell had continued his double-life of Columbia professor and private composer for several years. However, 1904 also saw a falling out with the [then new] President of Columbia University, Murray Butler, who didn't believe Columbia needed a Music department. The conflict led Edward to resign his post with the school. The incident was much-published in local and nationwide papers, and forced much pressure and stress on MacDowell's delicate, artistic sensibilities.

Edward retreated to Hillcrest, to the privacy and solace of his woodlands. It would be his final years of such peace. An accident involving a hansom cab - which ran over him in 1904 as he was going down Broadway in New York - further debilitated his physical and mental state. MacDowell's condition and general depression declined rapidly. He passed away on January 23, 1908.

Before his passing, Edward and his supportive wife Marian had discussed how therapeutic and providentially positive the environment of Hillcrest was for him. It was this ideal environment, with its privacy, peace, and quiet in the woodlands which Edward desired to share with artists of all kinds. Together, he and Marian had decided they would found a Colony where artists of many kinds could come for a Residential experience. There, they could compose, write, paint, in peace.

Marian would go on to fulfill her husband's dream, opening what would become one of the most influential Artist Colonies of its kind in



MacDougall

Edward MacDowell (cont)

history - The MacDowell Colony. After his death, Marian was a major contributor to a 1909 biography by Lawrence Gilman. A passage from Gilman's biography describes Edward's final years:

"His mind became as that of a little child. He sat quietly, day after day, in a chair by a window, smiling patiently from time to time at those about him, turning the pages of a book of fairy tales that seemed to give him a definite pleasure, and greeting with a fugitive gleam of recognition certain of his more intimate friends."

Join us in the next issue of The Tartan for an in-depth look at the MacDowell Colony, and its incredible, positive influence on artists, composers, writers, and more, as well as a glimpse of what the future may have in store for this incredible part of the worldwide MacDowell legacy.

To listen to some of Edward MacDowell's compositions, follow these links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7oATuVHRA8>

Edward MacDowell - To a Wild Rose, Op. 52, No. 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRUgprMbRgE>

Edward MacDowell - Sonata no. 4 in E Minor - Op. 59 - Keltic I - "With Great Power and Dignity"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFfz5K3W4dc>

Edward MacDowell - Woodland Sketches, Op. 51 - Complete

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twiC5yd-jBM>

Edward MacDowell - Sea Pieces - Op. 55

For Further Reading:

Edward MacDowell: A Study, by Lawrence Gilman. Published by The John Lane Company, New York, 1909. Available free online at

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/14109>

MacDowell Artists Colony web page - www.macdowell.org

Library of Congress web page - Edward MacDowell Biography

<https://www.loc.gov/item/ihms.200035715/>

All Music web page - Artist Biography, Edward MacDowell

<https://www.allmusic.com/artist/edward-macdowell-mn0000750697/biography>

Join Us for the 2020 Annual General Meeting

Our 2020 Annual General Meeting will be an online affair,
held via GoToMeeting.

Please join us for a brief update on all that is happening in the Society
and our plans for the future.

September 12, 2020
4:00 pm Central Daylight Time

To take part, connect to the link below at meeting time.
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/615812381>

To listen in by telephone, use the appropriate number for your country:

United States: 1 (571) 317-3116

Canada: 1 (647) 497-9373

You will be prompted to enter an access code,
which is: 615-812-381



MacDowall

Society History Papers

Several of our members are family or relatives of past Officers of our Society. If you happen to have some of their old papers from their time as Society Officers or as Executives prior to the year 2000, we would be glad to give them a home in our Archives. We already possess copies of all issues of The Tartan newsletter but there are other records and correspondence which we do not have.

We have an ongoing project to scan and preserve our old records and files. We are especially interested in finding more documents, lists, and records from our earlier years. If you think you have something which the Society might wish to preserve, please send an email to our Society President, Kyle Jones, at President@macdougall.org telling him what papers and records you have.

President's Annual Report

Our Society has now completed its 55th year and I have been spending a good deal of time going over what has been accomplished during that time. What began as a chance meeting at Eseeola Lodge has grown into a seasoned non-profit organization, propelled by a dedicated cadre of volunteers. We currently number 711 families committed to expanding our knowledge of our shared heritage and communicating that heritage to each other and the greater Scottish community.

The President traditionally presents a review of the previous year each fall. With the succession in the Presidency happening this year, our immediate Past President, Scott MacDougald, supplied his very detailed report to the Board of Directors at our July meeting. Here are a few highlights:

Phase III Consolidation

This latest stage of work began at Dunollie in October and concentrated on stabilization of the northeast and northwest walls of the keep and expansion of visitor access to the upper floors of the structure. The Society's initial contribution of £23,000 was an important part of making this project a reality. The ability to accept donations through our website is very convenient and members were quick to respond with further donations. By December, the Society was able to supply Dunollie with an additional \$5,000 of support for the project. Work was paused in March of 2020 due to the pandemic but is now nearing completion.

Highland Games and Budget Impacts

Admittedly, the games season was a mess this year due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Central Florida Highland Games (Jan. 18) and the Queen Mary Highland Games (Feb. 15-16) were held as usual, but all other games were cancelled. This resulted in very few new members joining, which had a negative impact on our budget. However, as usual, our members stepped up to the plate and we saw a dramatic rise in donations

President's Annual Report (cont)

throughout the year. The end result was that we completed the year with a sizable budget surplus. The generosity of our members and their commitment to our cause is never to be underestimated!

Scholarships

The 2020 John A. McDougall Scholarship Program recipients were announced in June. Once again, member donations made it possible for us to grant \$3,000 in awards, split among eight deserving recipients. Your support this year has enabled one tenor drummer and seven highland dance students to continue their studies! We often receive updates from these students on their progress and it is important for you to know how grateful they are for your assistance.

Personnel Changes

We experienced a bit of a generational change in the Society in May of 2019. Three members of the Board of Directors retired and their replacements came onboard. Doug MacDougall was appointed Southeast Region Commissioner. We also added some new State Representatives and Clan Tent Sponsors who are learning their roles.

In July, I took over the Presidency from Scott, and Chris MacDougall succeeded me as President-Elect. Things are moving forward nicely under the new Executive Committee. We are still adjusting to our new roles but much has been accomplished already.

We continue to work closely with our heritage sites. Thanks to the budget surplus I alluded to before, we were able to contribute an additional \$5,000 to the Dunollie Phase III project in July. The Board also approved our first ever donation of \$2,000 to the ancient Kilbride Church in support of consolidation and archaeological work at the site. The MacDougall Chiefs have been buried here for the past 300 years and more. We have been in contact with folks on the Isle of Lismore, a place with many clan connections, and believe a project will be forthcoming. We continue to save donations made to our new MacDowall Heritage Fund which will aid research activities in the future.

Our freshly staffed Communications and Heritage Committees are getting to know each other and both have exciting projects underway. We continue our search for members interested in being part of these, and other, committees. Our goal is to strengthen the Society by providing more opportunities for members to be actively involved.

Our State and Region Representatives are about to embark on a project to contact each member. This is an enormous undertaking and I want you all to understand the thinking behind it. We find that making personal connections with our people in your own area to be crucial to your enjoyment of the Society. This is the primary reason we are reaching out. This is a “customer service” type of call. We are not looking to “sell” you anything. We just want to know what we can do to better your experience. Yes, we also want to hear any problems you may have as well and will do what we can to fix them. We will also be checking to be sure we have all the correct contact information for you so you can stay connected. I sincerely hope each of you will accept this chance to visit with a “cousin” and help us create a better Society.



MacDougall

President's Annual Report (cont)

Purposes

As I conclude my annual report to you, I think it important for everyone to clearly understand what our Society is all about. For many of you, this will be old information. We also have many newer members who may not have seen this, so I'm putting it out there again. Everything we do is in support of the purposes laid out in our Bylaws which are quoted below. Please read them over and give them some thought. Any ideas or feedback you can provide me at president@macdougall.org will help us achieve these purposes.

The purposes of the Society are literary, historical, and educational as follows:

- i. To distribute books, pamphlets, bulletins, and other material published by the Society or others relating to: Scottish history and literature, Clan MacDougall, Clan MacDowall and their clan heritage sites, including Clan MacDougall's Dunollie and Gylen Castles, and Clan MacDowall heritage places in Galloway and Renfrewshire;
- ii. To collect and preserve literary, historical and genealogical records, documents, and relics relating to Scotland or to the heritage of Clan MacDougall and Clan MacDowall;
- iii. To encourage visits by Members to Scotland, specifically to Dunollie House, Grounds, Museum and Castle, and Gylen Castle;
- iv. To assist, through The MacDougall of Dunollie Preservation Trust, in the maintenance, repair, and upkeep of the ruins, grounds and buildings of Dunollie Castle, the ancient seat of the Chief near Oban, Argyll, Scotland, as a Scottish historical site;
- v. To establish scholarships, fellowships, awards, prizes, and other means of financial assistance for deserving students (preferably with the surname MacDougall or MacDowall, however spelled) at North American or Scottish universities, colleges or other appropriate institutions, or for other individuals
- vi. To perpetuate Scottish traditions and customs, promoting Clan sentiment and social interaction among Members;
- vii. To support other literary, historical, educational or similar activities as the Board of Directors determines.

Kyle Jones
President, CMSNA



Clan MacDougall

Society of

North America



Reference information for Society members:

Web Site & Facebook & Twitter

Visit our web site at www.macdougall.org

Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/clanmacdougall

Follow us on Twitter at https://twitter.com/Clan_MacDougall

Your Contact Information

Please report your email, telephone, or postal address changes to:

records@macdougall.org

Or mail your changes to:

Membership Secretary
17 Ladysmith Court
Hamilton, VA 20158-9065

Non Profit Status

We are registered as a charitable, non-profit organization under US IRS Regulation 501(c)3. Donations may be tax deductible in the US.

Membership Eligibility

Membership is open to all who support Clan MacDougall or Clan MacDowall.

Remuneration

No Society Officer receives monetary compensation or other benefits for their services.

Submissions

Persons wishing to submit articles or photos of interest to The Tartan newsletter may contact the Editor at:
editor@macdougall.org

Membership Year

Membership Dues are on a calendar year basis ending on 31 December. They may be paid or prepaid, online for one or more calendar years through Paypal at:
<https://macdougall.org/pay-membership-dues-with-paypal/>

Membership Applications and Costs

Applications for Membership are available Online at: <http://www.macdougall.org/memberApp/>
Membership Dues rates are available at:
<https://macdougall.org/pay-membership-dues-with-paypal/>

How To Volunteer with the Society

Our Society has a need for a wide range of skills and interests, and the work is interesting. Volunteers may complete and submit our Volunteer form online at <https://macdougall.org/volunteer/> or print it out and mail it by post to our Treasurer.

Postal Applications and Dues Payments

Postal mail containing address or telephone changes, applications for Membership, Dues payments, or Volunteer forms can be mailed to:

Treasurer Barbara Osgood
418 29 Ave
Greeley CO 80634-2651

**Clan MacDougall Society of
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