



CLACH·AN·AIRM

Vol. III, No. 2. Journal of Clan MacGillivray Society USA 2019

FEATURES:

**THE MCGILVRAY FERRY AND MCGILVRAY
ROAD: A FRONTIER STORY**

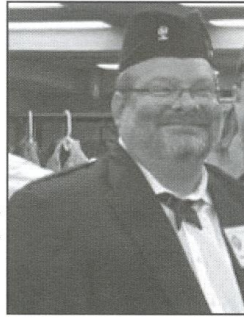
A GLIMMER OF HOPE

TWENTY YEARS!

Photo credit: Wildcat Haven

From the President

Rodney McGillivray



Greetings to the wonderful Clan MacGillivray family: In the 2018 President's message I mentioned that our Clan and our USA Society are changing more quickly now than ever. That pace is continuing.

USA Eastern Commissioner Ron McGillivray once again organized our Clan's participation in the Tartan Day Parade in New York City on April 6, 2019. Members of our clan marched up the Avenue of the Americans, past Radio City Music Hall and Rockefeller Center and thousands of cheering spectators. At the end our group was saluted by world famous Scottish actor/comedian Sir Billy Connolly. This is a new activity for us and each year our contingent is growing. We hope to continue this trend going forward as it is a fun event for the participants and it gives our Clan good exposure nationally and internationally.

Vice President Jim MacGillivray and his wife Linda have organized our 2019 biannual gathering in Dayton, Ohio. There will be many things to celebrate and discuss at this year's gathering. The continued growth and evolution of our organization is one topic for discussion. The international gathering in Scotland in 2020 will be another hot topic. The St Andrews Society of Dayton's Highland Dancers will be helping us to celebrate our Scottish heritage.

Commander of the Clan Iain MacGillivray and his team in the UK are putting together our international gathering for 2020 in Inverness, Scotland. This will be the first since Iain's appointment. It is shaping up to be a fun and enlightening time celebrated with our cousins from around the world.

We are exploring the use of technology to help us locate and reach out to our fellow MacGillivray cousins. Social media, of course, is one method. Ancestry, DNA, and family tree technology is another way to find relatives. I encourage everyone with an interest in your heritage to use these tools to seek out your MacGillivray relatives. Mention our Clan and USA Society to them when you find them. We need to grow to survive. If we plant enough seeds, some will bear fruit for us.

Farewell until our next meeting.

With Warmest Regards,

Rodney E McGillivray

CLACH AN AIRM

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SOCIETY USA

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THE STORY OF THE CLACH AN AIRM



The object known in Clan MacGillivray lore as the Clach an Airm (roughly pronounced: Klak an Airm) is a stone. It stands on a hillside of the Gask farm, a former MacGillivray property about five miles south of Inverness in upper Strathnairn. Today the hill is covered with a forestry plantation, so to find the stone requires someone well acquainted with the local country. But earlier, the hill was treeless and the stone visible from a distance.

The importance of this stone is hinted at by its name, Clach an Airm, in Gaelic meaning "Stone of Arms," that is, weapons. The time was 1746, during the Jacobite Rebellion in favor of returning the Stuart line to the crown of Great Britain. The MacGillivrays of Strathnairn were stout supporters of the Rising and came out in force with their chief. They mustered for the battle looming at nearby Culloden Moor by this stone at Gask. As they did, they sharpened their blade weapons on the stone.

The battle, and the Rising with it, was lost, with great misfortune to our people and forever changing the Highland way of life. But we remember this stone as a rallying point for our Clan in time of peril, when the song of steel against stone rang out in our homelands.

From the Editor

Tom Cox



Our featured article in this issue deals with a subject first brought to my attention by our own Jack McGilvary of Genoa City, Wisconsin. It was some years before I could follow up on his lead, but however long the delay Jack deserves our sincerest thanks, and I am especially delighted that we are able to feature a photo of him inside the back cover—I just wish we had a picture with better resolution so that we could have featured it on our front cover. Following up on the information Jack provided, I have been very fortunate to have found Nancy Hill of the Friends of the McGilvary Bridges who was a fount of information and willingly answered my many questions. While in Dayton for our upcoming Gathering, I sincerely hope I will be able to make a detour to Wisconsin to see the remaining bridges for myself.

I am equally delighted that our founding vice-president, my wife Mary, has prepared an article looking back at the twenty years of our Society. She has been there at every step of the way, no one is better equipped to trace our society's history—and, of course, she has roped me into many a chore for the society as well.

And then we have a short piece on the on-going plight of the Scottish wildcat featured on our clan badge and on efforts to save this very much endangered animal. I had also hoped to have an article by our Commander Iain MacGillivray discussing the on-going events surrounding the Culloden Battlefield and plans by real estate developers that would encroach thereon. No place is more sacred to our clan than the battlefield, Iain's account of efforts to protect it shows why we all should be concerned. However, the story is still unfolding. Look forward to Iain's account in the next issue of *Clach an Airm*.

Taken together, these articles mentioned above demonstrate how this journal leans on the contributions of clan members. This is and always has been the case, and I would urge each and every one of you to continue to share your ideas for future articles with me—or send me manuscripts even if they are still in rough form. Only in this way can *Clach an Airm* successfully reflect the rich and varied history of Clan MacGillivray. I already have some submissions of this sort, but more are always needed.

Onward!

Tom



“

Elusive and nocturnal, they are hard to track and thus to manage. Moreover, they show almost no capacity for domestication—from birth to death, they remain thoroughly wild, making captive breeding programs extraordinarily difficult.”

A Glimmer of Hope

By Tom Cox

We all know the Scottish wildcat. It sits snarling, claws bared on our clan badge—and it graces the cover of this issue of *Clach an Airm*. But this distinct sub-species is the most endangered mammal in the British Isles. Loss of habitat, feline diseases spread by feral domestic cats, and interbreeding have all taken their toll. Recent estimates hold that there may be only 35 pure Scottish wildcats remaining in the wild, although with this extremely fugitive creature no one knows for sure. Even counting those in sanctuaries and captivity there are at most only 400 Scottish Wildcats left.

Larger, more robust, with a larger mouth and more solitary habits than domestic cats, Scottish wildcats also display less fear of water—probably a good thing in a place with weather like Scotland! The largest recorded specimen, the so-called “Clashindarroch Beast” photographed in 2018, measured an estimated four feet from nose to tip of tail. But size aside, they interbreed readily with feral domestic cats (which are descended from a different sub-species), and therein lies the greatest danger to their survival.

The contrast to better known endangered mammals is stark. Scottish wildcats are less numerous than the Amur leopard, often called the world’s rarest feline. Moreover, there are some 1,000 giant pandas in the wild, 3,000 tigers, 20,000 polar bears—all the subjects of recent environmentalist concern.

With its tiny numbers the capacity for bounce-back of the “Highland Tiger” is limited. Scottish wildcats breed only once a year, unlike domestic cats which might have two or more litters. Elusive and nocturnal, they are hard to track and thus to manage. Moreover, they show almost no capacity for domestication—from birth to death, they remain thoroughly wild, making captive breeding programs

extraordinarily difficult, although with some 100 wildcats in sanctuaries, there is hope that captive breeding can provide cats for reintroduction to the wild.

Still, thanks to the work of Wildcat Haven and other organizations there is a glimmer of hope for the wild population. Two kittens, recently found abandoned, weak, and dehydrated, have been nursed back to health and, as we

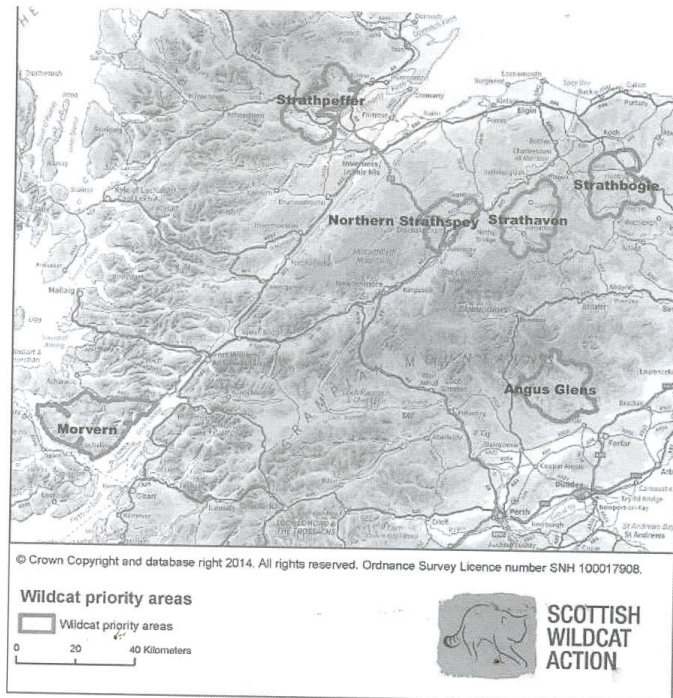




Photo credit: Wildcat Haven. The rescued kittens.

go to press, are ready to be released back into the wild. More important, since 2008 the organization has created a huge wildcat refuge area in Morvern where a remaining population will be free from the inter-breeding with feral cats and the habitat destruction that have done so much to diminish their numbers.

Wildcat Haven and Scottish Wildcat Action are also in the process of creating a second refuge, this encompassing much of the Ardnamurchan Peninsula just north of Morvern. Although there do not seem to be many wildcats in the peninsula at present, it is an ideal location for their expansion for it is lightly populated and offers the mixed habitat wildcats prefer.

Between these refuges and the rest of Scotland, a large buffer zone is being created where all domestic cats—feral or not—are being spayed or neutered, but not eliminated for removing them would simply create a biological vacuum into which other domestic cats would soon move. Neutered males will protect their territory keeping unsterilized intruders at bay. Dependent upon private support, Wildcat Haven has adopted a variety of money-raising schemes including an

“adopt a cat” program (popular with children) and the sale of tracts of a few square feet of land in their refuge areas, thus making even Americans Scottish landowners.

Champions of wildcat restoration differ as to the best route forward. Wildcat Haven believes protecting and expanding wild populations is the best way to go. Wildcats raised in captivity and then released into the wild will have too few survival skills to live on their own, they believe, and by breeding with truly wild specimens might undermine their offspring’s knowledge of what it takes to survive.

The leaders of Scottish Wildcat Action, on the other hand, think the number of cats remaining in the wild is too small and scattered for recovery to have much chance. Their studies show that there are only six widely scattered areas where populations of wildcats are known to exist: Morvern on the west coast; Strathpeffer, near the head of Cromarty Firth; Angus Glens, east of Blair Atholl in the Grampians; and Strathbogie, Strathhaven, and Northern Strathspey near the upper reaches of the Spey. Interaction among these populations is limited, Scottish wildcats are strongly



territorial. Scottish Wildlife Action advocates a program of captive breeding and release of animals that DNA testing shows are essentially purebred. Friction between the two organizations is not uncommon

Meanwhile, a third group is pushing for habitat protection. Although to label this a third group is a bit of a stretch for many of its members come from those supporting Wildcat Haven or Scottish Wildcat Action. In recent months this disparate group has focused especially on trying to halt clearcutting of pine forest plantations near Clashindarroch in the Strathbogie area. How many Scottish wildcats live in the Clashindarroch forests is unclear, but many believe it to have ten to fifteen which would be the largest wildcat

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Come Join The Fun!!

Clan MacGillivray Society USA
Biennial Gathering and AGM
July 12 & 13, 2019 Dayton, Ohio

We are excited to announce the eighth biennial gathering of Clan MacGillivray Society USA to be held at the Hope Hotel and Holbrooke Conference Center in Dayton, Ohio. The city was the home of the Wright Brothers (pictured in the mural reproduced above) who at the beginning of the twentieth century set the aviation age in motion.

On Friday evening there will be a Meet-and-Greet reception with light refreshments, a piper, and a cash bar. This casual gathering is a wonderful time for meeting old friends, making new ones, and sharing genealogical information and tall tales. Registration packets will be complete with souvenir Clan MacGillivray T-shirts, a program of events, and guides to area attractions.

After breakfast Saturday we will gather for our General Business Meeting. The afternoon is left free for you to check out the Dayton area or just relax. There is a shopping mall not far away if you like to shop and lots to do in the area.

The banquet will be on Saturday evening—complete with haggis, of course. Entertainment will follow. There will be a gift table, raffle, and plenty of other activities, planned and unplanned, at the Saturday evening session. Commander Iain hopes to be able to attend.

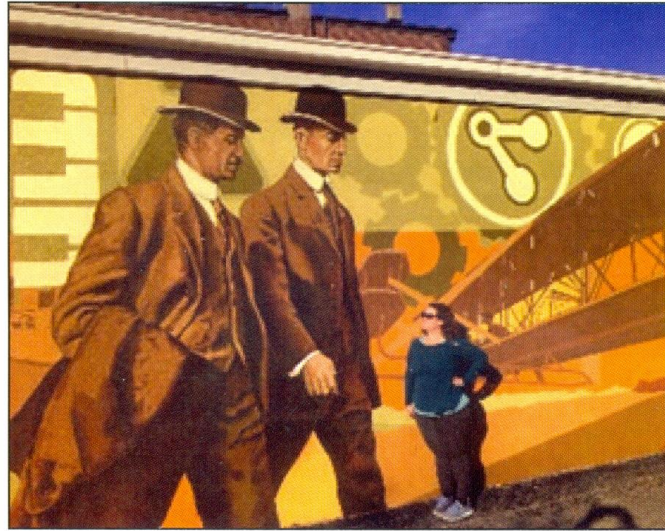


Photo credit: Dayton Convention and Visitors Bureau. Mural of Orville and Wilbur Wright.

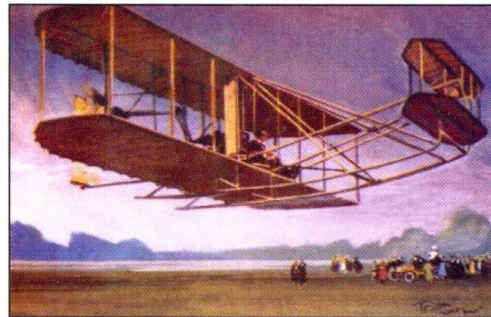


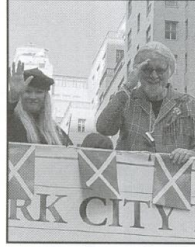
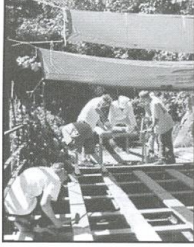
Photo credit: Ferdinando Tacconi. Painting of the First Airplane.

For those who are still around, President Rod and Vice-President Jim are also working on plans for an optional trip on Sunday to the nearby U.S. Air Force Museum. Admission is free and the museum close enough to the hotel that it should not be necessary to hire a bus.

The registration fee is \$180 per adult (\$80 for children 4 to 10 years of age). The hotel has offered a special room rate of \$99 per night double occupancy. The last day to get the reduced hotel rate is June 20. When making reservations, you **must** mention Clan MacGillivray to get the reduced rate. The hotel's telephone number is (937) 879-2696.

To get registration forms and further information, contact James E. MacGillivray, 187 Henry Street, Bedford, OH 44146. Jim and Linda may also be reached at jemmac@att.net or by phone at (440) 439-1907.





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"STONE OF WEAPONS"

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Rodney McGillivray

FROM THE EDITOR

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...THE STORY CONTINUES

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TWENTY YEARS!

Mary MacGillivray Cox

POETRY A 'FINE ART' FOR LOCAL WRITER

Brendan Egan

CLAN & SOCIETY NEWS

NEW CONVENORS

Published for the Society.

Contact the editor at P.O. Box 358, McCammon, Idaho 83250 or dogapple21@yahoo.com *



Photo credit: Friends of McGilvray Road. Now a Footpath

Editor's note: The following essay is excerpted from the late Doris Brenengen Wagner's *McGilvray's Ferry: A History of Caledonia Village and Township* self-published in 1976. A descendant of pioneers of the area and a life-long resident, her account ranges well beyond the story of the McGilvray ferry and bridges, the portions reproduced here. A few editorial changes have been made to provide continuity from excerpt to excerpt and footnotes added to provide additional context, but in spite of these changes the account that follows is hers and is reproduced by permission of The Friends of McGilvray Bridges.

The McGilvray Ferry and McGilvray Road: A Frontier Story

By Doris Brenengen Wagner

In the summer of 1851, Alexander McGilvray headed west on horseback from Portage, in central Wisconsin, stopped on the banks of the Mississippi at La Crosse, and then made his way north, threading his way through the tangle of the Black River bottoms on a blazed trail. He forded the Black River looking for land on which to establish a claim. After selecting a quarter section, he returned to Portage.

In the spring of 1852 McGilvray returned and near the village of Trumpealeau built a log house and put up a stack of hay. The following spring he brought his wife Catherine from Portage to join him. A son, Gilbert O. McGilvray, was born that same year.

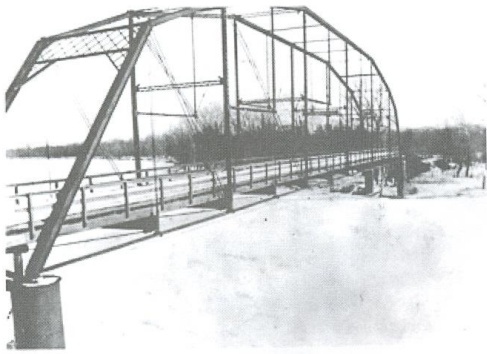
Initially McGilvray caulked up the box of a new wagon and used it to ferry incomers and supplies across the Black, but in the spring of 1854 he joined Charles Utter in building a scow in the streets of Trumpealeau. Once the winter ice was gone, they used horses to haul the craft to the banks of the Black River, launched it near McGilvray's home, and poled across with Utter's team as its first cargo. The ferry opened the way for the first wagon road into the southern end of Trumpealeau County. In 1856 the county granted McGilvray an exclusive right to maintain his ferry at what was then called Caledonia. It set the charges allowed at 35 cents for a vehicle drawn by two horses or a yoke of oxen, 10 cents for each horse or ox; 15 cents for a man and horse; 25 cents for

a one-horse or one-ox wagon; 10 cents a dozen for hogs and sheep in droves; 10 cents per foot passenger; and 5 cents per head for horses and cattle in herds. Thus began McGilvray's Ferry which would remain in service for nearly forty years.

Alex, whose family spelled their last name McGillivray, had been born in Inverness on July 15, 1804. He emigrated to Nova Scotia as a youngster and then moved to the Ottawa area where he engaged in logging. In 1849, having saved sufficient money, he moved to the United States and settled in Portage. It was probably there that he changed the spelling of his name to McGilvray because so many people could not pronounce or spell the longer version correctly.

In Portage he turned again to logging, the area's economic mainstay, but the venture into which he entered proved unprofitable, and he decided to seek a new home in the agricultural belt to the west where vast amounts of land remained unclaimed. He was not alone. Long caravans of people and wagons were soon pouring into the area. By 1856 much of the land in Trumpealeau County had been claimed, homes built, the prairie broken for farming, and crops put up. The land was good, and people prospered.¹

But progress did not come without difficulty. After long days bumping along in a wooden wagon or treading behind their faithful oxen, sometimes in the hot-sun,



Credit: Friends of McGilvray Road. Black River Bridge, 1892-1954

sometimes blinded by rain, shuffling through the dust or plodding heavily through mud and ooze, new settlers at last took their place in the waiting line for McGilvray's little one-wagon ferry. At times as many as 150 teams and wagons waited in line to be carried across the river.

After crossing the river on the precarious ferry and proceeding up the sandy banks on the western side of the Black River, rolling hills and flat grass-covered fields stretched before them to the west and the north. On the western bank of the river they were also greeted by the stately whiteness of an inn McGilvray built and operated with the help of his brother Donald. The inn and associated tavern provided both a welcome respite for travelers and a gathering place for the thriving close-knit community that grew up nearby. As many as 300 people were fed there on one occasion, and Alex often entertained visitors with tunes played on the bagpipe he had brought with him from Inverness.

The ferry itself was a simple affair, a flat-bottomed boat that was poled across the river.² Things improved slightly in 1859. McGilvray located 350 feet of two-inch rope which he extended across the river. McGilvray attached the ferry to the rope to prevent it from being swept downstream

“After long days bumping along in a wooden wagon or treading behind their faithful oxen, sometimes in the hot sun, sometimes blinded by rain, shuffling through the dust or plodding heavily through mud and ooze, new settlers at last took their place in the waiting line for McGilvray's little one - wagon ferry.”

in foul weather and high water and inch-by-inch snubbed it across the swirling water. Hemp rope was only a partial solution. It stretched when wet and frayed with usage, so after one season McGilvray went to La Crosse and returned with a load of 7/8 inch round iron rods 12 feet long which he had the local blacksmith weld into one round bar 350 feet long. This was placed across the river with a heavy chain on one end to which the ferry could be attached and then drawn along by a windlass. In time it was replaced by a wire cable which remained in use until the ferry was abandoned.

The first ferryboat lasted two years, when a new one was constructed. In all, five boats were built, the last by G. O. McGilvray in 1890. It ran until the McGilvray Bridge was completed in 1892 and was then sold to the operators of Gordon's Ferry upstream at Decorah Prairie.

From time to time the ferry landing had to be moved to comply with changes in the river channel. There were other challenges as well. Upstream, Wisconsin's lumber industry was booming and the river became an artery for lumber rafts headed downstream. Lumber production on the Black rose from six million board feet in 1858 to sixty-two million in 1878, and the resulting increase in traffic made the operation of McGilvray's Ferry more and more difficult. Log drives became a problem too. Usually they bothered only a few weeks in the spring for a few hours at a

time, but occasionally the ferry was laid up for a week or two on account of jams. In the summer of 1890 the ferry was blockaded for five months.³ In the spring the river was also nearly solid with lumber rafts for over two miles above the ferry, tied up as close as they could together. There, raftsmen had to break down their long strings of rafts into smaller units for the nine-mile journey from the ferry to the Mississippi.⁴ It was an operation that took time and added extra complications for McGilvray's operation.

Log jams were a special problem. As one authority noted, the Black was an extraordinarily difficult stream for log driving: “Sometimes several seasons pass before logs started on the upper waters reach the boom at La Crosse.

Very few reach the mills until the second summer after they have been banked,” and jams were frequent.⁵ McGilvray's son remembered in 1885 “the river to be jammed solid for 36 miles. . . . This jam remained in the river at McGilvray's Ferry from the last of March until the 15th of September before we crossed a team.”

Traffic often piled up as people sought to cross the river before it iced up for the winter. One cold drizzly night as the rain was falling, a string of 25 teams were waiting to cross on the ferry. The last in line was an ox team hitched to a wagon in which a mother was trying to hush the moanings of a sick child. The father ran forward from rig to rig asking the drivers to give him the first chance to cross the river. The first four gave quick and gracious assent to his request, but the 20th in line told the distressed father that he could go to hell with the sick brat. The cruel reply was quickly carried from man to man to the river's brink where Alex McGilvray was snubbing his boat. Then, clear and strong as a bugle's blast, came the old Scotsman's voice, "Not a rig will I carry until the mother and child have crossed the river!" More than 20 voices

rose in a rousing "Hurrah for Mac!"

It had turned bitterly cold overnight and McGilvray knew it would not be long before he would have to close down for his operations for the winter. Still, the wagons kept coming, everyone hurrying to get to their selected lands and hoping to build a cabin or shanty before the snow began falling. Mac watched the rising sun peek over the horizon and looked further up in the sky and noticed swirling clouds beginning to gather. The wind had risen and the temperature to fall. Cold, stormy weather was coming.

With the sick child safely across the river, Mac could hear some sort of session going on across the river and hurried back with the ferry to greet the new arrivals and see what the

yelling was about. It was freezing cold by this time and a raw wind was blowing. About 75 teams were by now in line on the east bank waiting their turn when a man drove up, his wife and children screaming with cold. All the freight haulers but one told the man to drive past and get the children to the inn as soon as possible.

One man, about 25 teams ahead of them, gave them to understand they could not go ahead of him, but the aggrieved father laid down his lines and sought desperately to convince the freight hauler that he would be out in the cold all day anyway, and only a matter of three minutes for him, and his children were freezing. While he was "warming up" on the freight hauler, Mac led the team with the woman onto the ferry and put them across. By the time the ferry got back for the next team, the man was convinced they could go ahead of him.

On another occasion, five or six West Prairie farmers drove to Onalaska for lumber. The river was open and the ferry running. The next day the men returned to find that the river had been closed for twelve hours. The horses were unhitched and the wagons loaded with a thousand feet of lumber apiece and run across the ice by hand. The horses were then led across in safety. That was closing in rather suddenly!

Improvements came bit by bit. In 1859 the county voted to pay 85 dollars to build a bridge between Galesville and McGilvray's Ferry and in 1861 voted to put in a corduroy road⁶ and a plank bridge over the swampy ground for farmers attempting to negotiate the steep slope to the ferry landing. For his part McGilvray voluntarily graded the approaches to his ferry with good, hard clay and presented the county with a bill for \$65.45 for planking the bridge across the slough behind his ferry. The county paid the then-sizable sum since the ferry was an asset to the whole county, promoting settlement and commerce of the area. Other simple bridges followed, easing movement across the bottoms. McGilvray's Ferry had become an institution.



Photo credit: Wis. State Historical Society. *Lumber Rafts*



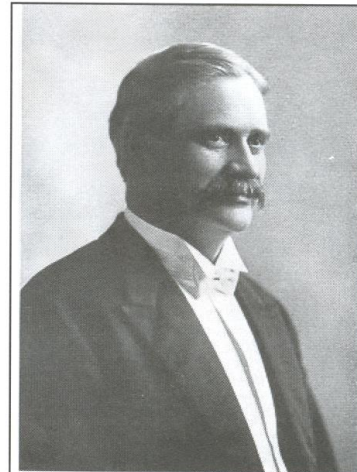
Photo credit: Wis. State Historical Society. *Log Jam on the Black River*

“ the bridge was . . . an improvement over the ferry, but hardly state-of-the-art. One person recalled her fear as she travelled “down the hill, straight for the Black River, and [at the last minute] turning left onto the bridge. I wondered if my dad had remembered to put the brakes on whenever we were turning onto the bridge. . . .”

In the 1860s, the ferry took on a new role. Alex's second son, Rankin, later recalled:

When the Civil War broke out, we began to carry soldiers across the ferry. Hardly a day went by until the close of the war that we did not carry some of the boys, and along at first they were all going one way, bound for La Crosse and from there to Madison or Milwaukee, and then to the front. But after the first battle of Bull Run the wounded soldiers started to return and then we were carrying soldiers both ways until the war ended. You could

always tell the wounded ones, for they were bandaged and crippled: a great many had their arms in slings, others were walking with crutches, while some had bandaged heads. I recollect one fellow who came back nearly shot to pieces. He was the most dilapidated looking soldier I ever saw. He was lame and his right arm was in a sling, and he had been hit in the face and lost one eye and couldn't see very well out of the other one. He was sour and cranky and rather discouraged, and I didn't blame him. Father kept him all night [at the inn] and had one of the boys drive him to Trempealeau the next day. Father never charged the soldiers anything



Wm Torrance
William Torrance
An Organizer and First President of
La Crosse Bridge and Steel Company

for carrying them across the ferry or for board or lodging. . . . Although he could not go to war, he did this patriotic service for his adopted country. My chances of going to war were spoiled on account of the ferry. I was on fire to go all right, but instead of going to the front and dying for my country, I had to stay at home and bail water out of the ferry boat and help run it.⁷

The ferry was not without its faults. Traffic frequently backed up, and seasonal shutdowns when the river froze up were a major inconvenience. Talk of replacing it with a bridge surfaced repeatedly, but Alex McGilvray opposed the idea, fearing the loss of business that would follow. His son Gilbert took over operation of the ferry after Alex's death in 1878 and proved more forward-looking. Indeed, he became an advocate of replacing the ferry with a bridge. In 1892 the *Galesville Independent* reported: “G. O. McGilvray was in La Crosse last week to confer with the [County] Bridge Commission. That's right, Gib! Hurry them if you can. There has been much talk about that bridge, [and] we people would like to see some work going on to convince us that they mean business.”

Continued on Page 16

“

Locals would have none of it. In 1989 a volunteer group, the Friends of McGilvray Road, formed to help save the bridges from demolition, to do maintenance work on the trail connecting them, and to encourage their use.”

...The Story Continues

By Tom Cox

The trail through the Black River bottoms over which Alex McGilvray made his way in 1851 in search of a homestead claim would in time become a road to his ferry site. A series of six wooden bridges were constructed to aid in passage through the marshy terrain, but they did not hold up well under the wet conditions and most were replaced beginning in 1892 by iron truss bridges. The last wooden bridge, bridge number 5, was a kingpost structure removed in 1986 and replaced ten years later by moving the Cove Creek Bridge from near the village of El Paso, Wisconsin.

In time, traffic shifted to higher ground and the bridges fell into disuse. The road became a path for hikers, hunters, and wildlife enthusiasts seeking access to what became the Van Loon Wildlife Area, a tract encompassing five miles of bottomland along the Black that the state acquired in 1957. But the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources had limited funds for use in the area. The main channel bridge had been removed in 1954, so the remaining bridges were on a road to nowhere. They continued to deteriorate. In time the path was closed and plans were made to remove the hazardous bridges that remained.

Locals would have none of it. In 1989 a volunteer group, the Friends of McGilvray Road, formed to help save the bridges from demolition, to do maintenance work on the trail connecting them, and to encourage their use. They were remarkably

successful, providing many hours of labor repairing the bridges and clearing the overgrown pathway, publicizing the “Seven Bridges Road,” marshalling local support, and persuading the DNR to use state funds designated for removal for maintenance instead.

To underwrite the expenses involved in the restoration work, Friends engaged in a variety of fund-raising activities. The most notable of these was the commissioning two artists, Arthur G. Anderson and Michael A. Klafke, to paint pictures of the various bridges together with the wildlife that was a major part of the area’s draw

now that transportation was no longer its *raison d’être*. The large originals brought significant returns, while various smaller prints brought in additional funds.

The dedication of the restored bridges and pathway in 1999 was a major community event. Among those in attendance was one of our Society’s earliest members, Alex McGilvray of Genoa City, Wisconsin, who served as piper during the celebration.

Maintenance work continues as does fund-raising and volunteer



Photo credit: Friends of McGilvray Road. Bridge 4

labor to keep the bridges and pathway in good shape—not always an easy task for high water sometimes hinders access, just as it is doing this year. In spite of such difficulties, the group is planning a major event on September 9 to celebrate its 30th anniversary and toward that end is working with the Holmen Area Historical Society and the La Crosse Tribune to publicize it.

The Friends have not been alone in their interest in the bridges and their preservation. The bridge group was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in February 1980. In his compilation of America’s historic bridges, Nathan Holth (historicbridges.org) ranks the historic importance of all but one of the bridges as a 9 on a scale from 1 to 10. The relocated bridge 5 is a welded, rivet-connected truss bridge. It rates a 6.



Credit: Friends of McGilvray Road. Nancy Hill, Linda McMullin and Anna Jahns, key friends of the road



Credit: Friends of McGilvray Road. *McGilvray’s Ferry*, Anderson and Klafke Painting

“

Pushed along by Jim's leadership and Mike's legacy of enthusiasm, on November 11, 1999, the Steering Committee unanimously voted to establish Clan MacGillivray Society USA.”

Twenty Years!

By Mary MacGillivray Cox

2019: The year we celebrate twenty years as a society! As the sole founder still in an official position, I am delighted to have been asked to write a short chronicle of the events that led to our society's founding and from there to where we are today. They have been twenty fruitful and rewarding years, but the forces that led to the establishment of our society go back even further.

In 1989 the Lord Lyon named George B. Macgillivray of Thunder Bay, Ontario, as

Commander of Clan MacGillivray with the charge of rallying the clan. He set about doing just that, naming Commissioners as his lieutenants in the United States, Canada, The Netherlands, and Australia.

The Commander's appointee for the United States, Bruce P. McGillivray of Portland, Oregon, soon set to work, publishing an occasional newsletter, naming convenors for various parts of the country, and encouraging those of MacGillivray blood toward some form of union. Commander George died in 1989, but the work he had inaugurated continued.

In 1998 Bruce called together



a **Steering Committee** to do the spade work for establishing a US Society for the clan. Members were Tom Macgillivray of Greeley, CO; Michael A. McGillivray of Scituate, MA; James J. McGillivray of Oakton, VA; Chris McGillivray of Anchorage, AK; and Mary MacGillivray Cox of McCammon, ID. Most had come to Bruce's attention through their positive responses to his outreach efforts, but in my case because I was

pushed for membership by Bruce's counterpart in Great Britain, Ishbel MacGillivray-McGregor, with whom I had worked to erect plaques at the Dunlichity and Petty churches in Scotland commemorating chiefs Alexander VIII and John William XIII of Dunmaglass.

Michael McGillivray had, it was often said, "the fire in the belly" for Clan MacGillivray, but he died unexpectedly in 1999 and his brother Jim took up the mantle of leadership. Pushed along by Jim's leadership and Mike's legacy of enthusiasm, on **November 11, 1999**, the Steering Committee unanimously voted to establish Clan MacGillivray Society USA, thus making that the date our society came into being as a formal entity. In accordance with provisional by-laws crafted by the Steering Committee, the following were named officers of the organization: James J. McGillivray, President; Mary MacGillivray Cox,

Vice-president; Tom Macgillivray, Treasurer; and Sue McGillivray Johnston, of Midland, TX, Secretary. Joining the officers on the board were Directors Christopher D. McGillivray of Miami, FL; James Clark McGillivray of Bloomington, IN; and Commissioner



Photo credit: Jim McGillivray. Attendees in Las Vegas



Photo credit: Jim McGillivray. Officers at First Gathering

Bruce P. McGillivray. Chris also served as our first Webmaster and James as our Legal Counsel.

Incorporation of the Society as a non-profit membership corporation under the laws of Indiana followed on October 2, 2002, and in 2004 we received tax exempt status from the IRS. A membership drive began in 2004 and our first **General Membership Meeting and Gathering**, was held in Las Vegas, NV, on August 6, 2005, with some 80 clan members and guests present.

It was there that formal adoption of the Society's by-laws by a vote of members took place, and the provisional officers took on formal status—although with a new Treasurer, Donald L. Almy of Edmonds, WA. Don would prove a godsend, for his long career in the IRS gave him the knowhow to insure that our tax-exempt status was implemented and protected. He would serve until 2016 when he was replaced by Janice MacGillivray of

Edmonds, WA.

Other biennial meetings followed the one in Las Vegas.

Subsequent Biennial Gatherings and AGMs were held in Portland, ME (2007); Salt Lake City, UT (2009); St. Louis, MO (2011); Charlotte, NC (2013); Inverness, Scotland (2015); and Portland, OR (2017). The 2019 meeting will be held in Dayton, OH, not long after this journal appears.

Meanwhile, Bruce remained active. In 2005 he published the inaugural issue of *Clach an Airm*. He would continue to publish the journal more or less annually until 2017 when my husband took over as editor and Allison McGillivray as Assistant Editor. For reasons of health, Sue McGillivray Johnston resigned as Secretary in 2008 and was replaced by David A. Danford of Cordova, TN, who in turn was replaced by Roger Johnston of Midland, TX, in 2014. There were other changes too. In 2007 I

was replaced as vice-president by Dan Hyde before he moved up to the presidency and then by James E. MacGillivray of Bedford, OH (I have, however, remained on the Board). After ten years as society president Jim McGillivray stepped down to be replaced in 2010 by Dan McGillivray Hyde (who in turn was replaced by Rodney E. McGillivray of Springboro, OH, in 2017).

There have been other changes as well, but the geographic diversity represented by the clansmen mentioned above is a testament to the breadth and depth of membership on which the society rests. These changes reflect an on-going infusion of **fresh talent and enthusiasm** into our leadership ranks and should be taken as a sign of strength, a strength that can only be enhanced by the Lord Lyons' appointment of a dynamic new Commander for the clan, Iain MacGillivray of Calrossie, Scotland, and the new commissioners for the United States he has appointed.



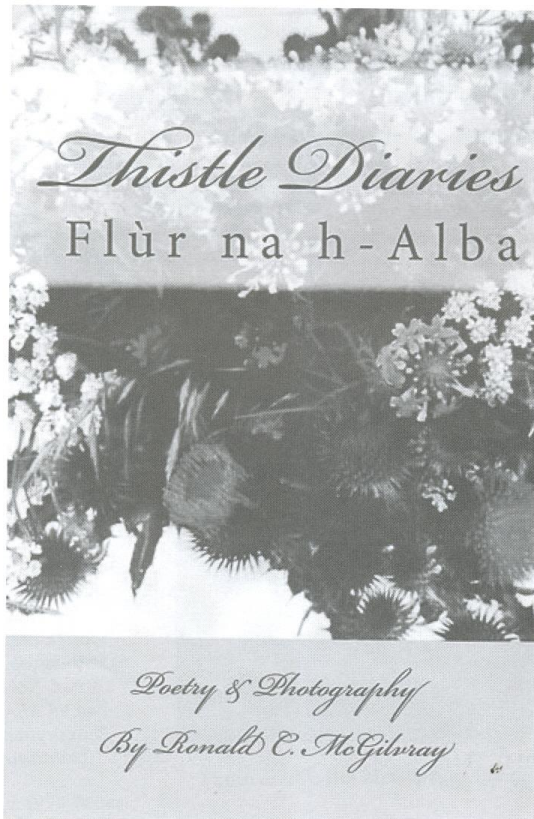
Editor's note: The following review originally appeared in the Spring 2017 issue of Worcester Magazine. With the kind permission of the journal's editor, Walter Bird, Jr., we reprint it here with a few editorial changes. With this review we are re-introducing our earlier practice of reviewing books that should be of interest to our readers.

“ *The Thistle Diaries contains his photography as well as his poetry. It was, he says, his way of creating a work to acknowledge his Scottish heritage. He feels that the Scottish culture and Gaelic language are fading. “This is my little effort to keep it alive.”*

Poetry A ‘Fine Art’ For Local Writer

By Brendan Egan

Worcester, Massachusetts



Everyone has a story to tell, but not everyone has an outlet or an audience. We don't all have a soapbox and a crowd to listen, but some people, like local poet Ron McGilvray, build their own. “I like to write and I always found that a good outlet for my imagination. Poetry sort of fit the bill for my short attention span,” said McGilvray in a recent interview.

Writing is in McGilvray's blood. His first published poem appeared in *Worcester Magazine* in the 1980s, and another of his poems, “The Urchin,” became the basis for a short story for which he won the Kathleen Downey Short Fiction Award.

Though a prolific poet—he says he has penned hundreds of poems—and has been writing for a good portion of his life, it's only recently that McGilvray has started publishing. His biggest published catalog comes from his years as a journalist. McGilvray, a former newspaper reporter and editor, likened journalism and poetry, connecting their appeal with his penchant for brevity. “Journalism does the same thing” as poetry, he says. “You try to say as much as you can in as few words as you can.”

McGilvray's writing career changed venues several times, mirroring area newspaper and ownership shuffling in the early 1990s and 2000s. His foray into professional writing started with a relatively brief, part-time stint at the *Worcester Telegram and Gazette*. But he was looking for something a little more permanent, and *Auburn News* was looking for a reporter. He ended up editing the *Auburn News* for ten years, mentoring *Worcester Magazine's* current editor, Walter Bird Jr., as a young reporter.

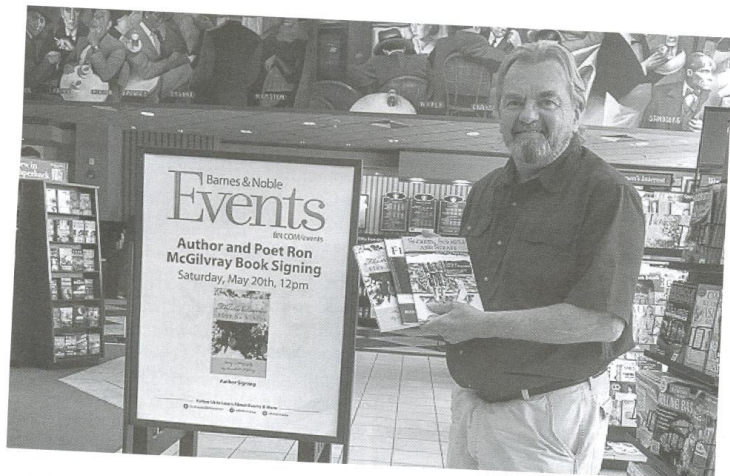
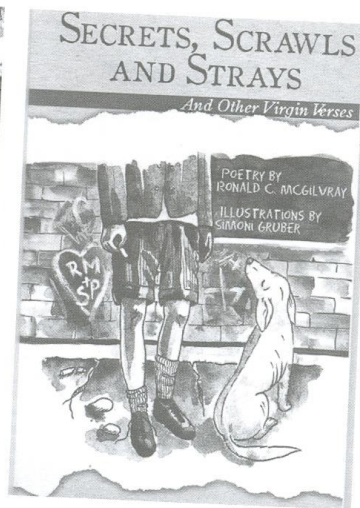


Photo credit: Ron McGilvray. Ron at Barnes & Noble Book Signing



His journalism days still tie into his thoughts about poetry. “I had some good reporters,” McGilvray says. “They knew enough to know how to put a story together so that it says enough and not too much. And I think that’s what poetry is about. The shorter, the better, but you make it a *good* short. Something really enjoyable to read and, hopefully, understandable.”

McGilvray has had to really focus to get his material out there. “People say the only way you’re going to get any kind of publicity is to enter contests and stuff like that,” he says. “I did a few times, and you never hear back about anything, and it gets a little frustrating. So I figured, ‘Hell, I’m just gonna do it on my own.’”

Online self-publishing was the only way to go. His first book of poetry, “Secrets, Scrawls and Strays,” came out in December 2016. He quickly followed it with “The Thistle Diaries” in February 2017, with a third book, “Fine Art,” right behind that. More followed. There are now eight volumes.

“I’m self-published,” McGilvray says unapologetically. “These days it is very hard, especially with poetry, to find someone to represent you as an

agent. It’s like musicians these days, they all do their own thing and they self-promote and that’s how they finally break in.”

Before the manuscripts go off to be published, Sandra, McGilvray’s wife of 23 years, goes over them with an editor’s eye. “It cost me almost nothing,” McGilvray says of *Secrets, Scrawls and Strays*. The only expense was for the illustrations; she had her own style and adapted it to the poems.” The “she” in this case being Simoni Gruber, a tattoo artist and illustrator, who McGilvray contacted over the internet and whose pen and ink style he felt would complement and enhance the collection’s words.

McGilvray’s books are not the simple chapbooks you might find local poets slinging at a reading or open mic session. They are books you would pick up at your local bookstore and on Amazon.com—professionally bound and accompanied by full-color artwork and complete with ISBN numbers. The artwork McGilvray believes, is essential. “With a book of just poetry, some people won’t have an interest. I was always very visual anyway, and I thought it would be a good mix.

Following this approach, McGilvray’s “The Thistle Diaries” contains his photography as well as his poetry. It was, he says, his way of creating a work to acknowledge his Scottish heritage. He feels that the Scottish culture and Gaelic language are fading. “This is my little effort to keep it alive,” he says.

When asked whether he had any plans for the big stuff—more short stories and novels—it sounded as if poetry will continue to be home to McGilvray. Poetry, he says “is like riding a motorcycle. A novel would be a Cadillac, but I like speeding down the road on two wheels. To me that’s what a poem is.”

His style is his own; McGilvray doesn’t even try to compare himself to those greats who came before him. Self-publishing has given McGilvray the voice he needs to leave his mark and the freedom to do it on his own terms.

The MacGilvray Ferry and MacGilvray Road: A Frontier Story

Continued from page 7

Success was not easy to come by, but before the year was out construction of a steel bridge across the river was under way just a few yards from the site of MacGilvray's Ferry. G. O. recalled how it came about:

The winter of '91 and '92 I realized the time was ripe for a bridge to be built. The fact that the MacGilvray Ferry was tied up by log jams from three to seven months each year, [while] the Gale's Ferry only a few days a year and the Council Bay Ferry only once, when the 36-mile jam was in . . . made the MacGilvray Ferry the proper place.

I went to the County Board of La Crosse Co. and got an appropriation of \$2,000 providing Tremp. Co. would give \$1,000 and I could raise the balance of \$8,000 from any other source. I went to the Black River Log Driving Association and got \$1,000 and \$1,000 from the Black River Improvement Co., \$2,000 from the City of La Crosse, and \$1,000 from the Town of Caledonia. Then when Tremp. Co. was asked for the \$1,000 to finish it, I could only get one vote. . . .

Undaunted, I went to the La Crosse Co. Board and asked them to change their resolution to read provided I "could raise the balance from any other source. . . ." I went to the Black River Log Driving Association and got

the \$1,000 that Trumpealeau Co. should have given.

Bids were called for, and the Clinton Bridge Company from Clinton, Iowa, represented by G. O. MacGilvray, won the contract. He did all the hauling, boarded all the men, furnished all the material excepting the iron, and hired all the men except two experts sent from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

MacGilvray continued:

They [the engineers] told me seeing as I was the father of the bridge, I could have the honor of driving the first team across. . . . The foreman being a beer guzzler could break his word for a glass of beer. The day before the bridge was completed, Friend S.⁸ came to the foreman and told him in German, "Let's have a joke on Mac! If you let me drive the first team across I will take you to Trumpealeau tonight and get a keg of beer."

The next morning being Sunday Friend S. drove down with a team and buggy with his sister-in-law dollied up beside him [and] drove across. Then the foreman's brother showed him the calk marks on the planks [from horseshoes]. He gave them the laugh after they had bragged about beating me. The evening before my son had driven my team across, then I drove the team across [again] to be sure. The foreman's

brother had overheard them talking in German and told me what was up, knowing that his brother had promised me the honors.

Gib's Monument, as the bridge was sometimes called, was a 252-foot span with a 16-foot roadway. It was an improvement over the ferry, but hardly state-of-the-art. One person recalled her fear as she travelled "down the hill, straight for the Black River, and [at the last minute] turning left onto the bridge. I wondered if my dad had remembered to put the brakes on whenever we were turning onto the bridge, and I held my breath all the way across. I remember how the boards would rumble beneath the weight of the car, and [fearfully] glanced out the window to watch the muddy brown water swirling along below."

Eight wooden pile bridges were also constructed in 1892 to aid in spanning the maze of sloughs and channels on the road through the bottoms that led to the main bridge. Between weather, use, and flooding, the wooden bridges did not hold up well and between 1905 and 1908 La Crosse County replaced five of them with steel bowstring arch truss bridges.⁹ Together with the smaller bridges in the bottoms, the steel bridge turned "The Road of the Seven Bridges" into a major local transportation route, but eventually

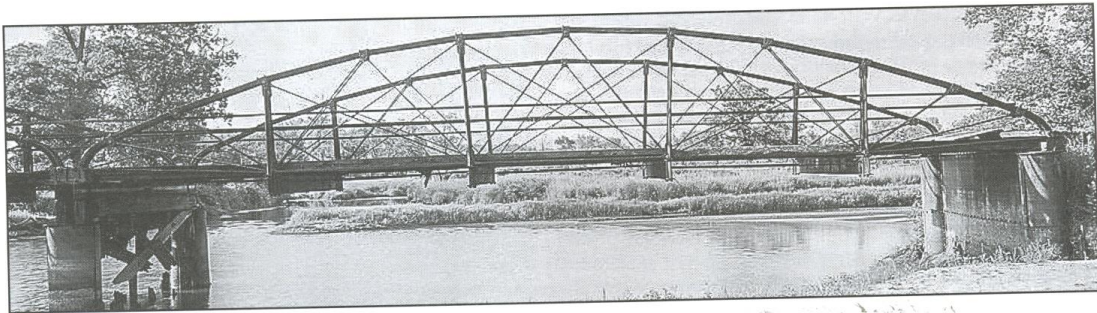


Photo credit: Friends of MacGilvray Road. Caption: Bridge No. 3.

Lewis Franklin (Frank) Martin, one of the four applicants for the position of Commander of Clan MacGillivray, died recently. Frank hailed from Spring, Texas. His lineage traced back to Lachlan MacGillivray, father of Chief Alexander of the Creeks, and through him to the MacGillivray chiefly line. He was, he said, brought up with a clear understanding of the importance of family ties, and it was this that spurred him to apply to become Commander. Before his death, he and his wife were considering moving to Scotland, and he was looking forward to learning Gaelic and how to play the bagpipes. This good, quiet man will be missed by all who knew him.

Secretary Roger Johnston should be applauded for his good work. The last issue of *Clach an Airm* had fewer copies returned by the post office as undeliverable than ever before. Still, in order to keep things up to date, Roger wants to remind all of you to be sure to send him your new contact information when you move. Only one address from the last mailing remains a mystery. Does anyone have a current one for Sharon Minoravic?

The latest Secretary's report shows 27 new members or lapsed members who have rejoined. That is a marvelous number, but our total is still only 115. Let's keep up the growth! Encourage your MacGillivray friends and relatives to join too—or at least get those nearby to attend the gathering in Dayton.

Once again Jordan McGillivray of Sandy, Utah, deserves our thanks. As he has for several past gatherings, he is designing the logo on the T-shirts that will be given to all those in attendance when we meet in Dayton. He is but one of many unsung members who contribute quietly and in their own way to our Society. We would be hard put to get by without them!

Plans are firming up for the Clan MacGillivray International Gathering to be held in Scotland July 15-20, 2020. The headquarters will be the Kingsmill Hotel in Inverness, and there will be trips to Culloden, Dunlichity, Dunmaglass, and other important MacGillivray sites. On Friday attendees will travel to the farm of Commander Iain's family near Tain for a day of fun and games concluding with a ceilidh. Finally, on Saturday the group will make its way to the Inverness Highland Games. Make your plans early, mid-summer is a busy tourist season in northern Scotland.

Clan MacGillivray tents are being raised at more and more Highland Games across the United States. Among the new locations (including ones to which we have returned after a long hiatus) are Kelso, Washington; Mt. Airy, Maryland; The Plains, Virginia; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Phoenix, Arizona. There are surely others of which your editor is unaware as well. Let's keep the ball rolling!

Our Eastern Convenor districts are changing. Tim and Traci Howell have moved from South Carolina to Florida. They will continue as convenors, but will now focus their efforts on Georgia and Florida. South Carolina has been peeled off from the Southeastern District and combined with North Carolina to form an Atlantic South District under Sheena Geiger. These changes will strengthen Society presence on the East Coast, where so much MacGillivray history has taken place and will reduce the amount of territory assigned to Owen MacGillivray's Atlantic Central district. The Howells' new address is 14108 Covert Green Place, Riverview, FL 33589. Sheena's is 203 Wrangell Dr. Mooresville, NC 28117.

As a further change, new convenors have been added for the long-vacant Atlantic Northern district. Robert and Margo McGilvrey of Saugerties, New York, will be taking on this vital area. Welcome aboard!

Gerry MacGillivray, longtime clan stalwart in Canada, died on January 4, 2019. He was 93 years old. With our Canadian kinsmen, we mourn his passing while remembering thankfully his many years of service. Fortunately, Commander Iain has named two new commissioners for Canada, so clan leadership will continue in strong hands north of the border. As part of the changes afoot, special arrangements have been made for the newsletter of the Clan MacGillivray Association of Canada to be published as a part of the *Antigonish Heritage Museum Newsletter* where it will be available to a wider audience than ever before.

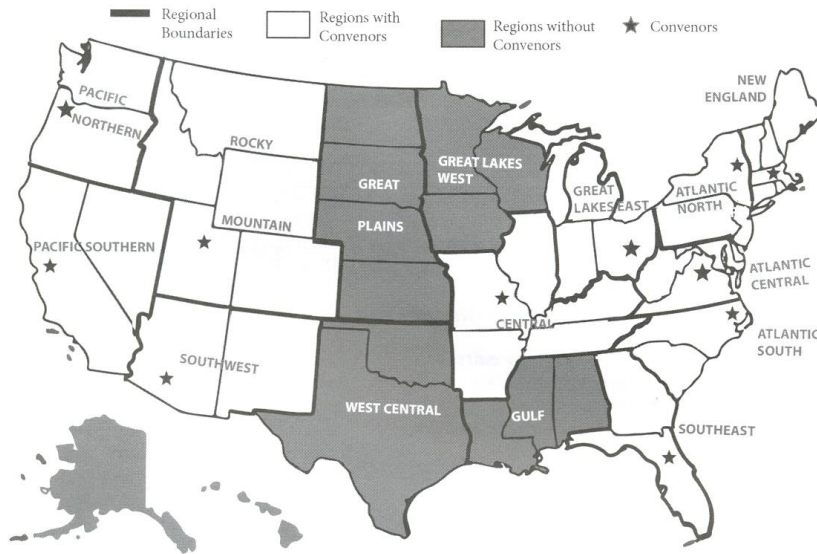
Small scholarships are available from Clan MacGillivray USA. The fund supporting these has been slowly accumulating over the past few years. Society members and their children are eligible to apply for help in a wide range of areas, ranging from Scottish dance lessons or bagpipe lessons to genealogical training or research. Letters of application should be sent to the Board via President Rod McGillivray.



Treasurer's report

The Clan McGillivray Society USA, Inc.
Account Reconciliation as of January 31, 2018
Bank of America

Beginning Balance 12/31/17		\$ 11,863.42
Cash Receipts		
General Fund / Dues Recv'd	\$ 3,350.00	
Donation-Cmnder Visit	\$ -	
Events - AGM	-	
Scholarship	-	
		\$ 3,350.00
Cash Disbursements		
Journal/Newletter-Print & mail	\$ 3,172.41	
Highlander ads	\$ 225.00	
Games Reimb	\$ 641.22	
AGM Expenses	\$ -	
Commander	\$ -	
Gifts	\$ -	
Postage, Supplies, Fees	46.00	
		\$ 4,084.63
Ending Balance 12/31/18		\$ 11,128.79
Memberships		
1 year	40 \$	950.00
5 year	14 \$	1,400.00
Life	2 \$	1,000.00
		\$ 3,350.00



2/2019

Regional Convenors

New England

Ron McGilvray
39 Grant St., Spencer, MA
newenglandcanary@yahoo.com

Atlantic Northern

Robert and Margo McGilvrey
42 Kalina Dr., Saugerties, NY 12477

Atlantic Central

Owen McGillivray
806 Channing Pl. NE
Washington, DC 20018
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Atlantic South

Sheena Geiger
203 Wrangell Dr., Mooresville, NC 28117

Southeast

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14108 Covert Green Place, Riverview, FL 33379
aaronfan@yahoo.com

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Sandy, UT 84093
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jordanjm@gmail.com

Southwest

Darry "Dee" Carbonell
15462 W. Fairmont Ave.
Goodyear, AZ 85338
602-214-5938
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Pacific Northern

Joe McGilvra
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joemcgvira@yahoo.com

Pacific Southern

John Loughney
4228 Rickeys Way Unit E,
Palo Alto, CA 94300
john.loughney@gmail.com

Vacancies

Gulf
Great Lakes West
Great Plains
West Central
Alaska
Hawaii

Bridge photo collection



Upper Left. Photo credit: Friends of McGilvray Road. *Bridge #5 before Restoration.*

Middle. Photo credit: Historic American Engineering Record. *Closeup of Construction*

Bottom Left. Photo credit: Alex McGilvray. *Alex at Restoration Celebration.*

Bottom Right. Photo credit: Friends of McGilvray Road. *The Last Wooden Bridge.*

Background: detail of the patented construction on the steel truss bridges

OFFICIAL MARKER

THE MCGILVRAY "SEVEN BRIDGES ROAD"

In the early 1850s Scottish immigrant Alexander McGilvray established a small settlement and ferry service, both known as "McGilvray's Ferry," along the Black River. For the next forty years the ferry made seasonal river crossings despite frequent log jams. Local citizens repeatedly petitioned for a more dependable means to cross the river, and in 1892 La Crosse County erected the first in a series of wooden bridges on McGilvray Road. Unfortunately, the river's marshy waters and frequent floods soon rotted the wood. From 1905 through 1908, the La Crosse Bridge and Steel Company erected a series of steel bridges. Designed and patented by Charles M. Horton, these bowstring arch truss bridges incorporated "hook-clips" instead of rivets to fasten and strengthen structural members. Five of these rare bowstring truss bridges are found on McGilvray Road and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1975 the bridges became part of the Van Loon Wildlife Area. In 1997 an additional historic truss bridge was moved to this location.

Erected 1997

Photo credit: John A. Weeks