

The Scots-Irish, Presbyterianism, and Other Things*

Part 2

***Who is Buried in Grant's Tomb?**

November 23, 2025

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Big Picture

- The Scottish Monarchy Wanted Scotland to Remain Roman Catholic – The Pope Is the Head of the Church.
- The English Monarchy Wanted Scotland to Be Anglican – The English Monarch is the Supreme Authority of the Church.
- Scotland Wanted Religious Independence – The Presbyterian Church Answerable to God Alone.

What Happened Last Week?

- The Scottish Reformation of 1590 was a Success; the Presbyterian Church of Scotland is the Kirk, A Uniting Force.
- As Espoused Vehemently by John Knox and His Successor, Andrew Melville, the Church Answers to God Alone – A Clear Statement of Separation of State and Church.
- But...James VI of Scotland and also James I of England (Two Kings in One Person) Doesn't Really Go For That – Too Republican For His Liking.

**“If You Aim at a Scottish Presbytery, it Agreeth
As Well with Monarchy, as God and the Devil”**



But The Kirk Transforms Scotland

- The Kirk Was Immediately Popular with Lowlanders: it Instilled a Devotion to Education, It Provided a Uniting Force for a Bickering People; It Introduced a Measure of Democracy.
- Presbyterian Ministers Visited the Sick, Helped the Poor, Consoled the Sorrowing, Made Humble Folk Feel Dignity and Worth.
- On the Downside....The Sermons Were Interminable.
- And,

No Golf on Sunday

- The Presbyterian Ministers Thought That Morals Were In Need of, Well, Reform.
- Drunkenness, Fornication, Swearing, Breaking the Sabbath, Fighting, Not to Mention “Vain Words” and “Uncomely Gestures” Would Bring You Before the Session.
- Also - No More Carnival Days, Maytime Celebrations, Passion Plays. No Fun.
- And, If You Were Suspected of Witchcraft...

Golf...A Game Invented By the English to Punish the Scots



James Has A Plan For These Zealous Presbyterians

- James Might Not Like Presbyterians Very Much, But He Does See How They Can Be Very Useful.
- After A Devastating War with England in 1603, the Troublesome Ulster Province's Troublesome Wild Irish Population Was Significantly Reduced.
- Now Was A Great Time to Resettle Ulster with People Who Could Be, If Not Liked, Counted On – Lowland Scots: “I Know, I Know, But At Least They Are Protestant.”

The Pitch: Green Acres is the Place To Be!

- Lowland Scots, Newly Inspired by Presbyterianism and Eager to Improve Their Lives, Are Shown in 1606 a “Can’t Miss” Real Estate Opportunity Brought To You By Your Royal Majesty, King James VI&I.
- The ULSTER PLANTATION In Northeast Ireland Has Just Come on the Market!!!
- (Only Lowland Scots and Protestant English Need Apply.)

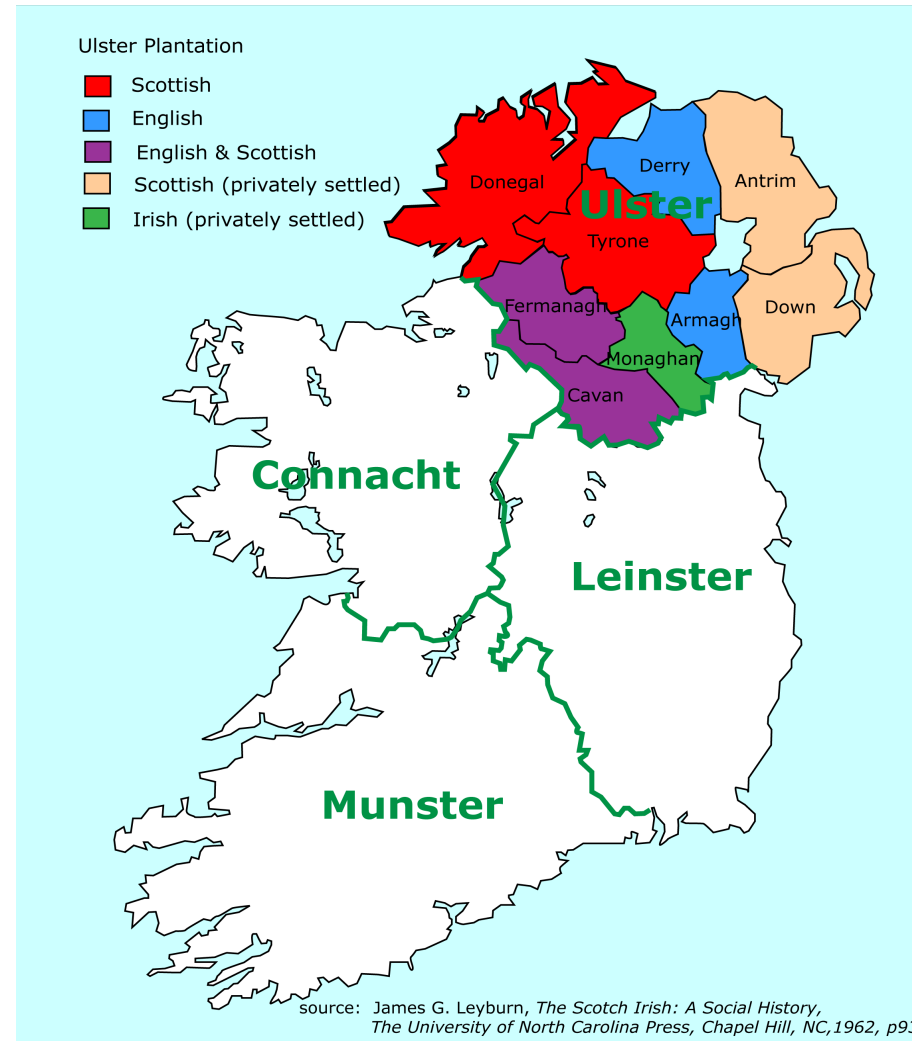
Ulster! Land Spreading Out So Far and Wide!



And I Can See Ireland From My House!



Ulster (Not Exactly Northern Ireland)



The Pitch Works: Many Lowland Scots Move To Ulster 1610 - 1640

- The Rationale: Lowland Scots Migrate to Ulster Because of the Promise of Better Economic Opportunities Than They Have in Scotland (Admittedly a Low Bar).
- The Promise: Good Land (Actually it Varies), Favorable Leases (Much Longer Leases, 21 Years and Longer, Than in Scotland), Peace and Protection (But Remaining Irish Are Understandably Very Annoyed).
- The Trip: Hey, Since Ulster is Only 20 Miles From Southwest Scotland 20 Miles Away So If It Doesn't Work Out You Can Always Go Home.

Who Came?

- Well, ... Ok, ...While Some of the Early Settlers Might Not Have Had the Best Credit Scores.. And Maybe a Run In with the Law Now and Then...
- Most of the Early Settlers Were Industrious And Determined.
- The Early Settlers Were Successful Which Attracted More Settlers; Within Twenty Years There Was a “Positive Fever for Emigration.”
- By 1640 Perhaps as Many as 100,000 Settlers (or Maybe 40,000)

How Y'All Doing Over There in Ulster?

- The Ulster Scots Learn How to Drain Bogs and Swamps Thus Adding Acreage.
- The Potato Is Introduced from North America.
- Sheep Flourished -- Which Encouraged A Woolen Cloth Industry.
- All Good For The Pocketbook, But: “Iniquity Abounded With Contention, Fighting, Murder, Adultery, etc.”
- In the Nick of Time, As If Preordained: Presbyterian Minsters Flee in Large Numbers to Ulster Because of King James’ Interference with Church Polity In Scotland.
- Ulster Becomes.....

Puritanical and Staunchly Presbyterian!!

(And I Ask You, What's Wrong With That?)

- Settlers Welcomed the Presbyterian Ministers.
- Churches Established; Strict Discipline Introduced (Of Course).
- Evildoers Made To Publicly Confess Their Sins. If They Did Not Their Faults were Read Out to the Congregation.
- The Ulster Scots Soon Recognized The Difference Between God's Glory and Hell's Torment And Reveled In Sermon and Instruction.

...And Sin No More!!

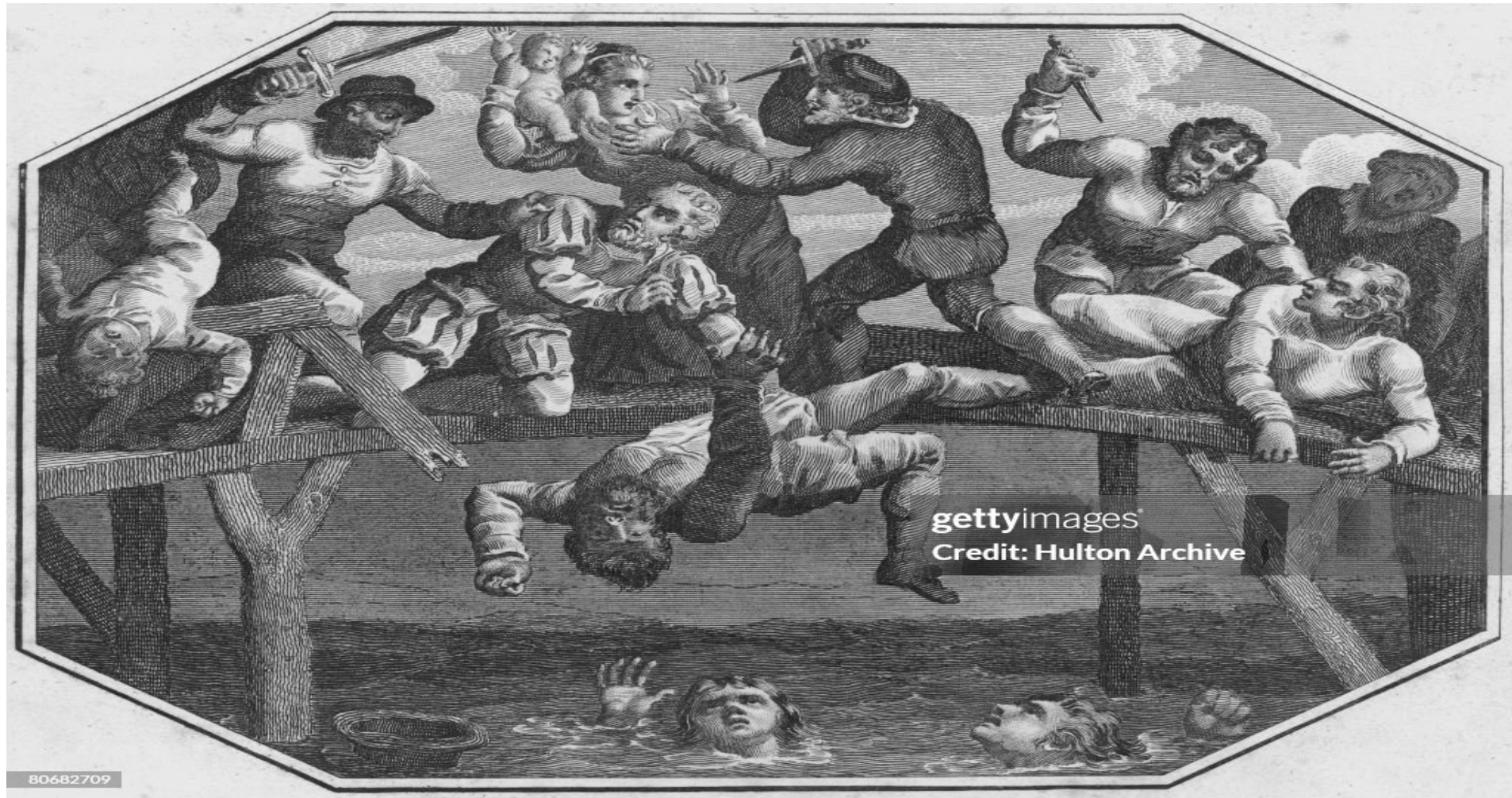


All Good... But The Natives Are Restless

1641

- The Ulster Scots Employ Native Irish As Sub-Tenants.
- Some Irish Hide Up in The Hills And Cause Mischief (The “Wood-Kerns”)
- Fed Up with Discrimination and Confiscation of Land, A General Irish Rebellion Begins in 1641 In Dublin.
- The Rebellion Spills Over into Ulster – Thousands of Protestants In Ulster Are Killed.
- Oliver Cromwell to the Rescue in 1650? Yes...But It’s Complicated.

Christians Behaving Badly...As They So Often Do.



Yet Ulster Continues To Grow...

- The Years 1642 – 1660 Were Tumultuous in The British Isles: English Civil War, Execution of Charles I, The Commonwealth and Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 with Charles II.
- In Scotland There Was Still Bloody Conflict Between the Covenanters (Fierce Supporters of Presbyterian Polity) and the Crown (Episcopal Polity). Many Covenanters Fled to Ulster as Well as Those Fleeing the Covenanters.
- English Dissenters, Puritans, and Quakers Also Emigrate to Ulster (and To The American Colonies!!) To Seek Religious Freedom From an Exacting State Church.

Signing the Covenant



.... And to Prosper

- “In its Material Result the Plantation of Ulster Was Undoubtedly a Brilliant Success.” James VI&I Would Have Been Proud.
- Ulster By 1700 Was an Exporter of Foodstuffs.
- And, Had Developed a Thriving Woolen Manufacturing Industry and...
- With the Influx of Huguenots, Was Quickly Developing a Linen Industry.
- Ulster Began to Compete with English Commercial Interests...In London: “Blimey, What Have We Done?”

The Empire Strikes Back; Greedy Landlords Jack Up The Rent

- To Further English Interests, Ulster Was Prohibited to Export Anything to the Colonies Except Indentured Servants (!), Horses and Provisions.
- “The Woollens Act” of 1699 Prohibited The Export of Ulster Wool and Cloth To Anywhere Except England and Wales.
- As The Long-Term Leases Expire, Absentee Landowners Double and Triple Rents Squeezing Tenant Farmer Income.

Bad Weather and Sheep Rot

- Weather: Severe Drought 1714-1719 Ruined Crops.
- Sheep Afflicted with Rot in 1716 Which Damaged the Wool.
- What Else Could Go Wrong?

The Test Act of 1703 Effects Ulster

- There Was Another Reason For Many To Consider Leaving Ulster: Public Office Holders Had to Effectively Be Members of the Church of England.
- As a Result, Presbyterian Ministers No Longer Had Official Standing: Legality of Presbyterian Marriages Was Denied, Children Could No Longer be Taught by Presbyterian Tutors; Funerals Needed to Be Officiated by Episcopalians.
- And, Presbyterians Were Made to Tithe to the Church of England.

We Gotta Get Out Of This Place

- The Appeal of the American Colonies Was Well Known by 1717.
- Some of the Colonies Were Flourishing – Presbyterian Ministers Had Been to America since 1683.
- William Penn Had Been Advertising His Colony Personally in Europe.
- The Colonies Needed Labor Desperately.
- Five Thousand Scots Irish Went to America in 1717 and Reports Coming Back Were Favorable.
- Two Big Questions: Where to Go? How To Pay for the Journey?

And How Do I Get There?

- An Ocean Cruise! – Small, Overcrowded Sailing Ship, Subject to Smallpox or Other Diseases. No Swimming Pools or Spa Privileges.
- The Sea Journey Might Take Three Months – But The Chances for Survival Were High.
- It's Going to Be Expensive (Not as Much as Viking), but If You Don't Have the Cash, We Have an Easy Payment Plan Called "Indentured Servitude."

Not Viking – But It Is Just A One-Way Fare



The Great Migration

- 1717-18: First Migration; At Least Five Thousand Scots-Irish
- 1725-29: Second Wave; Much Larger; Many to Pennsylvania; English Government Concerned (“Blimey, What Have We Done”); Indians Concerned.
- 1740-41: Third Wave; Moving Beyond Pennsylvania Into the Shenandoah Valley and Beyond; Skilled Workers Among Them
- 1754-55: Fourth Exodus Into the Carolinas Via The Valley; But Start of the French and Indian War Puts a Damper On Things.
- 1771-75: Huge Final Wave From Ulster Before Things: SHUT DOWN!

So How Many Scot-Irish Migrated to the American Colonies All Together?

- Good Question, Incomplete Statistics.
- Best Estimate is 200,000 – Perhaps Somewhat More.
- What Percentage of the Protestant Population of Ulster Emigrated to the American Colonies?
- No Reliable Numbers Available – Maybe 25%? Maybe More? 50%? Nobody Knows For Sure But It Was Significant.
- In Any Case, The English Government Was Concerned: Loss of Protestants in Ireland, and the Increase of Very Independent Minded (and Armed) Presbyterians in America. What Could Go Wrong?

By The Way, Scot-Irish Are Not Scots! (?)

- The Discussion Has Been About the Scots -Irish, Not the Scots.
- Leyburn Makes the Point that by 1717 the Scots and the Scots-Irish “Were Two Different Nationalities” but All Presbyterian.
- The Scots Emigrated to America, in Much Smaller Numbers, In the 1600s and 1700s, Voluntarily and Otherwise.
- For Example, Thousands of Highland Scots Moved to North Carolina After Jacobite Uprising Failed in 1746 (Landing in Tidewater and Moving West.)
- Unlike the Scots-Irish, the Scots Stayed East and Tended to Business.
- The Scots Tended to be Loyal to the Crown – Not So the Scots-Irish.

Indentured Servitude

- Let's Face It, The Poorer You Are, The More Likely You Are to Emigrate. Isn't That Right?
- Not Cheap to Cross the Atlantic – Maybe £6. How to Pay?
- It Is Estimated that Between 50% and 66% of the Scots-Irish Who Came to America Came as Indentured Servants.
- No Shame in It – The Colonies Needed Labor and Had Plenty of Land.
- Process Simple - Once You Land, A Colonist (or Agent) Bids For Your Labor in A Contract From 4 to 7 Years. After Which, You Are Free.
- And, of Course, There Was Involuntary Indentured Servitude...

Voluntary Indentured Servitude



Involuntary Indentured Servitude, aka “Transportation”



Scots-Irish Settlements –Where To Go?

- Virginia and the Carolinas? Anglicans, Plantations and Slave Owners.
- Maryland? Founded for Roman Catholics and More Plantations.
- New York? Reportedly Hard on Dissenters. Land Already Taken.
- New England? Calvinist But Very Frosty. They Don't Want Scots-Irish.
- Pennsylvania? Good Land, Fair Treatment, An Open Invitation. Sounds Good to Me. The Large majority of Scots-Irish Made Their Entry At Philadelphia, Chester or New Castle.

Where to Go?



New Castle Scene



But Philly? The City of Brotherly Love?



Pennsylvania Settled, Famously, By Tolerant Quakers: “We All Possess the Light Within”

- Quaker Pennsylvania Offered Rich Soil, Forests, Game, Good Climate, Access to Markets and...
- Universal Male Suffrage (for Freemen of Course), a Humane Penal Code, and Religious Freedom.
- Besides English Settlers, Southeastern Pennsylvania Was Settled By Pietist Protestant German Settlers Seeking Religious Toleration.
- The German Settlers Were Known for Their Quiet Industriousness, Respect for Laws, and Good Relations with the Native Americans.
- The Scots-Irish Settlers Were Going To Be More of a Challenge.

The Scots-Irish Pour Into Pennsylvania

- There Was Already a Presbyterian Presence Before the First Big Wave of Scots-Irish in 1717 from Early Movers.
- The Scots-Irish Moved to the Frontier to Claim Land at the Same Time as New German Immigrants. They Did Not Mix.
- From the Quaker Point of View, The Scots-Irish Were: “Quick-Tempered, Impetuous, Reckless, Too Much Given to Drinking” ...But Gaining Fame as Indian Fighters.
- Even if the Penns Sold Land At A Reasonable Price, For A Lot of Scots-Irish There Was A View That “God Willed No Land Should Be Idle.”

And Now, A Word About...Squatting

- Fed Up With the Scots-Irish as “Troublesome Settlers”, Pennsylvania Ceased Providing Them with Land Sales.
- The Scots-Irish Responded By Settling On Land Without Bothering to Secure the Legal Rights To It, i.e. Squatting.
- Efforts to Remove Squatters Were Not Well Received By the Squatters.
- One Thing About Squatting - It’s Contagious: “Why Should I Pay For Land if Others Are Getting Theirs for Free?”
- The Upside – the Squatters Were The First Line of Defense Against Upset Native Americans.

I “Own” This Land



The Pioneer.

Scots-Irish Move Across Pennsylvania...

- The Scots-Irish Take Route 30 (Great Wagon Road) Across PA into the Great Valley (Cumberland Valley) and Spread..
- The Native Americans Appeal To the Penns – “I Thought We Had A Deal”.
- The Germans Tended to Remain Fixed; The Scot-Irish Never Seem Satisfied.
- It Was Said That “No Scots-Irish Family felt Comfortable Until It Had Moved At Least Twice”.

Keep Movin'



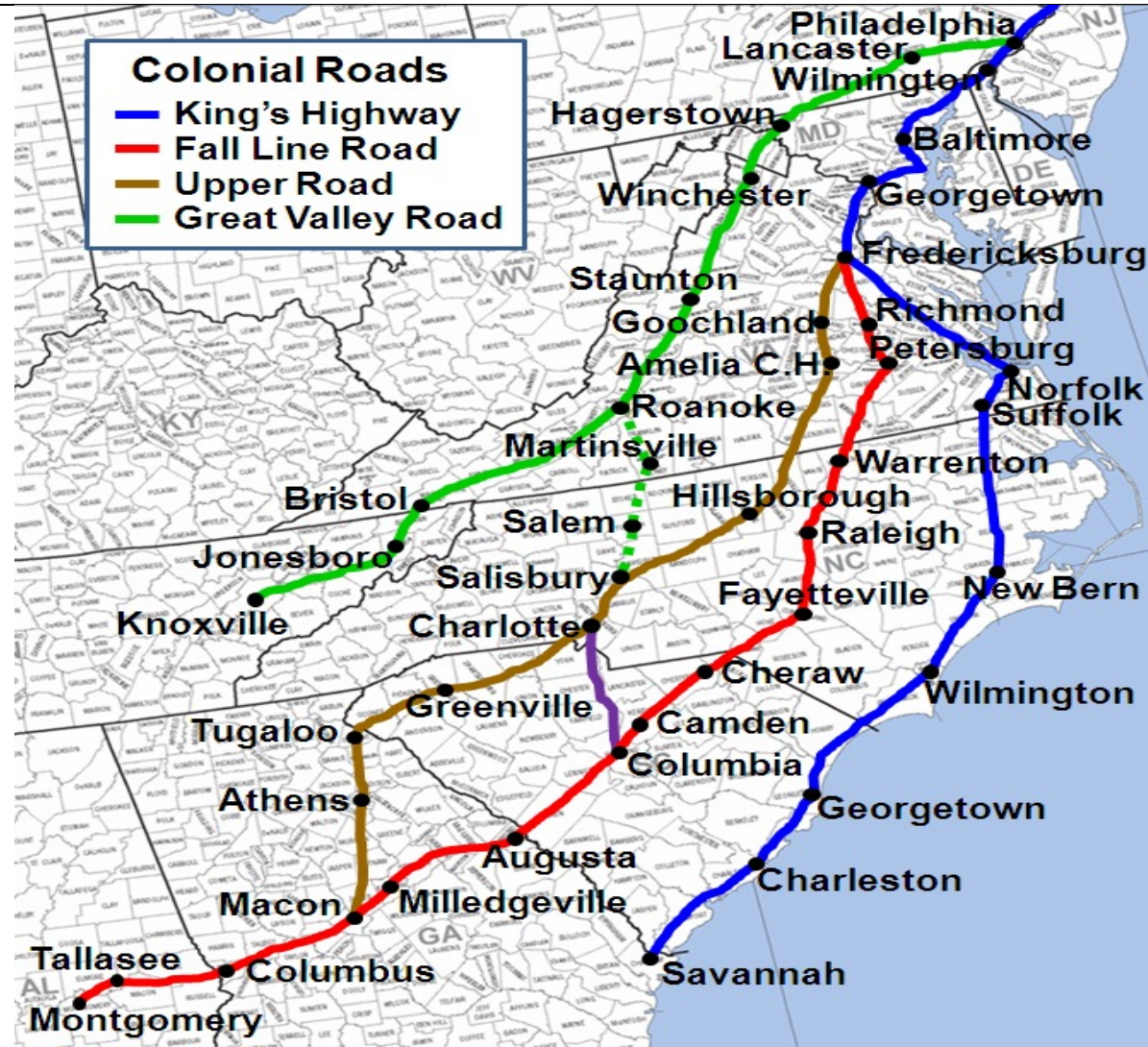
... Into the Valley Of Virginia 1730

- Pennsylvania Getting Filled Up, So Make a Left And Go South Down the Fertile and Beautiful Shenandoah Valley (Route 11).
- Augusta County, VA (Staunton) and Rockbridge County (Lexington) Claim (Or Did Claim) to Be the Most Scots-Irish Counties in the U.S.
- The Scots-Irish Were Very Welcome and Given Considerable Latitude in Land Ownership Rights and in Religious Freedom.
- Presbyterian Ministers Came From Pennsylvania – by 1775 There Were 23 Presbyterian Congregations in the Valley.
- Rumors Were That the Colonies to the South Wanted Settlers (Protestant Only).

The Carolina Piedmont 1740-1750

- The Third Great Region of Scots-Irish Settlement Was the Piedmont of North and South Carolina.
- Settlers Moved East and South Along the Blue Ridge and Spread Out Over the Piedmont.
- By 1775, There Were Over 140,000 Settlers in the Carolina Back Country.
- Mecklenburg County Was One of the Counties to Receive the Most Scots-Irish.
- Today North Carolina has the Largest Percentage of Scot-Irish Ancestry with 2.9%

The Great Wagon (Valley) Road



By Conestoga Wagon



The Natives Are Restless - Part II

- The Native Americans From Pennsylvania to the Carolinas Were Remarkably Peaceful During the Early 1700's Despite the Encroachment of Settlers.
- In 1754 the French and Indian War Broke Out and the Native Americans Attack All Along the Frontier. It's Not Pleasant.
- While the British Fought the French European Style, The Scots-Irish, Fought Using Native American Methods.
- The Scots-Irish Contributed Greatly to the Ultimate Defeat of the Native Americans. They Took Matters in Their Own Hands. They Were Not Politically Correct.

The American War for Independence

- Not Surprisingly, The Scots-Irish Were Overwhelmingly In Favor Of American Independence; In Mecklenburg County, Predominantly Scots-Irish, Declared Itself Free and Independent in 1775.
- “Our Rights Come From God, Not From Government.”
- From a Hessian “...It is Not an American Rebellion; it is Nothing More than a Scotch Irish Rebellion.”
- English Observer: “The Calvinists Have a Pretty Strong Inclination to Every Sort of Democracy.”
- Scots-Irish Played a Key Role in the Victories at Kings Mountain and Cowpens Which Ultimately Led to American Victory.
- They Were the “Very Backbone of Washington’s Army.”

The Scots-Irish Influence in Religion

- The Scots-Irish Brought Over Presbyterianism But Not Enough Ministers, and The Presbyterian Church Requires University Trained Ministers.
- In addition, The Spiritual Landscape in America was Changing – the Great Awakening is Stirring Up Religious Zeal. Are the Scotland Trained Ministers Out of Touch?
- The Presbyterian Church Splits into Old Side (Traditionalists) and New Side (Drinking the Kool-Aid) in 1745.
- New Siders See the Need to Establish Colleges In the Colonies to Supply Enough Fully Trained Ministers; Which Happened.

Still Not Enough Ministers

- The Old School/ New School Breach Was Settled in 1758.
- But Still, Even With Home Grown Presbyterian Ministers From the American Colleges, There Were Not Enough Presbyterian Ministers to Attend to the 200,000 Scot-Irish Migrants.
- The Baptists Filled the Vacuum
- Unlike the Presbyterian Church, The Baptists Had No Educational Requirement for Its Ministers. Some Baptist Ministers Could Not Even Read – All You Needed Was the “Call.” And No Need for Approval from a Presbytery or Other Ecclesiastical Body.
- By 1776, There Were More Baptist Ministers in The United States Than Presbyterian Ministers.

Traditional Presbyterian Practices in the U.S.

- The Presbyterian Church in the U.S. Developed a Democratic Form of Governance with the Congregation Electing Elders.
- Zeal for Education.
- Strict Observance of Sabbath, An All-Day Affair.
- Discipline. A Clear Sense of Right and Wrong. Compromise is Evil.
- Attributing Personal Failure to an Unfortunate Environment, Defective Social Institutions or Traumatic Experiences Were Unknown.

Maybe Not All That Inflexible...?

- In 1760, An Anglican Minister Sums It Up This Way:

“The Baptists Are Obstinate, Illiterate and Grossly Ignorant, The Methodists, Ignorant, Censorious and Uncharitable, the Quakers, Rigid, But The Presbyterians Are Pretty Moderate Except Here and There a Bigot Or Rigid Calvinist.”

The Scots-Irish Influence in Education

- For the Presbyterians, Education Was Deemed to Be of the Utmost Importance. Many U.S. Colleges Got Their Start As Training Grounds For Future Presbyterian Ministers.

Agnes Scott College	Presbyterian College
Centre College	Queens University
College of Wooster	Princeton University
Davidson College	Rhodes College
Hampden-Sydney College	Trinity University
Johnson C. Smith	Tusculum College
King University	Westminster College
Lafayette College	Whitworth University
Macalester College	William Peace University
Mary Baldwin College	Wilson College

The Scot-Irish Influence in Government

- “The Original Democratic Influence in the U.S. Came From the Scots-Irish; They Contributed the Deciding Forces in the American War for Independence; They Helped Shape the Constitution, Giving the Nation Its Republican Form of Government; They Provided Presidents, Justices, Legislators and Governors Far in Excess of Their Proportional Numbers.”
- “First Political Radicals in America, Lawless; Attempts to Enforce Summary Justice Outside of the Law; Rank Individualism, Win at Whatever Price, Ruthless.”

Closing Observations

- The Scots Stubborn Insistence On Presbyterianism Seems Consistent With the Path to Independence in America.
- The English Enabled the Improverished Lowland Scots to Achieve a Level of Prosperity in Ulster – Then Took It Away From Them.
- The Scots-Irish Traits of Independence and Self Reliance Enabled Them to Succeed in the Frontiers of the American Colonies and,
- They Contributed Mightily to The Success of the U.S.A. as Colonists, Presbyterian Christians, Educators, Soldiers and Statesmen.
- Not so Much in Art.

**And Now, Arguably The Most Important
Scots-Irish Contribution To American
Culture and Well-Being....**

White Lightning



Famous Americans of Scots-Irish Descent

• George Strait	Waylon Jennings	Hank Williams, Jr.
• Garth Brooks	Loretta Lynn	Kenny Chesney
• Merle Haggard	Toby Keith	Ernest Tubb
• Alan Jackson	Carrie Underwood	Glenn Campbell
• Johnny Cash	Reba McIntire	Kenny Rodgers
• Dolly Parton	Tim McGraw	Roger Miller
• Hank Williams	Patsy Cline	Bill Monroe
• Willie Nelson	Tammy Wynette	Ricky Skaggs

Pop Quiz!

Which Of These Famous American Frontiersmen Was Not Of Scots-Irish Heritage?

- 1) Davy Crockett -- King of the Wild Frontier?
- 2) Daniel Boone -- Who Looked a Lot Like Fess Parker?
- 3) Kit Carson -- Whose First Name Was Actually Christopher?
- 4) John Wayne -- The Most Famous Frontiersman of All?

Daniel Boone!

(Who Apparently Looked A Lot Like Davy Crockett)



Who Was the Best President of Scot-Irish Descent ?

Andrew Jackson #7



Who Was the Worst President of Scot-Irish Descent ?

James Buchanan #15



Who Is Buried In Grant's Tomb?