



NEWSLETTER

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The Irish, Scottish, Welsh and Ulster-Scot Patriots

In the 1770s, when the line was being drawn between the American 'patriots' and the British redcoats, as is the case in any conflict, the sides were not completely black and white. One might think that the Atlantic Ocean would have functioned as the natural line of demarcation, with the American colonies on the one side, and the enemy, Great Britain, on the other. But the truth of the matter is that the separation between the 'us' of the Patriots and the 'them' of Great Britain was not so simple. Just as there were many loyalists and tories in the rebellious colonies on this side of the Atlantic, there were also those in the British Isles who sympathized with the patriots. The purpose of this essay will be to look at the American Patriots of Irish, Ulster-Scot, Scottish and Welsh descent and their cousins in the Isles.

To provide a little perspective, during the period stretching from the late 1770s to the 1790s, throughout the thirteen original colonies, it has been estimated that over seventy-five percent of the total population was English. Looking just at the province/state of Pennsylvania, the English made up sixty percent of the population. And in the five westernmost counties, of which Bedford was one, the English comprised about thirty-seven

percent. Looking just at Bedford County, the English comprised seventeen percent of her total population.

At the start of the Revolutionary War, basically one-fifth of all the Irish in the colonies, and nearly one quarter of all the Ulster-Scots resided in Pennsylvania. The percentage of Ulster-Scots (most estimates including pure Scottish families along with those who had settled Ulster) was about nine percent in the thirteen colonies, and twelve percent just in Pennsylvania. In Bedford County the Ulster-Scots made up approximately five percent of the total population. The pure Scots are believed to have comprised thirteen percent of the population of Bedford County. The Irish comprised a meagre three percent throughout the thirteen colonies and only two percent in Pennsylvania as a whole; but in the western five counties, the Irish comprised nearly nineteen percent, with about six percent in Bedford County alone. There were very few Welsh in any of the colonies, but in the western five counties of Pennsylvania, they made up nearly seven percent, which was also the percentage they held in Bedford County alone.

In order to understand the position they held in the rebellion against the 'mother country' of England, and to gain some insight into why they would empathize with the Americans, we will need to take a brief look at the origins of these people - the Irishmen, the Scots, the Welsh and the Ulster-Scots.

The Irishmen were those who came chiefly from the Irish provinces of Connacht, Leinster and Munster. They were descendants of the essentially indigenous Celtic families of Eire, or Ireland, who had become interbred with the Norse and Danish Vikings who had invaded Ireland during the late Ninth to early Tenth Centuries. The Irish were the only people of the Isles who had not had any direct contact with the Romans. The first major invasion of Ireland had been that of the Vikings, and it could be argued that, despite the ravages brought by the Norse and Danes, the Irish retained much of their autonomy and independence. Later the island was invaded by the Norman English, and the Irish greatly resented the domineering nature of those invaders. The Vikings had plundered the Irish towns of their material wealth; but the Norman English wanted more than material objects, they want the Irishmen's souls.

The Scots were those who were descended primarily from the union of the Picti and the Scotti. The Picti were one of the Celtic tribes native to the land known originally as Alba, and sometimes Pictland or Caledonia. Theirs was a matriarchal society. The Romans never could subdue the Picts, and indeed had built the Hadrian's Wall to keep the Picts from venturing too far south. Scotti was the name given to the Dalriadan Gaels who came from the Dal Riata culture in the north of Eire, and who established a settlement in the Argyll region of Alba. Through years of alternating war and tolerated coexistence, certain of the Scotti chiefs married Picti women, through whom the Pictish royal line descended. One of those marriages was between Cenedd, son of Alpin, *aka* Kenneth Mac Alpin, and a Pictish queen. Through his wife, Cenedd succeeded in seizing control of the Pictish throne and henceforth began to rule both the Picts and the Scots under the name of Scotia, which eventually became Scotland. The Scots were not originally at

odds with their English neighbors. In fact, a number of marriages were contracted between Scottish and English royal families, to the point that following the deaths of Queen Elizabeth and her cousin, Mary Queen of Scots, Mary's son, then King James VI of Scotland also took the throne of England as James I. Despite their own king sitting on the throne of England also, the Scots were forced to assume a subordinate position to the English by the power of the English Parliament.

The Welsh people descended from four or five Celtic tribes who were never assimilated by the Romans in their conquest of Isles. The Welsh were only slightly influenced by the Norse and Danish Vikings, who preferred to plunder the rich monasteries of Ireland on the opposite side of the Irish Sea. Wales was invaded in 1068 by the Normans and an attempt was made to assimilate the Welsh into Norman England. They were only partially successful in terms of culture. In terms of political dominance, though, the Norman English were more effective. Apart from staging a few small rebellions, the Welsh were unable to shake off the English yoke. Under the Plantagenet king, Edward I, between 1277 and 1301, the English domination over the Welsh was increased. The Welsh made a final attempt, between 1400 and 1414, to gain their liberty from the English, but, despite the calling of a Welsh Parliament in 1404-5, the enterprise failed.

The Ulster-Scots, often erroneously called the Scotch-Irish, were primarily Scottish families from the 'lowlands' of Scotland who had been settled, in 1610, in the Ulster province of Ireland. That was during the reign of King James VI / I, as part of the same colonization program by which the settlement was made at Plymouth, in the Massachusetts-Bay Colony. Colonization attempts had been made previously, one each in the provinces of Leinster and Munster in the 1560s and twice in Ulster in the 1570s by Queen Elizabeth I. But each of those attempts ultimately failed because the predominantly English settlers either became disillusioned and returned home to England, or intermarried with the Irish and adopted their customs along with their hatred of the English.

Three factors led to King James' own scheme for the colonization of Ulster. The first was the acquisition of most of the lands of Ulster by the English king. In 1601 an army of about five thousand indigenous Irish was raised by Hugh O'Neill, the Earl of Tyrone in order to oust the remnants of Elizabeth's colony in Ulster. Queen Elizabeth responded by sending an army of nearly 20,000 Englishmen against O'Neill's army. The two armies collided at Kinsale in Munster. The Irish suffered a great defeat, but the English army that had been sent to quell the rebellion did not stop at just that. The English destroyed all of the homes, food and livestock they came across in the province. With the defeat of the Irish under O'Neill, their lands in Ulster, which amounted to roughly six of the nine counties in that province, were declared to be forfeited to the English court.

The second factor was the population explosion in England. As the Seventeenth Century dawned, there were nearly 250,000 inhabitants in the city of London.

The third factor was the situation of the lowland Scots who were struggling against starvation. Scotland was, for many decades, a very poor country. The best farmlands were in the lowlands, but those farms were overrun by the Highlanders and the English so often, that the Lowlanders were not motivated to work very hard to make their farms profitable. They simply did as best as they could to keep alive. In addition to that, the Scots were overall ignorant of 'modern' farming methods. They knew little about the value of crop rotation. They tended to plant the same crop year after year until the ground was practically depleted of any nutrients.

King James hoped to alleviate both, the problem of the overcrowding of London and the derpived condition of the lowland Scots by resettling them in the American colonies and the recently acquired territories of Ulster in Ireland. As it turned out, few Londoners wanted to leave their homes, so the Ulster Plantation, as it was known, was settled primarily by the lowland Scots.

In the 1770s, as the American colonists contemplated rebellion against England, there were Irishmen, Scots, Welsh and Ulster Scots who

shared the Americans' desire for independence. According to the volume, *The Book Of Irish Americans*, by William D. Griffin:

"Men of Irish birth or descent have been calculated to have formed between one-third and one-half of the Revolutionary forces, including 1,492 officers and 26 generals (15 of whom were born in Ireland)."

Pro-American sentiment was evident throughout the Isles. In September, 1775, an unidentified man in Cork, Ireland writing to a friend who was an officer at Boston, stated:

"People are much divided in their fentiments about the Americans. Placemen, penfioners, Tories and Jacobites, with fome ftupid, ignorant mercenary Whigs, are violent againft them, but the bulk of the people of England and Ireland are ftrongly in their intereft... How this unnatural combuftion will end, the Lord only knows, but one thing I know, that I wifh you and my other friends were removed from a fervice at once fo difgraceful and fo dangerous. Never did the recruiting parties meet with fuch ill fucefs in every part of this Kingdom as at prefent, fo invincible is the diflike of all ranks of people to the American fervice. The inhabitants of Bandon, Youghall, Birr and other towns have entered into a refolution not to fuffer any among them to enlift for the purpofe of enflaving their American brethren. There have been no lefs than five parties at once in Charleville, and after ftunning the town – God knows how long – with their fifes and drums, they were able to pick up only one recruit, who was under Mr. Robert's influence. Though the principal Romanifts in Cork and Limerick have formed afociations and offered bountied to fuch recruits as fhall lift on this occafion, yet have they very little fucefs; for though the heads of that communion are in the intereft of Government, the lower clafs, who have not fagacity enough to make proper diftinctions, are, to a man, attached to the Americans, and fay plainly the Irifh out to follow their

example. Even Lord Kenmore, who on this occasion took the lead, had his recruiting party feverely beat in Tralee, and their drum broke to pieces... Many of the draughts that are come here to fill up the regiments ordered abroad, fwear they will never draw a trigger againft the Americans, among whom they have all relationsl and moft of the Englifh and Irifh foldiers have left this laft April and May exprefed fo much repugnance to the fervice they were ordered on that I am fully perfuaded, if your army was not fhut up in Bofton, it muft fuffer exceedingly by defertion..."

For the Irish, both in America and in Ireland, the object of the war for American Independence was more about ending the generally oppressive tyranny of England than it was about gaining the momentary relief from taxes. And the native Irishmen's interest in the American Revolutionary War may have been instigated less toward the desire for the American Colonies to gain their freedom than for Ireland's own freedom from England's tyrannical rule. William Steele Dickson, an Irish Presbyterian minister, stated at the outbreak of the war in the colonies that "we are ready to approve ourfelves of the fteady friends of the conftitution" should necessity call them to oppose England, 'the enemy of their ancient liberties and religion.' In a letter dated 25 June 1776 to the Countess of Ossory, Horace Walpole wrote:

"I heard t'other day, from very good authority that all Ireland was 'America mad'..."

The Ulster-Scots, having for quite some time been 'encouraged' to leave their homeland by the English King and Parliament, had few qualms in joining the rebellion against the English. According to James A. Froude in his book, *The English In Ireland In The Eighteenth Century*:

"The resentment which they carried with them continued to burn in their new homes; and in the War of Independence, England had no fiercer enemies than the

grandsons and great-grandsons of the Presbyterians who had held Ulster against Tyrconnell."

According to various historians, there were no Ulster-Scots in the list of Tories and Loyalists. It was stated by an Episcopalian resident of Philadelphia that "a Prefbyterian loyalift was a thing unheard of." And a Hessian captain noted in 1778 that:

"Call this war by whatever name you may, only call it not an American rebellion; it is nothing more or lefs than a Scotch Irifh Prefbyterian rebellion."

Horace Walpole declared in Parliament that:

"There is no ufe crying about it. Coufin America has run off with a Prefbyterian parfon, and that is the end of it."

While the English-born colonists and the Germans in the Province of Pennsylvania were divided in their loyalties, the Ulster-Scots stood united against England.

One group of people in the Isles who were not sympathetic to the Americans in their quest for independence were the Irish Catholics. This might explain why, while there were a large number of Ulster-Scots who supported and served in the Patriot ranks, there were far fewer native Irish. The majority of the native Irish were Catholic and stood behind the Catholic king, George III, while the Ulster-Scots were predominantly Presbyterian, as had been their lowland Scot ancestors. In 1778, upon the declaration of France to provide financial and troop support to the Americans, six Irish Peers in the British Parliament, along with nearly three hundred other lay leaders published a statement of their loyalty to the King, and their 'abhorance at the unnatural rebellion' in the colonies. In February, 1779 the Bishop of Ossory, Dr. John Troy, condemned the rebellion of the Americans, and called on all Irish Catholics to 'be loyal.'

Thusly, from the foregoing it can be seen that, although it might have been more evident in

the Irish response to the American Revolutionary War, religious sectarianism was probably a primary factor in either the Irishmen, Scots, Ulster-Scots and Welshmen's choice of sides in the conflict.

A number of the regimental units raised on the Patriot side were composed mostly of Ulster-Scots. Colonel William Thompson commanded a battalion of riflemen which was raised throughout Pennsylvania. It was the first battalion enlisted by authority of the Continental Congress, and it traveled to Boston to participate in the siege of the British holding that city in 1775. Thompson's Battalion was composed primarily of Ulster-Scots. Of the nine companies raised for this battalion, seven consisted almost entirely of Ulster-Scots. Of the remaining two, only one was comprised almost totally of Germans; the last was divided between the two ethnic groups. The company raised by Captain Robert Cluggage in Bedford County was one of the 'mostly Ulster-Scot' companies. The Pennsylvania Line (the name given to the total group of regiments, including Thompson's Battalion of Riflemen, raised in the Province of Pennsylvania as part of the Continental Line), was predominantly Ulster-Scot in makeup. General Henry Lee was known to refer to the Pennsylvania Line as *The Line Of Ireland*. The Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment of the Continental Line was one of the Pennsylvania Line's regiments that was mostly composed of Ulster-Scots; seven of its companies were raised in Westmoreland County, while one was raised in Bedford County.

Pennsylvania was not the only province from which Ulster-Scots enlisted; there was just a greater population of Ulster-Scots there. But companies and regiments of Ulster-Scots were raised in Virginia and the Carolinas. The Virginian General Morgan's regiment of sharpshooters were primarily Ulster-Scot. According to the book, *The Scotch-Irish Of Colonial Pennsylvania*:

"at the decisive battle of King's Mountain the American Army was composed entirely of them."

Ulster-Scots from Pennsylvania who achieved the rank of General in the American

armies included: John Armstrong, Ephraim Blaine, James Ewing, Edward Hand, William Irvine, Andrew Porter, James Potter, Joseph Reed and William Thompson. Certain of these men, such as William Irvine, were natives of Ulster prior to the War.

According to *The Book Of Irish Americans*, the Declaration of Independence was signed by three native born Irishmen. They included James Smith of Pennsylvania, George Taylor of Pennsylvania and Matthew Thornton of New Hampshire. Other signers of Irish descent were Charles Carroll, Thomas Lynch, Thomas McKean, George Read and Edward Rutledge. The Secretary of the Congress was Charles Thomson, an Irishman.

Two of General George Washington's staff officers were native Irishmen. Colonel Stephen Moylan was born in Cork. Colonel John Fitzgerald was born in Wicklow. A third officer, Colonel Francis Barber, was the son of a man born in Longford.

On a more local level, it should be noted that many of the residents of Old Bedford County who served as Patriots during the American Revolutionary War were either Irishmen, Scottish, Ulster-Scot or Welsh in descent. The following are only a few for which the records reveal origins in either Ireland, Scotland or Wales.

Edward Bourke/Burke was the son of parents who emigrated from County Cavan in Ireland. Edward initially served in the First Pennsylvania Regiment. In 1777 he was commissioned as a Lieutenant in Colonel John Patton's Regiment, from which he transferred to the New Eleventh. In 1780 Edward was promoted to the rank of Captain of the Colonel's Company, and in 1781 transferred back into the First Pennsylvania. James Crawford was born in Ireland. James served as an ensign in the 2nd Company of the 3rd Battalion of the Bedford County Militia. Adam and William Holliday/Holliday were emigrants from Ulster. Adam served in Captain Thomas Paxton's Company of the Bedford County Militia. William Holliday served as a paymaster for the Bedford County Militia in 1778. William's son, James Holiday served as a Sergeant in Captain Robert Cluggage's

Company of Colonel William Thompson's Battalion of Riflemen. James was promoted to the rank of Ensign of the First Pennsylvania Regiment in 1776. Scotsmen, Patrick McDonnald and William McFarland both served in Captain Thomas Paxton's Company of the Bedford County Militia. Daniel Moore was Scottish; he served as a Corporal in Captain George Calhoun's Company of the 10th Pennsylvania Regiment. Daniel's brother, William Moore served as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 5th Company of the 3rd Battalion of the Bedford County Militia in 1777. Samuel Rea / Ray was the son of an Irish

emigrant; he served in the 2nd Company of the 3rd Battalion of the Bedford County Militia as a 2nd Lieutenant. Abraham Robinson / Robertson was born in Scotland; he served as a Court Martial Man for the 5th Company of the 3rd Battalion of the Bedford County Militia in 1777.

Although their actual places of origin are not known, it has been deduced from their names, that most of the following individuals, whose names were included on the roster of Captain Robert Cluggage's Company of Thompson's Battalion of Riflemen in 1775, were of either Irish, Ulster-Scot or Scottish descent:

Adam Anderson, Philip Bechey, John Bowman, Thaddeus Broughdon, Thomas Brown, George Bruner, Benjamin Burd, John Campbell, Thomas Casek, Stephen Cessna, Patrick Clark, James Corrowan, Joshua Craig, John Crips, Alexander Crugren, Thomas Cunningham, James Curran, John Davis, Cornelius Dilling, William Donelin, Matthew Dougherty, Laurence Dowling, Daniel Francks, George Freeman, Amariah Garrett, Daniel Gemberland, Reuben Gillespy, Conrad Hanning, Richard Hardster, James Holliday, John Holliday, Francis Jamison, Andrew Johnston, Matthias Judry, John Kelley, Peter King, James Knight, William Laird, William Lee, Charles Lenning, Robert Leonard, John Lesley, Thomas Magee, Daniel Mangam, Henry McCartney, Daniel McClain, John McCune, Angus McDonald, John McDonald, Patrick McDonald, Thomas McFarlane, Joseph McKensie, Robert McKenzie, Querinus Meriner, Michael Miller, Robert Piatt, John Pitts, Samuel Plumb, Martin Reynolds, Daniel Rhodes, Philip Ritchie, Thomas Shehan, Francis Shires, Alexander Simonton, Emanuel Smith, Henry Smith, Daniel Stoy, John Stuart, Timothy Sullivan, Jonathan Taylor, John Thompson, James Turmoil, Andrew Tweed, Daniel Vanderslice, James Vanzandt, Thomas Vaughan, Solomon Walker, Samuel Wallace, Thomas Ward, James Warford, Aquila White, George Whitman, Alexander Wilson, Samuel Woodward, and David Wright.

A List Of The Quarterly & Other Meetings Of The Blair County Chapter, SAR For 2003

Feb 22	1st Quarterly Meeting – Kings Restaurant, 3000 6th Ave., Altoona
May 17	2nd Quarterly Meeting – Kings Restaurant
Aug 9	3rd Quarterly Meeting – Kings Restaurant
	Constitution Day Dinner – (location and date to be announced later)
Nov 8	4th Quarterly/ Annual Meeting – Kings Restaurant

*Note - At this time we do not know if a George Washington's Birthday Dinner will be held this year. If one is planned, the location and date will be announced later.