implements, the bones of the animals they ate, the buttons and ornamentation of their clothing, as well as smoking pipes and stone marbles—evidence of their leisure activities.

Like the study of history, however, archaeology at sites like Swan Pond is an on-going process. Future archaeological work is planned at this significant historic site and new exciting discoveries are anticipated that will add to our ever-growing knowledge of the Ramseys and their times.

Recommended Reading

Faulkner, Charles H. *A History of the Ramsey House and Its Occupants, 1797-1852.* Knoxville: Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee, 1986.

Bowman, Elizabeth S. and Stanley J. Folmsbee. "The Ramsey House: Home of Francis Alexander Ramsey." *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 24 (Fall 1965): 203-218.

HOW SCOTCH-IRISH IS YOUR ENGLISH?

by Michael Montgomery*

GROWING UP IN KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE, IN THE 1960S, I WAS REQUIRED IN THE EIGHTH grade to take a six-week course on the state's history.[1] There my classmates and I learned such memorable facts as why Tennessee is nicknamed the "Volunteer State," what the "War of the Roses" political campaign of the late 19th century was, and who the three Presidents were the state contributed to that national office. The answer to the last question, most Tennesseans will recall, is Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, and Andrew Johnson. At some point during that course we also learned that all three men were born outside the state (in the Carolinas, actually), but this mattered very little to us. Since they had adopted Tennessee, had built their careers there, and were elected from there, these men were Volunteers foremost. It was therefore a little unsettling to me, upon leaving the state in 1981 to take a job at the University of South Carolina, to learn that not only did both Carolinas fervently claim Andy Jackson, who was born in 1767 in a vaguely mapped area of the Carolina Piedmont called the Waxhaws, but that the two Carolinas were still arguing about the issue—putting forth rival claims and counterclaims—of the exact site of his nativity.

After a decade of living in Columbia and hearing the local arguments, I found that I could finally begin to concede South Carolina a partial claim to Old Hickory, but little could have prepared me for the surprise at then finding still another claimant—in what I thought was half a world away. When traveling in Northern Ireland in 1990 I discovered that the village of Boneybefore took credit for Jackson as well! Indeed, in this tiny County Antrim community, which one reaches a mile north of the medieval for-

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[1] This is a revised version of an essay that originally appeared in *The Journal of East Tennessee History* 67 (1995): 1-33. The author is grateful to many friends and colleagues in Northern Ireland who helped him explore connections between that part of the world and his native East Tennessee. He especially benefitted from conversations with Philip S. Robinson, formerly Head of Collections at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum in Holywood, County Down. This paper grew out of the author's address at the 1992 annual banquet of the Sullivan County (TN) Historical Society in Bristol, Tennessee. He thanks Earline O'Dell of Northeastern State Community College for that invitation and for the opportunity to reflect on experiences and weave them into essay form. However, the views expressed in this paper are the author's alone, and any errors of fact or interpretation are solely his responsibility.

Andrew Jackson, Tennessean, seventh president of the United States, and son of Scotch-Irish immigrants. *Courtesy of UTK Special Collections*

tress town of Carrickfergus, fifteen miles from Belfast, one comes suddenly upon a roadside cottage which calls itself the Andrew Jackson Centre. In the summertime the site features a program of craftwork demonstrations and related events and a selection of historical videos, including "From Here to the Whitehouse," whose account begins in 1765, when "Andrew Jackson, Snr., his wife Elizabeth and sons Hugh and Robert left Boneybefore, Carrickfergus. They emigrated from Larne and sailed to Charleston, South Carolina." In presenting a chronology of "Andrew Jackson 1765-1845 7th President of the United States of America," the center's brochure asserted a local claim to be Jackson's pre-natal home, though of course he could not even have been conceived there.[2]

While the effort of this small place in northeastern Ireland, in the historical province of Ulster,[3] to share some of Jackson's reputation might strike Americans as only local boosterism or an outright tourist trap, it is in fact these things and much more. Anyone who spends much time in the book shops of Northern Ireland, keeps up with the popular press there, or becomes acquainted with the activities of its local historical societies or the Ulster-Scots Agency (a government-funded body set up in 1999 as an outgrowth of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement) begins to discover an extensive popular literature and awareness on Ulster people who went to North America in the 18th or early 19th century and contributed to the developing new country of the United States of America. One comes across small books such as W. F. Marshall's

[2] Carrickfergus Borough Council, "Andrew Jackson Centre at Boneybefore," n.d.

[3] Although "Ulster" and "Northern Ireland" are used interchangeably by some today in a political sense, the nine-county historical province of Ulster is a larger entity encompassing three counties (Donegal, Cavan, and Monaghan) that did not become part of the six-county province of Northern Ireland (which comprises the counties of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyrone) when the latter became part of the United Kingdom in 1922. In this paper, "Ulster" refers to the historical nine-county province.

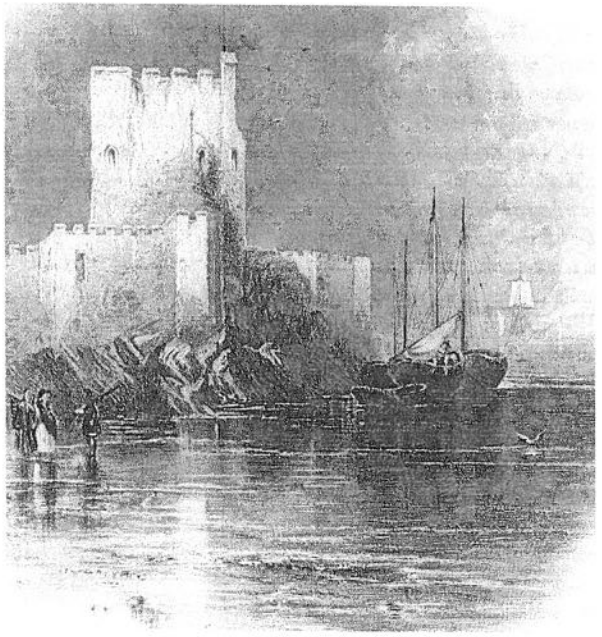
Ulster Sails West: The Story of the Great Emigration from Ulster to North America in the 18th Century. Together with an Outline of the Part Played by Ulster Men in Building the United States, Eric Montgomery's *The Scotch-Irish and Ulster: The Scotch-Irish in America's History*, Ronnie Hanna's *The Highest Call: Ulster and the American Presidency*, and Billy Kennedy's *The Scots-Irish in the Hills of Tennessee*.[4] One finds articles in magazines, such as David Hume's "Garden of the Waxhaw," in which he declares that "Andrew Jackson was destined to be a great leader and to enter the White House as the first of the Ulster Presidents of the United States of America."[5] Ulster Presidents? This is surely a term that few Americans are familiar with. I certainly wasn't. In Northern Ireland, though, there is an official ancestral homesite not only for him, but also for Chester Arthur and Woodrow Wilson (that this writer knows about—there may well be others).

This literature in Northern Ireland goes to considerable length to name the men of Ulster stock who signed the Declaration of Independence (at least eight, including Charles Thompson, Secretary of the Continental Congress, a native of County Londonderry), who printed the Declaration of Independence (John Dunlap, a native of County Tyrone), who led the assault at King's Mountain during the American Revolution, who served as generals during the American Revolution (twenty-one, by one reckoning), who later became President of the American republic (at least eleven by one count, as many as seventeen by another), and so on. Whether such calculations reflect something of modern political and cultural currents in Northern Ireland or are the product of an intense sense of history in the province (in whose six counties today around one hundred local historical societies exist), the interest in Ulster-American connections is lively and genuine, and it represents far more than a ploy for American tourist dollars. Along with the extensive literature, there is a popular awareness, unparalleled elsewhere in the British Isles, of strong historical ties between Ulster and the United States, even though these took place many generations ago. This awareness has increased markedly in recent decades, four demonstrations of which can be cited.

In 1976 the Ulster-American Folk Park was opened near Omagh, County Tyrone, at the birthplace of Thomas Mellon, who emigrated to the United States as a child in 1818 and founded a financial empire. The outdoor portion of the museum attempts to recreate the homesteads and community life that Ulster emigrants would have known two hundred years ago. The indoor portion features conventional exhibits and a recently initiated computer database provides written records of many kinds on the process of people uprooting themselves from their families and native soil to sail to a distant, unknown land. Additionally, the park has recreated something of the voyage

[4] W. F. Marshall, *Ulster Sails West: The Story of the Great Emigration from Ulster to America in the Eighteenth Century. Together with an Outline of the Part Played by Ulster Men in Building the United States* (Belfast, 1943); Eric Montgomery, *The Scotch-Irish and Ulster: The Scotch-Irish in America's History* (Belfast: Ulster-Scot Historical Society, 1965); Ronnie Hanna, *The Highest Call: Ulster and the American Presidency* (Lurgan: Ulster Society, 1989); Billy Kennedy, *The Scots-Irish in the Hills of Tennessee* (Belfast: Ambassador, 1995).

[5] David Hume, "Garden of the Waxhaw," *New Ulster* (Winter 1993); 13-14.



The medieval fortress in the town of Carrickfergus, County Antrim, Northern Ireland.
Courtesy McClung Historical Collection.

that emigrants would have experienced, by constructing a replica of a passenger ship, and something of the world they would have found on the other side, by building a section of the Philadelphia waterfront of the early 19th century. An expanded gallery built in the mid-1990s further documents struggles and successes of Ulster emigrants and their descendants in the new environment, featuring the Batlle of King's Mountain, David Crockett, and Andrew Jackson, and so on. The gift shop sells a full-color pictorial map, "Ulster-American Heritage Trail," that identifies the "ancestral home" in Ulster of, among many others, Edgar Allan Poe, Stephen Foster, Amelia Earhart, and Neil Armstrong.

Also in 1976 a group of historians at the University of Ulster at Coleraine organized the first Ulster American Heritage Symposium, an increasingly lively biennial gatherings that includes scholars across the humanities, amateur historians, genealogists, and the public at large. The conference alternates between Northern Ireland and the United States, with recent gathering having attendance of well over a hundred. The next symposium is scheduled for Knoxville, Tennessee, in 2006, to be hosted by the East Tennessee Historical Society.

Third, in 1989 Ulster Television broadcast the four-segment series *God's Frontiersmen: The Scots-Irish Epic*, produced by Rory Fitzpatrick, who also authored a pictorial

book of the same title recounting the lives of individuals of Ulster extraction such as frontiersmen Crockett and Sam Houston and Civil War generals Stonewall Jackson and Ulysses S. Grant.[6] The program was broadcast throughout the British Isles and was received with great interest. A final example that can be cited is a special twelve-page section titled "American Country" in 1993 (commemorating American Independence day) of the morning daily *Belfast News Letter* that emphasized the historical influence of Ulster on Southern Appalachian music. Among other stories, this included a long feature article on "The Queen of Tennessee" (Dolly Parton—who else?). The newspaper's special correspondent wrote dreamily about the Smoky Mountains in an article titled "Magic in the Place of the Blue Smoke" about how East Tennessee was settled largely by men and women of Ulster ancestry whose modern-day descendants faithfully preserve the culture of their forebears.[7]

While these phenomena and many more recent ones are undoubtedly important reflections of the cultural psyche of Northern Ireland today and of the conviction that the province should put on record its own unique contributions, that topic belongs to a separate essay. The purpose here is to put them into perspective with a series of historical events and to relate them to cultural developments in the United States following the emigration from Ulster. Historically speaking, two things are most important here. One is that such demonstrations of Ulster-American connections, seen most broadly, are part of a larger phenomenon—extensive annals, academic and popular, over the past century on the emigration of people, largely of Scottish heritage, from Ulster in the six decades before the American Revolution.[8] Nothing comparable exists for any other region of the British Isles, large or small. These are people who are called "Ulster Scots" in Ireland but in the U.S. usually "Scotch-Irish" or, much less often, "Scots-Irish."[9] Arguably the first account of their trans-Atlantic contributions was James Craighead's *Scotch and Irish Seeds in American Soil: The Early History of the*

[6] Rory Fitzpatrick, *God's Frontiersmen: The Scots-Irish Epic* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989).

[7] Billy Kennedy, "Magic in the Place of the Blue Smoke," *Belfast News-Letter* (July 2, 1993); 25.

[8] Among the most important works dealing with the subject are R. W. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration to Colonial America, 1718-1775* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1966; reprinted. Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1987); David Noel Doyle, *Irish, Irishmen and Revolutionary America 1760-1820* (Dublin: Mercier, 1981); James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962); Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Kerby Miller and Paul Wagner, *Out of Ireland: The Story of Irish Emigration to America* (Boulder, Col.: Roberts Rinehart, 1997). Streams of emigration, not always voluntary ones, have ebbed and flowed from Ireland to North America for more than three hundred years. Miller, the foremost authority on the subject, estimates that at least seven million people have made the voyage (Miller, p.c.) Historians generally distinguish two larger emigrations—one in the 18th century, mostly of Protestants from Ulster, and a much larger outpouring of mainly Catholic Irish in the 19th and early twentieth century, primarily from southern and western Ireland. As the work of Miller and other scholars shows, the two differed in multiple ways, including their areas of settlement (most 19th-century Irish settled in Northern cities).

[9] For the fullest examination of the historical usage and precedence of the two terms, see Michael Montgomery, "Nomenclature for Ulster Emigrants: Scotch-Irish or Scots-Irish?" *Familia* 20 (2004), 16-36.

Scotch and Irish Churches, and Their Relations to the Presbyterian Church of America.[10] The most voluminous study is Hanna's two-volume *The Scotch-Irish, or the Scot in North Britain, North Ireland, and North America*,[11] while the most heroic portrayal appears in *The Winning of the West*, by Theodore Roosevelt, who wrote that they were the "vanguard of the army of fighting settlers, who with axe and rifle won their way from the Alleghenies to the Rio Grande and the Pacific."[12]

Such enthusiastic, testimonial accounts can be found today in both America and Northern Ireland) and sometimes arouse great fanfare.[13] However, modern-day American versions are more often the critical work of seasoned historians who rely on original sources, quantitative methods of interpretation, and dispassionate assessment. Among the best of the latter kind from a generation ago are R. W. Dickson's *Ulster Emigration to Colonial America 1718-1775*, David Noel *Doyle's Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America 1760-1820*, James G. Leyburn's *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History*, and Kerby A. Miller's *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*. The first two of these cover only segments of the migration period, while Leyburn provides a detailed chronicle beginning in 16th-century Scotland. Within more recent years three important volumes that have appeared are Patrick Griffin's The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764;, Kerby A. Miller et al.'s Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America 1675-1815; and Marianne Wokeck's Trade in Strangers: The Beginning of Mass Migration to North America.[14]

The other important historical point is that although the vast majority of Ulster emigrants landed in Philadelphia or New Castle on the Delaware Valley (Charles Town, capital of the colony of South Carolina, was a distant second in popularity), most soon migrated to what became known as the "back country," the inland parts

[10] James G. Craighead, *Scotch and Irish Seeds in American Soil: The Early History of the Scotch and Irish Churches, and Their Relations to the Presbyterian Church of America* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1878).

[11] Charles A. Hanna, *The Scotch-Irish, or the Scot in North Britain, North Ireland, and North America*, 2 volumes (New York: Putnam, 1902; reprinted. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1968).

[12] Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, 4 volumes (New York, 1904), vol. 1, 134.

[13] James Webb, *Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America* (New York: Broadway Books, 2004), and Thomas A. Lewis, *West from Shenandoah; a Scotch-Irish Family Fights for America 1729-1781* (New York: Wiley and Sons, 2004). Webb emphasizes in particular the reputation of America's forebears from Scotland and Ulster as warriors and defenders of personal freedom and opponents to aristocracy. He credits them with fundamental views on which the United States has developed. Lewis chronicles the early settlement of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, which the author calls "the first frontier," and the role of the author's ancestors in this process.

[14] Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); Marianne Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers: The Beginning of Mass Migration to North America* (College Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999). For other sources, see note 8.

of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas, as well as nearby regions like Kentucky and Tennessee. This movement resulted in the Scotch-Irish often being the dominant settlement group in much of the territory, and their traditions had a profound formative influence on other groups, according to many historians (David Hackett Fischer, the most ambitious of these, identifies twenty-four broad cultural "ways" that connect the Scotch-Irish with Southern Appalachia in his Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America).[15]

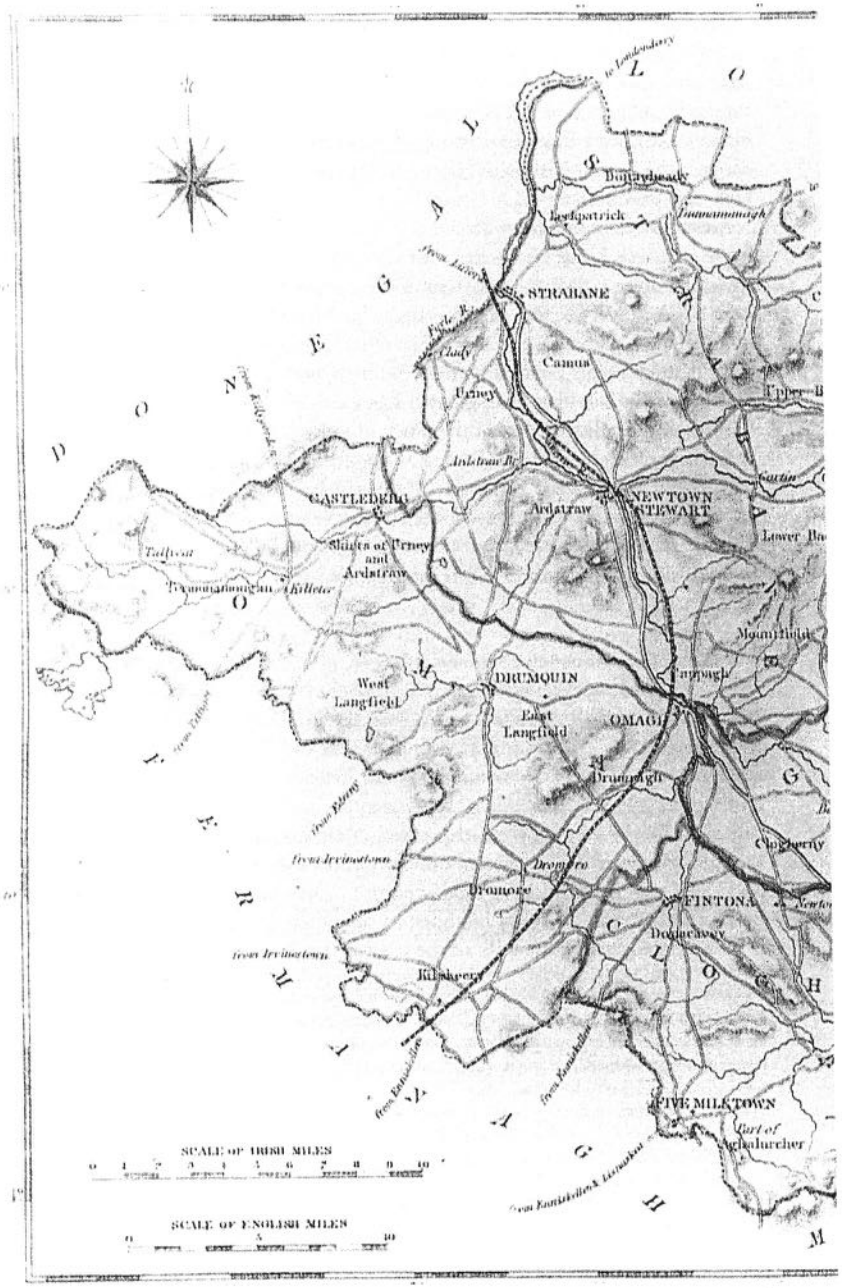
Although there are many accounts of the pre-Revolutionary emigration of people from Ulster to North America, controversy remains over what label should be assigned to them ("Scotch-Irish" is employed here because it is the conventional term in the U.S.), over the size of the emigration, and over the relative distinctiveness of this emigrant stream from others that came from the British Isles. The "Scotch" (a word that represents a contraction of "Scottish" and is a traditional form for the latter) element of the population originated from the 17th-century "Ulster Plantation" of Scottish and English settlers in the north of Ireland, a process that brought them and the "native" Irish into intimate contact and often conflict from the first quarter of that century. By the year 1659 (the year of one survey, 60% of the Ulster population was Irish, 30% Scottish (primarily in the northeastern counties of Antrim and Down), and 10% English. The heaviest influx of Scots was still to come—in the 1690s, to escape economic difficulties and religious strife in the Scottish Lowlands.[16]

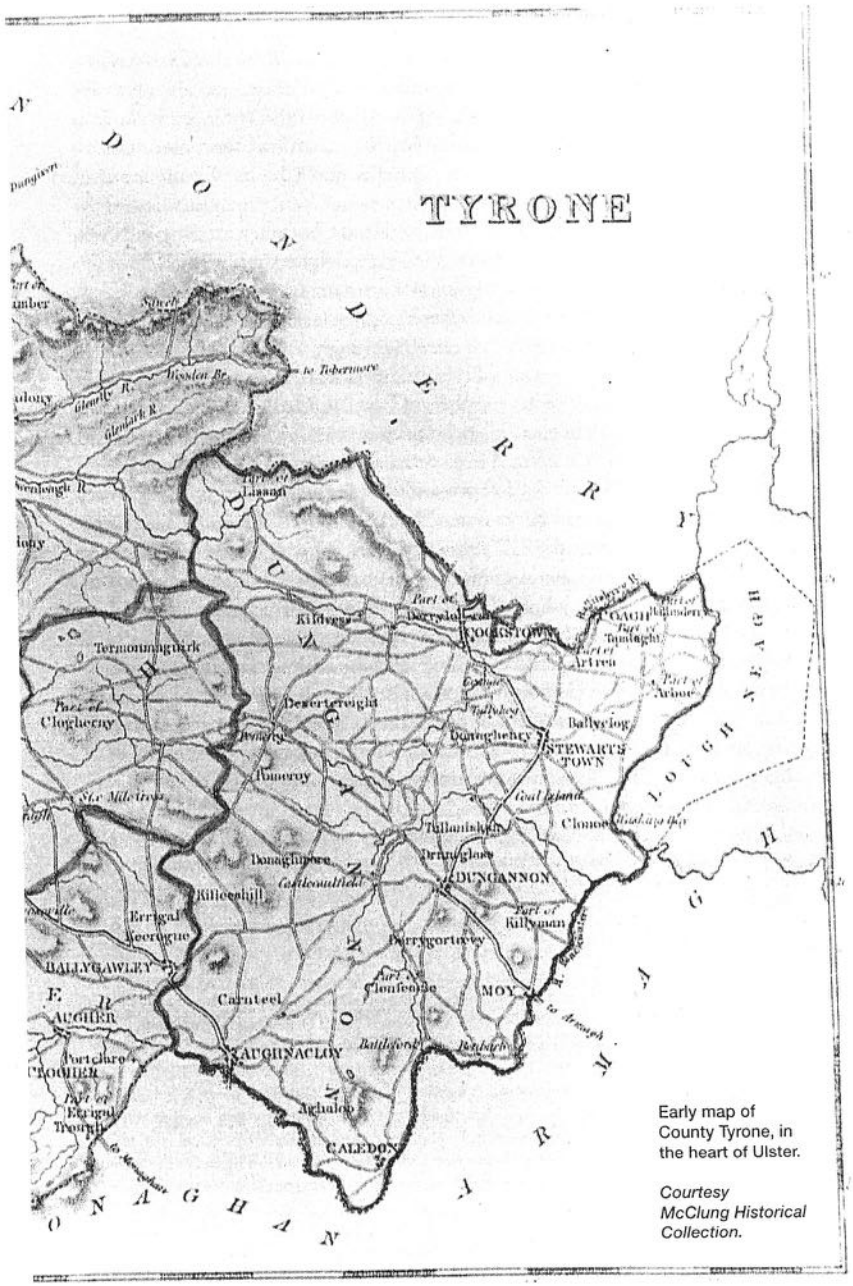
Misconceptions about the Scotch-Irish

Despite lively debates on some issues, a number of widely held ideas about the Scotch-Irish are genuine misconceptions. Among these is that they represent a mixture or interbreeding of Scottish and Irish populations in Ulster. In fact, these groups very often remained in separate communities in Ireland, though they often lived close to and worked alongside one another. A second misconception is that the Scots who came to Ulster were outcasts—deportees, criminals, and ne'er-do-wells. In fact, the vast majority were driven by economic pressures and the lure of long-term leases on good land, not by political or legal expulsion. They came because land was available on favorable terms, and they intended to stay; most of their descendants did, and it is they who constitute the bulk of the present-day Protestant population there, espe-

[15] David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Fischer uses the collective label "Borderers" to encompass the peoples of Northern England, Scotland, and Ireland and argues not only that there was internal migration between these areas, but that they brought to North America a shared and distinctive culture.

[16] For 17th-century emigration from Lowland Scotland to Ulster, see Maxwell Perceval-Maxwell, *The Scottish Migration to Ulster in the Reign of James I* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973; reprinted, Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1990); Philip S. Robinson, *The Plantation of Ulster: British Settlement in an Irish Landscape 1600-1670* (Dublin: Gill and McMillan, 1984; reprinted. Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1994); Patrick Fitzgerald, "'Black '97': Reconsidering Scottish Migration to Ireland in the Seventeenth Century and the Scotch-Irish in America" in William P. Kelly and John R. Young, (eds.), *Ireland and Scotland 1600-2000: History, Language and Identity*; W. A. Macafee, "The Movement of British Settlers into Ulster in the Seventeenth Century," *Familia* 2 (1992); 94-111.





Early map of County Tyrone, in the heart of Ulster.

Courtesy McClung Historical Collection.

cially in Antrim, Down, Londonderry, and east Donegal.[17]

A third misconception is the view that the term "Scotch-Irish" is a 19th-century creation of Americans having Ulster ancestry who wanted to distinguish their heritage from that of Catholic Irish, who were coming en masse to the U.S., particularly as a result of the Great Potato Famine of the 1840s. The term had been used, at least by outsiders (e.g. Anglican priests Jonathan Boucher and Charles Woodmason) in the 18th century. although it is not clear to what extent Ulster emigrants used it for themselves.[18] At least one well-informed scholar believes that, when arriving in North America, they most likely would have labeled their ancestry as simply "Irish."[19]

The consensus on the Scotch-Irish migration to America appears to be 1) that at least 150,000 people left Ulster for North America in the six decades preceding the American Revolution[20]; 2) that they were overwhelmingly Presbyterian (as many as ten percent of the migrants were Catholic Irish and at least as many were probably Anglicans of English ancestry; smaller numbers of Baptists, Quakers, Huguenots, and other groups came); 3) that the great majority of these were of Scottish ancestry and tradition (whose forebears had migrated from Scotland one to four generations earlier in the 17th century); and 4) that they left primarily for economic reasons. Most Ulster emigrants to North America had never owned land or enjoyed the status or security this afforded. Beginning around 1717 rents in Ulster were significantly raised (or "racked") as leases expired, crop failures brought the scarcity of food, and downturns in trade (especially with linen, whose manufacture was the principal cottage industry) occurred, only to recur with unnerving frequency in succeeding decades. These factors tipped the balance for countless individuals who, though no doubt strongly attached to their native soil and communities, made the usually irrevocable decision to emigrate. The same factors affected all of Ireland in the 19th century, especially during the potato famine, as a result of which a million people left the Emerald Isle in the 1840s alone.[21]

[17] Robert J. Gregg, "The Scotch-Irish Dialect Boundaries in Ulster," *Patterns in the Folk Speech of the British Isles*, ed. by Martyn Wakelin (London: Athlone, 1972), 109-39, provides the definitive mapping of the core Ulster-Scots speech areas. Robinson, op. cit., builds on Gregg's work by mapping surnames and the sites of Presbyterian churches.

[18] Michael Montgomery. op. cit.

[19] Maldwyn A. Jones, "The Scotch-Irish in British America," *Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire*, ed. by Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 284-313. Jones' essay is by far the best recent review of the literature on the Scotch-Irish.

[20] This was the consensus (at its meeting in Staunton, Virginia, in September 2003) of the U.S. Scholarship Panel commissioned by the Ulster American Folk Park to advise it on developing a new outdoor exhibit. This team comprised eight American academics (including several prominent historians of emigration). It agreed that the number may have been much higher, but that 150,000 was a minimum figure for those coming from Ulster between 1718 and 1776 and one-half million for those coming between 1680 and 1830.

[21] Percentages of migration are calculated by Trevor Parkhill, "Brave New World: 18th Century Emigration to America," *Auld Lang Syne: Searching for That Elusive Scots/Irish Ancestor* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1992), 13-14.

From time to time because of their religious affiliation, Irish Presbyterians, called "dissenters" in their day, suffered a measure of political and religious discrimination (these were inseparable because of the existence of the Church of Ireland, affiliated with the Church of England). The legal disabilities and the disaffection over paying compulsory tithes for the support of another denomination and its clergy spurred Presbyterian pastors to promote emigration, sometimes leading their congregations by enlisting a ship, recruiting passengers, organizing supplies, and leading the voyage themselves. From their pulpits they sometimes characterized their parishioners as an oppressed but chosen people and the American colonies as a veritable Promised Land. Even so, it is doubtful that many left Ireland solely or mainly for religious reasons, even though religious "persecution" by the established church later became a strong element in Scotch-Irish mythology, the set of beliefs which developed to recount how the people survived and overcame obstacles in crossing the Atlantic and how their experience in Ulster had uniquely prepared them for life on the American frontier. This mythology, through which has run a strong element of Calvinistic predestinarianism, has been articulated by popular historians in Northern Ireland in recent decades, e.g. "Ideally suited for their new life by reason of their experience as pioneers in Ulster, their qualities of character and their Ulster-Scottish background, they made a unique contribution to the land of their adoption"[22]). Fitzpatrick's *God's Frontiersmen* and Kennedy's series of volumes (which he calls the Scots-Irish Chronicles) are only two of the most recent versions of this. For 18th-century Ulster emigrants, all of these sentiments fed on existing convictions about events in the previous century, when the largely Scottish population in Ulster felt itself abandoned, particularly after the Siege of Londonderry in 1689, by the British Crown after having it induce them or their ancestors to move to Ulster in the first place. These sentiments have more recently been reinforced by a sense of political and cultural isolation of the Protestant population in Northern Ireland over the past quarter century.

The complexity of the history of the Scotch-Irish has required it to be sketched in some detail. This essay will not deal further with what happened in Scotland and Ireland in the 17th and 18th centuries, but the preceding paragraph reveals one particularly important point. In studying the different groups who came to North America and their subsequent history (especially their own versions of this history), it is often quite difficult to separate sobering fact from dramatic interpretation, or what is demonstrably true from what is widely supposed. One must always ask on what basis a statement is made. Much 20th-century literature about the settlement of East Tennessee and the rest of Southern Appalachia, for instance, states that the most numerous, and in fact the dominant, group was the Scotch-Irish:

> From Pennsylvania, many found their way along Virginia's Shenandoah and into the Valley of East Tennessee. Others who went from Philadelphia on a more direct route south into the North Carolina Piedmont were the source of subsequent migrations from middle Caro-

[22] Eric Montgomery, op. cit., 4.

> lina westward into the Tennessee country. There were many English, some Germans—mainly from the Palatinate—and Welsh and Irish, a few Huguenots, but the dominant character of Tennesseans came to be identified with that of the Scotch-Irish. Fondness for migration was only one of their characteristics.[23]

If one were to ask how such a scenario has been determined, the answer would be that the ancestry of people is normally surmised on the basis of their surnames. This approach to gauging the ethnic derivation of a population is fraught with many difficulties, some better known than others, and many pitfalls, but it has proved to be the principal way to estimate even roughly the relative proportions of different groups among a sample population, because surnames are the least elusive cultural element to trace.[24]

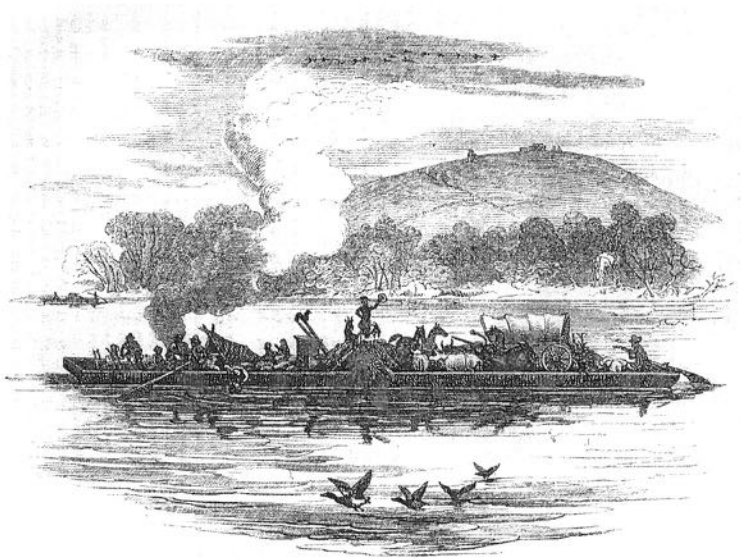
A standard assessment of the ethnic composition of the first federal census is *Surnames in the United States Census of 1790*, published by the American Council of Learned Societies.[25] On the basis of surnames, this lengthy report judges the population of Tennessee and Kentucky combined to have been 57.9% English, 10.0% Scotch, 7.0% Ulster Irish (i.e. Scotch-Irish), 5.2% South Irish, 14.0% German, 3.6% Dutch/French/Swedish, and 2.3% Miscellaneous (N.B.: people of African ancestry were not considered).[26] Subsequently it has become clear that for a variety of reasons, the Scotch-Irish were significantly underrepresented in this calculation. Some emigrants shifted their names after migrating, for instance, to enhance their social and economic prospects in the new environment (those with the Scottish name *McKean*, from *Mc* "son of" + *Ian* "John," sometimes changed it to *Johnson*; in like manner *MacAndrew* sometimes became *Anderson*). The ACLS study considered many names to be English (e.g. *Bell, Russell, Robinson*) or Scottish (e.g. *Campbell, Boyd*) that were and are quite common in Ulster. As a result, a reasonable estimate is that twelve to fifteen percent of the late-18th-century white population in the United States derived from Ulster, although again what is most relevant to East Tennessee and nearby regions is the fact that the Scotch-Irish and their descendants were concentrated in the back country. According to a recently published atlas based on the 1980 census, Tennessee is the state with the second-highest proportion of its population, after Massachusetts,

[23] Wilma Dykeman, *Tennessee: A Bicentennial History* (New York: Norton, 1976), 14-15.

[24] An excellent and sober exploration of the question of tracing traditional surnames in Southern Appalachia is John C. Campbell's chapter "Ancestry" in his *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1921; reprinted. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1969), 50-71. More recent research using genealogical records on 18th-century Tennesseans has shown that emigrants from Ulster were by far the largest proportion of them. See Michael Montgomery and Cherel Henderson, "Counting Early Ulster Emigrants to Tennessee," *Journal of Scotch-Irish Studies* 2 (Fall, 2004): 34-44.

[25] American Council of Learned Societies, *Surnames in the Census of 1790: An Analysis of National Origins of the Population* (New York: American Council of Learned Societies, 1932; reprinted. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1969).

[26] Ibid.



East Tennessee settlers traveling by flatboat on the Tennessee River. *From* Harper's New Monthly Magazine, *1858. Courtesy of Special Collections Library, University of Tennessee.*

reporting to have Irish ancestry; for nearly all Tennesseans, their Irish ancestors would have been the Scotch-Irish who left the island in the 18th century.[27]

It is beyond my purpose to recalculate the surname evidence or to rethink the ethnic proportions of the American population. This essay attempts to consider the Scotch-Irish emigrant stream in terms of its cultural and linguistic bequest to 20th-century East Tennessee and Southern Appalachia. Does the fact that most East Tennesseans have some, and many (like the present writer) have a great deal, of Scotch-Irish ancestry mean anything more than that many of us have names on our family trees that ultimately hark back to Ulster and Scotland? This writer has heard all of his life that most of his foreparents were Scotch-Irish, but so what? To what extent can the culture of East Tennessee be traced to Ulster?

That there is an inheritance of styles and traditions of music can hardly be disputed, but beyond such an obvious statement and a few very limited examples that can be pointed to, what more can be said? Can one make a more precise assessment? Can these musical influences be counted or measured or compared? Experts rankle, as well they should, at the notion of comparing, for instance, Celtic and African influences on country music. These are often inseparable. They have merged in many respects and taken lives of their own in others. Individual performers use and blend traditions

[27] James Paul Allen and Eugene Turner, *We the People: An Atlas of America's Ethnic Diversity* (New York: MacMillan, 1988). A recalculation by Doyle, op cit., 75, assigns to states generally double the proportion of overall Irish-derived population as found in the 1932 ACLS report.

in multiple ways. Musical styles and traditions are difficult to document before the turn of the present century, making it hazardous to identify and connect traditions that would have crossed the water in the 1700s. Besides, since the Second World War, the influence has also flowed vigorously in the other direction, to Ireland and Scotland. Appalachian Mist is a bluegrass band based in Irvine, Scotland, not in the U.S. However, there is one cultural phenomenon that, with some qualifications, is both measurable and comparable and that one can use to investigate the cultural heritage of East Tennessee.

This is language—the cumulative vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and other linguistic usages that are shared within a region and that distinguish one region from another. It should be possible to examine a select set of expressions common to East Tennessee and Southern Appalachia (but not generally known to the country at large) and then to trace as many of these as possible back to the British Isles to ascertain their probable source. After this is done, the number of usages having a "Scotch-Irish" source can be counted and compared to those found elsewhere (and presumably brought by emigrants from those places), to explore the relative contributions of different regions of Britain and Ireland to the modern-day language of East Tennessee. In part because of the sketchiness of the records for many words, it turns out that this type of systematic investigation is a bit more impressionistic and less scientific than one would like, and it will be attempted only for grammatical patterns here. However, it is difficult to imagine anything other than language through which one might determine to what extent the antecedents of East Tennessee culture are Scotch-Irish, English, a mixture of these, or something else. One long-encountered and often-heard idea in East Tennessee is that traditional mountain speech is "Elizabethan" or "Shakespearean."[28] It will be interesting to discover how far this notion may be true (if one takes these terms literally as applying to the time period and location of Shakespeare—Southern England around 1600) and how this inheritance compares to that from Scotland and Ireland. As we will see, East Tennesseans owe much of their traditional speech to Scotch-Irish emigrants of more than two hundred years ago, in fact considerably more than to ancestors who can be traced back to Elizabethan England. Of course, much of East Tennessee speech either was brought in common by emigrants from many parts of the British Isles, or it originated in the United States. These points are especially true for vocabulary. They are not germane to the question at hand, though they remind us of the complexities in establishing the etymological and geographical sources of East Tennessee speech and warn us against oversimplifications. The question is also complicated by the fact that linguistic usages have often undergone changes after reaching American shores.[29]

What are some of the Scotch-Irish terms? One is the pronoun *you'uns*, the traditional mountain equivalent of the plural pronoun *you* and of the general Southern American pronouns *y'all* and *you all* (the latter two have also been used in East Tennessee, but less often, by younger speakers, and in somewhat more formal situations). *You'uns* is a contraction of *you* + *ones*; in East Tennessee English ones contracts to form other terms, such as *young'un* "child" and *big'un*. Another example is the combination of helping verbs like *might* + *could*, as in "I wonder if you *might could* help me." Also one can cite the adjective *airish* "windy, chilly" and the preposition *till* "to" in expressions like "a quarter *till* five."

It becomes evident from considering only these few expressions that many of the terms useful for comparison (in that they are traceable to the British Isles and are more or less confined to the larger region surrounding East Tennessee) will be old-fashioned and probably unknown to many younger, particularly urban, speakers today. We will sometimes have to scratch beneath the surface of today's speech to identify the "traditional" language of the region, what is sometimes known as "folk" speech, but all of the expressions discussed in this essay are used today, though they are more widely attested in interviews with older East Tennesseans, in old letters, and in dialect stories written in the 19th century (for the most part there is not space to demonstrate these sources).

We also realize from considering these few terms that many traditional usages have acquired a negative reputation in the schoolroom, where they are now considered "country" or "uneducated" or "improper" or "incorrect." Legions of schoolteachers have preached and enforced the values and virtues of "Standard" English. They have given a bad name to and tried to erase many forms, like several to be cited, whose ancestry is as authentic and respectable as any others, even though they may be labeled as "errors" by grammar books today. Whether these expressions are up to snuff for the modern-day classroom and "proper" enough for use in writing is an entirely different issue (and a debatable one) from their historical validity, but there are no grounds for considering terms like you'uns and might could to be "corruptions" or "ignorant." They are traditional spoken usage, in many cases the literary style of a bygone day, and will accordingly be discussed here as ordinary language distinct to or particularly prevalent in the Southern Appalachian region.

Retracing the ancestry of words to the British Isles is a very different, and usually more difficult, matter than tracing a family tree. While people reproduce and disperse rather slowly, words are more fluid. They can spread across large territories or groups of people quickly and can easily be modified in meaning, sound, or use. Individual people can usually be dated and located with some precision and their relations across generations can be traced in a linear fashion. While words are a common currency

[28] Michael B. Montgomery and Joseph S. Hall, eds., *Dictionary of Smoky Mountain English* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004). For the fullest assessment of the Elizabethan English idea, see Michael Montgomery, "In the Mountains They Speak like Shakespeare," *Myths in Linguistics*, ed. by Laurie Bauer and Peter Trudgill (New York: Penguin, 1998), 66-76.

[29] Though Southern Appalachia has a modern-day reputation of being and having been an isolated region, in the 19th century it was both a crossroads and a seedbed for much migration to the Southwest, Lower Midwest, and West. As a result, relatively few linguistic features are confined only to Southern Appalachia today, much less to East Tennessee, but many are found there in greater concentrations. A paper by this writer, "The Diversity of Appalachian English" (given at the 1992 Appalachian Studies Association in Asheville), examined the items indicated by the first two volumes of the *Dictionary of American Regional English* (covering letters A-H) to be today more or less confined to Southern Appalachia. Two-thirds of these could not be linked to any European source, indicating that Appalachian English is far more innovative than commonly thought.

used by countless individuals, they are by comparison often elusive and cannot be traced so directly. Historical linguists and compilers of dictionaries are at the mercy of the written documents that survive if they wish to discern the speech patterns of the common people of an earlier day. Each word has a history of its own, and groups of words can never be traced like families. Usually because they have differing social significance, words and pronunciations have many variations that compete with one another, meaning that each generation, even each individual, assesses anew the language it inherits, and it makes choices sometimes quite different from its predecessors. Every dialect and variety of language, no matter how isolated or far removed from the effects of the schoolroom, is in a state of constant change.

For all these reasons, it would be a good idea, before turning directly to our investigation, for us to consider how realistic it would be to expect a clear and strong linguistic carryover from Scotch-Irish emigrants of the 18th century and their descendants. Though they came in large numbers to the interior, they are known to have lost, largely or entirely, many aspects of their culture early on—their Presbyterianism, for example, and most of their musical instruments. The traditional folktales of Northern Ireland and Appalachia today are quite different from one another. The effects of time, education, the dispersal of people, contact with other groups, and other factors at work since the colonial period to smooth away differences in language cannot be doubted. However dominant the Scotch-Irish and their descendants may have been in some places, they rarely constituted a majority. In the early days the population everywhere was ethnically diverse, and it became only more so in succeeding generations. Many Scotch-Irish expressions used early on would no doubt have been considered "provincial" and would not have been reinforced by either the written language of schoolbooks or the accents used in colonial and state capitals.

Another reason one might doubt a significant residue of Scotch-Irish language patterns is the absence of Ulster-derived place names where the Scotch-Irish and their descendants settled. Often after an emigrant group arrives, it begins to name its communities after those it remembers from the old country (this is why the names of so many towns in Massachusetts are the same as those in Southern and Eastern England). There is little, if any, evidence of this in East Tennessee, though one perhaps shouldn't expect very much of it since its settlers were usually a generation or more removed from arrival. Outside southeastern Pennsylvania, names reminiscent of Ulster are hardly to be found in the Shenandoah Valley, the Carolina Piedmont, or other areas of notable early Scotch-Irish settlement. Rather, towns were given names whose origin was English or local, and natural features (rivers such as Nolichucky and Chattahoochee, lakes, etc.) and territories (Tennessee, Alabama, etc.) often kept pre-existing names of indigenous origin.

Further, the great dissimilarity in accents and tones of voice between present-day East Tennessee on the one hand and Northern Ireland/Scotland on the other would hardly prompt one to suspect that two hundred years ago people in these different parts of the world had similar-sounding voices. However East Tennessee speech has been described over the years, it has not been with an "Irish lilt." In neither speech nor melody does Dolly Parton, from Sevierville, Tennessee, sound remotely like James

Galway, from Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Finally, there has been the presumption that people in the Southern mountains speak to a significant degree a remnant of "Elizabethan" English. It is difficult to identify the precise source of this notion, though it has been around for at least a hundred years. William Goodell Frost, President of Berea College in Kentucky in the late 19th century and a tireless speaker and writer on the positive qualities of mountain people, was probably more responsible for its popularity than anyone else. The idea has appealed to both mountain people and outsiders, though for different reasons. It received its fullest and most simplistic and romantic, if not extravagant, articulation in the first third of the twentieth century, and it is still very much alive today.[30] Until a few years ago, the North Carolina Department of Commerce was distributing at the state's interstate welcome centers a booklet titled *The Queen's English*. However, even cursory consideration tells us that William Shakespeare, from Southern England, would on the whole have used a type of language quite different from his early 17th-century counterparts in the northern reaches of the British Isles, though they would have shared many usages, even many that have passed entirely from fashion in modern-day English. It is certain that East Tennessee speech has influences from both Scotch-Irish and Elizabethan ancestors, and it should be possible to separate these to some extent. Since the question of this relative inheritance has not been investigated in a thorough manner until very recently, the popular myth about the "Elizabethan" ancestry of Appalachian speech has gone more or less unchallenged.

Having read this far, the reader may now wonder whether very much Scotch-Irish influence can be identified at all. Linguists have patiently collected a great deal of material on the speech of East Tennessee and Southern Appalachia in recent decades.[31] While it is true that the linguistic influence of the Scotch-Irish is not as apparent in this as it might be and that it is often difficult to discern earlier speech patterns from written documents, detective work does enable us to piece together a reasonably clear picture, especially for grammatical features, of how much can be traced to the Scotch-Irish. In this essay I share the results of my own research, which includes work over

[30] A typical statement is the following, written by Charles Morrow Wilson: "We know a land of Elizabethan ways—a country of Spenserian speech, Shakespearean people, and of cavaliers and curtsies. It is a land of high hopes and mystic allegiances, where one may stroll through forests of Arden and find heaths and habits of olden England. We are speaking of the Southern highland—Appalachia"; see Wilson, "Elizabethan America," *Atlantic* (1929); 238-244. See also Montgomery, op. cit. (1998). Two papers by this writer discuss more fully the assessment of the Scotch-Irish linguistic elements in Appalachia. These are Michael Montgomery, "The Roots of Appalachian English: Scotch-Irish or Southern British?," *Journal of the Appalachian Studies Association*, ed. by John Inscoe (Johnson City, 1991), 177-191; and Michael Montgomery, "The Scotch-Irish Influence on Appalachian English: How Broad? How Deep?" *Ulster and North America: Trans-Atlantic Perspectives on the Scotch-Irish*, ed. by H. Tyler Blethen and Curtis W. Wood, Jr. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997), 189-212.

[31] Montgomery and Hall, op. cit.; Lee Pederson, *East Tennessee Folk Speech: A Synopsis* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1983); Michael E. Ellis, *The Relationship of Appalachian English with British Regional Dialects* (Johnson City, Tenn.: 1984); and Donna Christian, Walt Wolfram, and Nanjo Dube, *Variation and Change in Geographically Isolated Communities: Appalachian English and Ozark English* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1988).

many years in archives in Belfast, Edinburgh, and East Tennessee. Because people in these parts of the world sound and talk quite differently today, one cannot simply compare what modern-day dictionaries and studies have to say. Instead, one must rely on evidence from historical documents, the most crucial of which are emigrant letters that were written back to the British Isles by family members who had made the move. Thousands of such letters are deposited in archives in the British Isles. At the end of this essay are appended portions of two emigrant letters having phonetic spellings and other evidence of speech patterns, to exemplify the kinds of documents most useful in discovering the language patterns of the Scotch-Irish emigrants themselves.[32]

Linguists often divide language into three broad components—pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. The Scotch-Irish influence on East Tennessee speech is clear in each of these, but clearest in grammar, to which we will give the closest attention.

Pronunciation

As far as pronunciation is concerned, one of the most prevalent tendencies in East Tennessee speech today is the identical sounding of pairs of words like *pen/pin, ten/tin*, and *hem/him*, that is, what are popularly known as the "short i" and "short e" vowels before the consonants "n" and "m" (in each case the first word is pronounced as the latter). Most people in East Tennessee, regardless of their education or social class, neither hear nor produce the vowels differently in such words, but they do distinguish wordpairs like *bit/bet* and *lid/led*, in which the vowels come before other consonants. Indeed, in Knoxville in the 1950s/60s I distinguished pen and pin only by the words that were put in front of them, such as *ink, straight*, or *safety*, and my mother, a first-grade teacher, had more trouble teaching the phonics lesson for words like *pen* than any others. There is a perfectly reasonable historical explanation for such pronunciations: this speech rule or habit was followed by emigrant ancestors, just as many others were. Letters written back to Ulster by emigrants are full of spellings like *gineral* and *sind*. Samuel Brown, living in Philadelphia but recently emigrated from Belfast, exhibited the same tendency in writing home to his brother in 1793: "Dear Brother, I take this opertunity of Wrighting you Afew Lines to Lett you know that I am in good health at preasent thanks be to god and hopeing these Lines will find you and My sister And the Children *Injoying* the seam ..." (see appendix).[33]

[32] For studies of Ulster emigrant letters, see E. R. R. Green, "Ulster Emigrants' Letters," *Essays in Scotch-Irish History*, ed. by E. R. R. Green (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 87-103; Michael Montgomery, "The Linguistic Value of Ulster Emigrant Letters," *Ulster Folklife* 41 (1995), 26-41; Michael Montgomery, "Making the Trans-Atlantic Link between Varieties of English: the Case of Plural Verbal -s," *Journal of English Linguistics* 25 (1997); 122-141; Michael Montgomery, "On the Trail of Ulster Emigrant Letters," *Atlantic Crossroads: Historical Connections between Scotland, Ulster and North America*, ed. by Steve Ickringill and Patrick Fitzgerald (Newtownards: Colourpoint, 2001), 13-26; Michael Montgomery, "Emigrants from Ulster Meet the Observer's Paradox: A Typology of Emigrant Letter Writers," *Journal of Scotch-Irish Studies* 1 (Fall, 2003): 10-18.

[33] This letter is reprinted with the permission of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. For a recent reinterpretation of the early evidence for this vowel merger, see Michael Montgomery and Connie Eble, "Historical Perspectives on the pen/pin Merger in Southern American English," *Studies in the History of the English Language II: Conversations between Past and Present*, ed. by Anne Curzan and Kim Emmons (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2004), 429-449.

A pattern of pronunciation that can possibly be traced to the Scotch-Irish is what is known as the "Southern drawl." This involves the stretching of short vowels in words like *bad* and *bed*, the result being that a second vowel is added (a kind of "uh" sound) that produces another syllable: "I felt so ba-yud that I just fell in the be-yud"). This type of pronunciation is, of course, common throughout the South, and where it occurs in the Lower South it most likely is due in part to an African-American influence. We can be less certain of the history of this pronunciation than the one discussed in the previous paragraph, because no evidence of it ever shows up in writing (no matter how poorly educated writers were and therefore tended to spell by sound, their spelling never reflected such a pattern). The drawl that speakers in Ulster today have is unlike the American one, but there are certain clues in their speech suggesting a connection between the two.

We could also cite any number of individual words (like *whip* sounded as *whup*, still the usual pronunciation in Scotland), but suffice it to say that some of the most widespread and distinctive features of East Tennessee pronunciation are quite possibly inherited from the Scotch-Irish. We turn now to vocabulary.

Vocabulary

For East Tennesseans, the vast bulk of their vocabulary (by which is meant their nouns, adjectives, most verbs, and most adverbs) consists of either terms that originated in the United States or that were brought by settlers from several regions of the British Isles. Some two to three dozen terms can be determined to have had a Scotch-Irish origin—a small number, but more than twice as many as those coming from Southern England. Some terms of Scotch-Irish origin are specialized or technical, such as ones from moonshining: *singlings* "liquor that has been run through a still once" and *double* "to redistill"). Most can be described as traditional, some as now becoming old-fashioned. Here are the more common of these terms, with definitions and examples:[34]

1) *airish* "windy, chilly: "It's right *airish* out today."

2) *backset* "a setback or reversal (in health): "He took the whooping cough along about Christmas time and was out of school for a month, and then he took a *backset* and was out of school again."

3) *beal, bealing* "an abscess, boil, festering sore: "Mary had a *bealing* on her neck."

4) *bonny-clabber* "curdled sour milk."

5) *bottom(s), bottom land* "fertile, low-lying land along a river or creek": "The house was right out in the middle of a little *bottom*."

[34] The quotations are from a variety of sources—primarily recordings of speech made by Joseph Sargent Hall in the Smoky Mountains in the 1930s and 1940s, but also some from Wilma Dykeman's *The Tall Woman* and elsewhere. All quotations and terms discussed in this essay are found in Montgomery and Hall, op. cit.

6) *chancy* "doubtful, dangerous": "It was a *chancy* thing to do."
7) *contrary* (as a verb) "to vex, oppose": "Don't *contrary* him any more."
8) *creel* "to twist, wrench, give way": "His leg *creeled* under him."
9) *discomfit* "to inconvenience": "I hope it won't *discomfit* you any."
10) *fireboard* "mantelpiece": "She got a big pistol and laid it up on the *fireboard*, and she said, 'you see this gun. If anything takes place here tonight,' she says 'I'll use this gun on you'."
11) *hull* "to shell (beans or peas)": "We *hulled* two bushels of butter beans last night."
12) *ill* "bad-tempered": "He was acting awful *ill* this morning."
13) *kindling* "twigs, pine needles, and scraps of wood to start a fire": "Before we began the fire, we made sure we had plenty of *kindling*."
14) *let on* "to pretend": "She *let on* that she didn't care."
15) *mend* "to improve physically": "He's *mending* very slowly."
16) *muley* "hornless cow": "Come on, Robert, let's get our little *muley*-cow to work again."
17) *nicker* "whinny": "Sure enough in a few minutes four lank horsemen were dismounting at the gate amid much *nickering* of horses and yapping of hounds."
18) *palings* "upright stakes (of a fence)": "That's what the mountain people called them, *palings*. They're split out just like boards."
19) *piece* "distance": "It's a far *piece* to town and back."
20) *redd up* "to tidy up, get a place ready": "I mean to wash and *redd up* the house before I do any special cooking."
21) *soon* (adjective) "early": "I hope that we can get a *soon* start in the morning."
22) *take up* "begin": "Has the meeting *taken up* yet?"

Just as the descendants of Scotch-Irish emigrants spread far beyond Tennessee and across much of the United States as the country grew, their vocabulary did as well. Some terms in the foregoing list, as well as other features cited in this essay, are or were known in parts of the Midwest, the Lower South, and the Southwest. Some diappeared where they had formerly prevailed. This is true for two intriguing terms brought by Ulster emigrants in the 18th century. Both were applied initially to back country whites. One is *cracker*, now most often referring to a white native of Georgia or Florida. The other is *cohee*, once referring to a less-cultivated person in the backwoods from Virginia to the Carolinas. *Cracker*, which in 20th-century Ulster parlance refers to an expert talker or raconteur, a master of good crack or a boaster; in colonial America it was used in the latter sense. In 1766 a Mr. Gavin Cochrane wrote from the American colonies to The Earl of Dartmouth in England: "I should explain to your Lordship what is meant by Crackers, a name they have got from being great boasters; they are a lawless set of rascalls on the frontiers of Virginia, Maryland."[35] *Cohee* derives from *co he* or *quo he*, originally a phrase used in oral narration, whereby one reports another's speech by "quo he," "quo she," "quo I," etc. (literally "he said," etc.); it is

[35] Mitford M. Mathews, ed., *Dictionary of Americanisms* (Chicago, 1951), 426.

still known in Ulster. In the 18th century the speech habit was brought to American colonies, where it became a nickname for the people who had it. Thus, an 1815 letter from western North Carolina a writer said, "The back country people [of Virginia] are called 'Co-hees' from some of the back country people using frequently the term 'quote he' or 'quote she' or as they usually speak it 'coo he' and 'coo she'."[36] *Cohee* did not catch on like *cracker*, apparently dying out about a century ago.[37] Neither is used in East Tennessee or elsewhere in the U.S. today with their traditional meaning, but both are clearly Scotch-Irish.

Grammar

An East Tennessee mountain man. *From Harper's New Monthly Magazine, 1858. Courtesy of McClung Historical Collection.*

For a variety of reasons it is easiest and most appropriate to examine patterns of grammar if one wants to see how much East Tennessee English is ultimately due to Scotch-Irish emigrants and how much is due to those who came from England. Old letters, even those written by the uneducated, reveal few clues about pronunciation and have few occurrences of vocabulary items like those discussed above, but they exhibit grammatical patterns far more regularly. By grammar is meant how words are combined, the use of suffixes, and parts of speech like pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, helping verbs, and some adverbs—words that stand for and relate words to one another. The distinction between vocabulary (nouns, adjectives, most verbs and adverbs) and grammar (other parts of speech, but also helping verbs and some adverbs) is not just a technical one made by linguists. It is important here because vocabulary can change, disappear, or spread over space much more rapidly than can grammar, which is more stable across generations and therefore easier to track historically. Even today, it is new vocabulary and terminology that can catch on around the country almost overnight.

To begin with, this writer examined linguistic studies, tape recordings, old documents, and other sources to compile 21 grammatical features that are most com-

[36] Mathews, s.v. *coo-hee*, 386.

[37] See Michael Montgomery, *From Ulster to America: The Scotch-Irish Heritage of American English* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, forthcoming).

mon in or are confined to Southern Appalachia and traceable either to Ireland/Scotland or to Southern England. These are grouped and listed below, with examples and sometimes comments about their usage and historical derivation. Not all of them are used in the British Isles today, but they are possible to document, through the use of dictionaries, historical grammars, and other sources that enable us to tell if they were originally Scotch-Irish or not. Of the 21, 18 (83%) are Scotch-Irish in origin. Five of these involve verbs, four pronouns, three prepositions, three conjunctions, and three adverbs.

An East Tennessee mountainwoman and child. *From* Harper's New Monthly Magazine, *1858. Courtesy of McClung Historical Collection.*

The following grammatical features are Scotch-Irish:

1) the combination of *used to* and *could*: "You *used to could* look from Grandpa's door to the graveyard and the church house where we attended church." This construction contrasts a practice or reality of the past with one today.

2) the combination of *might* and *could* and similar patterns (may can, might would, etc.): "You *might could* ask somebody along the road [for directions]"; "I *may can* get it out tomorrow." This type of construction expresses uncertainty or indirectness.

3) *done* as a helping verb or an adverb: "We *done* finished up the chores for you"; "By the time we got there, he was *done* dead"; "I *done* told that boy not to go near the river." This verb usually means "already" or "completely"; it is sometimes used, as in the third example, to emphasize that something was done and shouldn't need to be repeated.

4) the suffix *-s* on a plural verb (or *is*), but only if its subject is a plural noun (as in *people knows*). The suffix doesn't occur on a verb whose subject is a personal pronoun (*they know*). This rule for using the suffix (or *is*) only on verbs with certain subjects has been common in Scotland since the 14th century and in the British Isles has been limited to Scotland and Northern England, and by extension to Ulster. In all these areas it is very common today. While a construction like *People knows* may be judged as an "error" in subject-verb agreement in the schoolroom nowadays, it was formerly used by royalty and nobility and in high literature by the Scottish ancestors of many of us.

5) the combination of *need* and the past participle of a verb: "There were men and women living in the Sugarlands with talent and the ability to do most anything *needed done* in the community"; "That thing *needs washed*." Most Americans say *needs washing* or *needs to be washed*.

6) *you'uns* = "you" (plural): "I appreciate every one of *you'uns* here"; "*You'uns* make yourselves at home."

7) *y'all* = "you" (plural): "I hope that *y'all* are ready."

8) the combination of *all* with other pronouns and occasionally with nouns: "A number of people taught—I don't know *who all*"; "I don't know *where all* he sold it at"; "Old man *Lon and Will all, they all* went with him." These compound pronouns emphasize the inclusion of other things or individuals that are not specifically named.

9) *all the* = "the only": "In Sugarlands that's *all the* one I know anything about"; "It was *all the* way you could take anything up there"; "No, we didn't know nothin'—*all the* thing we knowed was what the teacher told us around the school."

10) *all the far* = "as far as": "That's *all the far* I want to go."

11) *till* = "to" (in expressions of time): "He said he'd be here about quarter *till* eight."

12) *wait on* = "wait for": "I was supposed to *wait on* this fellow at the forks of the creek where we heard the dogs barking."

13) *fernent/forenenst* = "opposite, next to": "I crawled down through the alders by the river till I got *fernent* the bear"; "It's over *forenenst* the wall."

14) *and* used to introduce an elliptical clause without a verb: "He would steal the hat off your head *and* you [would be] lookin' at him"; "He married them *and* them sitting there in the buggy."

15) *whenever* = "when, at the time that, as soon as" (for a single instance of something): "*Whenever* I heard about it, I signed up right away"; "What did they do with you *whenever* you killed that man?"; "They were real good religious people, I mean, *whenever* I'd know them"; "*Whenever* I was about eight years old, when I got old enough to know where I was at, I left."

16) *till* = "so that, to the point that": "She said that somebody was witching the milk *till* she couldn't churn [it]"; "If you get this would you drop me a card *till* I'll know you did get it"; "My mama had rheumatiz [and] she got *till* she couldn't walk."

17) *they* = "there" (to introduce a sentence): "*They* come a big rain and washed the old foot bridge into the hallway between the two barns"; "*They* was just enough of us to fill them three benches [in school]"; "*They's* not many that go there anymore."

18) *anymore* = "nowadays" (in positive sentences): "Government jobs are about all they have *anymore*"; "*Anymore* they have a hard time protecting things like that." All speakers of American English use this word in negative sentences ("I don't play *anymore*") and in questions ("Does he play *anymore*?"), but only a minority do so in positive sentences like those cited.

We now come to those grammatical features in traditional East Tennessee speech that were brought by settlers from Southern England (who in many parts of Appalachia were probably as numerous as those of Scotch-Irish heritage, if not more so). There are only three of these, each of which involves a suffix or a prefix, one on verbs, one on pronouns, and one on nouns:

1) the prefix *a-* on verbs: *a-runnin', a-comin'*. This pattern is historically unknown

Inside the cabin of an East Tennessee family. *From* Harper's New Monthly Magazine, *1858. Courtesy McClung Historical Collection.*

in Scotland outside ballad style, while in southern parts of England it was a feature of folk speech for centuries. It is thus classified as a Southern British feature. The prefix is especially likely to be used on action verbs, as is illustrated by the following quotation: "But here's the Good Book *a*-talkin' tonight, *a*-talkin' louder than the wind *a*-roarin' out yonder an' the thunder *a*-poppin'."[38]

2) the suffix *-n* on possessive pronouns (*hern, hisn, theirn, yourn*, etc.): "I thought *hern* was prettier than mine"; "I don't know just how he made *hisn*." These forms take the suffix by analogy with *mine* (*my/mine, her/hern*).

3) the suffix *-es* on words ending in *-st* and *-sp* (*nestes, postes, waspes*): "Then one day she was out hunting turkeys' *nestes*"; "Look over on the side of the mountains [and] you will see a little house on stilts or *postes*."

The comparison just presented reveals that the Scotch-Irish contribution to modern-day East Tennessee speech is much more substantial (in terms of the number of features), broader (in terms of the diversity of features), and deeper (in terms of the level of structure) than the Southern British or English one is. Most of the Scotch-Irish patterns can still be found in Ulster or Scotland, indicating that, however different people in Ulster and East Tennessee might sound today, this is a misleading impression based on the tone of voice, rhythm, and other superficial characteristics of speech; how they structure their sentences is much more similar and more telling. The settlers of the Volunteer State maintained much of what Scotch-Irish emigrants brought from Ulster a generation or two earlier, and Tennesseans today continue

[38] C. Hodge Mathes, *Tall Tales from Old Smoky* (Kingsport: Southern, 1952).

to preserve it, although social and educational pressures in the 20th century eroded many features. While our comparison enables us to answer the question that forms the title of this paper, it does only this and leaves other questions unanswered. The most intriguing and perhaps most important of these is why the Scotch-Irish features were preserved. The relative conservativeness of Southern mountain culture, a quality which has sometimes been confused with geographical isolation, is a factor external to the language that must be partially responsible for these retentions. Internal factors are probably at play as well (such as whether the form fills a useful niche, as the pronouns *you'uns* and *y'all* certainly do, or expresses a particular nuance of meaning not captured by forms brought by other dialects). But one can hardly do more than speculate about such matters (for instance, as functional as it might appear for speakers to have, a distinction between singular you and plural *you'uns/y'all*, it it a mystery why a similar distinction—between *thou/thee* and *ye/you*—disappeared in Shakespeare's day, though it is maintained in the conservative idiom of the King James Version).

In making our comparison, we have isolated only a handful of words and expressions from many times this number that can be found in everyday speech, so we must be careful not to overstate our conclusion—that, after all, has proved time and again a fault of those claiming the "Elizabethan" ancestry of mountain speech. The methodology has limitations and caveats. For instance, among the grammatical features brought by emigrants from the British Isles in common are at least a dozen that are traditionally associated with Southern Appalachia. These include the phrase *liked to* "nearly" ("I *liked to* died"), several pronouns (e.g., *hisself* "himself," and *theirself/theirselves* "themselves" nouns that are not marked with the plural suffix if preceded by a measure word (*five bushel, twenty mile*, etc.), the preposition *again/against* in the sense of "before, by the time that" ("She'll be back *again* five o'clock"), and the adverbs *right* "rather" ("It's *right* cold this morning") and *yonder* "over there" ("When the roll is called up *yonder*, I'll be there").

Still, we now have countable, measurable evidence from grammar and to some extent vocabulary to support an important conclusion: the Scotch-Irish contribution significantly outweighs that from Southern Britain and appears much more responsible for the distinctiveness of Appalachian English today. To the extent that Southern Appalachian and East Tennessee speech differ from most of the rest of the country, this is more than anything else attributable to the language brought by Scotch-Irish emigrants and spread through the rest of the population in settlement times.

Rather brief though it in many ways is, the survey of language in this essay enables us to come much closer to saying how "Elizabethan" Appalachian speech is or how "Scotch-Irish" it is. It is the latter more than the former. The idea that East Tennesseans and other Southern hill folk have spoken or still speak in a fashion similar to Shakespeare, the English bard from Stratford-on-Avon, is less true than that they maintain the language brought to American shores by Ulster farmers and artisans in the 18th century. It is another question whether the image of stern Ulster Calvinists as the progenitors of East Tennessee speakers is as remotely appealing, not to say as romantic, as the figure of the master of words who authored *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* or the charming Good Queen Bess, after whom the phrase "the Queen's Eng-

lish" was coined. Now that East Tennesseans can say with some assurance that their speech preserves considerably less of Shakespeare, Spenser, and Chaucer than often claimed, and far more of the faceless, and often nameless, commoner from the north of Ireland, East Tennesseans will have to decide what this says about them and their region. One thing for certain is that some of those early Tennesseans of Scotch-Irish ancestry did not remain faceless for long. Andy Jackson saw to that.

Appendix: Excerpts of Sample Emigrant Letters

Among the most interesting, for both historians and linguists, of the items documenting the movement of people from Ulster to North America are letters written back to family members in Ireland. Excerpts of two of these from the 18th century are presented below.

To the modern-day reader, such letters have erratic spelling and capitalization and virtually no punctuation. This reflects two things: the little formal education the writers had (it is in the schoolroom that such niceties are taught and stressed) and the consequent reliance of the writers on their ear (spoken language has no equivalent of capital letters and many marks of puncntuation). In analyzing texts like these, misspellings are the key, because most of them reflect speech patterns. Many reflect familiar pronunciations (*aw* and *teechin* from the Murray letter, *sins* from the Brown letter). Others reflect colloquial grammar (*grows, comes*, and *is* from Murray) occur with plural noun subjects and follow the subject-verb concord rule identified earlier. It is interesting to note that many words in the Murray letter than are Scotticisms and either did not migrate to or did not long survive in North America: *ged* "goed" [went], *ken, weans* "wee ones" [children], *bonny*, etc.

Letter of James Murray of New York to Rev. Baptist Boyd of Co. Tyrone, Ireland

(Reprinted from *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, Oct. 27, 1737)

Read this Letter, and look, and tell aw the poor Folk of your Place, that God has open'd a Door for their Deliverance; for here is ne Scant of Breed here, and if your Sons Samuel and James Boyd wad but come here, they wad get mere Money in ane Year for teechin a Letin Skulle, nor ye yer sell wad get for Three Years Preeching whar ye are. Reverend Baptist Boyd, there ged ane wee me in the Shep, that now gets ane Hundred Punds for ane Year for teechin a Letin Skulle, and God kens, little he is skill'd in Learning, and yet they think him a high learned Man: Ye ken I had but sma Learning when I left ye, and now wad ye think it, I hea 20 Pund a Year for being a Clark to York Meeting-House, and I keep a Skulle for wee Weans: Ah dear Sir, there is braw Living in this same York for high learned Men: The young Foke in Ereland are aw but a Pack of Couards, for I will tell ye in short, this is a bonny Country, and aw Things grows here that ever I did see grow in Ereland; and wee hea Cows and Sheep, and Horses plenty here, and Goats, and Deers, and Racoons, and Moles, and Bevers, and Fish, and Fouls of aw Sorts: Trades are aw gud here, a Wabster gets 12 Pence a Yeard, a labourer gets 4 Shillings and 6 Pence a Day, a Lass gets 4 Shillings

and 6 Pence a Week for spinning on the wee Wheel, a Carpenter gets 6 Shillings a Day, and a Tailor gets 20 Shillings for making a Suit of Cleaths, a Wheelwright gets 16 Shillings for making Lint Wheels a piece, Indian Corn, a Man wull get a Bushell of it for his Day's Wark here; Rye grows here, and Oats, and Wheet, and Winter Barley, and Summer Barley; Buck Wheet grows here, na every Thing grows here. —Now I beg of ye aw to come our here, and bring our wee ye aw the Cleaths ye can of every Sort, beth o'Linen and Woollen, and Guns, and Pooder, and Shot, and aw Sorts of Weers that is made of Iron and Steel, and aw Tradesmen that comes here, let them bring their Tools wee them, . . .

Samuel Brown, Philadelphia, to his brother, David Brown, Mill Street, Belfast, 23 December 1793 (Public Record Office of Northern Ireland Collection T 3525)

Philadelphia Dec^{r} 23rd 1793

Dear Brother

I take this opertunity of Wrighting you Afew Lines to Lett you know that I am in good health at preasent thanks be to god and hopeing these Lines will find you and My sister And the Children Injoying the seam as is My Ever sinser Wish—D^{r} David I hope you^{l} not think me Neglectfull not Wrighting to you Sooner for the times hav been So very Disagreeable sins I Came hear I Detianed to give you as full account of this Cuntry as possable I had a very Good passage of Eight Weeks and two days With out the Least sickness on the passage there Was a feavour aboard but Not mortal Wee Landed at New Castle on the Eight Day of September on account of a feavour that Prevealed in Philadelphia Thomas Stewart and Tho^{s} Smyth and I thought it better to Detain there for a few days to Wee Could Hear a better acount of the sickness which I think was Very fortunate for us only that I took A Feavour Which Continued for Near Four Weeks I Would Seen more of this Cuntry only on that acount for the feavour Was so shocking in Philadelphia I stoped there for Eight Weeks Which Cost Me ten Guineas With out—I Came to this Sitty on the 7th of Nov^{b}: Which Was Nearly the end of the Sickness When I got the acount of So many of My aquentanses being dead Shocked me Verry Much amongst these Was M^{r} Faulkner and Andrew Sproule Carpenter and W^{m}: Campble Stone Cutter & Medole the Beaker and Russal the Plummer and John Morrow Cabnit Meaker and A great Nomber two numerous to Mention the Number in Whole Died from the first of Agust to the 15th of Nov^{b}, in Concluded to be 6500 People this sitty is verry Much hurted by the Sickness and is thought by many it has a chance to brake out against the Spring it has Spoiled all kind of Trade there has numbers Left the sitty on Acount and not Coming back to after Spring I should not Came here only on the acount of the Lead I brought on our arival here put me to a studdy Whether to Leave the sitty or stay to Spring ...