

**CFGS Irish Special Interest Group  
Monthly Meeting Notes, 18 Feb 2017**

**“The Scots-Irish”**

The Irish SIG met this morning at 10am in the Bumby Church.

Elaine Powell got things started with tips on utilizing ancestry.com during this free access weekend. She presented a series of slides, which Walter Wood has posted on the CFGS site: [http://cfgs.org/images/files/FindingIrishAncestors\\_AncestryFREEWeekend.pdf](http://cfgs.org/images/files/FindingIrishAncestors_AncestryFREEWeekend.pdf)

Ellen Edmeade shared material on the Kidby family, and offered to make copies of pages from her new genealogical atlas of Ireland.

Billy Morgan shared a copy of “How the Irish Saved Civilization.” A digital version is online at: [http://readbookstory.com/details/25669.How the Irish Saved Civilization.html](http://readbookstory.com/details/25669.How_the_Irish_Saved_Civilization.html)

Sallie Belperche introduced this month’s general discussion about the Scots-Irish by telling us about her Johnstone forebears in North Carolina. She shared some of the books she has used over the years, including William Roulston’s “Researching Scots-Irish Ancestors.” [https://www.amazon.com/Researching-Scots-Irish-Ancestors-Essential-Genealogical/dp/1903688531/ref=mt\\_paperback?\\_encoding=UTF8&me=](https://www.amazon.com/Researching-Scots-Irish-Ancestors-Essential-Genealogical/dp/1903688531/ref=mt_paperback?_encoding=UTF8&me=)

We then reviewed some of the history and cultural distinctions of the Scots-Irish as compared to other immigrant groups. Notes below extracted from David Hackett Fischer’s “Albion’s Seed.” [https://www.amazon.com/Albions-Seed-British-Folkways-cultural/dp/0195069056/ref=mt\\_paperback?\\_encoding=UTF8&me=](https://www.amazon.com/Albions-Seed-British-Folkways-cultural/dp/0195069056/ref=mt_paperback?_encoding=UTF8&me=)

Origin: “The Plantation of Ireland” during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I, late 1500’s to early 1600’s, when Protestants were incentivized to settle land seized from the native Catholics. Most came from Scotland, but some also came from northern England and preferred to be known as “Anglo-Irish.” But, that term later became associated primarily with the Anglican nobility of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and fell out of favor with their Nonconformist predecessors.

Most Scottish settlers came from the counties of Ayr, Dumfries, Wigtown, Roxburgh, and Berwick.

Most English settlers came from Cumberland, Westmoreland, Northumbria, Lancashire, and Yorkshire.

They settled primarily in the counties that comprise the Province of Ulster: Antrim, Armagh, Derry, Down, and Tyrone.

Before 1636 – Few documented immigrants, but there are some likely examples among Virginia’s headright claims.

1636 – “Eagle’s Wing” carried 140 Irish Calvinists from Groomspoint, County Down, bound for Boston. Sometimes called the Scots-Irish “Mayflower,” but it turned back to Ireland without reaching New England.

1656 – British government sought to disband Cromwellian army by offering land in Ulster or transportation to America. Maryland was a popular destination, due to religious liberties there.

1713 – End of Queen Anne's War marked acceleration of immigration until the American Revolution, with spikes occurring in 1718, 1729, 1741, 1755, 1767, and 1774. Fully two-thirds of the 400,000 Scots-Irish who arrived in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, came during the ten years between 1765 and 1775.

Philadelphia was the principal port of entry for the Scots-Irish, but were encouraged by officials there to follow the wagon trail west. The Great Philadelphia Wagon Road eventually carried them across the Appalachian backwoods as far south as Georgia.

Poor but proud. Unlike in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century there was less demand for indentured servants. Irish servants were the least desirable, because they were considered unruly and less likely to accept discipline. So, those who did come during this era generally had to pay their own way. This might have required them to sell everything they owned in Ireland. But, the fact they had property to sell at all indicates they generally were not the poorest of the poor, but rather lower middle class in the old world and would not be content to remain in poverty in the new world.

Place names indicating Scots-Irish settlement:

- Orange or Orangeburg
- Cumberland, Westmoreland, etc.
- Derry
- Mont Beau > Monbo; Taliaferro > Tolliver.
- Vulgar: Big Fat Gap, Cuckold's Creek, O'dear, Shitbritches Creek, Why Knot
- Mc or Mac prefix

Common surnames: Alexander, Armstrong, Bankhead, Bell, Bryan, Calhoun, Craig, Donaldson/Donelson, Gordon, Graham, Harper, Henry, Houston, Jackson, Johnston, Knox, Logan, Lynch, Polk, Robertson/Robinson, Sullivan, and Williamson.

Given names

- Males – common John, Robert, Richard; saints names like Andrew, Patrick, David; Celtic names like Owen, Barry, and Roy; Northumbrian names like Archibald & Ronald; names of Scottish kings like James, Charles, and Alexander; noble surnames like Wallace and Bruce.

Language: Not considered proper English today, spelled phonetically according to their heavily accented pronunciation:

- Creature > critter
- Victuals > vittles
- Where/There > Whar/Thar
- Widow > wider
- Young ones > youngens

Architecture: Cabins and cow pens.

Family structure – concentric circles

- Nuclear family

- “Derbfine” – spanned 4 generations.
- Clan – not necessarily blood-related, but shared subcultural identity. They were not as clearly organized as the Scottish clans, a looser association that banded together for common defense in times of trouble.

Marriage:

- Average ages, 19 for brides, 20 for grooms. Lowest averages in colonial America, also the closest in age.
- Dowry > bidden wedding or brideswain

We concluded with some discussion of brick walls, including Deborah Harris's Murphy and Finnerty ancestors.

**It was decided next month's meeting (3/18) topic will be "The Irish in New York: Finding the Needle in the Haystack."**