

American Civil War Round Table (NSW Chapter)

Meeting 31 October 2011

Scottish migration to the Antebellum South

I am intrigued by the question: what did the mothers (and fathers) say to their sons as they were thinking about joining the Confederate army?

The title of my favourite Civil War Book, James M McPherson's "*Battle Cry of Freedom*" in its title seems to offer the answer to this question but does not really offer much inside! The same author's (small) book "*What they fought for 1861-1865*" is more help. In this paper I will look at the cultural issues that propelled many soldiers into the War – concentrating on the Scots who made North and South Carolina home in the years before 1861.

North Carolina is a good place to start this discussion, as it supplied at least 125,000 troops to the Confederacy – far more than any other State. Wilmington, NC was the last major port for the blockade-runners until it fell in the Spring of 1865. The Carolinas were pretty much in the thick of the start and finish of the War. As we know, Virginia, which, later, saw much of the fighting, delayed declaring for War. South Carolina was the first to secede (20 December 1860) and North Carolina the second last – a few days after the action at Fort Sumter. Also, some of the last battles of the War were fought in North Carolina.

Signs of Scottish migration are all over this part of the world – North Carolina today even has a County called "Scotland" - on its border with South Carolina - named in honour of the many Scots who settled there. It is said Lowland Scots settled nearer to Wilmington – while many of the Gaelic-speakers from the Scottish Highlands settled in the Cape Fear River valley. The 2001 movie "Songcatcher" was about a music teacher collecting Celtic and other traditional music in the Appalachian Mountains – "preserved by the secluded mountain people". Today about 35,000 people, in July each year, attend the "Highland Games at Grandfather Mountain" in backcountry North Carolina.

Who were these forebears of many of North Carolina's Civil War soldiers?

It is common to describe them as "Scots-Irish". In researching the traditional homeland of the McLennans, Kintail/Glenshiel, on the mainland of Scotland from Skye, to my surprise, I discovered, in a document written in the 1790s: "**For some years from around 1770 onwards a substantial number of parishioners (with their connections) migrated to North Carolina**" ¹

¹ Rev John Macrae, Church Minister at Glenshiel, in his entry for the *Old Statistical Account* (refer: <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-99/Ross%20and%20Cromarty/Glenshiel/>) noted that rapid changes had taken place in the lifestyle of the Highlanders since Culloden. The first minister in this parish (from 1730) had been John Bethune - a family connection of General James Neil Bethune, owner of "Blind Tom". In 1773 another Rev John Bethune (born on Skye in 1751, son of Angus Bethune and Christian Campbell) migrated to North Carolina. During the War of Independence he remained loyal to Britain and was captured by the rebels before being released and found his way to Canada where he founded the first Presbyterian Church in Montreal. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Bethune_\(clergyman\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Bethune_(clergyman))).

Old map of Scotland showing the dividing line between the "Highlands" and Lowlands.



The first surprise is that most "Highlanders" lived at sea level! There were very few roads. They were suspicious if governments wanted to build roads to their areas.

Who were these "Highland" Scots? In what circumstances did they leave?

The received view is that the Celtic peoples migrated to Alba (the relevant main part of Scotland) from Eire. Before the third century BCE these Celtic peoples (or proto-Celtic) had migrated to Eire and other parts of western Europe from central Europe (around the Alps). The name Celt seems to have been the Greek version (perhaps from the Celts themselves) and the name Gaul (and variations) was used by the Romans. In most of Roman Europe the Celts/Gauls seemed keen to adopt Roman ways. Celts are known for their language and culture. Celtic language is a branch of the Indo-European language family. The term "Insular Celts" refers to the different Celtic-speaking peoples of the British and Irish islands and their descendants. Insular Celtic culture diversified into that of the Gaels (Irish, Scottish and Manx - from q-Celtic or Goidelic), the Brythonic Celts (Welsh, Cornish and Bretons - from p-Celtic or Brythonic) of the medieval and modern periods. The Gaels in the western isles and coast formed a kingdom known as "Dalriada", which may have existed before the Romans. Brythonic celts known as the Picts occupied all of the rest of Britain. In particular the occupants of the Strathclyde (Glasgow etc) were of this racial origin. Angles (Germanic-speaking peoples) had been brought to Britain as soldiers for Rome and occupied the east coast of Scotland from the 5th Century CE. It is from them that modern-day English and lowland "Scots" (language) is derived.

Perhaps the first settlement from Eire was in 671, at Applecross, about 30 kms NW of Kintail - on the mainland from Skye - by Máel Ruba (pronounced Mel-roova), a monk from Bangor in County Down in (northern) Ireland. According to tradition the monastery at Iona, south-west of Kintail, had been founded (from Ireland) in 563 and played an important part in converting the Picts in Alba and the Anglo-Saxons in Northumbria (on the east coast of England) to Christianity.

The Norsemen (aka "Vikings") had begun arriving in quantity in the western isles in 793. Cináed mac Ailpín commonly anglicised as Kenneth MacAlpin became King of Dalriada about 843 CE and formed a dynasty that ruled over much of present day Scotland for a large part of the medieval period. On the east coast of Britain - from Edinburgh all the way south to the Humber River - a kingdom of Northumberland held sway.

The so-called "battle" of Largs - on the Firth of Clyde - in October 1263, although itself not a major confrontation, is regarded as a turning point between the Scots (under the banner of Alexander III) and Norsemen (under the raven banner of King Haakon IV - also spelt Håkon or Hakon). The King of the Isle of Man changed over to the Scottish side. Haakon died on his way back to Scandinavia. Three years later, in 1266, Haakon's successor, Magnus, signed the Treaty of Perth which surrendered sovereignty of the Western Isles off Scotland to the Scottish crown - of their once great territories, only the Orkney and Shetland Isles remained under the control of the Scandinavians. Much of the west coast itself (as opposed to the islands) became more like independent principalities. Alexander became known as "The Tamer of the Ravens". Some argue that until that time there were no Scots in what we now call Scotland.

Although Scotland and England had shared the same King since 1603, Scots were barred from entering the North American colonies until the "Union" between England and Scotland in 1707.

By 1700 there were already about 250,000 colonists in America. Settlement of America began in earnest in the 1700s - about 450,000 migrants arrived between 1700 and the start of the Revolutionary Wars. In the period 1701 to 1800 England had about five times the population of Scotland, both nations contributed roughly the same absolute numbers across the Atlantic. If we read American accounts of the ethnic mix of migrants to the Carolinas in this period, they usually will talk about "Scots-Irish" - as if they were the only significant migrants from the British Isles. Even the term Scots-Irish is an Americanism - not a term generally used in Ireland, Australia or Scotland. The big picture is that, of the migrants in these formative years, migrants from Ulster made up two-thirds of the "Irish" who made the journey to America and these were dominated by Presbyterians:

Source	'000
England and Wales	80
Scotland	80
Lowland	60
Highland	20
Ireland	115
Ulster	70
Southern	45
Total	275

Emigration from the British Isles to America, 1701-1780 (thousands)
 from J Horn, *British Diaspora: Emigration from Britain, 1680-1815*; and
 T C Smout, N C Landsman and T M Divine *Scottish Emigration in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* in N Canny, ed., *Europeans on the Move* (Oxford 1994) pp 90-112.

Among the emigrating (Scottish) Lowlanders were an important minority of men of status, education, social connections and some financial means. As merchants, teachers, clergymen, tutors, doctors, military officers and imperial officers, they soon played an important role throughout the colonial world. More than 150 Scottish doctors emigrated to America during the eighteenth century and almost the whole of the colonial medical profession was Scottish emigré or Scottish-trained. Scots and Scottish-trained ministers dominated not only the Presbyterian Church but also the Episcopalian Church in America.

Scottish educators were prominent under Dr John Witherspoon at Princeton and also at the College for Philadelphia and many Presbyterian academies in the middle and southern states, and tutors in the Carolinas and the Chesapeake.

However, the majority of migrants were not of the educated classes referred to above, they were more often tenant farmers, weavers, craftsmen, Highland crofters etc. A few had been forcibly sent to America following the Jacobite “Rebellions” of 1715 and 1745. Most migrated so they could own their own land and have better opportunities. Of about 95,000 Scots who left for North America between 1700 and 1815, almost a half of these (45,000) emigrated over the few years between 1763 and 1775 – with around 30,000 coming from the Lowlands alone. It was described as an “emigration mania”. The scale and speed of this exodus caused concern among the (Scottish) governing bodies which believed that population was vital to the nation’s prosperity and especially the Highlanders who had become a vital part of the imperial war machine. This concern prompted a Register to be kept between 1773 and 1776 that gives us an insight into the profile of those emigrating. The Register shows that they emigrated from all parts of Scotland. Servants and labourers comprised less than one-third of the total. Analysis of this Register indicates the Highlands of Scotland were second only to London as a source of migrants – accounting for one in five of all UK migrants to North America on the eve of the American Revolution.

As Lowlanders moved into towns from the 1700s on Highlanders from Argyll and elsewhere found seasonal work on lowland farms and, as demand grew, full-time work for them became available. Many Highlanders found work in the army or the navy.

If anything, the numbers of Highlanders migrating to North America may be understated as (Highland) soldiers at various wars went directly there rather than leaving from the Highlands. I have also found numerous cases of individuals who spent time in the Caribbean before returning to Scotland or moving on to the American South.

We should also note that significant large numbers migrated internally to North Carolina from Northern colonies such as Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, following Thomas Spratt’s route known as the “Great waggon road” but our purpose here is partly to show that this was not the only route for migrants to North Carolina.

Even before the failed Rebellion of 1745 (culminating at Culloden Moor) Gaeldom was under pressure from industrialisation and other social forces. Great structural changes were underway. Agrarian reform took place more rapidly in Scotland than they had in England. In the early 1700s only one in eight Scots lived in towns of more than 5,000 people but by 1820 the figure was one in three. After Culloden, the Highlanders were suppressed - the wearing of Highland dress was proscribed (apart from military use), estates were forfeited, roads were built where there had been none, and naval units were drawn into the heart of the Highlands. Highlanders were suspicious of the road construction – seeing it as a government intrusion on their lives.

This social transformation is an essential context for understanding the mass migration from Gaeldom. Many of the issues are highly emotional – even today. Gaels started migrating to Georgia in the 1730s – soon followed by migrations to North Carolina. The founder of Georgia, James Edward Oglethorpe (Governor 1732-42) had chosen troops from the Scottish Highlands to protect the southern-most outpost of British North America. The first of them, with their families (a total of 177), set out from Inverness in October 1735 – perhaps 100 were soldiers. Their garrison was at Darien – a headland on the Altamaha

River. They were a Gaelic-speaking troop – the forerunners of the “Georgia Highland Rangers” who continued to speak Gaelic during their long campaigns against the Spanish and the Indians.

In 1739 the Governor of North Carolina, the Scotsman Gabriel Johnston, encouraged 360 Highlanders to settle near Wilmington by offering them a ten-year tax exemption to do so. The (strongly Hanoverian) Duke of Argyll, like so many landlords, was in the process of replacing his tacksmen with others who could pay higher rents. Tacksmen from around Kintyre and mid-Argyllshire were keen to exploit the plantation land along the Cape Fear River for tobacco, tar, turpentine, flax and timber. So, migration was the result of pro-active entrepreneurship rather than despair. These migrants had little English. Gaelic was their first and, often, only language. Gaelic was spoken at home and in church. Scottish Gaelic (of the Highlands) – because it came with the Scots from Ireland – was almost the same as Irish Gaelic.

These Highland Scots sailed directly from the West coast of Scotland to Wilmington, North Carolina. Often then making the 90 mile journey up the Cape Fear River valley to Cumberland County and surrounds.

Whereas many will point to the Highland “Clearances” in the 1800s as a cause of migrations, in fact, “enclosures” had started much earlier in the Lowlands. The western Lowlands had been the heartland of Scottish industrialisation. Scots from these parts often had accumulated their own means and did not need to become indentured migrants. Another important conclusion from the Register is that Scots usually migrated in family groups – it would therefore be likely they would retain their culture longer once they arrived in North America.

In migration discussions, American texts tend to emphasise the “pull” factors and British texts tend to emphasise the “push” factors. Especially after 1760, the migrations became a flood. As well as British migrations between the 1700s and 1770s, more than 110,000 German-speaking settlers from the Rhineland and Switzerland crossed the Atlantic to British America. Also around this time the demography of the colonies was changed greatly by the importation of African slaves – about 175,000 by 1760. A further 84,000 African slaves were to arrive from the pivotal Seven Years War until the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1775. For a time Georgia’s settlers of Highland origin held out against owning slaves. But by 1775 at Cross Creek (now Fayetteville), there were several hundred slaves recorded. Visitors commented that these slaves spoke only Gaelic. By 1790 Scots made up 15% of the populations of each of North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia and 10% of Virginia’s. By this time, there were so many Scots in North Carolina it was dubbed “New Scotland”.

I was quite surprised when studying contemporary records from Scottish Highlands to discover how many Scots had left directly for America and North Carolina in particular. The “Old Statistical Account” of the 1790s – describes the small Parish of Glenshiel – traditional territory of the McLennans. John Bethune (from Skye) was the first minister there when it was disjoined from Kintail in 1730. In 1755 there were 507 people in the parish. For some years, from around 1770 onwards, a substantial proportion of the parish had migrated to North Carolina - reducing the numbers by about 150. By the 1790s the numbers were about 721. By that time there were more MacRaes than MacLennans in Glenshiel².

² *Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-1799*, Glenshiel, Vol 7, page 131)

The book "*The Ballard of Blind Tom*" by Australian author, Deirdre O'Connor³, tells of Tom, in the 1850s and '60s being owned by James Neil Bethune - son of John McEacarn Bethune (a relation of Rev John Bethune of Glenshiel) who had migrated from Skye to Georgia and there he became the State's Surveyor-General.

Analysis of migrations from Scotland in the 1770s shows the majority of those who were indentured were from the Lowlands. The vast majority of those who left from the Highlands for North America at that time did so using their own resources – they belonged to the tenant group – the middle rank of Highland society. They owned enough cattle, sheep, goats and other items to be able to raise sufficient funds for the fare to North America for themselves and their kinfolk. The records show that they overwhelmingly were married tenant farmers of mature years, with their wives, children, relatives, servants and subtenants. These emigration parties were well-organised, usually had close links with established migrant communities across the Atlantic and took with them considerable sums of money. This was not an exodus driven by stress and despair but a positive choice. One reason for a surge in migration numbers in 1802-03 was a spike in cattle prices. They often gave cheap land and freedom from feudal landholdings as a reason.

This analysis is contrary to that put in *Wikipedia* "History of immigration to the United States" that they were "mostly Presbyterian settlers ... fleeing bad times and persecution" and that "...many arrived as indentured servants".

Over this period Highland landowners ("Lairds") were increasingly acting in their own commercial interests rather than in the interests of their clansmen (tenants). From about 1770 there was a conscious policy to do away with the intermediary "tacksmen", further breaking down the loyalties between tenant and landlord. These tacksmen, traditionally the leaders in their communities, were the logical people to lead the Highlanders to a new land. In America they could be free of the landlords. They could be freeholders of their own farms. To these migrants, and to the many who would follow, America offered freedom.

The famous Flora MacDonald who, aged 24, and living in the Outer Hebrides, in 1746 had helped Bonnie Prince Charlie as he made his escape from Culloden. Later she married Allan MacDonald and they lived on Skye before migrating to North Carolina in 1774. They supported the loyalist cause and, after defeat at the "Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge", in 1779, they returned to Skye. Command should have been taken at that battle by Donald MacDonald who had recently been in action at Bunker Hill but he had asked Donald McLeod to stand in. Captured at the battle and soon after where fighters with the following surnames: McLean, MacNeil, MacDougall, Campbell, Stewart, McEachen, Cameron, MacPhail, MacLennan and MacRae⁴. These were all Gaelic-speaking settlers. One of the men who saw action at Moore's Creek Bridge, John MacRae, needed a translator when he made a claim on the (British) Government (for loss of his land and his right arm).

³ *The Ballard of Blind Tom*, Deirdre O'Connell, Overlook Duckworth Peter Mayer Publishers, 2009

⁴ J P MacLean, *An Historical Account of the Settlement of Scotch Highlanders in America Prior to the Peace of 1783*, Glasgow, 1900 pp 134-136 quoted in James Hunter, *A Dance Called America*, 1994, p12

Flora and Donald MacDonald were of sufficient means to be able in 1775 to buy a significant existing farm with an accompanying large home. We have a description of them before they migrated to North Carolina when they were visited by Dr Samuel Johnson (creator of the English Dictionary). What was then known as Cross Creek (since the War of Independence re-named Fayetteville – for the French General Lafayette who played a pivotal part in the success of the Revolution) was the centre of Highlanders settlement in North Carolina – in the county of Cumberland. Cross Creek was about 90 miles (150kms) upstream from Wilmington. On the south side of this county is a tributary of the Great Pee Dee River (now spelt Pee Dee) that flows out to sea near Georgetown, SC about 60 kms from Fort Sumter.



Flushed by success at Moore's Creek Bridge, the North Carolina Provincial Congress was the first representative body to declare an end to constitutional links with Britain.

During the War of Independence a majority of Georgians of Highland extraction supported the rebels – perhaps because they had been there slightly longer.

Back in Scotland, the famous poet Robbie Burns had been known at times to support the French Revolution and the American War of Independence. Burns (at first anonymously) wrote his famous piece "Scots Wha Hae" at the time of the trial of the Glasgow lawyer Thomas Muir of Huntershill, in August 1793 as part of a British government crackdown, after the French Revolutionary Wars. Muir, the most important of the five "Scottish political Martyrs" was sentenced to fourteen years and transported to NSW on the *Surprize* in 1794. He operated a small farm on the North Shore until he escaped to the Americas, eventually dying in France. The first verse of Burns' poem reads:

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
 Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
 Welcome tae yer gory bed,
 Or tæ Victory.

Following Independence, some of the North Carolina population of Scottish descent (many of whom had sided with the established order) moved on to Canada, western States and elsewhere. Others took an oath of allegiance – nearly 400 in Cumberland County in 1778 alone. Also, residents of Northern States, of Scottish origin, moved in to fill the numbers leaving and, over time, Canadians of Scots origin moved to the US.

During the 1812 War with Britain many North Carolinians of Highland descent enlisted to fight against the British.

For a time after the American Revolution, migration was banned. In the period 1820 to 1860 Highland landlords enforced mass evictions – often supported by migration schemes. As late as the 1860s Gaelic was still spoken in the Cape Fear valley.

Charlotte, due west of Fayetteville, today the biggest city in North Carolina was incorporated in 1768 and went on to become known as “the home of Southern Presbyterianism”. (Billy Graham grew up there.) It earned its nickname “The Hornet’s Nest” during the Revolutionary War when the British commander, General Cornwallis, who occupied the city, was driven out by hostile residents, prompting him to write that Charlotte was “a hornet's nest of rebellion”. Its population grew significantly after the Civil War.

North Carolina did not attract heavy settlement after the Revolutionary Wars. By the early 1800s settlers in North Carolina were moving on – beyond the Appalachians. The census of 1850 shows the largest number persons born in North Carolina living in another state as being in Tennessee (double any other). In fact, broadly speaking, there was much less migration to the US between the Revolutionary Wars and 1850 – most growth was from natural increase. In 1850 only 9.7% of Americans as a whole were foreign-born.

A Neil McLennan was the son of John McLennan and Katherine MacKinnon - born in 1787 in the Strath parish of Skye - the nearest part of Skye to Lochalsh – migrated, with his parents and siblings, to North Carolina in 1801 and, after many adventures, along with other Gaelic-speaking Scots, settled at Rosebud in Texas. McLennan County, TX is named after him. In Mart, Texas (south of Dallas) there is a mural showing their waggon, pulled by oxen, arriving there⁵. During the spring of 1835 Indians killed his brother (who had settled about a mile north) and his brother's wife, and their mother. His sister Abigail had a son-in-law, William Pinkney Anderson, who died at the Battle of Gettysburg (1863). At the time of their initial settlement, “Texas” was controlled by Mexico, until 1836, when it “won its independence”, becoming an independent Republic, not joining the USA until 1845.

During the Napoleonic Wars, Highlanders are estimated to have supplied between 37,000 and 48,000 soldiers out of their regional population of only around 3,000,000 – perhaps a per capita rate of recruitment unequalled anywhere else in Europe.

Wool was in high demand – especially during the Napoleonic Wars. Later cotton was imported (and processed) in Scotland at first from the Caribbean, and later from the American South. Just as we have seen a connection (at a previous meeting) between Liverpool and the South, also we had many large cotton mills in Scotland – providing a natural connection between there and the South. It is an indication of the extent of this trade that port blockades of the South during the War reduced cotton supplies to Scotland from 8,700 tonnes (17,055 cwt) in 1861 to 366 tonnes (7,216 cwt) in 1864. Scots migrants would be drawn out to their suppliers in the Caribbean and the South.

All over Europe populations were growing at a much higher than traditional rate – probably because of better food (including the adoption of the potato). On the west coast (Argyllshire) between 1801 and 1841 the population grew 53%!

These Scots took with them a fierce spirit of independence from their Scottish heritage. We can understand more by looking at the structure of religion in Scotland. Congregations fiercely asserted (what they saw as) their right to appoint their own minister. This structure (“Polity”) is in great contrast to the Catholic and, by succession, the Anglican church. By the 1840s this issue would lead to a huge split in the church in Scotland – “the Disruption” – in which almost half of the population left their established churches and created a new “Free” church – not directed from the centre. Does this structure sound like the key issue of the American Civil War – centralist government or affiliated bodies?

⁵ www.sutphen.org/genealogy/mclennan/mclennan.htm

We have seen earlier that many of the Irish who went to America in these important years – when the social ground rules were being laid down – were from Ulster and that many of these were Presbyterians. Much has been made of the idea that these were descendants of Scots who had been settled on estates in Munster and Ulster in the 1600s. Many of these settlers were Lowlanders – especially Ayrshire and Galloway in South-West Scotland (not usually the Gaelic-speaking Highlanders). The same pattern had occurred in Ulster - of landlords looking for higher rents and pushing out the tacksmen – only in earlier times. Therefore, these Ulster-migrants had arrived earlier in North America. There is an argument that the stories of Ulster migrants success in America may have influenced the Highlander (and Lowland) Scots to follow. Much myth surrounds these “Scots-Irish” as they later became known in America. In fact, the term “Scots-Irish” was not used significantly, even in America, until after the Great famines of the 1840s. It may be difficult to argue that they were still “Scots”, after so many years in Ireland. Having said that, Ulster maintained strong links with Scotland. The Ulster Presbyterians shared common ideas, education, popular culture and literature with Scotland. There were, by this time, high levels of literacy in both Lowland Scotland and Ulster.

By the 1730s the Scottish Colleges were the cradles of what would become known as the “Scottish Enlightenment”. These were fundamentally Presbyterian institutions and their ideas spread into Ulster society. These institutions were graduating between a fifth and a quarter of students who were from Ulster. Most of their ministers were educated in Scotland. Like their Scottish counterparts, Ulster Scots deemed it their religious duty to interpret their own Bible and their divine right to elect their own ministers. Presbyterianism stressed the importance of education to enable adherents to read the Bible for themselves as part of their personal relationship with their God. The 1560 Reformation in Scotland, quite different to that in England, had seen the end of the “Auld alliance” with France and closer ties to the traditional enemy, England. It was soon after this, when the Reformation was in full swing, that Lowland Scots migrated to Ulster (“the Plantations”).

Through the Calvinistic structures, laymen as well as ministers represented their congregations at General Assemblies of the Church – a taste of democracy! Kirk Sessions (the committee in the parish) took the role of maintain order in the parishes.

These Presbyterian ideas were later taken across the Atlantic from both Ulster and Scotland. (The ideas have a powerful influence on religion in America even down to this day.) In 1726 Rev William Tennant, a graduate of Edinburgh University but native of Antrim, founded the important Log College at Neshaminy near Philadelphia. Equally significant was the work of another Ulsterman, Francis Alison, “probably the most distinguished classical scholar in colonial America” – the Professor of Moral Philosophy at the College of Philadelphia. He began the “New London Academy” in Pennsylvania in 1736 using texts and lecture materials from his own education at Glasgow University. Three graduates of the New London Academy, Thomas McKean, James Smith and George Reed, were signatories to the Declaration of Independence. The great American historian and statesman, George Bancroft, is often quoted: “The first voice publicly raised in America to dissolve all connections with Great Britain came not from the Puritans of New England, nor the Dutch of New York, nor the planters of Virginia, but from the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians”. The name of only one clergyman appears among the signatures to the American Declaration of Independence: that of the Rev John Witherspoon D.D., a Presbyterian clergyman from Scotland – president of Princeton from 1768. By the end of the eighteenth century, Presbyterian ministers had founded about 100 schools in the American colonies.

The volume migrations from Ulster had started earlier than those from Scotland – commencing in the 1720s and growing even stronger in the 1760s through to the 1790s. Better economic times and better health played a part in the population explosion in Ulster that prompted the migrations from Ulster to North America. Initially many settled in the north and then upcountry Virginia, the Shenandoah Valley and then the Carolinas. They settled beyond the land occupied by William Penn and by the Rhinelanders – pressing also out to the back-country of Western Maryland and central Pennsylvania.

Many contemplating migration saw America as a land of opportunity. Letters home lead to chain migration. A whole literature has been invented in America to support the myth of the rugged Scots-Irish frontiersman. The legendary figures Davey Crockett and Jim Bowie were of Ulster stock. In his book *“The Winning of the West”* Theodore Roosevelt describes the Ulster-Scots as follows: “For generations their whole ecclesiastic and scholastic systems had been fundamentally democratic.”

The forebears of John C Calhoun, the most famous spokesman for the South during the Civil War, had been Ulster backwoodsmen, killed by Indians while heading for protection at Augusta, Georgia. Andrew “Old Hickory” Jackson, President from 1830 to 1850 (a significant time in the developments that would lead to the War), was a prominent Ulster-Scot. He had the warrior ethos – he killed at least two opponents in duels. John C Calhoun was his Vice President for part of his term.

It is an indication of the spirit of independence that many in North Carolina even today believe the “Mecklenburg Declaration” (also known as the *MecDec*) was signed at Charlotte, NC on 20 May 1775 declaring independence from Britain – fully a year before Thomas Jefferson signed the more famous declaration.

By the 1850s North Carolina was well-connected to the States further west by the “Great Central Railway” – all the way to California. A new wave of migrants was arriving from Ireland and elsewhere. The America Party (also known as the Know-Nothing Party) started to demand laws to reduce the numbers of migrants and to make it harder for foreigners to become citizens.

An 1860 census shows that 330,000 of the total population of North Carolina (992,000) were slaves – mainly concentrated in the Eastern “Tidewater” area plantations and around ports – a smaller proportion than many other Southern States.

W J Cash, in *“The Mind of the South”*, describes the replacement of traditional aristocrats by “new people” – those who had made good in America. He claims nine-tenths of Confederate Officers and nine-tenths of the men who directed the Confederacy were these “nouveaux”. Many of these “new men” invented genealogical links back to aristocratic families in Germany, Scotland or Ireland. Walter Scott’s novels, he says, were very popular in the South before the War – giving the South its “Social ideal”.

W J Cash reminds us that by that “patriotism” by Southerners, before the War, was to their State not to the Federal body, at that time referred to in the plural “... the united States they...”. In *“What they fought for 1861-1865”* James McPherson bases his observations on his reading of 25,000 letters and 100 diaries of Union and Confederate soldiers. By the time of this War, thanks to American schooling, most soldiers could read and write. Soldiers from the lower South expressed stronger patriotic and ideological motives (82%) than those from North Carolina (47%). Southern soldiers did not write about slavery very much. Of course, when Southerners did talk about slaves they used term such as “servants” and “southern institutions”. Many Southern soldiers argued they were fighting to protect the women – their wives and daughters.

Summing up, McPherson identifies Southern motives as:

- Independence
- Property
- Way of life
- Survival as a nation

Perhaps the soldiers' perceptions, he says, were influenced by the fact that the War was mainly fought on Southern soil.

To me, this analysis has reminded me how much new immigrants valued the independence they had migrated to America to achieve – including the ability to own their freehold land.

I have mainly dealt with the part of the population of North Carolina of Scottish origin. Others including German-speakers (sometimes wrongly called Dutch), English and others.

Four years and a couple of weeks after the War had begun at Fort Sumter, in March 1865, William T Sherman, and his 60,000-strong army, marched into Fayetteville (formerly Cross Creek) and totally destroyed the Confederate arsenal. Sherman's troops also destroyed foundries, cotton factories and the offices of the "*Fayetteville Observer*". Just outside Fayetteville on 10 March 1865 Confederate and Union troops had been involved in the last cavalry battle of the Civil War at "Monoe's Crossroads" (also called the "Battle of Fayetteville Roads"). One aim of the Battle (unachieved) was to capture (Union) Major General Hugh Judson Kilpatrick, who, as it turned out, was ensconced with his mistress in a small log cabin nearby and managed to escape. The time bought by this action allowed the Confederates to cross over the Cape Fear River to the east and burn the bridges behind them.

On 13-15 April the "Battle of Morrisville", North Carolina, was the next to last battle of the Civil War. General Joseph Johnston surrendered to Sherman at Bennet Place at what is today Durham, NC.

On April 24 President Davis held the last full meeting of the Confederate cabinet at North Tryon Street near 11th Street in downtown Charlotte, NC.



Bruce McLennan (October 2011)

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