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THE POWER OF ETHNICITY:
THE PRESERVATION OF SCOTS-IRISH CULTURE IN THE
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN BACKCOUNTRY
VOLUME I

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
The Department of History

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December 2000

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ABSTRACT

The character of the Scots-Irish has been shrouded in myth almost from the moment the first Ulster immigrants disembarked at Philadelphia in the 1710s. Contemporaries condemned the Scots-Irish as lazy, illiterate, uncouth, and violent. Later hagiographers, however, praised them as ruggedly individualistic, liberty-loving people who brought civilization to the American wilderness.

Recent historians have done little to advance this debate. While re-stating these simplistic stereotypes, modern scholars have failed to ground their arguments in extensive analyses of primary sources. While numerous monographs studying other ethnic and cultural groups in colonial America have appeared over the last thirty years, none as been published on the Scots-Irish.

My dissertation fills this gap in the historiography of colonial America. By comparing the cultural maturation of Scots-Irish communities in the Pennsylvania and North Carolina backcountries from 1715 to 1775, this study describes the growth and preservation of a unique Scots-
Irish ethnic identity. Following the methods of ethnohistorians, it examines Scots-Irish economic, social, religious, and political values, attitudes, and behavior as a means of examining the continued strength of the group’s unique self-image.

The Scots-Irish in the eighteenth-century American backcountry illustrate the continuing power of ethnicity better than any other group of people. Although the novel conditions of the American frontier partially undermined Scots-Irish ethnic uniformity and distinctiveness, the settlers struggled to re-create as much of the identity and culture that they had known in northern Ireland as possible. In both colonies, Ulster immigrants preserved their unique institutions, traditions, and beliefs; observed strict ethnic exclusivity in their economic, social, and religious lives; and clashed with other ethnic groups in politics and social affairs.

On the eve of the Revolution, ethnicity continued to determine many of the Scots-Irish immigrants’ actions in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Their sense of themselves as a distinct people within the diverse eighteenth-century American backcountry remained very powerful. They still identified themselves as Scots-
Irishmen or Irishmen more than Britons, Americans, Pennsylvanians, or North Carolinians.
INTRODUCTION

The character of the Scots-Irish has been shrouded in myth almost from the moment the first Ulster immigrants disembarked at Philadelphia in the 1710s. Reflecting eighteenth-century English prejudice, contemporaries like Benjamin Rush condemned the Scots-Irish as lazy, primitive, illiterate, uncouth, and violent. In response to these derogatory portrayals, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century hagiographers created a more flattering portrait of the Scots-Irish, describing them as ruggedly individualistic, liberty-loving people who planted the seeds of freedom and democracy in the American wilderness. Because their Scottish characters best fitted the frontier environment and uniquely exemplified American ideals, the Scots-Irish, they claimed, quickly became "true Americans."¹

Recent scholars have done little to move our view of the Scots-Irish beyond these earlier stereotypes. Some historians have agreed with Rush and other contemporary critics, portraying the Scots-Irish as pre-capitalistic, anti-intellectual, and highly volatile. Others have validated the hagiographers' views. Conceding that the Scots-Irish were restless and violent, these scholars have refuted much of the negative view of the Scots-Irish. So-called "modern" values of individualism, commercialism, industry, economic improvement, and religious zeal, they have claimed, characterized Ulster immigrants.²

None of these scholars, however, has grounded his argument on an extensive examination of primary sources. While numerous monographs studying other colonial American

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ethnic and cultural groups have appeared over the last thirty years, none has been published on the Scots-Irish. Even the two most comprehensive studies of the Scots-Irish -- by James Leyburn and David Hackett Fischer -- do not include significant amounts of primary research. Leyburn, a professional sociologist, based his conclusions on secondary sources and sociological theory. Because Hackett Fischer's work was an overview of colonial British American culture, he was forced to rely primarily on secondary literature as well, supplemented by a few, often unreliable, published sources such as travelers' accounts and autobiographies.3

Given the relative importance of the Scots-Irish in eighteenth-century America and the peculiarities of their immigration, this neglect has left a serious hole in the historiography of colonial America. Virtually every analysis of the ethnic composition of the American population in 1790 has determined that the Scots-Irish were the second-largest immigrant group in the country, behind

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only the overwhelmingly dominant English. Thomas Purvis, for example, has estimated that Scots-Irish and Scottish settlers comprised 16 percent of the total United States population in 1790. The next largest group — the Germans, according to Purvis, accounted for only 9 percent of the total population. The absence of a systematic examination of the Scots-Irish, thus, has left a large and important segment of the colonial American population unstudied.4

The unique conditions of Scots-Irish settlement in colonial America, moreover, makes them especially suitable for an ethnic study. Unable to establish their own colony, Scots-Irish immigrants populated areas that were already ethnically diverse and where other cultural groups controlled much of the economic, social, and political power. In addition, the search for cheap land led thousands of second- and third-generation Scots-Irishmen to embark on a second, internal migration from Pennsylvania to the southern backcountry. These distinct circumstances forced the Scots-Irish to interact with a wider variety of other national groups and to preserve their culture and

identity over a wider geographical area than most other immigrant groups in colonial America.

My dissertation fills this gap in the historiography of the Scots-Irish and colonial America. By comparing the cultural maturation of Scots-Irish communities in the Pennsylvania and North Carolina backcountries from 1715 to 1775, this study describes the growth and preservation of a unique Scots-Irish identity while also pointing out its weaknesses. Following the methods of ethnohistorians, it examines Scots-Irish economic, social, religious, and political values, attitudes, and behavior as well as their interaction with other national groups in both colonies.

This approach provides a new perspective on the role of ethnicity in eighteenth-century America. The ability of the Scots-Irish to transplant much of their traditional way of life throughout the backcountry illustrates the power of national heritage over the American landscape. The changes that Scots-Irish settlers made in their culture and identity, however, equally demonstrate the limits of ethnicity in the face of the new environment.

Scots-Irish colonists' complex pattern of relations with other ethnic groups, moreover, opens a window through which we can better view the interaction of the diverse national groups in colonial America. Scots-Irish suspicion, distrust, and sometimes open conflict with their backcountry neighbors suggests the absence of
"Anglicization" on the pluralistic frontier. The gradual emergence of Scots-Irish residents' contact with and acceptance of other groups, as well as the realization of their surprising similarity with other European immigrants, however, also highlights the unique nature of assimilation in the backcountry.
CHAPTER 1

"AN INTEREST DISTINCT IN GARB AND ALL FORMALITIES:"
THE ULSTER BACKGROUND OF THE SCOTS-IRISH, 1600-1750

In 1656, the English Parliament complained that the Scots Presbyterians in Ulster persisted in maintaining "an interest distinct in garb and all formalities." Forty years later, a traveler in Ireland similarly observed that Ulster Scots were "very national and very helpful to each other against a third." The Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry reported in the same decade that Ulster Scots Presbyterianism was more a matter of "national faction than conscience."¹

As these statements suggest, Ulster Scots established a culture and community that dramatically set them apart from the rest of Ireland's inhabitants. This distinct Ulster Scots mentality emerged gradually over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Before 1630, the scarcity and cultural diversity of Scottish colonists

prevented them from coalescing into a distinct, cohesive community and encouraged them to assimilate into the dominant English and Irish cultures around them.

A separate Ulster Scots culture and community, however, began to take shape after 1630. The pressure of almost continuous persecution by English Protestants and warfare with native Catholics forced Scottish immigrants to recognize their differences with other national groups. Increasing emigration from Scotland not only expanded the Ulster Scots population, but also gave them a greater sense of commonality and togetherness. The settlement of the Glorious Revolution in Ireland in 1689 and a final burst of emigration in the 1690s culminated this ethnic awakening by providing Ulster Scots with a growing sense of confidence and pride in their unique position within Ireland. Unafraid of reprisals by other ethnic groups, they solidified their distinct and cohesive community throughout the eighteenth century.

The economic and political atmosphere of eighteenth-century Ireland, however, increasingly thwarted their efforts. By 1730, Ulster Scots had settled into the awkward position of culturally and socially separate from, but still economically and politically subservient to, others. The increasing difficulty of achieving their goals of ethnic and personal autonomy ultimately led thousands of Ulster Scots to embark on the long journey to colonial
America in search of better conditions between 1715 and 1775.

Significant Lowland Scottish colonization in northern Ireland began with, but was not limited to, King James I's creation of the Plantation of Ulster in 1607. Approximately 75-90,000 Lowland Scots moved to Ulster during five bursts of sustained immigration -- 1605-1620, 1630-1636, 1650-1660, 1675-1689, and 1693-1699. Probably less than half of these emigrants settled within the six counties that comprised the official Plantation. The majority of Scots settled on private estates outside the Plantation, especially in Counties Antrim and Down. By the end of significant migration in 1700, the Scottish population in northern Ireland had reached 150,000. Fifty years later, primarily through natural increase, that number had risen to 200,000.²

Scottish Lowlanders embarked on the journey to northern Ireland either to find economic security or to join family and friends. Early seventeenth-century Scotland's rising population forced many tenants from their homeland in search of land to lease. At the same time, steadily increasing rents, church tithes, and state taxes, combined with frequent harvest crises and famines, in the Lowlands pushed additional tenants out of Scotland. Finally, as the migration to Ulster became more extensive, many Scots left their homes simply to join neighbors and relatives who were moving to, or had already settled in, northern Ireland. For these emigrants, Ulster promised abundant land, better harvests, lower rents and taxes, and the comfort of nearby family and friends.3


The relatively small number of Scottish emigrants, as well as their social and religious diversity, before 1630 initially prevented Ulster Scots from forming a cohesive, distinct community. Because they lived in widely scattered settlements, the Ulster Scots were too far apart to create a unified ethnic community. The early migration, moreover, contained a diverse collection of landless tenants and wealthy lairds as well as Anglicans and Presbyterians. These social and religious differences overwhelmed any sense of commonality the first settlers may have felt based on their shared national heritage.4

This lack of geographical and cultural unity, in turn, encouraged the early Scottish colonists to settle in ethnically mixed communities and interact with the English and Irish. Although James I’s vision for the colonization of Ulster had included the removal of most native Irish tenants and the strict separation of English and Scottish settlers, this ethnic segregation failed to materialize in the 1610s and 1620s. Members of all three national groups shared tools and labor, exchanged goods and services, served on juries, ate and drank, attended church, and in a few cases, intermarried with one another.5

The arrival of several new waves of colonists and the outbreak of hostilities with the English and Irish between 1630 and 1690, however, dramatically changed Ulster Scots' position. Scottish emigrants' increasing cultural

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homogeneity after 1630 overwhelmed the social and religious differences that had divided previous colonists. Persecution by English Protestants and war with the native Catholics highlighted Ulster Presbyterians' differences with other national groups, drew them together, and inspired them to seek as much independence as possible. Intermittent periods of toleration and peace allowed Ulster Scots to achieve at least part of their desired autonomy and coalesce into a distinct ethnic group.6

The immigration of 50-60,000 Scotsmen to Ulster between 1630 and 1685 laid the foundation for this new ethnic awareness. This influx of new settlers raised the Ulster Scots population to nearly 100,000 and their proportion of total British residents of Ulster to about fifty percent. These new arrivals increased the homogeneity of the Ulster Scots community as well. Influenced by the emergence of the radical Covenanter

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movement in Scotland after 1635, Scots colonists now were overwhelmingly Presbyterian and anti-episcopalian.  

As Ulster Scots became more closely identified with Presbyterianism during the seventeenth century, English authorities launched a series of campaigns to suppress religious dissent in Ireland. In the 1630s, Charles I forced Ulster Presbyterians to conform to Anglicanism and swear an oath of allegiance to the established Church of Ireland. After their victory in the English Civil War, Oliver Cromwell and the Independents also purged Presbyterians from the official Irish Church in the 1650s. With the restoration of the monarchy and re-establishment of Anglicanism in 1660, the Church of Ireland once again persecuted Ulster Scots for practicing Presbyterianism.  

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While Ulster Scots' cooperation with English Protestants disintegrated after 1630, the rebellion of native Catholics in 1641 shattered the previous harmony between the Scots and Irish. Because Scots comprised the majority of the colonists' forces in Ulster, the revolt commonly pitted Scots against Irish. Releasing years of latent ethnic distrust, both sides committed numerous atrocities. Rebel massacres of Scottish women and children stamped an indelible hatred of Irishmen into Ulster Scots' collective memory. Scottish soldiers' slaughtering of Irish prisoners similarly heightened Irishmen's resentment of the perceived Scottish interlopers.9

The immigration of additional Scots to Ulster and the increasing English and Irish hostility towards them from 1630 to 1690 led directly to the development of a distinct Ulster Scots community and culture. The arrival of thousands of culturally homogeneous emigrants from Scotland, combined with the common experiences of resisting English persecutors and fighting Irish rebels, enabled Ulster Scots to coalesce into a cohesive, and partially

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autonomous, ethnic group. By 1690, Ulster Scots had made tremendous strides toward founding their own segregated communities, achieving social and political unity and independence, establishing a separate Presbyterian church structure, and preserving powerful ties with their homeland.

The emergence of increasingly exclusive Scots settlements in Ulster provides the most obvious evidence of this ethnic awakening. As more Scots arrived in northern Ireland, and their relations with other ethnic groups in the region deteriorated, Ulster Scots congregated in specific geographical areas. In Counties Antrim and Down, and the Scots-assigned precincts of the royal Plantation, the new arrivals combined with the original Scottish settlers to form neighborhoods sharply segregated from those of other nationalities. Scots in Antrim, for example, dominated the fertile areas along the coastline while the Irish occupied the mountainous and boggy interior.\(^{10}\)

These new Scottish colonists established ethnically exclusive settlements in other parts of Ulster as well. Because the bulk of Scottish emigrants after 1630

disembarked in the ports of Derry and Coleraine, Ulster Scots quickly became dominant in those cities and their hinterlands. By 1685, Ulster Scots comprised the majority of inhabitants in a wide swath stretching from County Antrim, northern Down, and northeastern Londonderry to northeastern Donegal, northwestern Tyrone, and even parts of southern Tyrone.¹¹

Within this increasingly exclusive ethnic enclave, Ulster Scots began to develop a sense of social unity between 1630 and 1690. The rapidly growing Ulster Scots population allowed more young men and women to choose their spouses within their own ethnic group. Scottish settlers, moreover, began to forge new social and economic connections among themselves. As neighboring Ulster Scots exchanged goods and services in local fairs and markets, shared tools and labor in the fields, enjoyed traditional Scottish holidays and pastimes, and attended regular Presbyterian services with one another, they cultivated powerful bonds of interdependence and camaraderie.¹²

The increasingly tight-knit communities served as networks of assistance and cooperation that united Ulster

¹¹Moody, et al., New History, III: 453; Robinson, Plantation of Ulster, pp. 112-14; Canny, Kingdom and Colony, p. 75; Cullen, Emergence of Modern Ireland, pp. 12, 38, 110; Gailey, "Scots Element," p. 5; and Leyburn, Scotch-Irish, pp. 93-94.

¹²Perceval-Maxwell, Scottish Migration, pp. 145-47, 173-74; Gillespie, Colonial Ulster, pp. 147, 156-60; and Robinson, Plantation of Ulster, pp. 158-63.

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Scots of all social classes. In times of trouble, neighbors and relatives joined together to help and comfort one another. When heavy rains threatened to destroy the harvest in County Down, for instance, the entire Scots neighborhood fasted, prayed, and worked continuously for two days to gather each families' grain. During the English persecution of the 1660s and 1670s, a Scottish landowner in eastern Ulster, Hugh Montgomery, allowed the local Presbyterian congregation to worship secretly in his barn and stables.\textsuperscript{13}

The deepening hostility of other ethnic groups towards them after 1630 encouraged Ulster Scots to unite politically as well. After suffering through the harassment imposed by Charles I in the 1630s, Ulster Scots Presbyterians joined together to present their special grievances to the English Parliament. The language they employed in their petition illustrates Ulster Scots' new sense of political cohesion and growing desire for autonomy. The Church of Ireland's "unblest" actions, they complained, had left "our souls...starved, our estates undone, our families impoverished, and many of us cut off and destroyed (emphasis mine)."\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13}Gillespie, Colonial Ulster, pp. 72, 76, 91-95, 147, 158-60; Perceval-Maxwell, Scottish Migration, pp. 173-74; Greaves, God's Other Children, p. 49; Westerkamp, Triumph of Laity, p. 64; and Kilroy, "Protestant Dissent," p. 31.

\textsuperscript{14}Quote from Moody, et al., New History, III: 284-85. See also Stevenson, Scottish Covenanters, pp. 19, 39.
This recognition of their distinct political interests led Ulster Scots to chart a precariously independent course through the labyrinthine politics of the English Civil War in Ulster. United around presbyterianism and the National Covenant, Ulster Scots used the King and Parliament's struggles to control Ireland to advance their own interests -- alternately cajoling both factions to declare allegiance to the Covenant. By 1649, they had become bold enough to launch their own unsuccessful campaign to establish an exclusively Scots Presbyterian dominion in Ireland.\textsuperscript{15}

At the center of Ulster Scots' social and political unity and ethnic distinctiveness lay a common commitment to Calvinist doctrine and presbyterian church government. Sparked by a number of revivals in the late 1620s and early 1630s, Ulster Scots Presbyterian uniformity deepened through the turmoil of war and the sufferings of persecution. By 1685, Ulster Scots Presbyterians had created an ecclesiastical organization, system of beliefs and rituals, and powerful membership base completely independent of the Church of Ireland.\textsuperscript{16}


A series of immensely popular presbyterian revivals in Counties Antrim and Down from 1625 to 1632 initiated the evolution of a united, independent Scots Presbyterian church in Ulster. By converting many previously irreligious and episcopalian settlers to Presbyterianism, these revivals greatly reduced Ulster Scots' cultural diversity. More important, they marked the first instance in which Ulster Scots acted independent of the established church. Radical, anti-episcopal ministers from Scotland preached to enormous crowds in open-air services -- called conventicles -- without the knowledge, and against the wishes, of Church of Ireland bishops.

The numerous rebellions by Covenanter Presbyterians against English domination in Scotland after 1636 further inspired the Ulster Scots to assert their religious autonomy. Thousands of Ulster Scots in the late 1630s defiantly swore the Solemn League and National Covenant -- Scots Covenanters' declaration of independence from England. When English officials banned Presbyterian worship services, sacraments, and marriages after 1650, Ulster Scots secretly held their ceremonies in private homes and barns.¹⁷

History, III: 379; Schmidt, Holy Fairs, pp. 29-31; Westerkamp, Triumph of Laity, pp. 36-38; Beckett, "Irish-Scottish Relations," p. 33; and Stevenson, Scottish Covenanters, pp. 294, 305.

¹⁷Brooke, Ulster Presbyterianism, pp. 17-18, 40-60; Moody, et al., New History, III: 379; Gillespie,
Most important, Ulster Scots established a presbyterian ecclesiastical structure entirely beyond the Church of Ireland's control. First, they founded at least 91 new congregations -- increasing the total from 13 to over 104 -- between 1630 and 1690. With the creation of the first Presbytery of Ulster -- the regular meeting of ministers and elders from congregations in the region -- by Scottish army chaplains during the Irish Rising of 1641, Ulster Scots initiated the process of organizing their own centralized church government. As the denomination expanded rapidly in the 1650s, the original lone presbytery grew into five.18

Ulster Scots Presbyterians' uniformity in religious doctrine and church government, combined with the reality of their unique circumstances in the pluralistic Irish society also served as the foundation of their ethnic unity. A shared acceptance of Calvinist theology -- predestination, original sin, the covenant of grace, and strict moral discipline -- as detailed in the National


Covenant and Westminster Confession of Faith united Scottish settlers throughout Ulster after 1630.19

On the local level, Presbyterianism provided the glue that held Ulster Scots' neighborhoods together. In Scottish-settled areas, virtually everyone belonged to the Presbyterian church. The local church served as the meeting place where neighbors congregated each week to renew their friendships as much as their souls. Ministers diligently visited every member to ensure their regular attendance at worship services and to test their understanding of church doctrine. Some even resorted to publicly announcing the names of absentees before communion services.20

The church's strict regulation of moral behavior maintained social conformity and unity within the community. Each Ulster Presbyterian congregation annually selected a committee of elders, known as the session, who investigated and punished a wide range of sins -- including Sabbath-breaking, fornication, and even unfair business practices -- and mediated quarrels and disputes among local


residents. The public nature of the session's judgements reinforced the neighborhood's sense of togetherness. Individuals accused of committing moral infractions had to admit their guilt and ask forgiveness before the entire congregation. Punishments commonly involved some form of public shame and humiliation, such as sitting on a stool in front of the congregation for three consecutive Sundays. 21

The rituals and practices of Ulster Presbyterians' worship services also enhanced their sense of social unity. For Scots Presbyterians, communion affirmed the individual's membership in the community of saints. Beginning with the revivals of the 1620s, Ulster Scots administered the sacrament twice a year in huge open-air services -- known as "holy fairs" -- that attracted thousands of people and lasted several days. The elders' distribution of tokens to those whom they deemed worthy of participating in the solemn rite reflected the event's communalistic nature. The gathering of the whole congregation around dozens of long tables to receive the Lord's Supper on Sunday served as a fitting climax to the entire collective experience. 22


The development of a distinct Ulster Scots ethnic identity after 1630 was best reflected in the powerful connections that remained between Ulster Scots and their homeland. In essence, the Scottish community in Ulster became a virtual extension of Lowland Scotland during the course of the century. The short distance from the eastern coast of Ulster to southwestern Scotland -- a mere thirteen miles in some parts -- greatly facilitated the development of a vibrant trade between the homeland and its colony. The constant passage of ships enabled customs and beliefs as well as people and goods to travel easily from one area to the other.²³

The steady flow of new settlers continuously reinforced Ulster Scots' cultural dependence on Scotland. During each new wave of emigration from 1630 to 1685, the new colonists brought their traditional beliefs and practices with them. Ulster Scots continued the Scottish pattern of settling in dispersed clusters of single-tenant farms. They raised cattle and sheep, and grew oats and barley as they had done back home. Their material culture,


Ulster Scots' increasingly hostile relations with their Irish and English neighbors drew them closer to their national origins. The presence of a Scottish army in Ulster during the Irish Rising of 1641 greatly revived the decimated Ulster Scots community by supplying dozens of Scots Presbyterian ministers, who subsequently founded the region's first presbytery. Church of Ireland harassment in the 1630s and 1660s forced thousands of Ulster Scots refugees back to Scotland. Moreover, it transformed the
Solemn League and National Covenant into the foundation of a Scottish cultural unity that bridged the Irish Sea for much of the seventeenth century.26

While Ulster Scots had achieved a considerable amount of cultural autonomy and distinctiveness by 1690, their position in Ireland remained tenuous. Ulster Scots numerical and political inferiority to the Irish and English prevented them from achieving complete ethnic separation. The constant fear of persecution by the Church of Ireland frequently forced Ulster Presbyterians to keep their cultural and social distinctiveness secret. Another concerted effort by either the English or Irish, they realized, could potentially wipe them off the island.

The eruption of another Catholic versus Protestant war in Ulster in 1688 clearly demonstrated Ulster Scots' continuing vulnerability. Although Protestants ultimately prevailed, this second Irish rebellion -- like the Rising of 1641 -- decimated the Scottish community in Ulster. When an Irish army invaded Ulster in 1689, thousands of Scots once again fled to Scotland. Those who remained sought shelter in the last two Protestant bastions in Ireland -- Londonderry and Enniskillen. Many refugees burned their homes and crops to prevent them from falling

26Stevenson, Scottish Covenanters; Furgol, "Military and Ministers," pp. 95-115; and Bardon, Shorter History, pp. 76-77.
into the hands of the enemy; the Irish army destroyed any that were left.\textsuperscript{27}

Despite the massive death and destruction, however, the Ulster Scots Presbyterian community quickly recovered its pre-war strength and even experienced another spurt of spectacular growth. Although many Scots had left Ulster altogether, a large number had stayed to defend their adopted home. With peace restored, these hardy souls rebuilt their homes and lives. Many of the refugees who had fled to Scotland also returned, and more important, sparked another burst of Scottish emigration -- the largest wave in the seventeenth century -- from 1694 to 1699.\textsuperscript{28}

Ulster Scots' survival of a second ethnic conflict and the influx of more emigrants in the 1690s firmly entrenched the Scottish community in Ulster. Their ability to withstand yet another attempt to force them out of Ireland convinced Ulster Scots that neither the English nor the Irish could ever completely remove them from Ireland. Moreover, the arrival of thousands of new Scottish settlers in the 1690s meant that Ulster Scots outnumbered both ethnic groups in many parts of Ulster. For the first time,


Ulster Scots Presbyterians in 1700 became the largest Protestant denomination in the region.

A growing awareness of their power within Ulster society gave the Scots a new sense of confidence and pride. They now insisted that English officials acknowledge their uniqueness. When the English Lord Advocate referred to them as "Irishmen" in a 1722 decision, Ulster Scots howled in protest. Scots also began to realize their own peculiar place in Ireland's history. Eighteenth-century Ulster Presbyterian writers pointed out that Scots were an integral chapter in the annals of Ulster. Their lengthy settlement in the region, they reasoned, provided solid justification for Ulster Scots' continued independent existence.²⁹

Ulster Scots Presbyterians' reaction to renewed repression by the Church of Ireland in the 1690s best illustrates this new ethnic pride. Instead of trying to avoid persecution by hiding their services in private homes and barns, Ulster Scots Presbyterians now held public services in their own churches, endured the trials and fines, and sent a barrage of petitions to the Dublin and London governments demanding an end to the harassment. At the same time, Ulster Presbyterian ministers published a

²⁹Brooke, Ulster Presbyterianism, pp. 64, 67-72, 112; Kilroy, "Protestant Dissent," pp. 211, 232-33; Connolly, "Ulster Presbyterians," pp. 26, 32; Cullen, Emergence of Modern Ireland, pp. 55-56; and Moody and Vaughan, New History, IV: 22.
series of pamphlets denouncing the established church and proudly justifying their right to exist as a separate denomination and community.\footnote{29}

This new sense of confidence and ethnic pride after 1690 intensified Ulster Scots' ethnic unity and cultural distinctiveness. For the first time, they openly flaunted their differences with the English and Irish. Now more than ever, Ulster Scots actively sought to increase their geographical, social, religious, and political autonomy within Ulster. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Ulster Scots' new confidence in their distinct position in Ulster society also began to distinguish them from their countrymen in Scotland.

The arrival of additional Scottish settlers in the 1690s solidified the emerging Scots-dominated sector of Ulster. As the new emigrants took up residence in settlements that already had Scottish majorities, they replaced the few remaining English and Irish inhabitants in the neighborhoods. By 1700, all of northeastern Ulster -- centered around Counties Antrim, Down, and Derry -- formed an almost exclusively Scots domain.\footnote{30}


\footnote{31}Bardon, History of Ulster, p. 149; W. H. Crawford, "Ulster as a Mirror of the Two Societies," in Ireland and Scotland, 1600-1850, ed. T. M. Devine and David Dickson (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1983), p. 61; Macafee and Morgan,
Ulster Scots' growing self-assurance after 1690 also enabled them to increase their social and economic unity. With the gradual disintegration of the Scottish landowning elite in Ulster after 1650, the wide disparity of wealth and status that had divided earlier settlers diminished. By 1700, the vast majority of Ulster Scots were tenants. Not a single Scot numbered among northern Ireland's landed elite; only a few continued to own land at all. The greater concentration of Ulster Scots within the ranks of agricultural tenants gave them an additional bond of commonality: they not only shared the same national origins, but similar lifestyles as well.32

The growth of linen manufacturing among Ulster tenants after 1690 also drew Ulster Scots families and communities closer together. By purchasing much of their families' food from neighboring farmers at local fairs and markets, linen weavers deepened the ties of debt, cooperation, and camaraderie that helped to hold Ulster Scots neighborhoods together. More important, weavers' unique practice of sub-

letting parcels of their leaseholds to their adult sons helped to preserve the close-knit nature of Ulster Scots families.\textsuperscript{33}

Imbued with a new ethnic pride and confidence, Ulster Scots also struggled to expand their limited social and economic autonomy after 1690. More Ulster Scots began to openly demonstrate an ethnic favoritism and exclusivity in their social and economic activities. As one commentator observed in the 1690s, Ulster Scots were "very national and very helpful to each other against a third [i.e., member of another ethnic group]." The Anglican Bishop of Derry complained in the same decade that Ulster Scots would "employ none nor trade with any that are not of their own sort."\textsuperscript{34}


\textsuperscript{34}Quotes from Gillespie, "Presbyterian Revolution," pp. 161-62. See also Brooke, Ulster Presbyterianism, p. 112; and Kilroy, "Protestant Dissent," p. 233.
Ulster Scots attempted to maintain their social segregation from other national groups by establishing their own schools. Virtually every Presbyterian minister in eighteenth-century Ulster conducted a grammar school or academy in which they taught their parishioners' children the basics of reading and writing, inculcated a sense of their cultural and historical uniqueness, and prepared the brightest young men for further theological study at Scottish universities.\textsuperscript{35}

Ulster landlords' lack of capital enabled many tenants to achieve a limited amount of economic autonomy. Depending on their tenants to use their own resources to improve the land on their estates, landlords granted them the unprecedented right of selling or mortgaging their leases to others. This unique "Ulster Custom" allowed tenants to move freely from one estate to another in search of better leases and more fertile soil. By permitting their larger tenants to sub-lease parts of their leaseholds, Ulster landlords also enabled many tenants to become landlords in their own right.\textsuperscript{36}


Increased involvement in market agriculture and domestic industry further increased many eighteenth-century tenants' independence. As skilled craftsmen, weavers and spinners circumvented the landlords' control by exporting their linen cloth and thread directly to foreign markets. Other tenant farmers escaped the landlords' control by selling surplus grain and livestock to neighboring linen workers or in foreign markets.37

Increased market activity, however, did not undermine Ulster Scots' traditional desire for economic autonomy. Tenants focused primarily on feeding their families and attaining social and economic independence for themselves and their children, not making profits. For most, independence meant leasing a plot of land big enough to provide sufficient food for their families. As Ulster's population rose in the eighteenth century, more farmers turned to linen manufacturing and commercial agriculture, which allowed them to subsist on smaller leaseholds and sub-let lands to their sons -- thus assuring the entire family of its independence.38

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38 Kirkham, "To Pay the Rent," p. 101; Crawford, "Ulster as Mirror," pp. 62-63; David N. Doyle, Ireland,
This growing sense of self-assurance inspired some Ulster Scots to participate in Irish public affairs for the first time since the 1630s. The rapidly growing class of Scottish merchants and professionals dominated the local governments in the emerging Ulster ports during the 1690s. Eighteenth-century Ulster Scots leaders, moreover, began to forge a distinct political culture based on classical republicanism. While justifying their opposition to the Anglican establishment, Presbyterian intellectuals combined the rhetoric and principles of English Whigs with Scottish Enlightenment philosophy. Embracing the doctrines of virtue and practical morality, they envisioned an ideal society where rulers and citizens placed the public good above self-interest. When rulers violated this maxim, they claimed, the people were obligated to resist them.\(^3\)

Ulster Scots also demonstrated this new confidence and openness in their religious affairs. Unafraid of English persecution, they began to display their Presbyterian


beliefs and rituals in public worship services, weddings, and session meetings while redoubling their efforts to create an independent Presbyterian ecclesiastical structure. Throughout the eighteenth century, Ulster Presbyterians acted more like members of a separate national denomination than a collection of dissenters from the established church.\textsuperscript{40}

The founding of the General Synod of Ulster in 1691 reflected this new attitude. By establishing a centralized governing body to oversee all matters concerning the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Ulster Scots declared their total independence from the Anglican Church. They now had their own ecclesiastical hierarchy -- from individual congregations and their sessions to regional presbyteries and the General Synod -- completely separate from the Church of Ireland.\textsuperscript{41}

The eruption of numerous doctrinal conflicts among Ulster Presbyterians in the early eighteenth century best illustrates the church's new status as a separate national denomination. Between 1720 and 1750, three factions, each


with its own unique interpretation of Calvinist theology and the church's role in the world, seceded from the Ulster Synod and proclaimed themselves the true Presbyterian Church. Despite their criticism of the Synod, these dissenters remained part of the same Scots Presbyterian religious system in Ulster. Although they disagreed on doctrine and church government, they were still all Presbyterians. Ironically, the splinter groups assumed the same dissenting role within the Presbyterian Church that Ulster Presbyterians themselves had previously played vis a vis the Church of Ireland.  

As Ulster Scots Presbyterians became more secure in their permanent position in Ulster, they also began to develop an ethnic identity distinct from that of their Scottish homeland. While Ulster Scots remained closely linked to Scotland through commerce and the continued education of their intellectuals and professionals in Scottish universities, they also adopted a mentality that set them apart from their countrymen. After more than a century in Ireland, eighteenth-century Ulster Scots considered themselves as much Irish as Scottish.

Both Ulster Scots and their former countrymen in Scotland after 1700 recognized that cultural and social differences had emerged between them. Faculty and

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42 Miller, "Presbyterianism and Modernization," pp. 68-69; and Brooke, Ulster Presbyterianism, p. 112.
administrators at Scottish universities clearly distinguished the Ulster Scots students from native ones. In registration books at the University of Glasgow, officials identified Ulster Scots as "Scoto-Hiberni" -- roughly translated as Scotch-Irish -- to separate them from Scottish pupils. Native scholars resented and disliked the "great number of stupid Irish teagues who attend[ed] classes two or three years" at Scottish universities.\textsuperscript{43}

These distinctions between Ulster and Scottish students reflected Ulster Scots' growing cultural divergence from their homeland. Ulster Scots tenants throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries -- especially linen weavers and spinners after 1690 -- revealed more capitalistic and market-oriented values than their Scottish counterparts. Ulster landlords' practice of requiring tenants to pay their rents in cash forced increasing numbers of Ulster Scots to sell surplus products in local or international markets.\textsuperscript{44}

Ulster Presbyterians officially demonstrated their independence from Scotland by establishing the General Synod of Ulster in 1691. While still acknowledging the

\textsuperscript{43}McBride, "School of Virtue," pp. 74, 89.

Scottish Church as its forbearer and continuing to seek the advice of Scottish ministers, the eighteenth-century Synod of Ulster refused to be bound by any of its decisions or actions. Where Irish presbyteries previously had requested ministerial candidates from the Scottish General Assembly, the Synod now sent its own aspirants -- who had been born and raised in Ulster -- to Scotland to receive their educations before returning to serve Ulster congregations.45

Because Presbyterians' relations with the state and other religious denominations differed in Ulster and Scotland after 1690, their doctrine and worship practices began to diverge as well. While Presbyterianism became the established church in Scotland in 1690, it remained a dissenting denomination in Ulster. Ulster Scots were more obsessed with doctrine, orthodoxy, and ecclesiastical organization than their Scottish counterparts. A heated debate over individual salvation and subscription to the Westminster Confession that led to a division in the Synod of Ulster in 1725, for example, did not occur in Scotland.46

45 Westerkamp, Triumph of Laity, pp. 68-69; Gailey, "Scots Element," p. 9; and Brooke, Ulster Presbyterianism, p. 93.

Finally, the reality of dealing with the political and socially dominant English Anglican elite in Ulster enhanced Ulster Scots' differences with their fellow countrymen. Forced to co-exist with the Church of Ireland, Ulster Scots Presbyterians became more flexible and tolerant in their relations with other Protestants. Although the Seceders and Covenanters remained vehemently anti-episcopalian, mainstream Ulster Presbyterians recognized the need to cooperate with the established church in order to maintain their limited independence.

Despite Scots Presbyterians' ability to secure a remarkable amount of cultural independence, they still remained subservient to others. The disintegration of the Scottish landed elite in Ulster left Scots tenants completely dependent on English landowners. Although tenants had gained some autonomy through sub-letting, long leases, and the "Ulster Custom," English landlords gradually eliminated these freedoms after 1720. As leases expired in the 1720s and 1730s, planters imposed shorter terms and higher rents. They also took away tenants' ability to sub-let by reducing the size of their holdings and offering leases directly to the sub-tenants.47

The strategies that Ulster Scots tenants adopted to reinforce their social and economic sovereignty, such as sub-dividing their leaseholds, ironically deepened this subservience. The continued growth of Ulster's population nullified the benefits of sub-letting small sections of the family's leasehold to adult sons. As the offspring of the second generation reached maturity, fathers could not give land to all of their sons. By the 1750s, many young Ulster Scots were left without the means of providing for their families or of achieving the independence their fathers had envisioned for them.\textsuperscript{48}

Similarly, the adoption of market agriculture and linen manufacturing only increased the perilous nature of tenants' subsistence. Now, not only a bad harvest, but also a downturn in the demand for the farmers' product could undermine his ability to feed his family. Throughout the early eighteenth century, Ulster Scots' subservience to nature and distant markets resulted in frequent economic crises. Harvest failures and famines swept across the region in 1718, 1726, 1728-29, and 1739-41 while the crash of the international linen market sparked an extended period of starvation and turmoil as late as the 1770s.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{48}Dickson, \textit{Ulster Emigration}, pp. 10-17; and Bardon, \textit{History of Ulster}, p. 209.

Continued English persecution during the early eighteenth century limited Ulster Scots' political independence as well. In 1704, the Irish Parliament passed the Sacramental Test Act, which required all public officials to prove that they had taken the sacrament according to Church of Ireland practice. For the rest of the eighteenth century, this and similar acts prevented Ulster Scots from holding public office. Even when the repression ceased after 1719, the continued presence of discriminatory laws and Ulster Scots' vivid memories of the harassment left them feeling like second-class citizens.  

For growing numbers of eighteenth-century Ulster Scots Presbyterians, the daily reminders of their continued subservience began to outweigh the considerable independence they had attained. Even though they had forged their own distinct community, society, and religion in northern Ireland, the erosion of their economic and political autonomy after 1700 led more Scots to look elsewhere for better opportunities. Once again, just as their ancestors had done in the previous century, thousands

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of Scottish settlers in Ulster embarked on a long journey to a new home -- the British American colonies.

From 1715 to 1775, approximately 200,000 to 250,000 Ulster residents immigrated to colonial British America. A significant proportion of these settlers arrived in two periods of extremely intense immigration -- 1725-1729 and 1765-1774. Some scholars estimate that close to 70,000 Ulster families crossed the ocean in these fourteen years alone. In the decades between these two peaks, the stream of Ulster migrants continued, but at a much slower pace. Aside from a small burst in 1740-1, the flow of Ulster colonists to America in this period averaged less than one thousand per year.51

Although a significant number of Anglo-Irish Episcopalians and Quakers as well as native Irish Catholics made the transoceanic voyage, Ulster Scots Presbyterians comprised the majority of eighteenth-century Ulster emigrants. Approximately eighty percent of Ulster immigrants were Protestants, and Ulster Presbyterians constituted seventy percent of the Protestants. All of the region's ethno-religious groups were represented in the early years of the migration, especially during the peak

period between 1725 and 1729, but Ulster Scots predominated in the latter decades.  

Like their ancestors who had moved from Scotland to Ireland in the previous century, Ulster Scots embarked on the long journey to America in search of the economic and social independence they could no longer achieve for themselves and their children in Ulster. The rapidly rising rents, shorter leases, and sub-divided leaseholds that Ulster landlords imposed on their tenants after 1720, combined with frequent harvest failures and famines, undermined the virtual autonomy that many had carved for themselves and left them with little opportunity for passing that independence onto their children. For these immigrants, colonial America promised abundant cheap land, no rents or tithes, and bountiful harvests.

Although the Scots did not flee Ulster to escape persecution by the Church of Ireland and English government officials -- as early historians claimed, the memory of past repression made the decision to migrate easier. As recent scholars have pointed out, English harassment of

52Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, pp. 137, 149; Doyle, Irishmen and Revolutionary America, pp. 51-57; Dickson, Ulster Emigration, p. 4; and Wokeck, "Irish Immigration," pp. 136-37.

Ulster Presbyterians had essentially ceased by 1720. The continued presence of the discriminatory laws in the Irish legal code, however, symbolized Ulster Scots' continuing subservience to the English elite. Proprietary colonies like Pennsylvania offered the chance to escape this Anglican domination.54

As the migration intensified during the eighteenth century, increasing numbers of Ulster Scots also chose to immigrate in order to join friends or family members who had already settled in America. Most Ulster Scots extended families made the voyage in a gradual, piecemeal process. The hardiest, and most adventurous, member of the family -- commonly a young, single male -- emigrated first. Once established in America, these pioneers encouraged their relatives and former neighbors back in Ireland to follow them to the New World. Over the next several years, the other members of the family gradually left their homeland as well.55


The thousands of Ulster Scots who left northern Ireland between 1710 and 1775 carried more than just clothes, family heirlooms, and other material possessions with them. They transported a unique set of beliefs, attitudes, and customs to the eighteenth-century American backcountry as well. In essence, they would try to mold their new homeland into the ideal Ulster Scots Presbyterian world, which they had been increasingly unable to maintain in Ireland.

Congregating in ethnically exclusive communities, Ulster Scots had gradually created a unique culture between 1630 and 1750 based on their common Scottish origins and their shared experiences in Ireland. Encouraged by Ulster landlords' inability to control their estates, they had pursued personal autonomy for themselves and their children through a combination of self-sufficiency and commercial production. Committed to Calvinist doctrine, Ulster Scots had established their own church structure and openly celebrated their presbyterian rituals. Opposing the establishment of the Anglican church, their intellectuals had begun to fashion a political culture centered on the ideals of classical republicanism and natural rights philosophy.

Most of all, Ulster Scots Presbyterians had forged a unique cultural heritage that spanned more than a century of settlement in Ulster. After nearly one hundred years of
warfare with the native Irish and persecution by the ruling English elite, they had developed an acute awareness of their own ethnic identity and cultivated a powerful determination to remain a cohesive, separate, and autonomous group. Alone in a hostile world, they had learned the need for ethnic unity as they struggled to assert their independence in every aspect of their lives.
In 1718, James Galbraith, accompanied by his adult sons John, Andrew, and James, Jr., embarked on the long journey from northern Ireland to southeastern Pennsylvania. Landing in Philadelphia, James and his sons quickly made their way to the burgeoning Scots-Irish settlement in Donegal Township, Chester County, on the colony's western frontier. Over the next several years, they quietly blended into the surrounding community of their fellow countrymen. James, Sr., helped to found Donegal Presbyterian Church in 1720 and served as one its ruling elders for decades. Each of the sons, meanwhile, married into the families of other Ulster immigrants in the region.

As they became part of the community around them, James and his sons also began to fulfill their desires for economic security and prosperity. Intent on establishing his own independent farm, each man took up a modest tract of land within a few years of his arrival. The desire for greater independence, however, soon led to a search for
more ambitious economic pursuits. John erected the region's first grist and saw mills in 1721. James, Jr. opened a small trading post and began to buy and sell furs and imported goods with the local Delaware Indians. As their dreams of commercial success deepened, the men joined with their neighbors in signing dozens of petitions requesting the construction of roads leading from Donegal to the markets at Lancaster and Philadelphia.

The Galbraith's economic achievements quickly led to local political prominence. With the creation of Lancaster County in 1729, each of the men began to play active roles in the new county's government. James, Sr., served as the county's first coroner and as justice of the peace in the neighborhood from 1730 to 1746. John was elected sheriff in 1730 and captain of the local militia company during the threat of Indian attack in 1748. Andrew became especially influential, sitting on the county Court of Quarter Sessions throughout the 1730s and 1740s and representing the county in the General Assembly from 1731 to 1738.¹

The Galbraith family's efforts to find success on the Pennsylvania frontier were part of a much larger

process. Between 1715 and 1750, thousands of Ulster immigrants, like the Galbraiths, struggled to transplant their distinct culture and community within the Pennsylvania backcountry. Like their ancestors in northern Ireland in the previous century, the initial Scots-Irish colonists in Pennsylvania attempted to re-create as many of the social, economic, religious, and political practices and institutions that they had known in their homeland as possible. With little interference from the colony's proprietors, the Scots-Irish established Presbyterian churches, took up independent farmsteads, and sought to engage in commercial agriculture.

In some respects, Pennsylvania's unique environment even allowed the Scots-Irish to improve on the conditions they had known in Ireland. William Penn's policy of toleration for all ethno-religious groups granted the Ulster Scots more economic and political freedom than they had become accustomed to in Ulster. The colony's abundant land and the proprietors' generous terms for selling it allowed many immigrants to achieve the personal independence they had found so elusive back home. The colony's political openness also enabled them to resume the political activity they had once known in Ireland.

The ability to re-create their traditional culture, in turn, allowed the Scots-Irish to preserve the powerful ethnic identity they had forged during the century of
colonization in northern Ireland. Although the colony's unique pattern of ethnic pluralism forced them to alter their view of the native Irish and Anglo-Irish who had left Ireland with them, the Scots-Irish still sought to separate themselves from others as much as possible. Congregating in ethnically segregated communities, they observed a strict pattern of ethnic exclusivity in most of their social, economic, and political activities.

The early eighteenth century witnessed a period of intense immigration into southeastern Pennsylvania. Between 1715 and 1750, hundreds of thousands of Germans, Swiss, English, Scots, and Irishmen disembarked at Philadelphia and New Castle, Delaware, and began searching for homes in the New World. As they sought to find familiarity and security in a strange land, these national groups established ethnic enclaves in which they re-created as much of their traditional culture as possible.²

Ulster Scots immigrants comprised a significant portion of this larger movement. Although a few shiploads

of Ulster residents had arrived in the colony before 1710, a steady stream of Scots-Irish colonists began only after 1715. Over the next thirty-five years, approximately 30,000 Scots-Irish men and women entered the colony through Philadelphia and New Castle. In July 1729, James Logan, the Penn family's agent in Pennsylvania, declared that "it now looks as if Ireland or the inhabitants of it were to be transplanted hither." Six years later, the colony's governor Patrick Gordon reported that "vast...crouds of people yearly poured in upon us from Ireland..., who fill every vacant spot they can find."³

As increasing numbers of Scots-Irish settlers arrived in the colony, Pennsylvania authorities encouraged them to populate the western frontier. In 1729, John, Thomas, and Richard Penn instructed Logan to persuade the Scots-Irish to take up lands "either backwards to Susquehanna or north in ye country beyond the other settlements." In fact, Logan had been sending groups of Scots-Irishmen to the western part of Chester County since 1720. By the middle of the century, provincial leaders like Benjamin Franklin

had begun to advocate the settlement of "Irish Protestants" to counterbalance the growing number of Germans in the colony and to "restore by degrees the predominancy of our language."4

With this encouragement from provincial officials, thousands of Scots-Irish immigrants found their new homes on the extreme western edge of the colony between 1720 and 1750. By the latter date, approximately 12,000 Scots-Irish men and women resided in the Pennsylvania backcountry, constituting roughly one-third of the region's total population. These frontier Scots-Irish, moreover, comprised nearly forty percent of the total number of Ulster emigrants who arrived in the colony during the early eighteenth century.5


5I have based these figures on a surname analysis of the persons listed in the tax lists of twelve townships -- Paxton, Donegal, Hempfield, Martic, Coleraine, Hanover, Hidelberg, and Bethel in Lancaster County, and East Pennsborough, West Pennsborough, Middleton, and Hopewell in Cumberland County for 1750-1751 -- and of the persons obtaining land warrantees in Lancaster and Cumberland Counties between 1733 and 1750. See Lancaster County Tax Lists, 1748-1855, Record Group 44, Pennsylvania County Records, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC); Cumberland County Tax Lists, 1750-3, 1762-70, Record Group 44, Pennsylvania County Records, PHMC; Lancaster County Land Warrantees, 1733-1855, in William H. Egle, ed., Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series, 30 vols.
The first Scots-Irish colonists in the Pennsylvania backcountry settled along the eastern bank of the Susquehanna River in the northwestern end of what was then Chester County between 1715 and 1720. Shortly thereafter, another group took up residence along Octorara and other creeks in the southwestern end of the county. When the western sections of Chester County were formed into the new county of Lancaster in 1729, the Scots-Irish occupied part or all of eight of its seventeen townships -- Drumore, Martic, Sadsbury, and Leacock in the south and Donegal, Hempfield, Paxton, and Derry in the northwest.

After 1730, Scots-Irish settlement spread across the Susquehanna River into the present-day counties of York and Cumberland. In York, the Scots-Irish occupied the area known as the "Barrens" in the county's southeastern corner -- including the current townships of Chanceford, Fawn, Peachbottom, Hopewell, and Windsor. Further west in Cumberland, they comprised the bulk of the area's settlers and consequently founded communities throughout the entire county. By 1750, four distinct areas of Scots-Irish

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(Harrisburg: state printers, 1894-1899), XXIV: 349-568; and Cumberland County Land Warrantees, 1733-1855, in ibid., XXIV: 627-792. See also the estimates of the Scots-Irish percentage of the colonial Lancaster County and Pennsylvania populations in James Lemon, "The Best Poor Man's Country": A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), pp. 18 (Table 6), 79-80 (Tables 14 and 15).
colonization had emerged -- all of Cumberland, southeastern York, northwestern Lancaster, and southeastern Lancaster.⁶

As they populated the early Pennsylvania backcountry, the Scots-Irish sought to transplant as much of their Ulster culture as possible in the New World. In many respects, they successfully re-created many of the beliefs, customs, and institutions they had known in Ireland in their new homes. Presbyterian churches and practices, the desire to achieve personal independence for themselves and their children, and a complex economy that included both commercial production and subsistence agriculture, provided the foundation for Scots-Irish culture on the Pennsylvania frontier, just as they had done in Ulster.

Taking advantage of William Penn's offer of toleration for all religious denominations, the first Scots-Irish residents of Pennsylvania quickly established the Presbyterian institutions that their ancestors had struggled to create for years in northern Ireland. Within a decade of the initial Scots-Irish settlement in western Chester County (Lancaster County after 1729), five

Presbyterian congregations had appeared in the area. As Scots-Irish settlers crossed the Susquehanna after 1730, they founded at least ten additional churches in what would become York and Cumberland Counties. By 1750, the Pennsylvania backcountry contained a total of nineteen Presbyterian congregations.7

The sharp increase in Presbyterian ministers in the backcountry between 1720 and 1750 also reflected the continuing importance of Presbyterianism to Ulster immigrants. The first Presbyterian clergymen, Reverend Adam Boyd, arrived in western Chester County in 1724. Two years later, Reverend James Anderson joined Boyd as the only other minister in the region. In 1732, a mere five Presbyterian clergymen lived in the backcountry. A brief seven years later, however, the area contained eleven resident ministers. Over the next ten years, moreover, four additional men accepted pastorates with local churches.8

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8Klett, Records of Presbyterian Church, pp. 102, 123, 131, 141, 143, 160. See also the county and church histories cited in fn #6 above.
Once they had established churches and began to receive ministers, the backcountry Scots-Irish quickly founded the same Presbyterian ecclesiastical structure that they had known in Ulster. Each congregation elected elders and formed sessions to conduct church business and enforce moral discipline within the community. The sessions, in turn, guided the congregation's admission to the official governing body of the Presbyterian Church in America -- the Synod of Philadelphia, founded by previous Presbyterian settlers in Maryland and Delaware in 1706. Finally, backcountry Presbyterians, under the Synod's direction, established the middle level of presbyterian hierarchy by forming the Presbytery of Donegal in 1732.9

Presbyterianism quickly assumed the same central role in backcountry Scots-Irish communities that it had played in northern Ireland. The Presbyterian meeting house became a gathering place for local residents. On numerous occasions, Scots-Irish inhabitants in Lancaster County petitioned the county court to construct roads that provided the "nearest and best way by the Presbyterian meeting house." When the proprietors wanted to explain their new policy for collecting overdue land fees to Scots-

9Session Book, 1743-1749, Middle Springs Presbyterian Church Records, HSP; Minutes and Proceedings of the Presbytery of Donegal, 1732-1750, 1759-1769, Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS); and Klett, Records of Presbyterian Church, p. 132.
Irish settlers in Donegal Township in 1738, they posted the proclamation on the front door of the local church.10

Besides a deep commitment to Presbyterianism, the Scots-Irish carried their intense desire for personal autonomy to Pennsylvania as well. For most Scots-Irishmen, independence continued to mean property. They hoped to obtain enough land to provide separate plots for themselves and their adult children. In fact, this yearning for land and autonomy -- and their increasing inability to achieve it in Ulster -- had motivated many Ulster Scots to migrate to Pennsylvania in the first place. The local justices in the North West Circuit of Ulster complained in 1729 that ships' agents roamed the northern Irish countryside assuring the people that "in America they may get good land to them and their posterity for little or no rent." One such advertisement proclaimed that previous immigrants "now work for themselves, and enjoy the fruits of their industry."11


The abundance of land in Pennsylvania and the Penn family's policy of selling it on lenient terms actually allowed the Scots-Irish to achieve more personal independence than they had ever dreamed of in Ireland. The ability to purchase their own land enabled them to escape the domination of unscrupulous English landlords, under whom they had suffered in Ulster. For the first time, most families were able to break through the invisible barrier between landowners and tenants that had restricted them for centuries in Ulster. Between 1733 and 1750, well over one thousand Scots-Irishmen obtained warrantees for tracts of land in Lancaster County alone. Probably two or three times that number purchased parcels of land in Cumberland and York during the same period. 12

The Pennsylvania Scots-Irish quickly transformed landowning into a prerogative. Refusing to become tenants again, they proclaimed their right to occupy whatever land they pleased. In 1728, James Logan, the Penn's agent in the colony, expressed amazement that people who came from a country where an individual could do nothing to his land without the landlord's permission would, in Pennsylvania,

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"think [they] have a right or act as if [they] had one to take possession of either the proprietors or other persons lands without any manner of leave or permission." Scots-Irishmen even demanded that the proprietors permit them to purchase their own land. When the Penns proposed to grant the lots in Carlisle, Cumberland County, "on leases for lives," the local residents "could not be brought to think of any other tenure than a fee simple."13

The reaction of the Scots-Irish residents of Donegal Township to the proprietors' efforts to collect overdue land fees in 1733 perfectly illustrates this insistence on landowning. Many of the area's original settlers had neglected to pay the initial purchase price and the annual quitrents on their land for over a decade. When they learned of the proprietors' intention to collect these fees, the Donegalians petitioned Thomas Penn for leniency. Fearing rumors that the Penns intended to sell their lands to speculators, they announced their "utter aversion...at being tenants." Explaining that "we have been...so much oppressed and ravaged by landlords in our own country," they advised the proprietors that becoming tenants again

was something "we can never, with any pleasure think of subjecting our families unto."¹⁴

With this view of their right to own land, many Scots-Irish immigrants simply squatted — i.e., settled on lands without paying for them — wherever they found an empty tract. Impoverished by the voyage from Ireland, they lacked the capital to pay for the land or even to have it surveyed and the boundaries properly marked. James Logan complained in 1727 that Irish immigrants "sitt frequently down on any spott of vacant land they can find." Most, he continued, "pretend they would buy, but not one in twenty has anything to pay with." In March 1731, for example, "a gang of Scotch-Irish" seized a tract of proprietary land in York County — known as Conestoga Manor — and "threatened to hold it by force of arms."¹⁵

Engrossed in their own rights to the land, the Scots-Irish all too often ignored those of others, especially Indians. Many Scots-Irish families squatted on lands they

¹⁴Petition of Inhabitants of Donegal to Thomas Penn, June 26, 1733, Penn-Physick Papers, Penn Papers, HSP, VI: 29.

knew the Penns had not yet purchased from the Indians. From 1730 to 1755, the proprietors waged a seemingly endless war against Scots-Irish squatters in Indian territory on the colony's frontier. In the Spring of 1750, for instance, they evicted over forty-two illegal settlers from Indian property in northern Cumberland County. Other Scots-Irishmen used alcohol to cheat Indians out of their land. One Cumberland County resident got the Delaware warrior Jercotta drunk in 1735 and convinced the Indian to barter his land for a few articles of clothing.\textsuperscript{16}

The Scots-Irish desire for land and autonomy was so great that they often quarreled among themselves over property boundaries and titles. James Steel, the provincial surveyor, expressed disbelief that the Scots-Irish were "so litigious and troublesome one to another that they are perpetually falling out about that which do's not properly belong to either of them." When Lancaster County neighbors John Harris and John Hill both claimed the same tract of land in 1734, Harris proclaimed Hill a "scoundrel," sued him for trespass, and ultimately appealed to Steel for assistance, even though he had not even paid for the land.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16}Minutes of Provincial Council, V: 441-48, 454, 469; and Samuel Blunston to Thomas Penn, Aug. 25, 1735, Lancaster County Papers, HSP, I: 19.

\textsuperscript{17}James Steel letter cited in Horle, et al., Lawmaking and Legislators, p. 888; James Steel to John Harris, March 4, 1734, Steel Letterbook, Logan Papers, HSP, p. 70; Steel
Scots-Irish immigrants also tried to re-create the complex economy to which they had grown accustomed in northern Ireland. By 1720, most Ulster Scots tenant farmers, while still growing as much of their family's food on their own leaseholds as possible, were beginning to sell flax, linen yarn and thread, and surplus crops and livestock in local and distant markets throughout northern Ireland. Most Ulstermen immigrated to Pennsylvania with expectations of continuing this mixture of self-sufficiency and commercial production in their new homes. In this one instance, however, the novel environment of the Pennsylvania frontier, at least temporarily, prevented many Scots-Irish colonists from achieving the same level of economic production that they had attained in Ulster.

As the new arrivals from Ireland took up their small farmsteads in the Pennsylvania backcountry from 1720 to 1750, most of their efforts and resources were necessarily focused on building cabins and clearing sufficient land to house and feed their families. Because their primary concern was providing subsistence and independence for themselves and their children, most immigrants spent their first years in Pennsylvania trying to maintain their families' self-sufficiency. Many used the modest savings...
they had brought from Ulster to purchase the land and to make the initial improvements. While asking for government assistance during a threat of Indian hostilities in 1746, one group of Lancaster County residents explained that they had "expended what little subsistence they had in clearing and improving their lands."18

Once they had cleared enough land to provide for their families, the Scots-Irish established local exchange networks similar to those they had formed in Ireland. Men commonly traded grain, livestock, tools, and labor with neighbors to supplement their families' self-sufficiency. As a 1729 petition from western Chester County explained, "trade and commerce among ourselves [is done] mostly by way of barter." The small, but growing group of Scots-Irish artisans played a crucial role in the development of this traditional economy. These craftsmen traded their goods and services for farmers' surplus produce. James McCollough, of York County, wove sixty-three yards of linen for James Frier in 1749 in exchange for a hog. As these local networks grew, Scots-Irish neighborhoods flooded

county courts with pleas for the construction of roads from their homes to local mills. ¹⁹

Scots-Irish settlers, however, like many other colonial Americans, were not content with simple trades and exchanges. Accustomed to selling surplus produce at regional markets in Ulster, they fully expected to engage in commercial production in their new homes. Once they had met their families' needs, backcountry farmers began to search for access to both local and distant markets. The incredible number of petitions for the construction of roads to Lancaster, Philadelphia, and Baltimore that Scots-Irishmen sent to county courts and the provincial government best reflects this strong desire for market production. Between 1729 and 1742, the Scots-Irish residents of Lancaster County sent at least thirteen such petitions to the county court and four more to the governor and general assembly. In each of these petitions, they

made their desire for "speedy and easy conveyance of their commodities to the market" abundantly clear.\textsuperscript{20}

Motivated by this desire, a small, but growing, number of Scots-Irish farmers grew wheat and flax, distilled whiskey, spun linen yarn or wove linen cloth, and raised cattle which they carried to Philadelphia or Baltimore for sale. The ledgerbook kept by John Harris at his ferry on the Susquehanna documents increasing numbers of Cumberland County farmers carrying their produce to Lancaster and Philadelphia. John Erwin, for example, paid Harris seven shillings and sixpence for ferrying his "wagon and horses with load" across the river on April 15, 1751. Scots-Irish settlers' numerous complaints about the difficulty of shipping goods to market also implied that at least a few of them were accepting the high costs of sending their commodities to Philadelphia. A 1746 petition from Lancaster County claimed that local residents "depended on"

their sales of "stocks of cattle" in the city "for raising money."\(^{21}\)

As they sold their surplus produce for cash, some Scots-Irishmen began to purchase goods from local shopkeepers. Between 1749 and 1751, sixty-eight Scots-Irish inhabitants in northwestern Lancaster County frequented John Harris's store. Michael Grimes, for instance, bought seven shillings and fourpence worth of sundries and beer at the establishment on November 1, 1750. Others procured supplies directly from Philadelphia merchants. Robert McPherson, of York County, paid Thomas Minshall for carrying salt from the city in January 1751. Philadelphia merchant William Peters had done enough business with Lancaster residents by 1741 that he inquired about the possibility of opening a store in the county seat. Those who lacked access to local or distant merchants, sometimes purchased products from the numerous peddlers who traveled through the countryside.\(^{22}\)

\(^{21}\)Accounts of John Erwin, Christopher Houston, John Cunningham, and John Finley, John Harris Ledgerbook, 1748-1775, John Harris Collection, HSP; Petition of Lancaster County Magistrates, et al., January 29, 1730, in Montgomery, Pennsylvania Archives, Sixth Series, XIV: 267-68; Minutes of Provincial Council, III: 394-95, 522; and MacKinney and Hoban, Votes and Proceedings, III: 2196, 2253, 2261; IV: 3126-27, 3436-37.

\(^{22}\)Based on surname analysis of the customers listed in John Harris Ledgerbook, Harris Collection, HSP; receipt from Thomas Minshall to Robert McPherson, Jan. 29, 1751, Miscellaneous Papers, Robert McPherson Papers, HSP, folder 1; Thomas Cookson to William Peters, March 11, 1741, Lancaster County Papers, HSP, I: 26; receipt from Thomas
Trade with the Delawares and other Indian tribes that continued to populate the Pennsylvania frontier before the French and Indian War comprised an important source of commercial activity for some Scots-Irishmen. Settlers throughout the region illegally sold the "spiretus liquers" they distilled on their farms to local Indians. Provincial authorities and county courts waged an unsuccessful war to stamp out this illicit trade throughout the mid-eighteenth century. The Lancaster County Court fined Andrew Broughel ten pounds and court costs for "selling rum to a certain Indian called Delaware John" in November 1734. But, as late as 1754, one observer complained that "no means can be found to prevent the inhabitants of Cumberland County from selling strong liquor to the Indians."23

A small number of Scots-Irishmen traded manufactured goods with the Indians for furs and pelts. A significant proportion of the men who received licenses from the provincial government to trade with the Indians before 1750 were Scots-Irish. Between 1743 and 1748, for example, 23 of the 54 (43 percent) licensed traders in the colony had

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Scots-Irish surnames. Some, such as Adam Hoopes and Samuel Chambers, became frontier agents for large Philadelphia mercantile firms. Others opened their own trading posts in the backcountry. Lazarus Lowry founded his trading company in northwestern Lancaster County in 1730. As his four sons joined the firm during the 1730s and 1740s, the company gradually extended its commercial contacts as far as the Ohio Valley and the Mississippi River.24

The absence of navigable waterways, the scarcity of adequate roads, and especially the backcountry's great distance from Philadelphia, however, prevented most Pennsylvania Scots-Irishmen from engaging in market production before 1750. Because it flowed into the Chesapeake Bay far from any port or town, the Susquehanna River — the only river in the region deep enough to allow boat travel — did not provide a practical outlet for area farmers' produce. Moreover, the poor quality of the few roads leading out of the frontier between 1720 and 1750

made wagon transportation prohibitively expensive. In each of their requests for road construction and dozens of other petitions, Scots-Irishmen bemoaned the great difficulty and expenses they incurred by transporting their goods over such great distances on poor roads to Philadelphia and Baltimore.25

The wealth and landholdings of most backcountry Scots-Irish inhabitants before 1750 reflected their lack of market production. Despite their ability to purchase land, the vast majority of Scots-Irish on the mid-eighteenth-century Pennsylvania frontier remained relatively poor. In 1726/7, 51 of the 59 Scots-Irish taxables (86 percent) in the western townships of Chester County were assessed a tax of less than five shillings. Only one Scots-Irishman -- James Patterson -- paid more than ten shillings in tax that year. Even as late as 1751, 72 percent of the Scots-Irish taxables in Donegal, Manor, Hempfield, and Colerain townships paid taxes of less than five shillings.26

25Petition of inhabitants of Donegal to Thomas Penn, June 26, 1733, Penn-Physick Papers, Penn Papers, HSP, 6: 29; Petition of inhabitants of upper part of Chester County, Feb. 6, 1729, in Montgomery, Pennsylvania Archives, Sixth Series, XIV: 264; MacKinney and Hoban, Votes and Proceedings, III: 2253, 2261; IV: 3306; and the petitions cited in fn #19 above.

26Based on surname analysis of taxables in 1726/7 tax lists for Conestoga, Donegal, and Pequa Townships, Chester County, reprinted in H. Frank Eshelman, ed., "Assessment Lists and Other Documents of Lancaster County Prior to the Year 1729," Lancaster County Historical Society Journal 20 (1916): 188-93; and 1751 tax lists for Donegal, Hempfield, Manor, and Coleraine Townships, Lancaster County Tax Lists,
The small size of most Scots-Irish landholdings in the backcountry also suggests that many Scots-Irish farmers lacked sufficient acreage to produce significant crop surpluses. Of the 1,235 land warrantees granted to Scots-Irishmen in Lancaster County between 1733 and 1750, over half (57 percent — 701 warrantees) contained less than two hundred acres. The numbers are even more striking in the decade of the 1740s. Of the 801 Scots-Irish land grants in Lancaster County between 1741 and 1750, 73 percent (588 warrantees) were for tracts smaller than two hundred acres. Almost one-third contained less than one hundred acres. Only 48 Scots-Irishmen received patents for parcels over three hundred acres in the decade.27

Although it limited their commercial production, the new Pennsylvania environment allowed the Scots-Irish to resume at least part of the political participation they had known in Ulster before the enactment of the Sacramental Test Act in 1704. Accustomed to exclusion from public office in Ireland, Scots-Irish immigrants took full advantage of the political freedom offered them by William Penn's policy of toleration. Although English Quakers dominated backcountry politics before 1750, the Scots-Irish

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performed a number of official and unofficial governmental functions in the region.

Reveling in their newfound political freedom, the Scots-Irish displayed a great desire to participate in Pennsylvania politics and government. The numerous backcountry petitions for the creation of new counties and townships between 1720 and 1750 best reflect this yearning for political involvement. In 1729, for example, the Scots-Irish residents of the western part of Chester County petitioned the provincial government for the creation of a new county in the backcountry. Their "great distance" from the Chester County courthouse, "where elections and court are held and publick offices kept," they argued, left them with little government or legal protection. Their crimes were not prosecuted; their "highways...unrepaired...nor bridges built."²⁸

Scots-Irish colonists played a number of vital political roles in the mid-eighteenth-century Pennsylvania backcountry. Because the Quakers and many of the German settlers were pacifists, the Scots-Irish bore the brunt of military duty in the region. During any threat of Indian

hostility, the Scots-Irish constituted the majority of the area's militia. When England's war with France and Spain threatened to unleash an Indian attack on western Pennsylvania in 1747-8, Lancaster County raised two companies of militia predominantly from the county's Scots-Irish settlements. Of the 51 officers appointed to serve in the two companies, at least 27 were Scots-Irishmen.  

During the quasi-guerilla war between Pennsylvania and Maryland partisans that grew out of the two colonies' bitter boundary dispute in the 1730s, the Scots-Irish comprised the bulk of the sheriff's posses and other unofficial local militias that defended Pennsylvania citizens in the disputed territory from Maryland marauders. Every time a gang of Marylanders threatened the Quakers and Germans living in the no man's land between the two colonies, an armed party of Scots-Irishmen rode to their rescue. When the Lancaster sheriff collected a posse to capture the leader of the Maryland gang -- Thomas Cresap -- in 1736, over half of the volunteers were Scots-Irishmen.

29 Minutes of Provincial Council, V: 194, 210, 247, 325; and Klein, Lancaster County, II: 557-58.

County government offices provided the best avenue for the Scots-Irish to participate in backcountry politics. Because the language barrier prevented most Germans from holding public office, Scots-Irishmen were able to occupy a significant number of county government positions between 1720 and 1750. Of the 110 men who are known to have served as justices of the peace in Lancaster County from 1729 to 1750, 34 (31 percent) were Scots-Irish. Six of the county's eleven sheriffs and seven of its twelve coroners in these years were also Scottish emigrants from Ireland.31

The Scots-Irish held a few provincial government positions in the backcountry as well. In an effort to preserve peace in the pluralistic backcountry, the proprietors and other colonial leaders sought to include members of each ethnic group on every frontier commission and committee. The commissioners selected by the Provincial Council to choose the sight for the Lancaster County courthouse in 1730, for instance, contained the Scots-Irishman James Mitchell as well as two Quakers and an Anglican. Another committee appointed to investigate the deaths of three Indians in Lancaster County in the 1730s contained at least six Scots-Irishmen out of a total of sixteen members.32

31Based on a surname analysis of the Lancaster County officeholders between 1729 and 1750 reprinted in Linn and Egle, Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, IX: 787-92.

32Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, I: 252,
Scots-Irish participation in backcountry politics, however, remained limited before 1750. Although Scots-Irishmen achieved some political power, English Quakers dominated politics throughout the backcountry and the colony as a whole in the early and mid-eighteenth century. While many Scots-Irishmen served as sheriffs, coroners, and magistrates in Lancaster, the county's most powerful offices -- the clerk of the county court, clerk of the county commissioners, and the prothonatary -- remained in the hands of Quakers. Samuel Blunston, for instance, was clerk of the county court, prothonatary, and a county magistrate from 1729 to 1741. Throughout the 1740s, Quakers comprised the overwhelming majority of assemblymen elected in Lancaster County. One Quaker representative -- John Wright -- even served seventeen consecutive terms in the General Assembly from 1718 to 1748.\textsuperscript{33}

Scots-Irish settlers' efforts to re-create their traditional culture in the early-eighteenth-century Pennsylvania backcountry, ironically, made them remarkably similar to other European immigrants in the region. The English and German inhabitants in the region sought personal independence for themselves and their children as

\textsuperscript{33}Based on a surname analysis of the Lancaster officials between 1729 and 1750, in Linn and Egle, Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, IX: 787-97. See also Horle, et al., Lawmaking and Legislators, pp. 220-29, 1090-93, 1124-27.
much as the Scots-Irish. They created complex economies based on both self-sufficiency and commercial production much like the Scots-Irish. The wealth and landholdings of German and English families matched that of Ulstermen in Lancaster County as well. Scots-Irish participation in backcountry politics helped to integrate them into the colony's political mainstream, where they increasingly jostled with their ethnic neighbors for political influence and power.\(^{34}\)

William Penn's policy of toleration for all ethno-religious groups, however, enabled each of these groups to live in virtual isolation on the frontier before 1750 without realizing their social, economic, and political similarities. Concerned primarily with transplanting their own way of life in their new homes, each group of immigrants created ethnically exclusive enclaves within the region and had as little contact with outsiders as possible. Within this pattern of ethnic segregation,

Scots-Irish, English, and German men and women rarely realized the fundamental similarities of their values, attitudes, and behavior.

Of the three major national groups that populated the mid-eighteenth-century Pennsylvania backcountry, the Scots-Irish probably had the strongest sense of their ethnic distinctiveness and uniformity. A century of colonization in the hostile environment of northern Ireland had given them a powerful sense of themselves as a unique people. Although the new Pennsylvania environment caused a significant alteration in Scots-Irish colonists' view of themselves, their still powerful ethnic identity greatly affected virtually every aspect of their lives. While adopting new attitudes toward their former Ulster neighbors, the Scots-Irish sought to distance themselves from other European immigrants in the region as much as possible.

As increasing numbers of Ulster emigrants filled up the Pennsylvania backcountry from 1715 to 1750, the region's tremendous ethnic pluralism forced them to alter their view of themselves as a distinct ethnic group in one crucial respect. Surrounded by new and strange national and cultural groups, the Scots-Irish dramatically changed their relations with the native Irish and Anglo-Irish, who had emigrated from Ireland alongside them. In Ulster, the Scots had perceived the Irish and English as enemies and
strictly separated themselves from both groups. In Pennsylvania, however, compared to the other backcountry settlers -- principally the Germans and Indians, the small number of Irish and Anglo-Irishmen seemed familiar and friendly to most Scots-Irish.

As a consequence, the Scots-Irish on the Pennsylvania frontier allowed the numerically inferior Irish and Anglo-Irish immigrants to blend into their communities and culture. In 1752, the Anglican missionary Reverend George Craig reported that approximately fifty Anglo-Irish Anglicans lived among the Scots-Irish settlements in Lancaster County. Overpowered by the dominant Scots-Irish culture, many of these native Irish Catholics and Anglo-Irish Anglicans often converted to Presbyterianism. Another Anglican missionary claimed in 1746 that the Anglicans in Lancaster were "very much fallen off from their principles" because the area was "so overrun with Presbyterians." 35

Scots-Irish settlements in the region, thus, were often amalgams of native Irish, Ulster Scots, and Anglo-Irish residents. Of the 291 land warrantees granted by the

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proprietors in Paxton, Hanover, and Derry townships, Lancaster County, between 1733 and 1755, Scots-Irishmen comprised 58 percent, Englishmen 22 percent, and native Irish 10 percent. In Cumberland County, 59 of the 264 taxables in 1751 had distinctively Irish surnames.\textsuperscript{36}

Scots-Irish settlers' relationship with James Logan, the Penn family's agent in America, perfectly illustrates this change in their identity. Although Logan was a Quaker, he was also the son of Scottish immigrants in Ulster. Fully aware of his Ulster Scots heritage, the backcountry Scots-Irish considered Logan a part of their community and expected him to serve as their personal advocate with the proprietors. Virtually every Scots-Irish transaction with the Penns was conducted through Logan. In 1727, Logan complained to John Penn that one Irishman had applied to him for land "in the name of 400" immigrants, "who depended all on me, for directions where they should settle." During their fight with the proprietors over the payment of overdue land fees in the 1730s, the Scots-Irish residents of Donegal Township, Lancaster County, sent most of their petitions to the Penns by way of Logan.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{36}Based on surname analyses of land warrantees of Paxton, Hanover, and Derry Townships, Lancaster County between 1733 and 1755 reprinted in Egle, Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series, XXIV: 349-568; and 1751 tax lists of East Pennsborough, West Pennsborough, Middleton, and Hopewell Townships, Cumberland County, Cumberland County Tax Lists, Pennsylvania County Records, PHMC.

\textsuperscript{37}James Logan to John Penn, Nov. 25, 1727, in Linn and

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The names by which other Pennsylvanians identified the Scots-Irish in the backcountry best illustrates this blending of Ulster Scots, native Irish, and Anglo-Irish. Most Englishmen and other settlers in the colony referred to all immigrants -- whether they were Ulster Scots, native Irish, or Anglo-Irish -- from northern Ireland simply as "Irish." In his correspondence with the Penn family, James Logan, for instance, consistently called the Ulster colonists in the colony's backcountry "Irish." Only a few contemporaries recognized Ulster Scots' unique nature by using the specific term "Scotch-Irish."38

Even though the Scots-Irish expanded their community to include other Ulster immigrants, their ethnic awareness remained extremely high in early eighteenth-century Pennsylvania. They consistently displayed a strong determination to segregate themselves from non-Irish

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backcountry inhabitants. Preserving strong ties with their former homeland, the Scots-Irish congregated in separate neighborhoods and observed strict ethnic exclusivity in many of their activities.

The initial Scots-Irish residents of the Pennsylvania frontier retained powerful connections with Ulster. The continuous flow of new emigrants from Ireland each year enabled previous settlers to keep in touch with the culture they had left behind. These new arrivals constantly refreshed and reinforced Scots-Irish culture in Pennsylvania. The piecemeal fashion in which Ulster Scots families immigrated to America added another dimension to this ethnic link -- kinship. Virtually every Scots-Irish colonist had at least a few relatives who had remained in Ireland. The occasional bequests of property by Pennsylvania Scots-Irishmen to family members in Ulster reflected this continued transoceanic bond of kinship. 39

The Presbyterian Church provided another crucial link between the two Ulster Scots communities. Although it had its own institutions, the American Presbyterian Church was heavily dependent on its forbearers in Ulster and Scotland. The Synod of Philadelphia frequently requested ministerial candidates from both the Synod of Ulster and the Scottish

39 Wills of John Barwick, 1742; William Gregg, 1744; Hugh McNeal, 1747; and James Murray, 1747, in Lancaster County Wills, 1729-1908, Record Group 44, Pennsylvania County Records, PHMC.
General Assembly. In fact, twelve of the sixteen Presbyterian clergymen who served in the backcountry from 1720 to 1750 had been born in Ireland or Scotland. Ulster immigrants brought not only their church's doctrines and practices, but also the sacred objects used in their rituals, to Pennsylvania. When Arthur and Ann Patterson emigrated from County Donegal, Ireland, to Lancaster County in the early 1720s, they carried a pewter communion service as a gift from the local Ulster congregation to its namesake church in Pennsylvania.40

The names that Scots-Irish settlers gave to their new homes reflected the reverence they still held for their old ones. In 1722, provincial officials changed the name of the area of the backcountry in which the first Scots-Irish had settled from West Conestoga to Donegal -- the name of a predominantly Ulster Scots county in northern Ireland. With the creation of Lancaster County in 1729, several of the townships with Scots-Irish majorities received Irish names -- Donegal, Derry, and Coleraine. Place names from northern Ireland such as Antrim, Fannett, and Greencastle also appeared in Scots-Irish-dominated Cumberland County in 1750.41

40Klett, Records of Presbyterian Church, pp. 118-19, 123, 170-71; Richard Webster, A History of the Presbyterian Church in America, from its Origin until the Year 1760 (Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, 1857), pp. 355-498; and Horle, et al., Lawmaking and Legislators, p. 815.

41Eshelman, "Assessment Lists," p. 176; Klein,
Repeating their settlement patterns in Ulster, the early and mid-eighteenth-century backcountry Scots-Irish congregated in separate communities. Most Scots-Irish immigrants settled in areas with majorities of their own countrymen. In 1726/7, for example, almost two-thirds of all Scots-Irish taxables in the western section of Chester County lived in one township -- Donegal. Scots-Irishmen comprised 70 percent of the residents in Paxton Township, Lancaster County, in 1750 and 1751. Almost three-fourths of the settlers along Conodoguinet Creek in Cumberland County between 1733 and 1736 were Scots-Irish. In 1751, Ulstermen constituted three-fourths of the population in East and West Pennsborough, Middleton, and Hopewell townships in Cumberland as well.42

The Scots-Irish especially attempted to segregate themselves from Germans. When a group of German immigrants tried to take up lands in Donegal township in 1727, the Scots-Irish residents sent a petition to James Logan "requesting that the Dutch may not be allowed to settle" in the region. In fact, no Germans were listed as taxables in


42Estimates based on surname analyses of the following sources: Eshelman, "Assessment Lists," pp. 188-93; 1750 and 1751 Paxton Township tax lists, in Lancaster County Tax Lists, Pennsylvania County Records, PHMC; "The Blunston License Book, 1733-1736," reprinted in Donehoo, Cumberland Valley, I: 38-72; and 1751 East and West Pennsborough, Middleton, and Hopewell Townships tax lists, Cumberland County Tax Lists, Pennsylvania County Records, PHMC.
the township in 1726/7 and only a handful of Germans received warrantees for land in that section of Lancaster County before 1740.\textsuperscript{43}

Scots-Irish families' reactions to the encroachment of increasing numbers of Germans into their original settlements after 1740 best reflects their continued desire for ethnic separation. As more Palatines took up land in northwestern Lancaster County, hundreds of Scots-Irish families abandoned their farms in the area and moved further west across the Susquehanna River. In fact, after a number of political clashes between the Scots-Irish and German settlers in Lancaster County, the proprietors even sanctioned this ethnic segregation by encouraging the Scots-Irish to move further west.\textsuperscript{44}

As they moved across the Susquehanna, the Scots-Irish re-established the ethnic exclusivity of their original communities in Lancaster. When the General Assembly formed


\textsuperscript{44}For examples of Scots-Irish families moving from Lancaster to York and Cumberland Counties, see "The Blunston License Book, 1733-1736," reprinted in Donehoo, Cumberland Valley, I: 38-72; and James Magraw to John Magraw, May 21, 1733, reprinted in Richard, Franklin County, p. 149. Also see Klein, Lancaster County, I: 63; Rupp, Lancaster County, p. 576; and William H. Egle, The History of the Counties of Dauphin and Lebanon: Biographical and Genealogical (Philadelphia: Everts and Peck, 1883), p. 33.
part of this vast territory into Cumberland County in 1750, the region included an overwhelming majority of Scots-Irish, a small number of English (many of whom were Anglo-Irish), and virtually no Germans. In 1751, for example, nearly 350 Scots-Irish and English taxables, but only 8 Germans, lived in four townships within the county.\(^4\)\(^5\)

The Pennsylvania backcountry became so identified as a bastion of Scots-Irish culture in the 1730s and 1740s that it attracted Scots-Irish settlers from all over British North America. Individuals and groups of families from smaller, isolated Scots-Irish communities in New England, New York, Maryland, and Virginia frequently gravitated toward the region. After spending ten years in the Scots-Irish colony of Londonderry, New Hampshire, siblings Andrew and Rachel Gregg moved to Lancaster County in 1732. Members of the interrelated Sample and Alexander families moved from Cecil County, Maryland to join the rapidly growing Scots-Irish settlement in Cumberland County.\(^4\)\(^6\)

The Scots-Irish preference for their own countryside extended beyond simply their settlement patterns. Like other immigrant groups in the mid-eighteenth-century

\(^{4}\)\(^5\) Based on a surname analysis of the 1751 tax lists for East and West Pennsborough, Middleton, and Hopewell townships, Cumberland County Tax Lists, Pennsylvania County Records, PHMC.

backcountry, the Scots-Irish practiced strict ethnic exclusivity in their social and economic activities. Each national group, for instance, frequented "publick houses of entertainment" owned by their own countrymen. Not surprisingly, every Scots-Irish settlement in Lancaster County in 1740 included at least one or two Scots-Irish-owned taverns. German and English neighborhoods had their own ethnically oriented ordinaries as well.\textsuperscript{47}

In their most personal aspects of life, most Scots-Irish trusted only fellow Ulstermen. Virtually all Scots-Irish individuals appointed other natives of Ulster as executors of their wills. While most men chose their wives or eldest sons, many also selected close friends and neighbors, who were invariably Scots-Irishmen as well. Of the 246 Scots-Irish wills recorded in Lancaster County between 1729 and 1750, all but 15 listed Scots-Irish individuals as executors. In 1749, for example, Alexander Craig selected Adam McNeely and Anthony McCraight -- both classic Scots-Irish names -- as his executors.\textsuperscript{48}

The Scots-Irish also demonstrated ethnic exclusivity in less personal activities. When Scots-Irish settlers engaged in sinful behavior, they commonly did so with other Scots-Irishmen. Virtually every case brought before the

\textsuperscript{47} Minutes, Lancaster County Court, in Hawbaker, \textit{Lancaster Abstracts}.

\textsuperscript{48} Lancaster County Wills, PHMC.
session of the Middle Spring Presbyterian Church in Cumberland County between 1742 and 1749 involved Scots-Irish men and women. In January 1745, for example, George McElwain, William and Joseph Carnahan, William and Francis McCall, Joseph Loughlane, James and John Jack, John and Samuel Smith, and Alexander Fairbourn — all Scots-Irishmen — were brought before the session for fighting at Andrew Culbertson's house.49

When the Scots-Irish broke the civil law (as opposed to ecclesiastical law), they usually did so with their fellow countrymen as well. The majority of Scots-Irish individuals prosecuted by the Lancaster County Court of Quarter Sessions from 1729 to 1742 had committed a crime against one of their own, not a person of another nationality. The August 1732 court, for instance, convicted Walter Denny and Robert Steel of assaulting Margaret Jamison. Six years later, the court tried Charles Kilpatrick, John and Andrew Cunningham, and John McNeely for “assaulting and beating” Sarah Rippet.50

Scots-Irish ethnic exclusivity even extended to economic transactions. In local stores, Scots-Irish settlers commonly interacted with their fellow countrymen.

49 Minutes, Jan. 1745, Session Book, Middle Springs Church Records, HSP.

50 Based on a surname analysis of all criminal cases listed in Minutes, Lancaster County Court, in Hawbaker, Lancaster Abstracts (examples from pp. 14, 68).
Of the ninety-five customers at John Harris's store in Paxton township, Lancaster County between 1749 and 1755, over three-fourths were Scots-Irish. Only twenty Englishmen and one German shopped at the establishment during the six years. Similarly, Scots-Irish farmers commonly employed only fellow Ulstermen to work in their fields. Of the nineteen Scots-Irish farmers who petitioned the Lancaster County Court of Quarter Sessions concerning their indentured servants from 1729 to 1742, seventeen held Scots-Irish or Irish servants.51

As they began to play an active role in backcountry government, the Scots-Irish also demonstrated ethnic unity in politics. On the rare occasions when the provincial government violated William Penn's ideals of toleration and enacted legislation which the Scots-Irish perceived as discriminatory, Ulster immigrants united to protest the government's actions. Lancaster County Presbyterians, for example, collectively complained to the General Assembly in 1739 that the colony's practice of requiring officeholders to swear an oath by laying a hand on the Bible violated their religious principles. They requested permission, instead, to take oaths simply by lifting their right hands.52

51 John Harris Ledgerbook, Harris Collection, HSP; and Minutes, Lancaster County Court, in Hawbaker, Lancaster Abstracts.

52 MacKinney and Hoban, Votes and Proceedings, III:
Scots-Irish settlers consistently chose fellow 
countrymen to handle their relations with the provincial 
government and the proprietors. When James Magraw became 
concerned about the Indians living near his new home in 
Cumberland County in 1733, he asked his brother to speak 
with one of the Scots-Irish leaders in Lancaster County -- 
John Harris -- about requesting guns from the governor. 
During the debate between Scots-Irish residents in Donegal 
Township and the proprietors over unpaid land fees in the 
1730s, the most influential men in the area -- James 
Mitchell, Arthur Patterson, Andrew Galbraith, and Reverend 
James Anderson -- successfully conducted the negotiations 
for the Donegaliens.53 

Within the multi-ethnic Pennsylvania political arena, 
Scots-Irish inhabitants, like the colony's other ethnic 
groups, frequently voted as a bloc. In 1752, one Quaker 
leader reported that the entire Scots-Irish settlement of 
Marsh Creek in York County was often "brought in at the 
time of an election with the popular cry, and no one would

53James Magraw to John Magraw, May 21, 1733, reprinted in Richard, Franklin County, p. 149; James Steel to James 
Anderson, March 6, 1735, James Steel Letter, Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS); Samuel Blunston to Thomas Penn, 
January 3, 1736, Lancaster County Papers, HSP, I: 21-22; James Logan to Andrew Galbraith, September 1728, Logan 
Letterbooks, Logan Papers, HSP, III: 119; and Logan to John 
Wright, October 23, 1727, Logan Letterbooks, Logan Papers, 
III: 88.
or durst touch them." Lancaster County political lore surrounding the contentious election of 1732 illustrates the strength of this Scots-Irish political unity. The especially bitter campaign between a Quaker candidate for assemblyman, John Wright, and a Scots-Irishman, Andrew Galbraith, heightened ethnic awareness among the two immigrant groups. On election day, Galbraith's wife, according to the story, led the entire Scots-Irish constituency to the court house to cast their votes.\(^{54}\)

Colonial officials often recognized Scots-Irish immigrants' political cohesiveness and tried to avoid pitting the Scots-Irish against one another. When Maryland officials began recruiting Scots-Irish settlers in Chester County to join their side of the vicious boundary dispute between the two colonies, Pennsylvania leaders became greatly alarmed. If Scots-Irishmen comprised the bulk of Maryland's forces in the disputed territory, they feared, the Scots-Irish inhabitants of Donegal would not want "to go up against their countrymen" -- thus depriving the colony of its best defenders.\(^{55}\)

\(^{54}\)Thomas Cookson to Thomas Penn, June 8, 1752, in Linn and Egle, Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, VII: 242; Zachariah Butcher to Gov., June 17, 1741, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, I: 625; MacKinney and Hoban, Votes and Proceedings, III: 2162-63, 2172; Rupp, Lancaster County, pp. 264, 288; and Klein, Lancaster County, I: 100.

\(^{55}\)Samuel Blunston to Thomas Penn, October 21, 1736, Lancaster County Papers, HSP, I: 27.
County and provincial authorities also made sure that the local government officeholders representing Scots-Irish neighborhoods were mostly Scots-Irishmen. When George Smith compiled a list of the "most remarkable inhabitants" of York County, who were "fit to discharge publick offices" in 1749, he recommended only Scots-Irishmen in the townships with significant Scots-Irish populations. From the Marsh Creek and Rock Creek settlements, for instance, he named William Buchanan, Hans and William Hamilton, John Armstrong, Matthew Gault, Patrick Watson, George Black, William Greer, and James Murray. Similarly, John Armstrong included an overwhelming majority of Scots-Irishmen in his list of suggested magistrates for the new, Scots-Irish-dominated, county of Cumberland in 1751.56

This ethnic clannishness among the Scots-Irish is best illustrated by the distrust with which they viewed other backcountry immigrant groups. Ulstermen were especially suspicious of Germans and seem to have taken extreme measures to avoid contact with them. When a party of German Moravians passed through Cumberland County on their journey from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to western North Carolina in 1753, their diarist recorded that the "Irish" in the area refused to sell food or other supplies to them.

"One can buy little or nothing from them," he complained. None of the Scots-Irish wills written between 1729 and 1750 named a German as executor, while only one criminal case brought before the Lancaster County Court from 1729 to 1742 involved members of the two national groups.\textsuperscript{57}

Pennsylvania Quakers' often derogatory remarks about Ulstermen heightened Scots-Irish misgivings about members of that immigrant group. Revealing eighteenth-century English prejudice, one prominent Philadelphia merchant referred to the Scots-Irish as "the very scum of Mankind" while a backcountry Quaker described them as "idle trash." When a Lancaster County sheriff's posse used excessive force to capture a gang of Maryland partisans, who had been harassing Pennsylvania residents during the bitter boundary dispute between the two colonies, a Quaker member of the General Assembly suggested that authorities blame the violence on the "Irish people." Each of these incidents created a deepening animosity towards Quakers among the frontier Scots-Irish.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{57}Fries, Records of Moravians, I: 76; Lancaster County Wills, PHMC; and Minutes, Lancaster County Court, in Hawbaker, Lancaster Abstracts.

Quakers' public declarations of alarm at the increasing immigration of Ulster Scots to early eighteenth-century Pennsylvania exacerbated these ethnic tensions. In 1728, the Quaker-controlled General Assembly enacted legislation designed to reduce the number of Irish immigrants by placing a duty of twenty shillings on all "Irish servants" imported into the province. While the Assembly repealed the act the following year, prominent Quakers continued to express their concerns. In 1736, Samuel Blunston voiced his approval of the proprietors' "caution to prevent more of that nation coming in." Even James Logan admitted "there are some grounds for the common apprehensions of the people that if some speedy method be not taken, they [the Scots-Irish] will make themselves proprietors of the Province."59

This ethnic hostility occasionally erupted into public disputes and political squabbles. Samuel Blunston and Reverend James Anderson, leading members of the Lancaster County Quaker and Scots-Irish communities respectively, engaged in a bitter personal feud during the 1730s. Scots-Irish settlers in southeastern Lancaster County quarreled with the Quaker inhabitants in neighboring Chester County.

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for almost five years concerning the route of several proposed roads from Lancaster through Chester to Philadelphia. The Lancaster residents consistently complained to the provincial government that the Quakers refused to keep the roads through their county in passable condition. The Chester citizens accused the Scots-Irishmen of laying out the roads in such a manner that they destroyed their valuable farmland.  

This mutual distrust often added an ethnic dimension to the already tumultuous nature of backcountry politics in the 1730s and 1740s. Lancaster County elections usually pitted the Scots-Irish against the Quakers. The campaigns for virtually every local public office in the county during these years involved Scots-Irish candidates competing against Quaker nominees. The Scots-Irishman Andrew Galbraith defeated the Quaker John Wright for assemblyman in 1732; the Quaker Thomas Lindley successfully ran against the Scots-Irishmen James Mitchell and James Hamilton in 1740 and 1742 respectively. At times, the two groups resorted to violence and intimidation to carry an election. During the 1749 campaign, Scots-Irish voters seized control of the courthouse and forced the sheriff to 

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60James Logan to James Anderson, March 5, 1730, Logan Letterbooks, Logan Papers, HSP, IV: 228; Minutes of Provincial Council, IV: 278-83, 495; and Petition of John Wright, Thomas Lindley, Thomas Ewing, and Thomas Edwards, November 26, 1739, in Records of Provincial Council, reel B2.
accept only tickets, which they approved -- thus ensuring their candidates' victory.\footnote{Horle, et al., Lawmaking and Legislators, pp. 677, 1124-27; Minutes of Provincial Council, III: 370, 387, 416, 464-65, 521, 575, 615; MacKinney and Hoban, Votes and Proceedings, III: 2162-63, 2172, IV: 3278-80, 3297-3301; Rupp, Lancaster County, pp. 264, 288; and Klein, Lancaster County, I: 100.}

In neighboring York County, the Scots-Irish battled the Germans for power within the local government. In the very first election held after the county's founding in 1749, for example, the Scots-Irish and German factions literally fought for possession of the courthouse and the ballot box. On election day, the Scots-Irish sheriff allowed his fellow countrymen to take control of the polling place. When the Scots-Irish refused to admit German voters, a mob of Dutchmen attacked the Ulstermen guarding the courthouse and forced them and the sheriff to retreat hastily. In the riot's aftermath, both sides accused the other of attempting to win the campaign by fraud.\footnote{Deposition of Benjamin Swoope, September 8, 1750, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, II: 50-52; Minutes of Provincial Council, V: 468; MacKinney and Hoban, Votes and Proceedings, IV: 3357-58, 3398; and Gibson, York County, pp. 309-10.}

By 1750, Scots-Irish inhabitants in the Pennsylvania backcountry had successfully preserved the powerful ethnic awareness they had brought from Ulster. Although Ulster Scots had expanded their identity to include the native
Irish and Anglo-Irish immigrants, they had continued to distance themselves from the English and German residents in the region. They had not only created communities segregated from those of others, but also had excluded non-Ulster emigrants from virtually every aspect of their lives. When they had encountered other national groups, suspicion, distrust, and occasionally even open conflict had characterized their relations.

The foundation of this continuing ethnic realization rested on Scots-Irish settlers' ability to re-create much of their traditional culture in their new homes. The initial Scots-Irish colonists in mid-eighteenth-century western Pennsylvania fashioned the same Presbyterian churches, independent farms, and complex economic relations that they had known in Ulster. The colony's atmosphere of toleration for all ethno-religious groups allowed Ulster Scots to achieve even greater economic independence and political freedom than they had attained back home.

The Scots-Irish community founded in early eighteenth-century western Pennsylvania became the core of Scots-Irish culture throughout the backcountry. It was here that Ulster Scots immigrants first planted their distinct way of life in the American frontier. Every future Scots-Irish settlement in the region would trace its origins directly to this initial Ulster Scots colony in Penn's Woods. From 1740 on, a steady stream of Scots-Irish families, in search
of independence and better economic opportunities, would expand this community and culture throughout the rest of the American backcountry, particularly the North Carolina piedmont. There, they would once again struggle to re-create their ethnic identity and culture in a new land.
Sometime in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, James Cathey had brought his family from County Monaghan, Ireland, to Cecil County, Maryland. By 1724, the family had joined the rapidly growing Scots-Irish settlement in neighboring Chester County, Pennsylvania. Nine years later, James received a license for 200 acres of land in Lancaster County. The Cathey family's sojourn in the Pennsylvania backcountry, however, was only temporary.

In the late 1730s, members of the family began migrating out of Pennsylvania into the southern backcountry. The first individual to leave, James' son, William, purchased 466 acres of land in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia in 1738. Shortly thereafter, James and the rest of the clan joined William in the Valley. By 1743, James had title to over 1,000 acres in the region. Despite their apparent accumulation of wealth and influence in Virginia, however, the Catheys continued their southward trek.
After only six years in the beautiful Shenandoah, the family moved yet again to help carve another Scots-Irish community out of the wilderness in western North Carolina. In 1749, James and another son named George purchased land in the new "Irish Settlement" west of the Yadkin River in Rowan County. It was here that the family patriarch's restless life finally came to end in 1757.1

The experience of the Cathey family illustrates the course of the Scots-Irish migration from Pennsylvania and adjacent colonies to the North Carolina backcountry during the eighteenth century. From 1745 to 1775, thousands of Scots-Irish men and women left Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, and Delaware to settle in western North Carolina. Commonly travelling in small groups of interrelated or neighboring families, these immigrants followed the path of the Great Wagon Road from the Pennsylvania frontier through the Shenandoah Valley to the Carolina piedmont.

Most Scots-Irish settlers embarked on the long journey to Carolina in hopes of finding the land and autonomy they could no longer obtain in Pennsylvania. Drawn by the abundance of cheap land in western North Carolina, the

majority of immigrants originated in the middling and lower levels of colonial Pennsylvania society. As the growing scarcity of land in Pennsylvania prevented many fathers from providing independent plots of land for all their children, more and more adult sons left for North Carolina shortly after their fathers' deaths.

Once in North Carolina, the newly arrived immigrants maintained surprisingly strong ties with their fellow countrymen back in Pennsylvania. Despite the seemingly overwhelming geographical distance, the Scots-Irish settlers in Pennsylvania and North Carolina remained closely linked through commerce, Presbyterianism, educational institutions, and most importantly, correspondence and visits by family and friends. Throughout the colonial period, the unyielding bonds of a common ethnicity and culture held the two Scots-Irish communities together.

The willingness of thousands of Scots-Irish men and women to migrate from Pennsylvania and surrounding areas to North Carolina distinguished them from other European settlers in colonial America outside the backcountry. Scots-Irish individuals and families were apparently more willing to move over long distances than their fellow European immigrants elsewhere in colonial America. While other national groups commonly moved from place to place within the American colonies, none outside the backcountry
embarked on a migration that covered such a broad geographical distance or that involved as many people as that of the Scots-Irish from Pennsylvania to North Carolina.²

Within the backcountry, however, mobility was not unique to the Scots-Irish. Thousands of English and German residents of southeastern Pennsylvania joined the Scots-Irish on the long trek to North Carolina and other parts of the southern backcountry. In many respects, the English and German migration paralleled that of the Scots-Irish. Significant communities of German Lutherans, Reformeds, and Moravians from Pennsylvania emerged in both the Shenandoah Valley and the North Carolina piedmont. At the same time, settlements of English Anglicans, Quakers, and Baptists

from Pennsylvania and adjacent colonies were scattered throughout the region.³

It is difficult to gauge the number of men and women who took part in this internal migration. Unlike the immigration from Europe, there are no ships' passenger lists to document the number of settlers who left Pennsylvania or other colonies for the southern backcountry. A few contemporary observers of colonial America made estimates of the size of the migration. In 1763, for example, Benjamin Franklin claimed that 40,000 persons had moved from Pennsylvania to Virginia and the Carolinas.⁴

The best guide for measuring the flow of immigrants into the southern backcountry remains the region's population statistics. By 1775, the western areas of


⁴Cited in Merrens, Colonial North Carolina, p. 54.
Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina contained approximately 200-250,000 inhabitants. Most eighteenth-century observers and modern scholars agree that the vast majority of these settlers originated in the Middle Colonies instead of Europe or the coastal regions of the three colonies. Based on this assumption, probably 125-175,000 immigrants traveled from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, or Maryland into the southern backcountry from 1730 to 1775.5

Approximately 55-60,000 of these immigrants chose the North Carolina piedmont as their final destination. From 1745 to 1775, the population of the North Carolina backcountry exploded. In the space of thirty years, the region transformed from a wilderness inhabited only by native Americans to the home of over 70,000 European

5I have based the estimate of the southern backcountry's population on the figures presented in the following works: for Virginia, the 1790 Census returns for the counties in the Shenandoah Valley cited in Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, p. 99 (Table 9); for North Carolina, the number of taxables in Rowan, Mecklenburg, Tryon, Orange, and Anson Counties in 1769/1770 listed in North Carolina; A Table of the Number of Taxables in this Province from the Year 1748 Inclusive (New Bern: James Davis, 1771); for South Carolina, the 1790 Census returns for the counties in the Upcountry cited in Rachel Klein, Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760-1808 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p. 250 (Table 11). For evidence that most southern backcountry settlers were from the Middle Colonies, see Merrens, Colonial North Carolina, pp. 53-56; Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, pp. 34-40; Ramsey, Carolina Cradle; and Klein, Unification of a Slave State, pp. 13-15.
settlers. The creation of six new counties within the colony's western frontier in less than twenty-six years illustrates this rapid growth. Each of these counties experienced tremendous population growth throughout the colonial period. Rowan County nearly quadrupled in population from its founding in 1753 to 1770 -- increasing from 1,000 to 3,850 taxables in those seventeen years.\(^6\)

The rapid growth of the North Carolina backcountry's population frequently caught the attention of observers all over colonial America. In 1767, one New England newspaper editor remarked that "there is scarce any history, either ancient or modern, which affords an account of such a rapid and sudden increase of inhabitants in a back Frontier country, as that of North Carolina." The previous year, North Carolina's royal governor had advised the Board of Trade in London that his colony was "settling faster than any on the continent."\(^7\)

As in the other parts of the southern backcountry, the vast majority of western North Carolina's booming population consisted of immigrants from Pennsylvania and

\(^6\)Based on the number of taxables for the backcountry counties listed in North Carolina; A Table.

\(^7\)Connecticut Courant, November 30, 1767, cited in Blethen and Wood, From Ulster to Carolina, p. 43; Governor Tryon to Board of Trade, August 2, 1766, in William L. Saunders and Walter Clark, eds., Colonial Records of North Carolina, 26 vols. (various places: various publishers, 1886-1905), VII: 248. See also Merrens, Colonial North Carolina, pp. 53-56; and Ramsey, Carolina Cradle.
surrounding colonies. Residents of both Pennsylvania and North Carolina recognized the steady flow of settlers between the two colonies. Hermon Husbands, a migrant from Pennsylvania to North Carolina himself, wrote in 1754 "tis also well known that all the way from the Potowmack to Georgia, near the mountains have been first settled by the northward men out of Pennsylvania and the Jersies." The following year, the Pennsylvania General Assembly complained to the colony's governor that "thousands [have] likewise left us to settle in Carolina." Nine years later, Governor Arthur Dobbs of North Carolina informed London officials that "all of the settlers in the back Country came by land from Pennsylvania."8

Of the approximately 50,000 immigrants from the Middle Colonies who settled in western North Carolina from 1745 to 1775, at least one-half -- or roughly 25-35,000 -- were Scots-Irish men and women. By 1775, the Scots-Irish comprised slightly more than half of the region's total population. North Carolina government officials commonly associated the backcountry with the Scots-Irish and

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Presbyterianism. In 1753, one member of the colony's privy council reported that the settlers on the frontier were "for the most part Irish Protestants and Germans." A report published in the 1760s by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts described the two primary backcountry counties in North Carolina as containing "mostly Presbyterians."\(^9\)

Like their fellow German and English settlers, most of the Scots-Irish men and women who took up residence in the North Carolina piedmont before the Revolution were immigrants from Pennsylvania or other middle colonies. Of a sample of 335 Scots-Irish settlers in the North Carolina backcountry for whom origins are known, 94 percent (314 individuals) were from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, or Maryland. Only 3.6 percent (12 men) of the sample were immigrants directly from Ireland or Scotland. Seven of the

\(^9\)This estimate of the Scots-Irish population in the North Carolina backcountry is based on a surname analysis of the 1778 tax list for Rowan County, Rowan County Tax Lists, 1778, 1802-1892, North Carolina Department of Archives and History (NCDAH); 1790 Census return for Mecklenburg County, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, XX: 737-772; and 1790 tax list for Orange County, in ibid., XX: 1286-1313 as well as the number of taxables for those three counties in 1769/1770 listed in North Carolina: A Table. For evidence of Scots-Irish comprising a majority of North Carolina backcountry settlers, see Matthew Rowan to Board of Trade, June 28, 1753, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, V: 24; "Report on North Carolina Counties," in ibid., VII: 540-41; Gov. Dobbs to Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), March 29, 1764, in ibid., VI: 1041; Rev. Andrew Morton to SPG, August 25, 1766, in ibid., VII: 252-53; and Gov. Tryon to SPG, July 31, 1765, in ibid., VII: 102.
remaining migrants had previously lived in Virginia, while the final two had moved from New England.\textsuperscript{10}

The overwhelming majority of these migrants came from one colony -- Pennsylvania. In the sample group of immigrants, 76 percent (253 individuals) had moved from Pennsylvania to western North Carolina. Contemporaries frequently described the Scots-Irish families who took up residence on North Carolina's western frontier as emigrants from Pennsylvania. In 1755, Gov. Dobbs reported that "a colony...removed from Pennsylvania of what we call Scotch Irish Presbyterians" had settled on his lands in the western part of the colony. An Anglican missionary in Rowan County in 1771 informed Benjamin Franklin that the county's population consisted largely of "People of Conegocheeke York and Cumberland Counties" -- all strongholds of Scots-Irish settlement in Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{10}This sample group of migrants from other colonies to the North Carolina backcountry was collected from biographical sketches of 335 men and women published in various county histories, biographical dictionaries, as well as secondary literature and primary sources. For an explanation of the methods used in compiling this sample, a list of the sources from which the biographies were taken, and a list of the individuals included, see Appendix B.

Indeed, thousands of Scots-Irish men and women left Pennsylvania for various parts of the southern backcountry between 1730 and 1775. In 1783, Benjamin Rush, the doctor, scientist, and astute observer of colonial Philadelphia, reported that "it has long been a subject of complaint among us that the principal part of the emigrants from Pennsylvania into new countries were Presbyterian." In another letter the following year, Rush told a friend that he had heard reports "of whole congregations" of Scots-Irish Presbyterians in the colony "being bought out by the Germans." These emigrants, Rush concluded, "always travel to the southward" into Virginia and the Carolinas.12

An analysis of the persistence rates of Scots-Irish residents of selected townships in Lancaster County supports Rush's observations. Areas with Scots-Irish majorities in the Pennsylvania backcountry experienced a heavy turnover in their populations after 1750. While many

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of the areas' original settlers moved out each year, dozens of new arrivals -- both Scots-Irish and German -- took their places. From 1750 to the Revolution, at least one-third of the county's Scots-Irish population left the area.

Some townships with Scots-Irish majorities experienced extremely high turnover rates. In Donegal township, for example, 47 percent (121 individuals) of the 256 Scots-Irish men listed on the five extant tax lists for the period from 1750 to 1771 left the township sometime in those years. Some years witnessed an even greater amount of loss. Between 1757 and 1759, 59 percent of the 61 Scots-Irish men who appeared on the 1757 tax list disappeared from the township.

Other Scots-Irish-dominated townships suffered smaller, but still significant, population losses. From 1756 to 1758, 41 percent (58 individuals) of the 142 Scots-Irish taxables in Paxton township left the area. In Coleraine township only 26 percent of the 359 Scots-Irish residents listed on the eight extant tax lists from 1751 to 1771 left the area. But, even there, specific time periods experienced turnover rates similar to those of Donegal. From 1759 to 1763, 40 percent (20 individuals) of the 50 Scots-Irish residents in the township disappeared from the tax list.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{13}My analysis of Pennsylvania backcountry persistence rates do not account for mortality. Quantitative
Many Scots-Irish immigrants settled in the Pennsylvania backcountry for only a few years before moving on to Virginia or the Carolinas. Of the 146 Scots-Irish individuals included in the five extant tax lists for Donegal township from 1750 to 1771, only 5 percent (7 individuals) appeared on all five lists. Twenty-four percent registered on only two different lists. Over half (59 percent) showed up on only one tax list. Scots-Irish inhabitants of Coleraine township displayed a little more stability than those of Donegal. Twenty-six of the 132 Scots-Irish settlers in the township (20 percent) appeared on at least five of the eight extant tax lists from 1751 to 1771. But, even here, over half (59 percent) of the Scots-Irish taxables were listed on only one or two tax lists.¹⁴

The precipitous decline in the percentage of Scots-Irish settlers in the total population of certain Lancaster

¹⁴Donegal township tax lists, 1750, 1757, 1759, 1769, and 1771; Coleraine township tax lists, 1751, 1756, 1757, 1758, 1759, 1763, 1769, and 1771; Paxton township tax lists, 1756, 1758; and Derry township tax lists, 1769, 1771, Lancaster County Tax Lists, 1750-1855, Record Group 44, Pennsylvania County Records, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC).
County townships also reflects the mass exodus of Scots-Irish settlers from the area. In 1758, Scots-Irish men comprised 43 percent of Derry township's 233 taxables. Twelve years later, they accounted for only 19 percent of its taxpayers. Other townships experienced similar reductions in their Scots-Irish populations. In Paxton, the Scots-Irish fell from 63 percent of the taxable population in 1758 to 46 percent in 1771. Between 1750 and 1771, the Scots-Irish percentage of the total population in Donegal township dropped from 35 to 26.15

This high degree of mobility, however, did not distinguish Scots-Irish settlers in the Pennsylvania backcountry from their ethnic neighbors. English and German inhabitants apparently moved just as much as the Scots-Irish. In Donegal township, 56 percent of the 408 German and English taxables listed on the five extant tax lists from 1750 to 1771 left the area -- compared to 47 percent of the Scots-Irish. Of the 41 German and English residents of Paxton township in 1756, 42 percent (17 individuals) failed to appear on the 1758 list -- compared to 41 percent of the Scots-Irish. During the same two-year span in Derry township 28 percent of the 40 German and

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15Based on surname analysis of Derry township tax lists, 1758 and 1771; Paxton township tax lists, 1758 and 1771; Donegal township tax lists, 1750 and 1771; and East Hanover township tax lists, 1750 and 1771, Lancaster Tax Lists, Pennsylvania County Records, PHMC.
English taxables disappeared -- compared to 36 percent of the Scots-Irish.16

The first Scots-Irish settlers arrived in the North Carolina piedmont around 1745 or 1746. Over the next ten years, thousands of Scots-Irish, as well as English and German, settlers poured into the region. In 1753, Matthew Rowan reported to the Board of Trade in England that there had not been "above one hundred fighting men" in the colony's backcountry when he visited it in 1746. Now, he informed them, the area contained "at least three thousand" adult males. Rowan County's population alone had grown from just a handful of pioneers in 1745 to nearly 8,000 European immigrants, of whom nearly 4,000 were Scots-Irish men and women, by 1756.17

16 Donegal township tax lists, 1750, 1757, 1759, 1769, 1771; Paxton township tax lists 1756, 1758; Derry township tax lists 1756, 1758; and Hanover township tax lists, 1750, 1756, Lancaster Tax Lists, Pennsylvania County Records, PHMC. The comparative mobility of Scots-Irish, German, and English settlers in Pennsylvania has been a subject of debate among historians. Early scholars claimed that the Scots-Irish moved constantly while the Germans tended to remain in place for long periods of time. See Bridenbaugh, Myths and Realities; and Leyburn, Scotch-Irish. Recent students, however, have begun to argue that all ethnic groups in colonial Pennsylvania were highly mobile. See especially Lemon, "Best Poor Man's Country"; Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier; and Ramsey, Carolina Cradle. At the same time, the most recent study of Germans in colonial Pennsylvania supports the older argument for greater stability among that ethnic group -- see Fogleman, Hopeful Journeys, pp. 93-99.

17 Matthew Rowan to Board of Trade, June 28, 1753, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, V: 24; Gov. Gabriel Johnston to Board of Trade, February 15, 1751, in ibid.,
The outbreak of the French and Indian War in 1754, however, temporarily stopped the flow of Scots-Irish into western North Carolina. While the war only slightly affected the North Carolina frontier, Indian raids along the route the immigrants' commonly traveled through the Pennsylvania backcountry and the Shenandoah Valley prevented many settlers from making the journey. In 1761, North Carolina's royal governor explained that for the previous seven years the "importation of people" from the northern colonies had been brought to a "total stop by the Indian war to the Northward and of late by the Cherokee War."18

With the end of Indian hostilities all along the colonial frontier in 1764, a second burst of intense Scots-Irish -- as well as English and German -- migration from the Middle Colonies to western North Carolina ensued. From 1763 to 1769, for example, the number of taxables in Rowan County more than doubled -- from 1,486 to 3,850.

IV: 1073-74; Gov. Dobbs to Board of Trade, November 9, 1754, in ibid., V: 149; Gov. Dobbs to Board of Trade, August 24, 1755, in ibid., V: 356; and Minutes of Provincial Council, VI: 574-75. See also Ramsey, Carolina Cradle, pp. 23-86, 94-129. Population of Rowan County based on number of taxables listed in North Carolina; A Table. I multiplied the number of taxables by 5 to estimate the total population. Estimate of Scots-Irish settlers in the county based on surname analysis of 1778 Rowan County tax list, Rowan County Tax Lists, NCDAH.

Similarly, Mecklenburg County's taxables rose from 791 in 1763 to 1,436 in 1769. In 1766, the colony's governor reported that "last winter and autumn, upwards of one thousand wagons [had] passed thro' Salisbury [in Rowan County] with families from the northward."19

The vast majority of the approximately 50,000 Scots-Irish settlers who migrated from Pennsylvania and adjacent areas to western North Carolina from 1745 to 1775 followed what became known as "The Great Wagon Road." Beginning in Philadelphia, this inter-colonial highway ran west through Lancaster and the Pennsylvania backcountry before turning south into the Shenandoah Valley, and ending -- 435 miles later -- at the Yadkin River in the North Carolina piedmont. Because it ran through the heart of the Scots-Irish settlements in Pennsylvania and provided easy access to both Virginia and the Carolinas, this "great and good waggon road" quickly became the preferred route for most Scots-Irish migrants.20

19 For the rising population of Rowan and Mecklenburg Counties, see North Carolina; A Table. See also Gov. Tryon to Board of Trade, August 2, 1766, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VII: 248; Rev. Theodorus Swain Drage to Benjamin Franklin, March 2, 1771, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XVIII: 40-41; and James S. Brawley, The Rowan Story, 1753-1953 (Salisbury: Rowan Printing Co., 1953), pp. 28-33.

20 Minutes of Provincial Council, VII: 445; Ramsey, Carolina Cradle, p. 172; and Merrens, Colonial North Carolina, p. 66.
Not all Scots-Irishmen made the journey directly from Pennsylvania to North Carolina. A considerable number briefly settled in the Shenandoah Valley before eventually moving on to North Carolina. Out of the sample of 335 Scots-Irish immigrants to western North Carolina, 24 (or 7 percent) had resided in the Shenandoah for several years before arriving in North Carolina. Fifteen years after settling in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1729, the Carruth siblings -- Walter, Adam, and Jane -- migrated to the Shenandoah. Less than five years later, they again moved to Rowan County, North Carolina. James Armstrong and his family followed a similar path from Lancaster County to Augusta County, Virginia, in 1739 to Rowan County in 1750.21

Although most Scots-Irish settlers made the journey as single individuals or families, a significant minority traveled in small groups of relatives and friends. Of the 335 Scots-Irish immigrants to North Carolina in the sample, over one-third (35 percent) accompanied relatives or neighbors on the trek to North Carolina. Many emigrants left Pennsylvania with their adult siblings. John Lock, for instance, moved from Pennsylvania to North Carolina in

1748 along with his brothers George and Matthew, his sister Elizabeth, and her husband John Brandon. Similarly, adult sons often joined their fathers on the long journey to Carolina. Samuel and William Bryan first migrated with their father Morgan from Pennsylvania to the Shenandoah Valley in the 1730s, and in 1748 accompanied him to North Carolina.22

Other Scots-Irish men and women traveled to North Carolina in small groups of families who were interrelated or had lived near one another in Pennsylvania. Governor Dobbs of North Carolina hinted at this common migration practice when he explained that Scots-Irish individuals in the backcountry sought to "take up 5 or 600 acres to accommodate 2 or 3 families together in the same grant." In other words, one person secured a single land grant large enough to contain the several families with whom he had traveled. Dozens of members of the interrelated Alexander, Sample, Polk, and Brevard families migrated from Cecil County, Maryland, to Mecklenburg County during the 1750s and 1760s.23

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22 For the sample of Scots-Irish immigrants to North Carolina, see fn #10 above. Specific examples from Ramsey, Carolina Cradle, pp. 40, 118; and Powell, North Carolina Biography, IV: 79-82, I: 256-63.

Scots-Irish extended families often migrated from Pennsylvania in piecemeal fashion. One family or individual commonly traveled to North Carolina on a sort of reconnaissance mission. They purchased land and began establishing farms for themselves. After a few months, they sent word to their relatives and friends back in Pennsylvania, encouraging them to make the move as well. The rest of the family usually followed within a year or two. In the early 1760s, James Houston moved from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to Rowan County, North Carolina, married a local woman, and started a farm. By 1765, three brothers and a sister — Samuel, James, Christopher, and Mary — had joined James in his new home.24

Families employed this piecemeal method of migration to facilitate the acquisition of land in North Carolina. The first family member to arrive in the region purchased enough land for several families. Thus, when his relatives and friends arrived later, they could focus on clearing fields and building houses instead of worrying about

finding land. North Carolina's Governor Arthur Dobbs informed London officials in 1754 that Scots-Irish settlers "employ either some of their own people to come before them to look out for lands, or some of their friends already settled here."\(^{25}\)

A small percentage of the Scots-Irish immigrants traveled in groups larger than several interrelated families. In a few cases entire Presbyterian congregations -- or at least significant portions of them -- moved as a group to western North Carolina. One such communal migration has been well documented. In 1753, a group of 20-30 families from the Nottingham Presbyterian Church in Cecil County, Maryland, organized the Nottingham Company and jointly purchased 21,120 acres in Rowan County, North Carolina (in present-day Guilford County). Within a year, the company moved *en masse* to their new home.\(^{26}\)

There is some evidence that other Presbyterian congregations in the Middle Colonies moved as groups to the North Carolina backcountry. Although he was clearly


exaggerating, Benjamin Rush claimed to have heard reports of "whole congregations" of Pennsylvania Presbyterians "being bought out every year by the Germans." More convincing, the German Moravians recorded in their communal diary on November 3, 1762, "two men from Pennsylvania" had recently visited their settlement at Bethabara in Rowan County, North Carolina, "looking for thirty to one hundred thousand acres of land for a company of Presbyterians, who wish to settle together."27

Members of other ethnic groups moving from Pennsylvania to North Carolina followed similar patterns of migration. Englishmen and Germans also traveled along the Great Wagon Road and frequently made temporary sojourns in the Shenandoah Valley. Moreover, most German and English immigrants traveled as individuals or in small groups of interrelated or neighboring families. The German Moravians provided the only major exception to this rule. They moved from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to Rowan County, North Carolina, in the 1750s as a community, instead of small groups. Virtually all other German and English migrants, however, made the long journey in similar fashion to their Scots-Irish neighbors.28


28 Ramsey, Carolina Cradle, pp. 130-51; Merrens, Colonial North Carolina, pp. 57-70; Gehrke, "Pennsylvania German Element," pp. 353-54; and Daniel Thorp, The Moravian
No matter how they traveled most Scots-Irish settlers embarked on the long journey for the same reasons. While contemporaries claimed that laziness motivated many Scots-Irish men and women to migrate, modern scholars agree that a variety of forces combined to push them out of Pennsylvania and pull them towards western North Carolina. Confusion over land titles, fear of Indian attacks, dissatisfaction with the provincial government, and especially the increasing scarcity and expense of land encouraged many Scots-Irish individuals to look beyond Pennsylvania for their families' futures. At the same time, reports of natural abundance, cheap and easily accessible land, and the previous moves of numerous friends and relatives drew them to the North Carolina piedmont.

Reflecting a latent ethnic prejudice, many contemporary observers attributed the Scots-Irish migration to far less flattering motivations. Benjamin Rush, for example, concluded that many Scots-Irish moved to North Carolina because of indolence. "The soil and climate of the western parts of Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia," he claimed, "afford a more easy support to lazy farmers than the stubborn but durable soil of Pennsylvania." The hard ground of Pennsylvania, according

to Rush, "requires deep and repeated plowing," but in Carolina, "scratching the ground once or twice affords tolerable crops."29

The German Moravian Bishop Spangenburg, who led the Moravians' migration from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to Rowan County, North Carolina, in 1752, agreed with Rush's negative view of the Scots-Irish immigrants. The "crowds of Irish" settlers who had flocked to North Carolina, Spangenburg recorded in his diary, had done so "because they hear that it is not necessary to feed the [live]stock in winter" in North Carolina, "and that pleases them."

Other Scots-Irish migrants, according to the pious Spangenburg, "were refugees from debt, or had deserted their wives and children, or had fled to escape punishment for evil deeds and thought that here no one would find them, and they could go on in impunity."30

Despite these biased observations, most Scots-Irish migrated in search of more secure social and economic lives. After 1740, a number of forces in colonial Pennsylvania undermined many Scots-Irish families' economic and social security. The boundary dispute between Pennsylvania and Maryland in the 1730s and 1740s, for example, left some Scots-Irish settlers disenchanted with

their Pennsylvania homes. The territory claimed by both colonies included several Scots-Irish neighborhoods. The resulting confusion over which colony had the right to issue land grants in the region eroded many residents' confidence in the legality of their land warrants. Fearing that Marylanders would claim their land, many Scots-Irish abandoned their farms in this no man's land and moved south.\(^{31}\)

The growing threat of Indian attack on the Pennsylvania frontier after 1740 also accounted for the migration of growing numbers of Scots-Irish settlers to Carolina. While backcountry settlers had always been wary of the Delawares and other tribes living around them, the eruption of hostilities between England and France in 1748 first raised the real possibility of an Indian attack on the region. While many Scots-Irish families braced themselves for the anticipated raids, others chose to leave the potential battleground and find safer havens in the southern backcountry.\(^{32}\)


\(^{32}\)Ramsey, Carolina Cradle, p. 16; and Leyburn, Scotch-
With the outbreak of the French and Indian War in 1754, the threat of Indian war on the Pennsylvania frontier became a reality. From 1754 to 1763, thousands of residents fled their homes in the wake of deadly Indian raids on dozens of backcountry communities. In 1756, petitioners from Cumberland County reported to the governor that "great numbers of the inhabitants are already fled, and others preparing to go off." The following year, a group of Lancaster County citizens complained that "the greater part of the remaining inhabitants are now flying with wives and children to places more remote from danger." 33

Ironically, death and destruction in the backcountry prevented many Scots-Irish men and women from migrating during the war itself. Having temporarily deserted their homes and crops, many found it impossible to collect the necessary provisions to take on the journey and to raise capital for the long trek by selling their land or produce. At the same time, Indian raids in the Shenandoah Valley

Irish, pp. 213-14.

made "The Great Wagon Road" that led to the North Carolina piedmont far too dangerous for travelers.34

The return of peace in 1764 allowed many Scots-Irish families to re-assess the quality of their lives in western Pennsylvania. The war had left many settlers, in the words of John Elder, the minister at Paxton Presbyterian Church in Lancaster County, "quite sunken and dispirited." A nagging fear of renewed Indian attack, combined with the war's destruction of many of their homes and crops, convinced thousands of Scots-Irish colonists to migrate to the safer confines of North Carolina. In 1769, an influential Philadelphia merchant explained to Thomas Penn that "the people cannot soon forget the terrors of an Indian war, and rather than live dispersed in an inhospitable dreary part of the country, they would chuse to leave it."35

The vast majority of Scots-Irish, however, left Pennsylvania because of the increasing scarcity and expense of land in the colony after 1740. As the backcountry's

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population grew from 1740 to 1775, more Scots-Irish men found it increasingly difficult to obtain the land -- and the independence it brought -- for themselves and their offspring. North Carolina's governor reported to the Board of Trade in 1755 that he had "seen returns" demonstrating that so many new immigrants had landed in Pennsylvania over the last several years that many of them were "obliged to remove to the southward for want of land to take up."  

The sharp decline in the number and size of land warrants granted to Scots-Irish settlers in the Pennsylvania backcountry after 1750 best reflects the growing scarcity of land in the region. Between 1733 and 1750, the Penn family had granted 1,235 tracts of land to Scots-Irish inhabitants in Lancaster County alone. Over the next twenty years, the number of land parcels in the county given to Scots-Irishmen plummeted to a mere 306. At the same time, the average size of the tracts fell from 160 acres from 1733 to 1750 to 90 acres from 1750 to 1770.  

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With less vacant land available, the price of already cleared land in the region steadily increased from 1750 to 1775. By 1760, the price of land in the Pennsylvania backcountry exceeded what most young Scots-Irish men could afford. In the 1740s, for example, Scots-Irish individuals had paid an average of one pound and four shillings per one hundred acres of land in Lancaster County. By the 1760s, that average had risen to two pounds and three shillings per one hundred acres. One emigrant from Pennsylvania explained that the influx of "such a crowd of inhabitants from all parts [into Pennsylvania] has occasioned the price of lands in the province to exceed more than double the price of better lands...in neighboring provinces."  

Changes in the proprietors' land policies after the French and Indian War exacerbated the growing shortage of vacant land in the Pennsylvania backcountry. Fearful of re-igniting hostilities with the native Americans, the Penns sharply curtailed their efforts to purchase new territory from the Six Nations tribes after 1754. This refusal to acquire additional land on the frontier forced those settlers who could not obtain land in the colony's settled areas to look elsewhere. As early as 1755, the

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Pennsylvania General Assembly had complained that "the exorbitant price at which the proprietors held their lands and their neglect of Indian purchasing" had driven thousands of settlers from the colony.39

When the Penn family did purchase land from the Indians after 1754, their sales policies increasingly favored speculators over common settlers. After the acquisition of the "New Territory" in the Susquehanna and Wyoming Valleys in 1768, the proprietors' land agents distributed over 30,000 acres of the tract to speculators before even offering it for sale to the public. Even when the land office opened in 1769, the decision to allow individuals to claim as many as one hundred grants of three hundred acres apiece enabled speculators to quickly monopolize the territory. Within four months, the office had granted over one million acres -- all of the best land in the region.40

These speculator-friendly policies frequently drew the ire of Scots-Irish settlers in the backcountry. In March 1769, for example, a group of frontier inhabitants petitioned the governor to allow them to purchase land in the "New Territory." "We begin to fear," they explained, "that we will not have any benefit therein, as the whole of

39 Minutes of Provincial Council, VI: 574-75.
40 Boyd, Susquehanna Papers, III: xii-xx.
the best of the...purchase betwixt Military Officers and other private Gentlemen is wholly taken up." Despite these pleas, few Scots-Irish settlers obtained land in the new territory before the Revolution. Unable to find land on the Pennsylvania frontier, many of them turned their attention towards the southern backcountry.41

As western Pennsylvania became less and less attractive to many Scots-Irish settlers, the North Carolina piedmont offered an abundance of natural resources -- especially cheap, easily accessible land -- and the opportunity to achieve social and economic independence. While land was becoming scarce and more expensive in Pennsylvania, a sparse population and vast expanse of open territory kept land prices down in western North Carolina. In the Granville District of western North Carolina, for example, vacant land sold for five shillings per one hundred acres -- compared to fifteen pounds per one hundred acres for similar land in Pennsylvania.42

The terms of a land exchange between a North Carolina and Pennsylvania resident in 1771 best illustrates the gap in land prices between the two colonies. Andrew Erwin had migrated from Pennsylvania to Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, in 1762. Nine years later, however, he decided

41Boyd, Susquehanna Papers, III: 102-5, 176-77.
42Ramsey, Carolina Cradle, pp. 17-22; and Merrens, Colonial North Carolina, p. 63.
to sell the four-hundred-acre farm he had purchased in Mecklenburg and return to his former home in Pennsylvania. To accomplish the move, Erwin swapped his land in North Carolina for a tract owned by John Wilson in Pennsylvania. Erwin traded his four hundred acres in Mecklenburg to Wilson for a one hundred acre tract in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, and five pounds sterling. In other words, it took four hundred acres in North Carolina to equal the price of one hundred acres in Pennsylvania.\footnote{Brent Holcomb and Elmer O. Parker, comps., Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1763-1779 (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1979), p. 238.}

As the migration from Pennsylvania and adjacent colonies continued, another force emerged that lured thousands of Scots-Irish to western North Carolina. The presence of family and friends who had already moved to Carolina influenced more and more individuals to make the long trek themselves. Letters from relatives and former neighbors encouraged those who remained in Pennsylvania to join them in the new territory. In 1771, for example, Alexander Caldwell moved from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to join his brother David in Guilford County, North Carolina. Another immigrant explained that settlers in Carolina had "encouraged their friends and acquaintances to follow them, among whom I was one."\footnote{Mark Francis Miller, "David Caldwell: The Forming of a Southern Educator," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of}
In most cases, Scots-Irish immigrants' motives for migrating from Pennsylvania to North Carolina differed very little from those of other ethnic groups. The thousands of English and German settlers who traveled the same route from Pennsylvania to the southern backcountry shared the same motivations as their fellow immigrants. Like the Scots-Irish, English and German individuals left Pennsylvania to escape Indian attack and worsening economic conditions. At the same time, the same prospects for economic improvement and independence, as well as the desire to join friends and relatives who had already moved, that lured the Scots-Irish to North Carolina also attracted the English and Germans.⁴⁵

The motivations behind Scots-Irish settlers' migration to North Carolina, however, differed from those of the English and Germans in one important respect. Scots-Irish residents' growing dissatisfaction with Pennsylvania's provincial government after the French and Indian War greatly contributed to the steady stream of emigrants out of the colony. Many Scots-Irish inhabitants attributed the


extensive death and destruction the frontier had suffered to the pacifist Quaker-controlled General Assembly's refusal to appropriate funds for the colony's defense. While other ethnic groups in the region also blamed the Quakers for their suffering during the war, the hatred and resentment between the Scots-Irish and Quakers became especially acute.

During and after the French and Indian War, a bitter ethnic quarrel developed between the Scots-Irish in the backcountry and the Quakers in the eastern portion of the colony. Scots-Irish leaders accused the Quakers of callously ignoring their pleas for defense. The Quakers, they claimed, cared more for the native Americans than they did for their fellow British subjects. At the same time, the Quakers blamed every atrocity committed by Europeans against the Indians on the supposedly bloodthirsty and lawless Scots-Irish. The division almost erupted in violence when a group of angry Scots-Irishmen from Lancaster County -- known as the Paxton Boys -- marched on Philadelphia in 1764 to protest the government's apparent disregard for their safety.⁴⁶

Although cooler heads in Philadelphia prevented bloodshed in that instance, the bitter animosity between the two ethnic groups continued until the Revolution. Scots-Irish settlers never forgave the Quakers for allegedly abandoning them during the war. Many firmly believed that the Quakers would again ignore their pleas for protection in the event of another Indian conflict. Blatant cases of Quaker prejudice against the Scots-Irish in the years following the French and Indian War only deepened their hostility. Refusing to live in a colony controlled by pacifist Quakers any longer, many Scots-Irish men and women left for North Carolina.47

Whatever their reasons for leaving Pennsylvania, the majority of the approximately 30,000 Scots-Irish immigrants who settled in the North Carolina backcountry came from the lower or middling levels of colonial Pennsylvania society. Although Scots-Irish men and women from all social and economic backgrounds made the journey, small farmers and

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47 Thomas Wharton to Benjamin Franklin, April 27, 1765, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XII: 117; John Elder to Colonel Shippen, February 1, 1764, Elder Papers, DCHS; and Frantz, Paxton, p. 146.
craftsmen, landless young adults, and recently-freed indentured servants were more likely to do so.\textsuperscript{48}

An analysis of the social and economic status of the Scots-Irish men who left Lancaster County between 1750 and 1775 illustrates the social composition of the Scots-Irish migration. Of the 100 Scots-Irish individuals who disappeared from the Donegal township tax lists from 1751 to 1771, 68 percent had paid less than ten shillings in taxes. Similarly, in Coleraine township from 1757 to 1769, 70 percent of the 64 total Scots-Irish men who disappeared from the tax lists had paid less than ten shillings in taxes. Finally, 88 percent of 51 men who disappeared from the Paxton township tax list between 1756 and 1758 owned less than two hundred acres of land.\textsuperscript{49}

North Carolina officials frequently commented on the impoverished condition of most Scots-Irish settlers on their colony's western frontier. In 1755, Gov. Dobbs reported that because most of the immigrants traveled "at a great expense...by land in waggons," and "their wealth being expended they are incapable of improving or

\textsuperscript{48}Merrens, Colonial North Carolina, pp. 65-66; and Lemon, "Best Poor Man's Country", p. 83.

\textsuperscript{49}Again, these statistics do not account for mortality. For more detail on this, see fn \#13 above. Donegal township tax lists, 1751, 1757, 1759, 1769, 1771; Coleraine township tax lists, 1751, 1756, 1757, 1758, 1759, 1763, 1769, 1771; Paxton township tax lists, 1756, 1758; Hanover (east end only) township tax lists, 1750, 1756, Lancaster Tax Lists, Pennsylvania County Records, PHMC.
cultivating the lands they take up for some time." A decade later, another governor claimed that most immigrants arrived in the colony with "not more than a sufficiency to erect a Log House for their families and procure a few Tools to get a little corn into the ground."50

A significant proportion of the migrants also consisted of adult sons whose fathers could not provide them with land -- and thus independence -- in the Pennsylvania backcountry. The increasing scarcity and expense of land in the region left many fathers with too little land to set up all of their sons on independent farms. While their fathers were alive, most of these landless young males remained at home, but commonly left for North Carolina immediately after their fathers' deaths.51

The high rate of mobility among individuals who were described as freemen on Lancaster County tax lists from 1750 to 1770 demonstrates this movement of landless sons from Pennsylvania to Carolina. Freeman on colonial Pennsylvania tax lists included both adult males who still lived at home and male indentured servants. In virtually


51Ramsey, Carolina Cradle, pp. 21-22; and Frantz, Paxton, pp. 139-40.
every township with significant concentrations of Scots-Irish settlers, a high percentage of the freemen left the county. In Donegal, for example, 74 percent of the 38 Scots-Irish freemen listed on the five extant tax lists from 1751 to 1771 disappeared from the area. Similarly, 12 of the 14 Scots-Irish freemen in Coleraine township between 1751 and 1771 left the region.52

The Scots-Irish migration also seems to have included a surprising number of widows who left Pennsylvania or adjacent areas in search of new beginnings after their spouses' deaths. Following the death of her husband Robert Davidson in the 1750s, for example, Isabel Ramsey Davidson moved from Lancaster County to Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, with her family. Once in North Carolina, she married a young schoolmaster named Henry Hendry and started life anew. Similarly, Jane McWhorter moved from New Castle, Delaware, to Mecklenburg County after her husband's death in 1748 to join three of her children, who already lived there.53

Not all Scots-Irish emigrants from Pennsylvania, however, were impoverished at the time of their arrival in

52Donegal township tax lists, 1751, 1757, 1759, 1769, 1771; Coleraine township tax lists, 1751, 1756, 1757, 1758, 1759, 1763, 1769, 1771; Paxton township tax lists, 1756, 1758, Lancaster Tax Lists, Pennsylvania County Records, PHMC.

53Examples from Powell, North Carolina Biography, II: 24, 197, 335.
North Carolina. Many had prospered after several years of living in Pennsylvania or the Shenandoah Valley. The sale of the land they had owned in those colonies enabled some immigrants to bring significant financial resources with them to Carolina. Scots-Irish settlers in North Carolina frequently used the currency they had brought with them from Pennsylvania to make business transactions in their new homes. In 1765, for example, David Caldwell purchased five hundred acres of land in Rowan County with eighty-four pounds in "Pennsylvania money." Similarly, Aaron Alexander of Mecklenburg County bequeathed twenty pounds in "Pennsylvania currency" to his son John in 1771.\footnote{Quotes from Rowan County Deed Book 6: 39-40, Rowan County Record of Deeds, 1753-1962, NCDAH; and Brent Holcomb, comp., Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Abstracts of Early Wills, 1763-1790 (Greenville, SC: A Press, 1980), p. 1. See also the deeds in Rowan County Deed Books 1: 108-13, 2: 256-57, 3: 370-72, 4: 59-61, 6: 29-30, NCDAH; and the wills in Rowan County Will Book A: 109, 114, 131, 177, 196, 200, Rowan County Record of Wills, 1762-1951, NCDAH. Also see Ramsey, Carolina Cradle, p. 171.}

The capital carried from Pennsylvania, combined with the low price of land in western Carolina, enabled some to accumulate significant landholdings shortly after their arrival. Of the 147 land grants received by Scots-Irish immigrants in Anson County between 1749 and 1751, 55 (37 percent) contained more than five hundred acres. Fifty-nine percent of the grants included at least four hundred acres. Most important, 90 percent of the grants contained
two hundred or more acres. Only 14 of the 147 grants were for less than one hundred acres. Clearly, most of these Scots-Irish men and women had achieved at least a moderate amount of success in their new homes.\(^{55}\)

Other national groups migrating to North Carolina displayed similar social and economic backgrounds. Of the 32 English and German residents who left Hanover township between 1750 and 1756, all but one had owned less than two hundred acres of land -- compared to 93 percent of the Scots-Irish. Similarly, all of the fifteen English and German settlers who disappeared from Paxton township between 1756 and 1758 had owned less than two hundred acres -- compared to 88 percent of the Scots-Irish. In North Carolina, German and English immigrants apparently achieved the same success as their new Scots-Irish neighbors. Of the 129 land grants given to German and English settlers in Anson County from 1748 to 1751, 54 percent contained more than four hundred acres -- compared to 59 percent of the Scots-Irish.\(^{56}\)


\(^{56}\)Paxton township tax lists 1756, 1758; Hanover township tax lists 1750, 1756; Lancaster Tax Lists, Pennsylvania County Records, PHMC; and Anson County Land Grants, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, IV: 946-65, 1037-47, 1238-55. See also Lemon, "Best Poor Man's Country", p. 83; Ramsey, Carolina Cradle, p. 171; Merrens, Colonial North Carolina, pp. 65-66; and Joseph R. Nixon, "The German Settlers in Lincoln County and Western North
Once in North Carolina, the newly arrived Scots-Irish settlers maintained a close connection with their fellow countrymen back in Pennsylvania throughout the colonial period. The steady flow of new immigrants from Pennsylvania and adjacent areas to western North Carolina in the years between 1750 and 1754 and again from 1763 to 1775 helped to strengthen the ties between the Scots-Irish communities in the two colonies. Despite the overwhelming geographical distance, Scots-Irish residents in Carolina remained amazingly close to the family and neighbors they had left behind through commercial transactions, religious institutions and doctrines, and a remarkable amount of correspondence and personal visits.

Much of the economic link between the two Scots-Irish communities involved private transactions between recent immigrants to North Carolina and the friends and relatives they had left behind in Pennsylvania. Numerous Scots-Irish settlers in North Carolina made provisions in their wills for collecting debts still owed them by former neighbors or for distributing portions of their estates to family members back in Pennsylvania. John McCutcheon of Mecklenburg County, for example, bequeathed "a young negro boy" to his niece in Pennsylvania in 1785. John Rutledge's will in Rowan County in 1774 instructed his executors to

collect the debts owed him by Robert Dobson and Robert Rosenburg in Pennsylvania. 57

A few Scots-Irish immigrants did not sell the land they had owned in Pennsylvania until after their settlement in North Carolina. Their attempts to sell this land or other property in their former homes provided yet another economic link between the two regions. After settling in Mecklenburg County in the early 1770s, Robert and Margaret Stewart, along with their neighbors John and Jane Hill, sold their land back in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, to William Adams. Similarly, Thomas Sharp sold the three-hundred-acre farm on which he had previously resided in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to Joseph Kennedy shortly after his arrival in Tryon County, North Carolina, in 1775. 58

Many Pennsylvania Scots-Irishmen speculated in lands in the North Carolina backcountry. Knowing that their neighbors and relatives were moving into the region, they expected to accumulate huge profits from the re-sale of their lands. In 1770, Andrew Mitchell of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, purchased twenty-nine tracts of land

57 Holcomb, Mecklenburg Wills, pp. 21, 34, 40, 65; and Rowan County Will Book A: 114, 131, 196, Rowan County Record of Wills, NCDAH.

58 James Findlay Peffer Lamberton Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP), I: 84; and Holcomb and Parker, Mecklenburg Deeds, p. 193.
containing 6,090 acres in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, for 258 pounds. Pennsylvanian Patrick Campbell sold the 640-acre tract he had previously purchased in Rowan County, North Carolina, to two recent immigrants to the area in 1762.59

Because of the poor quality of roads and the lack of adequate water routes to eastern North Carolina before 1770, much of the backcountry's economic life was directed outside the colony. Most goods and products shipped into or out of the region came from Pennsylvania or South Carolina. Merchants received many of the manufactured goods they sold to local customers from Philadelphia or Charleston. North Carolina backcountry settlers routinely drove the herds of cattle they raised to markets in Pennsylvania. Similarly, they sent wagonloads of flax and other commercial crops to Philadelphia for sale there or export to England.60

Many men and women in western North Carolina made frequent personal business trips back to their former homes

59 Holcomb and Parker, Mecklenburg Deeds, pp. 23-24, 34, 63, 117, 152, 179, 198, 204, 210, 224, 235; and Rowan County Deed Book 6: 307-9, 357-59, Rowan County Record of Deeds, NCDAH.

in Pennsylvania or surrounding areas. While there, they
took advantage of the local and regional markets they had
known before their migration to sell products they had
grown or gathered in North Carolina, and to purchase
manufactured goods for their families. John McKnitt
Alexander, for example, transported the cattle and hides he
received as payments for his work as a tailor in
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, back to Pennsylvania,
where he exchanged them for broadcloth and other material
he needed for his business.61

The memorandum book of William Alexander provides a
unique glimpse into this colonial American version of the
long-distance business trip. Between 1770 and 1775,
Alexander made two extended trips from Mecklenburg County,
North Carolina, back to his former home in Cecil County,
Maryland. While visiting old friends and kin, he made
several trips to nearby Philadelphia to sell the furs and
bitterroot (a medicinal herb used by eighteenth-century
physicians) he had collected back in North Carolina. With
the profits from these sales, he purchased silver buckles,
reams of writing paper, rum, cloth, spices, and clothing
for himself and his family in Carolina.

William Alexander also acted as a commission merchant
for many of his neighbors in Mecklenburg County. Before

61 Alexander, Hopewell Section, pp. 10-11.

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travelling north, he routinely collected furs from many of the residents in the community in order to sell them in Philadelphia. During his 1770 trip, for example, Alexander carried furs from sixty-six different persons in his wagonload bound for Pennsylvania. At the same time, he purchased manufactured goods for his neighbors in Philadelphia as well. Again in 1770, Alexander bought a gun for Nathaniel Erwin, one roll of press papers for Moses McClain, and a silk handkerchief for Nancy Graham at Philadelphia shops.\(^6\)

A shared belief in Presbyterianism provided another bond between the Scots-Irish settlers in North Carolina and Pennsylvania. Scots-Irish residents in both colonies firmly embraced Calvinist theology and presbyterian ecclesiastical government. In fact, Scots-Irish settlers commonly brought proof of their membership in a Pennsylvania Presbyterian congregation with them to North Carolina in order to facilitate their acceptance by their new neighbors. When they migrated to Rowan County, North Carolina, in 1751, James and Prudence Hall carried a certificate affirming their good moral behavior and good standing in the church from the elders of their old congregation in York County, Pennsylvania.\(^6\)

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\(^{62}\) William Alexander Memorandum Book, Rufus Barringer Collection, NCDAH.

\(^{63}\) James King Hall Papers, SHC, box 1, folder 1. See Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
The continuing bonds of kinship and friendship provided the strongest connection between the Scots-Irish communities in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Despite the long distance and lack of an inter-colonial communications infrastructure, Scots-Irish relatives and former neighbors in both regions maintained remarkably close contact with one another. The constant flow southward of immigrants allowed a steady stream of letters, gossip, and news about those they had left behind to reach the new settlers in western North Carolina.

One of the first things that new Scots-Irish colonists did on arriving in Carolina was to make the rounds of visiting friends and relatives who had already settled in the region. After moving from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to Rowan County, North Carolina, David Caldwell spent several weeks visiting with friends and relatives from Pennsylvania who had settled in Mecklenburg County. While staying with his former pastor from

Lancaster, Caldwell even began the courtship of his future wife -- the minister's daughter Rachel Craighead. These old friends commonly vouched for the new arrivals' trustworthiness and honesty with the other settlers.\textsuperscript{64}

For those who chose not to make the arduous journey from Pennsylvania to Carolina, occasional visits to North Carolina or brief returning trips by friends or relatives who had migrated helped to keep the bonds of kinship and friendship close. A surprising number of Scots-Irish settlers made short trips to see relatives and former neighbors who had left Pennsylvania. In 1754, the Rowan County Moravians sent several letters to their fellow countrymen in Pennsylvania by way of "an Irishman [from Lancaster County] who has been visiting in this neighborhood." Ephraim Steele, of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, traveled to Rowan County, North Carolina, in 1778 to spend some time with his sister Elizabeth who had migrated to the area twenty years earlier.\textsuperscript{65}

At the same time, many Scots-Irish settlers who had moved to North Carolina made trips back to their former homes in Pennsylvania and surrounding areas. After


\textsuperscript{65} Fries, Records of Moravians, I: 97; and Elizabeth Steele to Ephraim Steele, May 15, 1778, Ephraim Steele Papers, SHC.
migrating to Carolina in 1754, John McKnitt Alexander carried on a long-distance courtship of Jane Bain in Pennsylvania by making frequent trips between the two regions until the couple finally married in 1759. John's cousin William Alexander made two extended visits to his former home in Cecil County, Maryland, between 1770 and 1775. In each instance, William spent at least three months in Maryland visiting relatives and friends.⁶⁶

For many Scots-Irish settlers in Pennsylvania and North Carolina, letters provided the only means of keeping in touch with friends and family members in distant places. As one Scots-Irish immigrant in Carolina wrote her brother in Pennsylvania, "letters are the meeting and talking of absent friends." The many visitors and immigrants travelling back and forth between the two regions provided ample opportunities for individuals to send letters to far-away friends. Even in the midst of the Revolutionary War, siblings Elizabeth and Ephraim Steele sent at least fifteen letters back and forth between Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, and Rowan County, North Carolina, from 1778 to 1780.⁶⁷

⁶⁶Alexander, Hopewell Section, pp. 10-11; and William Alexander Memorandum Book, Barringer Collection, SHC.

⁶⁷Quote from Elizabeth Steele to Ephraim Steele, May 15, 1778, Steele Papers, SHC. Also see the other letters from Elizabeth to Ephraim, Jan. 22, 1778; July 30, Oct. 17, 1778; Oct 19, 1779; April 29, July 13, and Oct. 25, 1780 in the same collection.
Letters allowed individuals to pass along news and gossip about their families and neighbors to friends and relatives living elsewhere. Nicholas Massey of Rowan County, North Carolina, for example, informed his brother back in Maryland of his wife's death and the marriage of three of his daughters in October 1774. When her son Robert was stationed at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, during the Revolution, Elizabeth Steele of Rowan County asked her brother Ephraim, who lived in the town, to keep her informed about his behavior.\(^{68}\)

At the same time, family letters also carried vital information from one colony to the other. Correspondence served as a means of keeping Scots-Irish residents of one region informed on what was happening in other parts of the American colonies. This communication proved especially crucial in times of war. During the French and Indian War, settlers in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, first learned that a party of friendly Cherokees were travelling from western North Carolina to help them fight the French and Indians from a letter written by a son living in Carolina to his father in Pennsylvania. Similarly, Elizabeth and Ephraim Steele frequently exchanged news about the progress

\[^{68}\text{Nicholas Massey to his brother, October 4, 1774, Nicholas Massey Paper, NCDAH; and Elizabeth Steele to Ephraim Steele, October 17, 1778, Steele Papers, SHC.}\]
of American and British forces in their respective parts of the country during the American Revolution.  

Members of other ethnic groups in western North Carolina maintained similarly close ties with their fellow countrymen back in Pennsylvania. Like the Scots-Irish, English and German settlers in the region continued to engage in economic relations with their former neighbors back home. Many of them still owned land in Pennsylvania, transported most of the crops and livestock they raised to Pennsylvania for sale, and purchased many of the manufactured goods they needed there as well. More important, German and English immigrants kept in close contact with the people they had left behind through frequent letters and occasional visits.  

Scots-Irish inhabitants of the Pennsylvania and North Carolina backcountry, however, preserved uniquely intimate connections in two crucial respects. Scots-Irish Presbyterians maintained closer links with their Pennsylvania brethren than did most German and English settlers.  

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denominations. While German Reformed and Lutherans as well as English Quakers and Anglicans in western North Carolina shared similar theology and practices with their counterparts in Pennsylvania, these denominations lacked a formal church hierarchy to unite their members in both regions.

As the only national church organization in colonial America, the Synod of New York and Philadelphia provided a powerful bond between the Scots-Irish Presbyterian communities in Pennsylvania and North Carolina that no other denomination could match. By deciding issues of doctrinal debate, regulating worship practices and ministers' actions, and determining the placement of ministers, the Synod helped preserve Presbyterian doctrinal and institutional unity throughout the colonies after 1758. Only the German Moravians came close to equaling the intercolonial organizational connections of the Presbyterians.\footnote{See Guy S. Klett, ed., Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1706-1788 (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publications, 1904); and Trinterud, Forming an American Tradition. For the Moravians, see Thorp, Moravian Community.}

The Synod's control of the placement of ministers in frontier areas provided the strongest link between the Scots-Irish communities in the two regions. Throughout the colonial period, Presbyterian congregations in western North Carolina sent numerous supplications for ministers to
the Synod in Philadelphia. In response, the Synod dispatched dozens of missionaries from Pennsylvania and surrounding areas to visit the region. These Pennsylvania missionaries frequently played key roles in the growth of Presbyterian churches in the North Carolina backcountry. In 1764, for example, two such missionaries, Elihu Spencer and Alexander McWhorter, organized nine congregations in Rowan and Mecklenburg Counties.72

Even the ministers who settled permanently in North Carolina continued this connection with Pennsylvania. Virtually every Presbyterian minister who served a congregation in the North Carolina backcountry before the Revolution originated in Pennsylvania or an adjacent area. All of the twelve colonial North Carolina Presbyterian ministers for whom biographies could be found had been born, educated, or served as ministers in Pennsylvania or another middle colony before moving to Carolina.73


73 Compiled from biographical sketches found in Powell,
Presbyterians' insistence on an educated ministry and populace in general also provided a unique link between the two Scots-Irish communities. Parents in North Carolina sometimes sent their sons to Presbyterian academies in Pennsylvania and surrounding areas to receive their educations. Alexander McWhorter, of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, returned to his home colony of Delaware to study at the Newark Academy in the early 1750s. Alexander and Nancy McCorkle, of Rowan County, North Carolina, sent their son Samuel to a Presbyterian school in their old home of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in the early 1760s.\footnote{McLachlan and Harrison, Princetonians, I: 194-95; and Powell, North Carolina Biography, IV: 128-29.}

The Presbyterian-controlled Princeton College in New Jersey became an important gathering place for talented young Scots-Irish men from both the Pennsylvania and North Carolina backcountry during the eighteenth century. Five of the college's eight graduating classes from 1769 to 1776 included students from both regions. The classes of 1772 and 1773 alone contained seventeen graduates from the two


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areas. The common philosophy of classical republicanism they learned under the tutelage of professors like James Witherspoon, as well as the lasting friendships they formed with one another, helped to provide an ideological and personal bridge between the geographically distant Scots-Irish communities. No other denomination in the backcountry created such an inter-colonial educational institution.⁷⁵

As these ethnic connections between the two regions suggest, the Scots-Irish migration from Pennsylvania and adjacent areas to western North Carolina was more than merely a movement of people. It was the expansion of a unique Scots-Irish ethnic identity and way of life from the culture's core area in southeastern Pennsylvania throughout the southern backcountry. The approximately 30,000 Scots-Irish settlers who populated the North Carolina piedmont between 1745 and 1775 brought their own distinct values and beliefs with them from Pennsylvania. With Scots-Irish settlements scattered all along its route, the Great Wagon Road over which the migrants traveled became a sort of cultural bridge between the two communities.

While searching for land and personal independence, these Scots-Irish small farmers and craftsmen, landless adult sons and widows, and indentured servants helped to transform western North Carolina into an extension of the Scots-Irish culture and community that had first emerged in the Pennsylvania backcountry from 1710 to 1750. The continued commercial, social, religious, and educational connections between the Scots-Irish men and women in the two regions best illustrates the cultural attachment of Scots-Irish settlers in North Carolina with their fellow countrymen back in Pennsylvania.

In fact, the North Carolina piedmont became, in the words of one immigrant, "a second Pennsylvania."

Throughout the colonial period, Scots-Irish culture in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina remained remarkably similar. Despite being separated by hundreds of miles and encountering somewhat different conditions, the Scots-Irish in the two regions developed in much the same way after 1750. The economic, social, religious, and political values and behavior of Scots-Irish settlers on the North Carolina frontier closely resembled those of their countrymen back in Pennsylvania.76

The grandson of Ulster immigrants in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Lazarus Stewart spent much of his life searching for land and the independence it provided. In 1769, he and other backcountry residents protested the Penn family's increasing practice of granting new lands purchased from the Indians to members of the colonial elite, instead of common people. Fearing they would not be able to "buy from them [speculators] at the rate they will sell," Stewart and his neighbors begged for the chance to obtain just "one tract [each]" in the new lands.¹

When this and other peaceful means failed, Lazarus joined a company of New Englanders who had forcibly occupied the Wyoming Valley in northeastern Pennsylvania. For two years, Stewart and his followers squatted in the fertile Valley and violently resisted Pennsylvania authorities' efforts to remove them. When surrounded by a

sheriff's posse during one such battle, Stewart clearly revealed the motive behind his actions: "If the Governor will...give me some land I'll surrender myself; otherwise, I'll fight it out as long as I have Blood left in my Body!"\(^2\)

Although he shared Lazarus Stewart's Ulster roots, John McKnitt Alexander led a dramatically different economic life. Born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1733, Alexander migrated to western North Carolina in 1754. Within five years, he had established a successful tailor business and farm in Mecklenburg County. Anxious to accumulate wealth, John McKnitt quickly engaged in commercial production. He not only sent the surplus wheat and cattle from his own farm to markets as far away as Philadelphia, but he also accepted foodstuffs and animal hides as payments from his tailoring customers and sold them at market as well.\(^3\)

As he realized increasing profits from his commercial endeavors, Alexander began to speculate in lands throughout western North Carolina. He bought dozens of tracts of

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unimproved land, rented them out for several years, and then resold them for at least double the original purchase price. In 1767, for example, he sold 131 acres on Rocky River — that he had purchased three years earlier for thirteen pounds and two shillings — for sixty pounds. By the Revolution, John McKnitt had amassed a substantial estate of over one thousand acres.  

The divergent lives of Lazarus Stewart and John McKnitt Alexander reflect the complexity of Scots-Irish economic culture in the eighteenth-century American backcountry. As the region's growing population and emerging infrastructure gave them greater access to markets, more Scots-Irish men and women embraced commercial production. Despite their increasing market-orientation, however, most continued to place their families' self-sufficiency and autonomy above the search for profits. They still engaged in traditional exchanges of goods and services with neighbors and struggled to obtain land for themselves and their children.

The growth of market production among Scots-Irish settlers throughout the backcountry after 1750 set in motion forces that threatened to undermine Ulster immigrants' unity and distinctiveness. As a small minority of Scots-Irishmen began to emphasize capitalist values,

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their economic interests diverged, and clashed with, those of their fellow countrymen. Moreover, the Scots-Irish residents' increasing commercial-orientation deepened their similarity to other European immigrants in the region.

Despite these destructive forces, Scots-Irish colonists managed to preserve much of their unique ethnic identity in their economic lives before the Revolution. Ulster emigrants throughout the backcountry shared an economic culture that contained both capitalistic and non-commercial values. Whether they lived in Pennsylvania or North Carolina, virtually all Scots-Irishmen simultaneously prized the seemingly contradictory ideals of profit seeking and subsistence. United by these common beliefs, they observed ethnic exclusivity in many of their economic transactions.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, capitalist production expanded throughout colonial British North America. As the colonies' population rose and an emerging infrastructure of towns and roads linked them together after 1700, more colonial Americans engaged in commercial agriculture. Despite their increasing market-orientation, however, eighteenth-century Americans never abandoned the ideals of self-sufficiency and independence. Even while eagerly entering the market, men continued to place their
families' subsistence and their own autonomy above all other economic pursuits.\(^5\)

The Scots-Irish played an important role in creating such a complex economy in the mid-eighteenth-century backcountry. Ulster immigrants in southeastern Pennsylvania had laid the foundation for such a composite economic culture before 1750. Their sons and daughters, along with thousands of new emigrants from Ireland, expanded this hybrid economy in Pennsylvania and western North Carolina between 1750 and 1775. As the region's economy developed, most Scots-Irishmen increased their market activity while continuing to produce much of their own food and other necessities. They employed a surprisingly complicated mixture of cash, credit, and barter in their financial transactions. By the Revolution, the frontier Scots-Irish had established an intricate

\(^5\)I have based this summary on Allan Kulikoff's insightful synthesis of the two principle historiographical interpretations of eighteenth-century American economic development. Like Kulikoff, I believe that both viewpoints present solid arguments, but that neither can stand alone; only by combining them can we fully appreciate all the nuances of the complicated colonial economy. For a good survey of the debate and his synthesis, see Kulikoff, The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), especially pp. 14-33. Also see Richard Bushman, "Markets and Composite Farms in Early America," William and Mary Quarterly 55, 3 (July 1998): 351-74; and Christopher Clark, "Rural America and the Transition to Capitalism," in Wages of Independence: Capitalism in the Early American Republic, ed. Paul A. Gilje (New York: Madison House, 1997), pp. 65-79.
combination of subsistence-oriented local exchange networks and profit-minded participation in the capitalist world.

Scots-Irish residents of Pennsylvania and North Carolina continued to seek greater access to markets within and outside the backcountry between 1750 and 1775. Like their parents in early eighteenth-century Pennsylvania, they flooded local and provincial governments with requests for more and better roads and waterways. Between 1750 and 1775, backcountry Pennsylvanians sent more than fifteen such petitions to the General Assembly and Provincial Council as well as countless others to their county courts. Each of these supplications made Scots-Irish inhabitants' desire for commercial agriculture abundantly clear. One group from Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, for example, asked the Assembly in 1769 to clear the Juniata River so that they could "bring the produce of the fruitful country...to the market of Philadelphia."  

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The backcountry's tremendous economic development after 1750 enabled more Scots-Irishmen in Pennsylvania and North Carolina to realize their ambitions for market production than had been able to do so in the first half of the century. The steady population increase and growth of towns within the Pennsylvania backcountry, combined with the continuous presence of a British army on the frontier during the French and Indian War, provided a new pool of consumers for farmers' surplus produce. The development of a network of roads in the region, moreover, gave Pennsylvania Scots-Irish more convenient access to markets in Philadelphia and Baltimore. The incredibly rapid settlement of western North Carolina between 1745 and 1775 sparked a similar economic transformation in that region. By 1775, the North Carolina piedmont's economy was as commercialized as that of Pennsylvania.7

Southern Historical Collection (SHC); William L. Saunders and Walter Clark, Colonial Records of North Carolina, 26 vols. (Various places: various publishers, 1886-1905), VI: 191, 1169; VII: 354; VIII: 330, 342-43; IX: 498, 753; and Petition of Rowan County, Feb. 1772, Rowan County Road Records and Reports, North Carolina Department of Archives and History (NCDAH), box 1.

Backcountry residents and other contemporary observers often commented on the growth of frontier commerce. One petition from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, declared in 1774 that the "trade of the western parts of the Province has increased very greatly with these few years past." "Large quantities of grain, flax-seed, hemp, iron, and other articles of trade," they proclaimed, "are daily conveyed to Baltimore" from the backcountry. Frontier Pennsylvanians commonly spoke of travelling to Philadelphia "on business" and taking "the produce of their farms to market" after 1750. North Carolina's Governor Arthur Dobbs frequently complained about the growing trade inhabitants on his colony's western frontier conducted with Charleston, South Carolina, in the 1750s.8

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Indeed, increasing numbers of Scots-Irish farmers in both colonies began to carry their surplus wheat and rye, which they either ground into flour or distilled into whiskey; hemp and flax, which they turned into rope and linen cloth; and butter and other dairy products to local towns or coastal cities for sale or export to Europe. Backcountry Pennsylvanians after 1750 continued to transport their produce to Philadelphia and Baltimore. North Carolina frontier farmers initially shipped their commodities to Philadelphia and Charleston. With the construction of better roads leading from the backcountry to the North Carolina coast in the 1760s, many also began to send their products to New Bern and Edenton by way of the emerging commercial center of Cross Creek (now Fayetteville).  


9John Armstrong to Thomas Wharton, Feb. 17, 1777, John Armstrong Papers, Alphabetical Series, Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP); Will of Robert Lockhead, 1763, Lancaster County Papers, 1728-1816, HSP, I: 139; Peter Bard to Gov., July 27, 1758, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, III: 499; MacKinney...
and one half pound of allspice from the Edenton merchant Nathaniel Allen in October 1783.\textsuperscript{10}

Increasing numbers of Scots-Irish colonists also began to purchase goods and necessities from the burgeoning number of general stores and ordinaries that appeared throughout the backcountry after 1750. Nearly one hundred Scots-Irish individuals, for example, shopped at John Harris's store in Lancaster County from 1750 to 1775. One hundred and eighty-one Scots-Irish customers purchased goods at two shops in Carlisle, Cumberland County between 1765 and 1775. In Rowan County, North Carolina, 153 local residents shopped at David Hill's store from 1771 to 1773.\textsuperscript{11}


These men and women purchased a wide variety of goods -- from foodstuffs to tools to fabric and clothing -- at local mercantile establishments. Elizabeth Carson bought 27 bushels of wheat, one half bushel each of flour and salt, 4 pounds of sugar, one half pint of tea, 70 pounds of beef, 4 yards of linen, and 4 yards of check cloth at Samuel Postlethwaite's store in Carlisle between 1766 and 1770. In Rowan County, Gabriel Alexander procured a looking glass, 1 pound each of lead and powder, 2 pounds of shot, 4 pounds of sugar, 5 pounds of iron, a felt hat, a pair of shoe buckles, and a gimlet at David Hill's store on November 3, 1774.  

Throughout the 1760s and 1770s, local general stores and ordinaries became the focus for much of the market activity on the Pennsylvania and North Carolina frontiers. Backcountry merchants imported many of the manufactured goods that local inhabitants demanded from wholesale merchants in coastal cities. In November 1763, William McCord purchased over 120 pounds worth of fabric and

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clothes from the Philadelphia retailer Isaac Wickoff, which he, in turn, sold to his customers in Lancaster. Salisbury, North Carolina, storeowner John Steel obtained his store's inventory from his partner, the Fayetteville wholesaler Robert Adams.¹³

Backcountry general stores increasingly served as collection points for surrounding farmers' surplus produce as well. Local merchants in both colonies purchased neighboring residents' flour, whiskey, flax, hemp, and other products, and shipped them to coastal cities for resale or export. Lancaster merchant William McCord sent 213 bars of iron and 5,642 pounds of hemp that he had collected from his customers to eight different Philadelphia firms in May 1767. In 1785, Salisbury, North Carolina, shopkeeper Thomas Nesbit sent forty-one pounds worth of tobacco, beeswax, and fallow to Fayetteville merchant Robert Adams.¹⁴


¹⁴William McCord Cash Book, McCord Account Books,
Despite experiencing severe losses during the French and Indian War, the Indian trade continued to provide an important form of market activity for a small number of Scots-Irish men in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina. As agents for a large Philadelphia firm, Alexander and Ephraim Blaine of Carlisle shipped goods from Philadelphia to Indians in the west, inspected skins and furs carried from the wilderness, and transported the usable ones to Philadelphia. Francis and Matthew Locke established their own fur trading business with the Cherokees and Catawbas in the North Carolina backcountry in the 1750s.\(^{15}\)

As they increasingly engaged in market production, some Scots-Irish began to use cash or credit in their financial transactions. John Cuthbertson, of Lancaster County, for example, paid twenty-three shillings and sixpence in cash to William Kerr for two shirts in 1752. Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, native Thomas Coyl sold "horses, cattle, and sheep" to William Hagans for forty pounds "good money of North Carolina" in 1770. The

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PHMC; Account of Thomas Nesbit with Robert Adams, 1785, Nesbit Papers, SHC, folder 1; and Jonathan and Joel Evans to Ephraim Blaine, May 16, 1770, April 26, 1771, Blaine Papers, LC.

majority of Scots-Irish customers at backcountry stores paid cash for their purchases after 1750. Virtually every person who shopped at William McCord's store in Lancaster used currency instead of barter. James Thompson, David Scott, and other Cumberland County citizens who bought goods at Robert Elliott's store in 1756 and 1757 paid cash. Similarly, most of the Rowan County, North Carolina, residents who purchased alcohol and foodstuffs at Alexander and John Lowrance's tavern between 1749 and 1775 used paper money.\textsuperscript{16}

The Scots-Irish also increasingly borrowed money from neighborhood merchants between 1750 and 1775. In addition to selling goods imported from coastal seaports, backcountry storekeepers provided short-term loans to their customers. In 1774, Jonathan Wilkins borrowed twelve pounds from Carlisle merchant Ephraim Blaine for a trip to Philadelphia. Pennsylvania storeowner Robert Elliott

advanced Thomas Call 7 pounds, 4 shillings, and 1 pence to pay debts he owed to seven other creditors. From May 1772 to August 1773, Rowan County merchant David Hill loaned James Hall a total of 6 pounds, 2 shillings, and 6 pence in cash.17

Because of the chronic shortage of paper money throughout the eighteenth-century backcountry, many of these transactions involved promissory notes or I.O.U.'s, instead of actual currency. When they purchased goods or labor from their neighbors after 1750, many Scots-Irish individuals did so on credit, promising payment at a later date. When John Potter, of Cumberland County, died in 1757, for example, he owed over nineteen pounds to twelve different individuals. At his death in 1776, Rowan County native Isaac Price held promissory notes worth two pounds each from James McCallie, Samuel Neely, Louis McCamont, and John Bigham.18


18List of debts owed by John Potter, Sept. 1757, The Draper Manuscripts, Series PP: Potter Family Papers, IPP: 30; Promissory notes, Nov. 7, 1776, Price Family Papers,

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Backcountry merchants relied heavily on credit in their businesses. Most allowed their customers to wait several months to pay for their purchases. William McGunnery bought 13 pounds, 3 shillings, and 8 pence worth of goods at William McCord's store in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, on January 6, 1763, but did not reimburse the storeowner until April sixth. Between July 18, 1758 and October 8, 1761, James Stewart purchased twelve shillings and one pence worth of liquor and sundries at Alexander and John Lowrance's tavern in Rowan County, North Carolina, but did not clear his account until October 21, 1761.\textsuperscript{19}

The rising number of debt cases in local courts reflected this growing prevalence of credit throughout the backcountry after 1750. As debts went unpaid for long periods of time, more Scots-Irish settlers resorted to legal measures to recover them. While requesting Robert McPherson to collect several debts owed to him in York

\textsuperscript{19}William McGunnery and other accounts, McCord Ledgerbook, McCord Account Books, PHMC; Charles Stewart and other accounts, Alexander and John Lowrance Ledger, Lowrance Papers, Duke. See also Accounts of George Marshall, Henry Patterson, and John Rees with John Nisbet, 1774-1776, Nisbet Papers, SHC, folder 1; David Hill Ledgerbook, Nisbet Papers, SHC; Anonymous Account Book, Hamilton Papers, HSP; and Samuel Postlethwaite Account Book, Hamilton Papers, HSP.
County, Pennsylvania, Samuel Johnston instructed McPherson "to sue them [the debtors] without delay" if they resisted. In western North Carolina, forty-nine debt cases involving either Scots-Irish defendants or plaintiffs appeared on the docket of the Salisbury District Superior Court between 1756 and 1770.20

Despite their increasing market-orientation, the vast majority of Scots-Irish immigrants continued to demonstrate their belief in the ideals of subsistence and independence after 1750. For most men, their family's welfare and autonomy outweighed the search for profits. Although they sought to raise enough cash to pay taxes and buy a few luxuries, many Ulster emigrants were content to provide "an independent living" for themselves and their families. Most continued to use their farms' produce primarily to feed their families; they sold only what their wives and children did not need. In the 1760s, John Campbell reported that many western North Carolina residents "supply

their wants within themselves." When low crop yields threatened to undermine their families' subsistence, farmers sharply reduced their market sales. After a poor harvest in 1756, for example, backcountry Pennsylvanians petitioned the governor to halt "the exportation of provisions, in order to prevent a scarcity."21

The annual routine of raising food crops dictated the pattern of life in Scots-Irish communities. During the fall harvest, all social activities and other work ceased until the family's food source was gathered. In 1758, one Pennsylvanian claimed that the local inhabitants could "do nothing" else until the harvest was over. During the French and Indian War, men on the Pennsylvania frontier endured tremendous dangers to gather their crops. John Armstrong reported in 1763 that many refugees who had fled their homes after Indian raids returned "in small bodys to thresh out...the grain wherewith to supply their familys."22


Scots-Irish farmers' primitive agricultural techniques reflected their emphasis on subsistence over market production. Most did not adequately improve their farms, or try to increase the soil's fertility. They left acres of land uncultivated and neglected to clear, plow, and fertilize their fields properly. One recent arrival from Scotland in 1771 complained that his Pennsylvania neighbors were "really lazy. They make no improvement in their land but just what they do with the plough, in which they are not very expert, many of them do not so much as draw out to the land the dung which is made by their cattle."  

Even though they had begun to use cash and credit in many of their economic transactions, the Scots-Irish still continued to exchange goods and services with neighboring farmers, artisans, and merchants after 1750 to maintain their families' self-sufficiency. In 1759, William Karr of York County, Pennsylvania, wove fifteen yards of cloth for James Moore in exchange for two bedsteads, one pulling box, and nine shillings worth of cloth. Henry Oneal paid for the corn and tobacco he bought at Samuel Postlethwaite's

store in Carlisle by making a coat, vest, and two pair of breeches for his son.\textsuperscript{24}

Many Scots-Irish residents of the North Carolina backcountry engaged in similar local exchanges. Governor Tryon reported in 1767 that backcountry families who did not own looms "send their...linen yarn to their neighbors to weave." John Sharp gave merchant John Nesbit, of Rowan County, 94 pounds of butter, 98 pounds of tallow, and 2 cow hides in exchange for the 12 pounds, 7 shillings, and 5 pence worth of products he purchased from the store in 1772. Similarly, James McCollough cleared his account at Nesbit's shop by "building a chimney" and "under mining the [Nesbit's] house."\textsuperscript{25}


The increasing economic diversity of Scots-Irish neighborhoods reflected the expansion of local exchange networks throughout the backcountry after 1750. As the region's population grew, more artisans established shops in fledgling towns like Lancaster and Salisbury. According to the occupations listed in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, deeds between 1750 and 1770, local Scots-Irish men were employed in at least twenty-one different crafts and professions, ranging from blacksmiths and carpenters to tailors and merchants. The number of artisans in two Rowan County, North Carolina, Scots-Irish settlements rose from eight in the early 1750s to forty-four by 1762.²⁶

Scots-Irishmen's primary objective after 1750 remained the acquisition of enough land to provide independence for

their families. They often went to great lengths to obtain property. Pennsylvanian Andrew Delap made two trips to England in the 1760s to secure title to his land from both the Penn family and the King. Fearing that South Carolinians would challenge their North Carolina land grants, families living in the disputed territory between the two colonies sent dozens of petitions to the royal government throughout the 1760s requesting an end to the controversy.27

When they could not obtain legal title to a parcel of land, many Ulster emigrants continued to squat on any vacant tract they found. In 1765, Thomas Wharton reported that a number of Pennsylvanians had joined "some Virginians" in establishing a settlement on lands west of Pittsburgh that the proprietors had not yet purchased from the Indians. Similarly, John Campbell complained that "great numbers" of people from the north "resort to...lands [in western North Carolina] and set down on any place they fancy."28


28Thomas Wharton to Benjamin Franklin, April 27, 1765, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XII: 117; John Campbell to unknown, [1760s], Dobbs Papers, NCDAH, box 1, folder 1; Petition of neighbors of Joseph Wylie, 1770, Lamberton

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As cheap, unoccupied land became more difficult to find in both colonies during the 1760s and 1770s, more Scots-Irish colonists resorted to violence to obtain the land and independence they so desperately craved. A band of Scots-Irish settlers along Sugar and Reedy Creeks in Mecklenburg County took advantage of the boundary dispute between North and South Carolina to hold their lands without title. Inhabiting territory claimed by both colonies, they avoided paying North Carolina land fees and taxes by pretending to have grants from South Carolina. When North Carolina officials tried to survey the lands for actual buyers or collect taxes in the area, the squatters attacked them.  

The most prominent example of Scots-Irishmen forcibly seizing land occurred on the Pennsylvania frontier in 1770 and 1771. When a colony of Connecticut settlers -- known as the Susquehanna Company -- tried to assert its claim to the Wyoming Valley in northeastern Pennsylvania, a Scots-Irish party from Lancaster County joined them. Angered by

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their inability to obtain land from the Penn family, Lazarus Young, John Montgomery, and other Lancasterians petitioned the Company in 1769, proposing to swap their loyalty and protection for six square miles of land in Wyoming.30

When the New Englanders sent an expedition to re-claim their lands from Pennsylvania authorities in the spring of 1770, a company of Lancaster men marched to their aid. Led by Scots-Irishman Lazarus Stewart, the coalition attacked the small settlement of Pennsylvanians in Wyoming, "plundered and destroyed several houses," and routed the inhabitants. Over the next two years, the Lancasterians played a key role in helping the New Englanders battle the Pennsylvanians for control of the valley. In return, they received a township of six square miles within the Susquehanna colony.31

The Scots-Irish who did legally obtain land in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina used the profits from market participation to sustain, and even expand, their

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31 John Penn to Thomas Penn, March 10, 1770, in Boyd, Susquehanna Papers, IV: 42-43; Eliphalet Dyer to Settler's Committee, April 30, 1770, in ibid., p. 61; Minutes of Susquehanna Company Meeting, June 6, 1770, Jan. 9, 1771, in ibid., pp. 84-85, 148; and MacKinney and Hoban, Votes and Proceedings, VIII: 6632, 6668-70, 6673.
families' self-sufficiency and autonomy. Men often used the cash they earned to pay for their own land and independence. In 1776, a group of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, residents complained that the current "distressing situation of public affairs" prevented them from "selling the produce of their plantations" to cover the cost of their lands.32

Fathers commonly used the proceeds from market sales to fulfill their desire to give each of their adult sons land. In 1773, Pennsylvanian Alexander Thomson explained that he did not invest his profits in additional cattle and livestock because "I have many children [and] I design to purchase more land for them." "I hope," he continued, "I shall soon provide a comfortable settlement to every one of them who are come up to years." Hezekiah Alexander acquired two tracts of land in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, in the early 1770s, which he later divided among his sons James, Silas, and Hezekiah, Jr.33

In fact, Scots-Irish parents frequently gave land, either through deeds or in wills, to their sons as they reached maturity. Pennsylvanian William Sawyer deeded 468


acres in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, to his son William for "natural love and affection" in 1774. Seventeen Scots-Irish couples transferred tracts of land to their sons in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, between 1750 and 1775; ten did so in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, during the same years. Virtually all Scots-Irish fathers who owned land in the backcountry from 1750 to 1775 bequeathed real estate to as many of their sons as they could in their wills.34

Finally, Scots-Irish immigrants routinely used their market gains to procure the food, tools, clothes, and other articles their families needed. Necessities such as foodstuffs and materials for making clothes, not frivolous luxuries, comprised the bulk of Scots-Irish purchases at backcountry general stores. Between 1766 and 1770, Elizabeth Carson bought wheat, flour, bacon, beef, salt, butter, and other victuals as well as various types of cloth at Samuel Postlethwaite's establishment in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Rowan County, North Carolina, native Nathaniel Ewing obtained thread, needles, buttons, sugar,
iron, and a scythe at David Hill's shop from 1771 to 1776.35

By 1775, the increasing contradictions within Scots-Irish economic culture threatened to erode Ulster emigrants' sense of ethnic distinctiveness and cohesion. As the economic interests of a few profit-minded Scots-Irishmen increasingly diverged from those of their more subsistence-oriented countrymen after 1750, brief conflicts occasionally erupted between the two groups. At the same time, the backcountry's economic development gradually began to make more Scots-Irishmen aware of their economic similarity to other transplanted Europeans in the region.

As they embraced market production, a small number of Scots-Irishmen adopted economic ideals and attitudes that diverged from those of their fellow countrymen. Attracted by the lure of profits and riches, this tiny group abandoned the ideals of independence and subsistence and embraced a new philosophy of possessive individualism. Focused on the accumulation of wealth, they cheated their neighbors at every opportunity, took advantage of lean

times to charge exorbitant prices, accumulated large amounts of land, and began investing in slaves and servants to help them achieve even greater financial success.

With their appetites whetted by the adoption of market agriculture, some Scots-Irish settlers began to place the search for profits above all other economic pursuits. One observer explained in 1766 that Scots-Irish freemen in Pennsylvania moved from place to place so much because they "find their profit in selling, and know they can find more land to improve, so they sell." John Armstrong condemned "the...demon of avarice and infatuation" that caused some Cumberland County farmers to distill their grain into the more profitable whiskey instead of using it for bread and other foods during the early years of the Revolution.36

The characterizations of the protagonists in a thinly-veiled satirical poem written by a Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, Scots-Irishman in 1777 reveal the prevalence of possessive individualism among some members of that county's gentry. Criticizing the corruption of local government officials, the author portrayed the leading candidates in his fictional election as consumed with the accumulation of wealth. One candidate, for example, assured his running mate that he would "make you

36Gottfried Achenrall, "Some Observations on North America from Oral Information by Dr. Franklin, [1766]," in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XIII: 354; and John Armstrong to Thomas Wharton, Feb. 17, 1777, Armstrong, John, Alphabetical Series, Gratz Collection, HSP.
rich" while in office. After his election, the same
official privately revealed his dreams of:

"seeing my grounds by negroes tilled
And all my chests with dollars filled."37

A few greedy men and women took advantage of others'
misfortune or times of economic scarcity to augment their
own wealth. In 1757, a company of Pennsylvania militiamen
commanded by a Captain Patterson "clandestinely" collected
a number of horses abandoned by refugees who had fled their
homes during recent Indian raids, and sold them for profit.
A year earlier, Colonel John Armstrong had accused two men
of embezzling government funds intended for the purchase of
provisions for the colony's militia. Adam Hoopes and
William Buchanan, he alleged, had bought cheap, low-quality
beef, flour, and pork for the soldiers and pocketed the
remaining 2300 pounds given to them by the General
Assembly.38

Merchants, tavern keepers, and artisans sometimes
tried to increase their profits by charging exorbitant
prices for their wares. Colonel Hugh Mercer complained in
1759 that his provincial soldiers had "their pockets picked

37The Mecklenburg Censor, "A Modern Poem, [1777]," in
E. Thomson Shields, ed., "'A Modern Poem' by the
Mecklenburg Censor: Politics and Satire in Revolutionary

38John Armstrong to James Burd, Sept. 13, 1757,
Shippen Family Papers, HSP, III: 49; and John Armstrong to
Gov., Nov. 11, 1756, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives,
First Series, III: 48-49, 54-55.
by tavernkeepers” in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, who arbitrarily raised the prices of their alcohol and other goods whenever the militiamen visited the town. In western North Carolina, the Salisbury District Superior Court fined two Scots-Irish tavern owners in Rowan County for selling beer and whiskey at rates higher than those set by the court.39

Some of the most prosperous Scots-Irish colonists in both regions began to view land as a means of making money, instead of a source of independence. Between 1750 and 1775, a tiny Scots-Irish elite accumulated dozens of tracts of land on the Pennsylvania frontier. John Armstrong, of Cumberland County, for example, purchased over four thousand acres of land in that county alone from 1752 to 1774. His neighbor, Benjamin Chambers, owned over one thousand acres there as well as seven hundred in neighboring Lancaster County. In 1770, Lancaster native Andrew Mitchell acquired over six thousand acres in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, for 258 pounds.40


40For land purchases by John Armstrong, Benjamin Chambers, and other Scots-Irish speculators, see Cumberland County Land Warrantees, 1733-1855, in William H. Egle, ed., Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series, 30 vols. (Harrisburg: Clarence M. Busch, 1894-1899), XXIV: 625-792. Andrew Mitchell example from Holcomb, Mecklenburg Deeds, p. 152. See also Land Warrantees of Thomas Steel, 1773, Steel
The small but growing Scots-Irish gentry of western North Carolina speculated in land as well. Members of the extensive Alexander family bought and sold thousands of acres of land in the region during the 1760s and 1770s. Abraham Alexander purchased 1,772 acres and one town lot in the county by 1774; his brother Benjamin owned 872 acres in 1775; his cousin John McKnitt acquired over 1,183 acres by 1779; and Moses accumulated over 1,100 acres by 1773. At the same time, they sold parcels of their expansive holdings to newly arrived emigrants from the north. John McKnitt, for example, sold fifteen tracts of less than three hundred acres each to fellow Scots-Irishmen between 1765 and 1779.41

As they became more and more profit-minded after 1750, a minority of Scots-Irish farmers in Pennsylvania and North Carolina also began to use indentured servants and slaves to cultivate their fields. In 1771, 106 Scots-Irish taxables (11 percent of the total Scots-Irish taxables) in seventeen Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, townships owned servants or slaves. Nine years later, 28 of 154 landowners (18 percent) in heavily Scots-Irish Paxton Township in the

Papers, SHC; and Alexander Harris, A Biographical History of Lancaster County (Lancaster: E. Barr and Co., 1872), pp. 375-76.

41See the dozens of deeds involving Alexander family members in Holcomb, Mecklenburg Deeds. For an example of another Scots-Irish land speculator, see Powell, North Carolina Biography, I: 46.
same county owned slaves. The inhabitants of the six townships with Scots-Irish majorities in neighboring York County owned ninety-nine slaves in 1780 as well.\textsuperscript{42}

By the Revolution, many Scots-Irish members of the region's emerging elite had embraced slavery. William Irvine, an affluent merchant in Carlisle, purchased slaves and indentured servants to serve as personal servants for himself, his wife, and each of his children in 1782. When Hance Hamilton's executors sold his estate in York County in 1772, they advertised "six negroes, two of which are men well acquainted with farming." Even the area's Presbyterian ministers embraced slavery: Rev. John Steel of Carlisle Presbyterian Church owned two slaves in the late 1760s.\textsuperscript{43}


\textsuperscript{43}William Irvine to his wife, Sept. 10, Oct. 4, 1782, The Draper Manuscripts, Series AA: William Irvine Papers, reel 70; Gibson, York County, p. 394; "Tax assessment of Rev. John Steel, 1766-1774," Steel Papers, SHC. For other examples of Scots-Irish slaveownership, see Files of Bristol, slave of David Richey, 1787; Julius, slave of James Campbell, 1789; and Joseph, slave of James Moore, 1790, Clemency Files, 1775-1790, Records of Revolutionary Governments, 39: 1110; 41: 380-81, 1200-1; Minutes, 1767, Court of Oyer and Terminer, Lancaster County, 1759-1774, Records of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Record Group 33, PHMC, folder 3; and George Johnston, History of Cecil County and the Early Settlements around the Head of
Increasing numbers of Scots-Irish yeomen in western North Carolina also accepted the use of servants and slaves to augment their wealth. In 1759, only 7 percent (26 of 206) Scots-Irish taxables in Rowan County owned slaves. Ten years later, the percentage of slaveowners among the county's Scots-Irish population had risen to 20 (98 of 503 total taxables). In neighboring Mecklenburg County, 30 of the 166 (18 percent) Scots-Irish men who wrote wills between 1750 and 1790 bequeathed slaves to their heirs.44

In fact, slave sales became an integral aspect of western North Carolina's market economy by the end of the Revolution. From 1769 to 1772, at least six Scots-Irish residents of Mecklenburg County bought or sold slaves. In December 1771, James Alexander purchased the "negro fellow Ned" from Richard Raines for 150 pounds. The executors of Moses Alexander's estate sold nine slaves worth over 600 pounds at an auction in the same county in 1774.45


441759 Rowan County Tax List, reprinted in Jo White Linn, comp., Abstracts of Wills and Estate Records of Rowan County, North Carolina, 1753-1805, and Tax Lists of 1759 and 1778 (Salisbury: the author, 1980), pp. 111-17; 1768 Rowan County Tax List, Rowan County Tax Records, 1758-1910, NCDAH; and Holcomb, Mecklenburg Wills, pp. 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 22, 28, 32, 39, 40, 44, 45, 47, 48, 50, 52, 53, 54, 72.

45Holcomb and Parker, Mecklenburg Deeds, pp. 56, 122, 127, 185, 233; Tompkins, Mecklenburg County, I: 85; Certificate for sale of slave named Dinah, 1785, Price Family Papers, SHC; and Deed for sale of slave Millea, 1785, Mary Hunter Kennedy Papers, SHC, box 1, folder 2.
As these men adopted the values of possessive individualism, they sometimes clashed with their fellow countrymen who continued to prize the ideals of subsistence. In 1772, a number of Guilford County, North Carolina, citizens protested the construction of several milldams on Deep River. "Many poor familys who depended on...fishing for [a] great part of their living," they explained, were unable to do so because of the new dams. The petitioners asked the governor to instruct the mill owners to "afix proper flood gates in their dams...[and] to keep them open at proper times."46

Most economic conflicts within Scots-Irish communities resulted from the emergence of two divergent views of land among their residents. Individuals who had begun to see land as a means of making money often quarreled over property titles and boundaries with their neighbors who still saw land as a means of independence. Some avaricious men resorted to trickery and violence to defraud their fellow countrymen of property. Pennsylvanian George Sanderson unsuccessfully tried to persuade the government surveyor "to pick and cull the land, and take into him all the meadow or low grounds about him, to the prejudice of the lands adjacent." Taking advantage of the boundary conflict between North and South Carolina, some Scots-Irish

colonists tried to steal property from North Carolinians living in the disputed territory by obtaining South Carolina grants for their lands.\textsuperscript{47}

Especially intense confrontations occurred between Scots-Irish land speculators and their more independence-minded countrymen. In Pennsylvania, John Armstrong's speculation in real estate on the colony's western frontier raised the ire of many of his neighbors. Cumberland County native William Beale accused Armstrong of stealing John Fitzgerald's land on Tuscarora Creek in 1763. After Fitzgerald had cleared "a good deal of land" and made "some considerable improvement" on it, Armstrong "surveyed it for himself and...placed his brother-in-law...on it," without giving "the poor man anything for his improvement."\textsuperscript{48}


\textsuperscript{48}William Beale's Complaint against John Armstrong, Oct. 3, 1763, Armstrong Papers, Founders Collection, DC; John Armstrong to Colonels James Burd and Patrick Work, June 16, 1766, Burd-Shippen Family Collection, PHMC, box 1, folder 4; John Armstrong to Edward Shippen, March 29, 1771, Burd-Shippen Collection, box 1, folder 6; and unknown to Ephraim Steel, March 3, 1786, Steel Papers, SHC.
In western North Carolina, Scots-Irish squatters and small farmers struggled against the speculations of the Alexander family and their wealthy English allies in what became known as the "Sugar Creek War" in the 1760s. When several members of the Alexander clan assisted the Scottish speculator Henry McCulloh in surveying his extensive landholdings in Mecklenburg County in May 1765, a Scots-Irish mob, led by John Polk, attacked the party, whipped the Alexanders, and threatened to shoot McCulloh if he ever set foot in the county again.49

While Scots-Irish colonists' deepening market involvement threatened to undermine their ethnic unity, the backcountry's economic development slowly began to break down the barriers that separated them from other national groups. Much of eighteenth-century Scots-Irish economic culture closely resembled that of English and German settlers. Although backcountry ethnic groups continued to observe segregation in many economic activities, the increasing similarity of their economic beliefs encouraged a limited amount of economic interaction among them before the Revolution.

Other national groups in the backcountry displayed a similar mix of non-commercial and entrepreneurial values

49 For detailed accounts of the Sugar Creek War, see the various letters, petitions, depositions, and other documents in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VII: 10-35, 37-38.
and behavior. Germans and Englishmen wanted to participate in market agriculture as much as their Scots-Irish neighbors. They signed as many petitions in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina requesting the construction and improvement of roads to give them better access to markets as did the Scots-Irish. They sold their surplus hemp, flax, tobacco, and foodstuffs in local and distant markets, and purchased manufactured goods from merchants in backcountry towns as well as coastal cities.  

Subsistence and independence mattered as much to Englishmen and Germans in the region as to the Scots-Irish. Other European immigrants placed the duty of meeting their families' needs above all other economic pursuits. Like their neighbors from Ireland, they used the bulk of their farms' produce to feed their wives and children while exchanging goods and services with one another to supplement their families' self-sufficiency.  

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50For examples of Germans and Englishmen signing road petitions, see Petitions of Lancaster County, March 1769, Nov. 1770, and Jan. 11, 1773, Records of Provincial Council, B11: 2741/1050, 2790/1253; B12: 2869/254; Petition of Lancaster County, Nov. 10, 1770, in Montgomery, Pennsylvania Archives, Sixth Series, XIV: 289-92; and Petition of Rowan County, Feb. 1772, Rowan Road Records, NCDAH, box 1.  

Other backcountry ethnic groups shared the Scots-Irish obsession with land and independence as well. When frontier Pennsylvanians protested the Penn's favoritism towards land speculators in 1769, their petition included several "signers in dutch" in addition to Scots-Irish ones. The Lancaster County party that joined the New England Susquehanna Company in the Wyoming Valley in 1770 contained members from all three ethnic groups. In western North Carolina, Scots-Irish, Germans, and Englishmen signed numerous petitions in the early 1770s seeking greater security for their land titles.52

This increasing economic similarity enabled some Scots-Irish settlers to begin establishing tentative economic relations with other national groups throughout the backcountry between 1750 and 1775. As their financial affairs expanded beyond the bounds of their own local neighborhoods, a number of Scots-Irish inhabitants began to trade with other transplanted Europeans in the region. By the Revolution, backcountry residents of all nationalities had begun the gradual process of molding an ethnically integrated economy.

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As more German and English families moved into Scots-Irish settlements in Pennsylvania, they gradually began to trade with their new Scots-Irish neighbors. When the Scotsman James Burd stocked his new farm in Lancaster County in 1766, he purchased twenty-three sheep and a wagon from the Germans George Fry and Craft Cost respectively. At estate sales and weekly fairs, emigrants from all over Europe began to exchange foodstuffs and other commodities with one another. Members of all three ethnic groups, for instance, purchased items at John Davis's estate sale in York County in 1763.53

Backcountry North Carolinians of various European origins established limited commercial connections with one another between 1750 and 1775 as well. William Alexander purchased animal furs and hides from English and German neighbors as well as his fellow Ulstermen. Of the 110 debt cases involving Scots-Irish defendants and plaintiffs that appeared in the Salisbury District Superior Court from 1756 to 1770, 60 (55 percent) included debts owed to or by members of other ethnic groups.54


54William Alexander Memorandum Book, Barringer Collection, NCDAH; Civil Action Papers, Salisbury Court Records, NCDAH, box 1; and John Allen Account Book, Allen
The Scots-Irish and Englishmen in Rowan County commonly frequented the shops and mills of the German Moravians at Wachovia between 1750 and 1775. They brought grain to the Moravian's gristmill, broken tools to their blacksmith shop, and purchased alcohol and supplies from the Wachovia store and tavern. Pottery produced by the expert German craftsmen proved especially popular with their English and Irish neighbors. On May 21, 1770, the Wachovia Diarist recorded that an "unusual concourse of visitors, some coming sixty or eighty miles," had visited the town "to buy milk crocks and pans in our pottery."\(^{55}\)

Despite the emergence of internal conflicts and their economic convergence with other national groups, Scots-Irish immigrants throughout the backcountry maintained a remarkably high level of ethnic unity and distinctiveness in their economic affairs. Because the vast majority of Scots-Irish individuals shared the same values, their economic culture reinforced their unique ethnic identity. Ulster emigrants' simultaneous desire for market participation and subsistence gave them a sense of unity and togetherness beyond their common Irish origins. United by these common beliefs, they sought to segregate

themselves from other ethnic groups in their economic affairs.

Whether they resided in Pennsylvania or North Carolina, Scots-Irish men and women displayed the same delicate balance of capitalist and non-commercial values. On the one hand, they exhibited entrepreneurial attitudes centered around the pursuit of profit and engaging in market agriculture. On the other hand, they highly prized the ideals of independence and subsistence that limited their market participation and acquisitiveness.

The accumulation of wealth, according to Scots-Irishmen, was an acceptable part of a man's economic life. A desire for prosperity, they realized, often motivated an individual's actions. The pursuit of money, in the words of one Pennsylvanian, "is certainly a necessary ingredient -- in human happiness." Fathers advised their sons to choose careers that would bring them affluence. William Irvine, of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, instructed his son not to become a physician because "the practice is laborious[,]...unhealthy, and not very profitable, a bare existence is all that most can make."56

56John Beatty to Reading Beatty, August 16, 1781, in Joseph M. Beatty, Jr., ed., "Letters of the Four Beatty Brothers of the Continental Army, 1774-1794," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 44 (1920): 221; William Irvine to son, April 9, 1795, Irvine Papers, Founders Collection, DC; John Armstrong to Jamey, April 30, 1772, Armstrong Papers, Founders Collection, DC; and Fries, Records of Moravians, II: 799.
The chance to achieve prosperity played an important role in luring many Ulster families to the Pennsylvania and North Carolina backcountry between 1750 and 1775. In letters to friends and relatives still in Ireland, recent arrivals commonly praised the wealth of opportunities for success in their new homes. Alexander Thomson lauded Pennsylvania as "the best poor man's country in the world." Many former tenants and servants, he proclaimed, had acquired "good plantations, and are in wealthy circumstances" in the colony.57

Presbyterian ministers frequently reassured their congregations that God did not require them to lead lives of poverty. In 1768, Reverend James Lang, of East Conococheague Church in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, advised his parishioners that they need not "consider [it] unworthy of a Christian to make his worldly interest and the advancement of his fortune, a[n]...end of his labor and diligence." "The Hand of the diligent maketh rich," he concluded. Similarly, Reverend John Elder, of Paxton Church in neighboring Lancaster County, declared that "all who sincerely love God's word...shall enjoy...outward prosperity."58


58Rev. John Elder, "Ordination Sermon, Paxton Church, Dec. 21, 1738," reprinted in Mathias Wilson McAlarney, History of the Sesquicentennial of Paxton Church, Sept. 18,
Most men expected to accumulate their riches through commercial activity. To earn profits, one had to have something to sell. Established settlers and new arrivals in both regions continued to express their belief in the importance of market activity after 1750. One group of recent arrivals in Pennsylvania refused to move to the Ohio Valley because "they are afraid [they] will be too far from market." In 1769, yeomen in Orange County, North Carolina, expressed their ambition to cultivate tobacco and hemp because they were "two of the most valuable as we apprehend [and] profitable branches...of Husbandry." Scots-Irishmen, moreover, propagated a number of capitalist values. As Charles Harris, of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, advised his younger brother, "industry and frugality, steady perseverance, honesty, and punctuality are essential in a...career."\(^{59}\)

\(^{59}\) Wylie, "Alexander Thomson," p. 323; Petition of Orange County to Gov. Tryon, 1769, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VIII: 80a; Gov. Tryon to Board of Trade, Jan 27, 1766, in ibid., VII: 155; Petition of Orange and Rowan Counties to General Assembly, 1769, in ibid., VIII: 84; Petition of Lancaster County to Gov., Nov. 10, 1770, in Montgomery, Pennsylvania Archives, Sixth Series, XIV: 282-92; Charles Harris to Robert Harris, Sept. 22, Oct. 29, Nov. 27, 1797, in Wagstaff, "Harris Letters," pp. 50, 51, 55 (quote from p. 50); Henry Pattillo, The Planter's Family Assistant, Containing an Address to Husbands and Wives,
Scots-Irish colonists, however, exhibited non-commercial attitudes as well. They tempered their praise of affluence by condemning excessive wealth and luxury. Although the pursuit of profit was permissible, opulence and excess were not. During the Revolution, John Beatty contemptuously described the "dissipation, luxury, and extravagance" displayed by the guests at a ball he attended while stationed in Philadelphia. As they declared their support for the boycott of imported British goods passed by the First Continental Congress in 1774, Rowan County, North Carolina's citizens resolved that "every kind of luxury, dissipation, and extravagance ought to be banished from among us." 60

Presbyterian ministers balanced their approval of wealth by admonishing their listeners to avoid the evils that accompanied its abuse. Although they condoned the pursuit of profit, clergymen insisted that it remain subordinate to spiritual matters. Riches, they warned, were "great temptations to a degenerate world." As

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Children and Servants (Wilmington: James Adams, 1788), p. 41; Elizabeth Steele to her children, Feb. 5, 1783, in H. M. Wagstaff, ed., The Papers of John Steele, 2 vols. (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1924), II: 759-60; and John Harris to Edward Shippen, June 18, 1759, Harris-Fisher Collection, PHMC.

60 John Beatty to Reading and Erkuries Beatty, July 16, 1782, in Beatty, "Letters of Beatty Brothers," pp. 228-29; "Rowan County Resolves, August 8, 1774," in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, TX: 1025; and John Armstrong to Jamey, April 30, 1772, Armstrong Papers, Founders Collection, DC.
Reverend Robert Smith, of Pequea Church in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, proclaimed, "the riches, the luxury, the pomp, the various gayeties of this life are the gods of ungodly sinners....Large treasures and large estates are snares for the covetous."\(^6\)

Scots-Irish residents condemned the use of immoral means to achieve prosperity as well. Reverend James Lang reminded his Pennsylvania congregants in 1768 that "a man may lawfully labor to obtain any worldly good" only if it could be "fairly obtained, without violating any known law of God, or injuring his neighbors." Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, merchant John Harris lambasted his competitors for selling their wares at exorbitant prices during the difficult early years of the Revolution. "The men that has made [the] most by the present distressed people," he declared, "are in my opinion enemies to the State."\(^6\)

Instead of hoarding money and treasures, Scots-Irishmen in both regions aspired to the ideal of "an


independent living." Each individual, they believed, should provide for his family's needs. As Alexander Thomson reminded friends back in Scotland, "the industrious strive to maintain themselves by their labor without being troublesome to any body." After explaining that Indian raids had forced them to flee their homes "with nothing to subsist on, or allay the cravings of their suffering children," two Pennsylvanians justified their illegal sales of alcohol to provincial soldiers in 1758 by stating their unwillingness "to beg or...become charges to the public."63

Scots-Irish inhabitants frequently criticized those who refused to help themselves. Reverend David Caldwell preached a scathing sermon at Alamance Church in Guilford County, North Carolina, in 1775 describing the "Character and Doom of the Sluggard." "Ignorance, disregard of moral obligation, and a supreme love of ease," he lectured, typified these people. While condemning his fellow countrymen who refused to leave Ireland, Alexander Thomson growled, "the lazy are motionless, and like snails, abide on the spot where they are, until they either starve or are compelled by hunger to go a begging."64

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Independence, for most Scots-Irishmen, continued to mean landowning. Each individual hoped to acquire enough property to provide for his family's subsistence. The opportunity to purchase land and escape dependency on landlords lured thousands more Ulster immigrants to Pennsylvania and North Carolina between 1750 and 1775. One Pennsylvanian expressed amazement at the willingness of his former neighbors in Ireland to "live in slavery, and work all year round, and not be threepence the better at the year's end than [to]...transport themselves to a place where..., in two or three years, they might know better things."65

Scots-Irish residents in both regions continued to prefer landowning over renting. When the Penn family attempted to lease lots in Carlisle in 1766, John Armstrong informed them that the locals "have a general aversion, and say they will not take them on leases." In 1771, North Carolina's Governor William Tryon explained that Lord Granville's refusal to sell land in his large tract on the colony's northwestern frontier had created a "restless disposition" among the region's inhabitants. Unable to purchase land, new arrivals, he continued, reluctantly "set

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down on vacant land...without the prospect of making provision for their children."  

United by their shared economic values, Scots-Irish settlers routinely joined together to perform economic tasks. During the annual harvest, neighboring farmers often cooperated with one another to bring in the precious crops before bad weather arrived. When hostile bands of Indians ravaged the Pennsylvania frontier during the French and Indian War, Scots-Irish farmers in the region utilized these communal work practices to harvest their grain safely. To protect themselves from Indian attack, Cumberland County men assembled "in small bodys" to reap the wheat and corn their families needed.

Neighbors' practice of bartering goods and services with one another to meet their families' needs established close-knit networks of economic interdependence within Scots-Irish communities. When one portion of his crop failed, a Scots-Irish farmer knew he could rely on his fellow countrymen to share their surplus foodstuffs in

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exchange for whatever produce or labor he could provide. In 1779, Pennsylvanian Edward Burd explained that because of the poor quality of his wheat crop, he would have to "exchange corn for wheat" with his father and other neighboring farmers.\textsuperscript{68}

Scots-Irish freemen also helped one another acquire, or retain, their land and independence. James Wylie's Pennsylvania neighbors petitioned the proprietors in 1770 to allow him to obtain legal title to the land on which he had squatted for several years. The improvements he had made on the land, they explained, were "all the fruit of his sore toil [and]...what (meanly) supported himself and his family." North Carolina Governor Arthur Dobbs reported in 1754 that families from the north commonly joined together in small groups to purchase land on his colony's frontier.\textsuperscript{69}

As more Scots-Irish farmers in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina transported their surplus produce to distant markets like Philadelphia and Charleston, they joined together to ease the rigors of the long, arduous


journey. In 1770, one Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, petition described how "the Waggoners" carrying goods "to or from the Philadelphia market" traveled "in parties, that they may afford each other assistance." Similarly, North Carolina backcountry residents frequently formed wagon trains to carry their produce to Charleston. ⁷⁰

Although they began to have limited economic interaction with other colonial Americans, the Scots-Irish maintained a high level of ethnic exclusivity in most of their economic transactions before the Revolution. Many Scots-Irishmen used commercial activities to preserve their connections to their homeland. They imported and exported all sorts of products to and from Ulster throughout the eighteenth century. In 1766, Job Johnson, of Chester County, Pennsylvania, asked his uncle in Ulster to send him "ten yards of linen well bleached." Governor Arthur Dobbs reported in 1755 that frontier settlers in North Carolina exported flaxseed to Ireland by way of Philadelphia. ⁷¹

Personal finances kept most Ulster emigrants firmly linked to their former homes. Many bequeathed portions of their estates to friends and relatives back in Ireland. A

⁷⁰Petition of Lancaster County to Gov., Nov. 10, 1770, in Montgomery, Pennsylvania Archives, Sixth Series, XIV: 289-92; and Fries, Records of Moravians, I: 269.

few even returned home to claim inheritances. John Graham, of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, gave two hundred pounds to his brothers and their children who lived in County Armagh, Ireland, in 1763. Similarly, North Carolinian Walter Smiley left his "lands and monies" in 1787 to "my sister Mary" in County Tyrone, Ireland. In 1782, Moses Cupples requested permission from the Pennsylvania government to return to Ireland to collect the "considerable estate...[that] hath devolved to him by the death of his father." 72

When Scots-Irish colonists bought or sold goods and services in local neighborhoods or markets, they commonly did so with other Ulster immigrants. All of the sixteen men who owed money to the Pennsylvanian Thomas Boyd at his death in 1765 were Scots-Irish. Similarly, the thirty-three individuals in Rowan and Mecklenburg Counties, North Carolina, who hired the lawyer Waightstill Avery between 1771 and 1775 had Scots-Irish surnames. 73

72 Lancaster County Wills, Pennsylvania County Records, PHMC; Holcomb, Mecklenburg Wills, pp. 27, 40, 63; Petition of Moses Cupples, April 17, 1782, "Applications for Passes, 1776-1790," Records of Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Governments, reel 30: 317; and Rowan County Record of Wills, NCDAH.

73 List of notes due estate of Thomas Boyd, March 20, 1765, Miscellaneous Papers, McPherson Papers, HSP, folder 13; Debts due Robert McPherson, Sept. 10, 1767, ibid., folder 20; Waightstill Avery's Book of Fees, 1771-1775, Draper Manuscripts: North Carolina Papers, reel 93; List of debts owed by Col. John Potter, Sept. 1757, Draper Manuscripts: Potter Papers, 1PP: 30; various promissory notes, Miscellaneous Papers, McPherson Papers, HSP, folders
The clientele of many backcountry general stores and taverns also reflected this practice of ethnic exclusivity in economic affairs. Scots-Irish families commonly shopped at the same establishments as their fellow countrymen. Of the 119 customers at Samuel Postlethwaite's shop in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, between 1765 and 1775, 71 (60 percent) were Scots-Irish. In Rowan County, North Carolina, Ulstermen comprised 66 percent (152 individuals) of the 231 total customers at David Hill's store from 1771 to 1776.74

Scots-Irish farmers observed ethnic selectivity in purchases of indentured servants as well. Servants on Scots-Irish-owned farms were almost always from Ireland. James Potter, of Cumberland County, paid for the voyage of Timothy Black and James Dawson from Newry, Ireland, to Philadelphia in exchange for their labor on his farm in 1753. Scotsman John Cuthbertson, of Lancaster County, owned the Scots-Irishwoman Margaret Bell from 1757 to 1759. In 30 of the 46 (65 percent) Scots-Irish households in Rowan County in 1768 that contained adults who were not

1-9; "Journals of Rowan County Committee," p. 367; and Lewis, Artisans in North Carolina, p. 41.

74 Based on surname analysis of the accounts in the following account books: Samuel Postlethwaite Account Book, Hamilton Papers, HSP; David Hill Ledgerbook, Nesbit Papers, SHC; Anonymous Account Book, Hamilton Papers, HSP; John Harris Ledgers, John Harris Collection, HSP; Alexander and John Lowrance Ledger, Alexander and John Lowrance Papers, Duke; and John Dickey Ledgerbook, Duke.
family members (and thus probably servants), those individuals also had Scots-Irish surnames.\textsuperscript{75}

Economic conflict with members of other national groups throughout the backcountry also enhanced the Scots-Irish sense of ethnic separateness and unity. In their desire for economic independence, Scots-Irish colonists sometimes clashed with other European immigrants over land titles and boundaries. Many Scots-Irish residents of Rowan County, North Carolina, joined the Regulator Movement in an unsuccessful effort to force the German Moravians from their settlement at Wachovia. In March 1771, Joseph Harris and other Regulators tried to convince Moravian leaders that a Scots-Irishman named Stewart held legal title to part of their land.\textsuperscript{76}

Opposition to English land speculators provided an especially strong measure of unity among the frontier Scots-Irish. When both Pennsylvania and North Carolina's land policies began to favor speculators over common people, Scots-Irish yeomen in both colonies protested

\textsuperscript{75}Receipt from John Leadley to James Potter, Aug. 18, 1753, in Draper Manuscripts: Potter Papers, 1PP: 3; Fields, Cuthbertson, p. 146; 1768 Rowan County Tax List, Rowan County Tax Records, NCDAH; Receipt from Alexander Stewart, May 12, 1756, in Draper Manuscripts: Potter Papers, 1PP: 21; and Powell, North Carolina Biography, II: 296.

loudly. In 1769, a group of Pennsylvanians complained that the proprietors were giving all of the fertile land recently purchased from the Indians to "Military Officers and other private Gentlemen." That same year, North Carolina citizens accused the royal governor of granting lands to his relatives and cronies.77

Scots-Irish immigrants often banded together to resist English speculators' attempts to survey their lands, remove squatters, or collect fees and quitrents. When Pennsylvania officials attempted to settle the boundaries of land belonging to John Cox of Philadelphia in Lancaster County in 1766, a Scots-Irish mob "armed with clubs and other dangerous weapons...abused and assaulted" them. James Edwards, Jr., claimed that a group of Rowan County, North Carolina, squatters drew their swords and threatened to shoot him while he was surveying lands belonging to the speculator Henry McCulloh.78

77Petition of "Back Inhabitants" to Gov. Penn, March 27, 1769, in Boyd, Susquehanna Papers, III: 103, fn #2; Edmund Physick to Thomas Penn, April 1769, in ibid., pp. 102-3; Hugh Williamson to John Penn, March 24, 1770, in ibid., IV: 46-47; Petition of Anson County, Oct. 9, 1769, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VIII: 77-78. See also ibid., V: 1017, 1088-94; VII: 513; IX: 790; Rev. Theodorus Drage to Benjamin Franklin, March 2, 1771, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XVIII: 47; and Minutes of Provincial Council, IX: 509.

By the Revolution, Scots-Irish settlers had carved their own complicated niche within the economic cultures of western Pennsylvania and North Carolina. As they struggled to preserve a separate ethnic identity in the American wilderness, eighteenth-century Ulster emigrants managed to maintain their ethnic unity and distinctiveness in many of their economic activities. They shopped and worked with their fellow countrymen more than with members of other national groups and joined together to battle other European immigrants for their share of the backcountry's valuable natural resources.

A common set of economic values shared by Scots-Irish colonists throughout the backcountry laid the foundation for this economic cohesion. Virtually every Scots-Irish man and woman embraced an economic culture that contained both capitalist and non-commercial beliefs. Although they increasingly demonstrated their affinity for markets, profits, and industry, the Scots-Irish also continued to prize the ideals of subsistence, fairness, and independence.

The complex economy that Scots-Irish settlers created in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina between 1750 and 1775 clearly illustrates this delicate balance of contradictory economic attitudes. Scots-Irishmen in both regions bartered goods and labor with one another and struggled to find land to maintain their families' self-
sufficiency. As the region's economy developed, they also eagerly deepened their involvement in commercial agriculture. By 1775, they had successfully preserved their local exchange networks while strengthening their connections to the wider capitalist world.

This market expansion, however, unleashed forces that threatened to shatter the Scots-Irish ethnic unity and uniqueness. In the years before the Revolution, a small group of Scots-Irish men embraced economic interests that dramatically diverged from, and clashed with, those of their fellow countrymen. At the same time, some Scots-Irish colonists destroyed the barriers that had separated them from other national groups by developing limited economic relations with other European immigrants in the region.
THE POWER OF ETHNICITY
THE PRESERVATION OF SCOTS-IRISH CULTURE IN THE
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN BACKCOUNTRY
VOLUME II

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On January 29, 1768, Colonel John Armstrong and a tiny group of gentlemen bravely blocked the door of the Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, jail while an angry mob of their countrymen gathered around them. Inside the jail sat a middle-aged man named Frederick Stump, who was accused of brutally murdering a family of friendly Indians. Appalled by the killing of innocent women and children, the county's leaders were determined to prosecute Stump to the fullest extent of the law. Hardened by the losses they had suffered during the French and Indian War, the majority of local Scots-Irish inhabitants, however, saw him as a hero and were equally determined to protect him from punishment.

Undeterred by the gentry's presence, the crowd "pushed the Colonel down the steps" of the jail's entrance, forced its way into the building, rescued Stump, and disappeared into the surrounding wilderness. For the next ten days, members of the local elite met with the mob's organizers, trying to persuade them to return Stump to prison. Despite
their arguments and reasoning, however, they failed to recover the accused killer. Stump never faced trial for his crime and remained a free man for the rest of his life.

In the inevitable political fallout that ensued, the backcountry Scots-Irish elite scrambled to preserve the respect and influence it had earned with provincial authorities and wealthy Quakers in Philadelphia. Embarrassed by their failure to punish such a heinous crime, county magistrates blamed one another for Stump's escape. John Holmes accused John Armstrong of preventing him from transporting Stump to Philadelphia for interrogation. Armstrong, in turn, justified his actions by implying that he doubted Holmes's ability to escort the prisoner out of the county safely.

After two weeks of tension, however, peace and unity returned to the Scots-Irish community. With increasing pressure for justice from outsiders, the Scots-Irish closed ranks to protect one another. County leaders actually defended the crowd's actions, pointing out that the citizens had believed that the government intended to deprive Stump of a jury trial in Cumberland County. In fact, Colonel Armstrong justified the mob's behavior so vehemently that the governor threatened to prosecute him as an accomplice. Despite receiving a censure from the
provincial council, the local gentry made no further effort to re-capture Stump or prosecute the rioters.¹

The seemingly contradictory actions of the Cumberland County Scots-Irish during the Frederick Stump Affair reflect the complexity of Scots-Irish society in the eighteenth-century backcountry. Scots-Irish immigrants displayed both individualistic and communalistic attitudes and behavior in their social lives. The Scots-Irish commonly acted in seemingly contradictory ways in ordinary activities or social crises. Some consistently strove to distance themselves from the community or willingly violated its norms. Others just as consistently sought the camaraderie and fellowship of their countrymen.

On the surface, the Scots-Irish community appeared to be unraveling in the midst of an increasingly individualistic and socially divisive world. Between 1750 and 1775, Scots-Irish men and women in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina became more focused on themselves and less connected to their communities. Not only did some of them display a total disregard for the rights of others and

the authority of the law, but others also placed their own interests above the needs of their neighbors.

The growth of social distinctions among Scots-Irish colonists and their increased interaction with other backcountry ethnic groups after 1750 intensified this fragmentation of Scots-Irish society. The emergence of a class of prosperous Scots-Irishmen whose interests diverged sharply from those of their fellow countrymen created occasional outbreaks of social conflict within Scots-Irish communities. At the same time, Scots-Irish inhabitants' increasing interaction with other backcountry residents threatened to erode their social and ethnic unity even further.

Despite these destructive forces, Scots-Irish settlers throughout the backcountry preserved a significant amount of social cohesion. They formed close-knit neighborhoods with powerful networks of interdependence, joined together to perform the tasks of daily life, and collectively celebrated its special moments. These communal ties even transcended the widening gap between Scots-Irish elites and their poorer countrymen. Moreover, this social unity reinforced the unique ethnic identity that Ulster immigrants brought from Ireland. Maintaining ties with their homeland, they created ethnically segregated settlements and practiced ethnic exclusivity in as many of their social relations as possible.
Colonial British North American society, like the economy, underwent a tremendous transformation over the course of the eighteenth century. The rapid rise of emigration from all over Europe, the expansion of a capitalist economy, and the increasing movement of people within the colonies gradually broke down many of the traditional communal bonds that had held society together. Caught up in the rapid expansion of colonial America, individuals increasingly found themselves unfettered by family, neighborhood, or society.²

This far-reaching transformation probably altered the social landscape of the backcountry more than any other part of colonial America. As a result of the continuous influx of new European immigrants, the movement of many second-generation settlers into other parts of the region, and the rapid expansion of commercial agriculture throughout the area, the backcountry individual's ties to his community became even more tenuous than those of other American colonists. By the Revolution, backcountry inhabitants felt the tension between individualism and communalism more powerfully than most of their fellow Americans.³


³James T. Lemon, "The Best Poor Man's Country": A
Within the backcountry, this apparent dissolution of society affected the Scots-Irish more than the region's other European immigrants. More Scots-Irish colonists embraced the new individualistic ethos than did their German and English neighbors. At the same time, the emergence of social distinctions among the Scots-Irish throughout the region further deepened this disintegration. While Scots-Irish social and ethnic unity appeared to be disappearing, their increasing interactions with members of other national groups threatened to erode their ethnic uniqueness as well.

Scots-Irish men and women in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina appeared to revel in the individual's newfound freedom from community constraints more than other backcountry residents. Government officials and other settlers in the region commonly associated the Scots-Irish with lawlessness and violence. Pennsylvania's governors frequently condemned the "ungovernable spirit" that they found "too prevalent" among backcountry Scots-Irish. After

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a party of Lancaster Countians massacred some friendly Indians in 1763, the Philadelphia elite, particularly the Quakers, blamed the Scots-Irish, describing them as "mad and bloody" and "of all savages the most brutish."  

Scots-Irish colonists in Carolina earned a similar reputation. In 1771, Governor William Tryon portrayed the Scots-Irish on his colony's frontier as "inhabitants who receive neither law nor gospel." Other backcountry residents often complained about the numerous bands of "Irish highwaymen" who roamed the countryside. The Moravians in Rowan County particularly lived in almost constant fear that "the Irish" in the county planned to rob them. The same county's Anglican priest dismissed the local Scots-Irish community as "an asylum for thieves and cheats from the northward."  


In fact, the Scots-Irish appear to have lived up to this reputation. They displayed a greater proclivity for illegal, and often violent, behavior than Germans and Englishmen. Almost two-thirds (65 percent) of the criminals indicted in the Cumberland and Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Courts of Oyer and Terminer between 1759 and 1774 and over half (52 percent) of those in North Carolina's Salisbury District Superior Court from 1753-1775 were Scots-Irish. At the same time, Scots-Irish individuals committed 20 of the 31 (65 percent) murders tried in the Lancaster and Cumberland courts and 29 of the 47 (62 percent) violent crimes prosecuted in the Salisbury Court.6

The property rights of others mattered little to many Scots-Irish inhabitants. They routinely stole from one another or cheated others out of their personal belongings. The citizens of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, constantly cut down the timber on proprietary property "in the most audacious manner." In Rowan County, North Carolina, the Moravians complained of an "Irish knave [who]...in full daylight, went through the dining-room of the Brothers'
house into Br. Peterson's room, rummaged through his things, and took clothing, money, and a pair of silver shoe-buckles, and hid them in the woods."

The Scots-Irish showed a blatant disregard for civil authority as well. Scots-Irish residents in Rowan County, North Carolina, frequently insulted the county court and assaulted constables and justices of the peace. In October 1754, for example, the court fined Robert Tate for "contemning the authority of this court." Scots-Irish mobs in Pennsylvania commonly broke into backcountry jails and released prisoners with whom they sympathized. When magistrates in Bedford County incarcerated a group of men for destroying trading goods bound for the Indians in 1765, a party from neighboring Cumberland County forcibly rescued them from prison.

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7 Thomas Penn to John Penn, Feb. 13, 1768, in Julian P. Boyd, ed., The Susquehanna Company Papers, 11 vols. (Wilkes-Barre, PA: Wyoming Historical and Genealogical Society, 1930-1971), III: 11; Edmund Physick to Thomas Penn, April 1769, in ibid., p. 106; Fries, Records of Moravians, II: 893; Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VIII: 149-50, X: 3-7. See also the numerous indictments against Scots-Irish men and women for theft and burglary in Cumberland Court of Oyer and Terminer, Records of Supreme Court, PHMC; Lancaster Court of Oyer and Terminer, Records of Supreme Court, PHMC; and Criminal Action Papers, Salisbury Superior Court Records, NCDAH.

8 Minutes, Oct. 8, 1754, Rowan County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, NCDAH, I: 51; James Smith, An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences in the Life and Travels of Col. James Smith (Lexington: John Bradford, 1799), 123-29; Minutes of Provincial Council, V: 628-29; and Samuel Wharton to Benjamin Franklin, May 27, 1765, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XII: 143-46.
Virtually every extralegal movement in the backcountry between 1750 and 1775 contained significant numbers, if not majorities, of Scots-Irish participants. In Pennsylvania, the "Black Boys" of Cumberland County who destroyed traders' goods bound for the western Indians at Sideling Hill in 1765, the Cumberland County mob that broke Frederick Stump out of jail in 1768, the squatters who joined the New England Susquehanna Company in the Wyoming Valley in 1770, and especially the Paxton Boys who massacred the friendly Indians in Lancaster County in 1763 all consisted primarily of Scots-Irishmen. When self-proclaimed Regulators protested corrupt local government officials by disrupting court sessions and whipping magistrates in Orange, Anson, and Rowan Counties, North Carolina, between 1768 and 1771, the Scots-Irish played an important role.  

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The life of Pennsylvanian Lazarus Stewart perfectly illustrates the Scots-Irish penchant for lawlessness and violence. Described as "a most wicked and abandoned wretch," Stewart led a party of Lancaster County Scots-Irish to the Wyoming Valley to defend the New Englanders who claimed the fertile lands in 1770. Throughout the two-year struggle between the Lancaster County/New England coalition and Pennsylvanians for control of the area, Stewart and his followers committed numerous atrocities. In June 1770, he severely beat and kidnapped John Murphy for sixteen days. The following year, Stewart murdered Nathan Ogden during one of the many confrontations between the two factions.10

After Pennsylvania's governor placed a bounty on his head in 1770, Lazarus further flaunted his disrespect for the law by forcibly resisting arrest. When authorities in Lancaster County captured him in September of that year, Stewart intimidated the constable's guard sent to escort him to jail, brutally attacked the local constable, and threatened the magistrate. After making his escape, Stewart and his gang surrounded the justice's house, "threatened him with even more violence," and informed one

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10See the various documents outlining Stewart's actions in Boyd, Susquehanna Company Papers, IV: 50-51, 70-77, 92-93, 125-27, 154-65. Also see Charles Stewart to Gov., Jan. 21, 1771, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, IV: 383; and Minutes of Provincial Council, IX: 710-11.
of the local citizens who had helped to capture him that if he ever did so again, Lazarus would "cut him to pieces, and make a breakfast of his heart."\textsuperscript{11}

Not all backcountry Scots-Irish, of course, became desperadoes like Lazarus Stewart. But, most exhibited individualistic attitudes and behavior patterns in their daily lives. In the expansive, geographically mobile, and rapidly developing American frontier environment, the traditional Scots-Irish desire for personal autonomy transformed into a virtual celebration of the individual and his ability to stand apart from society. North Carolinian Charles Harris advised his younger brother that "the burthen of any man's interest must rest upon himself." In 1775, Reverend Robert Cooper reminded his Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, congregation that "one man is not called to act in the sphere of another, [and] neither is he to be accountable for another's" actions.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11}Minutes of Provincial Council, IX: 682-84; John Penn to Thomas Penn, March 6, 1771, in Boyd, Susquehanna Company Papers, IV: 174-75; and Samuel Johnston to John Penn, Nov. 2, 1770, in ibid., pp. 132-33.


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Imbued with these ideals of autonomy and individualism, Scots-Irish families throughout the backcountry continued to establish independent farmsteads. Scots-Irish settlements, often stretching over twenty or thirty miles, consisted of individual farms separated by dozens, if not hundreds, of acres. While petitioning the provincial government for protection during the French and Indian War, the citizens of one Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, neighborhood explained that they were "in a great degree separate and disunited by means of our distant abodes."\footnote{Petition of Lancaster County, Nov. 1, 1755, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, II: 450; Edward Shippen to unknown, July 4, 1755, cited in History of Cumberland and Adams Counties (Chicago: Warner, Beers, 1886), pp. 259-60; Petition of Chanceford Township, Lancaster County, June 12, 1747, cited in John Gibson, ed., History of York County (Chicago: F. A. Battey Publishing Co., 1886), pp. 320-21; and Guy S. Klett, ed., Journals of Charles Beatty, 1762-1769 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1962), pp. 47-49.}

Because their neighbors were so far away, some Scots-Irish settlers felt little obligation to associate with them. Focused solely on their own interests, they refused to cooperate with their countrymen. During the Revolution, two Pennsylvanians explained a neighbor's Loyalism by pointing out that he had always been "closely attached to [his] interest."
militia asked to borrow his two canons for a campaign against the Indians in 1757, Benjamin Chambers refused and threatened to kill anyone who tried to take them. In the words of the expedition's commander, Chambers was a "person so troublesome and perverse" that he seemed to have the "brass and malice of the Devil." \(^1\)

The crisis of the French and Indian War brought this individualistic behavior into sharp relief. From 1754 to 1756 and again in 1763, parties of French-allied Delawares and other tribes murdered and abducted hundreds of men, women, and children while burning and pillaging dozens of Scots-Irish settlements on the Pennsylvania frontier. Although the war created much less death and destruction in western North Carolina, bands of Catawbas and Cherokees committed numerous murders, "abuses and[,] robberies" in that region between 1754 and 1760 as well.\(^1\)


[^15]: For Pennsylvania, see Pennsylvania Gazette, July 12, 1763; Adam Hoopes to Gov., Nov. 3, 1755, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, II: 462-63; Petition of Catherine McKay, Aug. 11, 1762, in ibid., IV: 99; William Allen to D. Barkley and Sons, Oct. 25, 1755, in Lewis Burd Walker, ed., The Burd Papers: Extracts from...
In the face of this onslaught, many Scots-Irish colonists in both regions failed to join their neighbors in defending their communities. In 1756, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, native William Trent complained that "no one scarce seems to be effected with the distress of their neighbors, and for that reason none will stir but those that are next the enemy and in immediate danger." A year later, the exasperated commander of the Pennsylvania militia reported that "such is the infatuation of a number of people that they can't be prevailed on to convene in proper partys for their own safety."\(^{16}\)

Many Scots-Irish men refused to enlist in the local militia or other voluntary military units to fight the invaders. When local leaders called for a company to pursue a party of Delawares that had raided the Great Cove in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, in November 1755, only

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forty of the one hundred and sixty men who showed up volunteered to go on the expedition. According to the sheriff, "our old officers hid themselves...to save their scalps." Scots-Irish militia companies in North Carolina refused to leave the colony in order to join forces with South Carolina units against the Cherokees in 1759.\textsuperscript{17}

Instead of uniting to defend their homes, many Scots-Irish families simply fled in search of safe refuge to the east, leaving all their belongings to the mercy of the enemy. After every Indian incursion into the backcountry between 1754 and 1763, hundreds of refugees fled from the region. In 1763, John Elder lamented that any future Indian attack on the Pennsylvania frontier would result in a "considerable part of the country [being] evacuated as all seem inclined to seek safety rather in flight than in opposing the savage foe." Moravians in Rowan County, North Carolina, reported, in 1760, that "at least half the inhabitants had fled from the country."\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17}Minutes of Provincial Council, VI: 674; Gov. Dobbs to General Assembly, Nov. 27, 1759, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VI: 136-37; John Elder to Gov., July 6, 1763, Elder Papers, DCHS; Andrew Work to unknown, June 25, 1757, Lancaster County Papers, 1728-1806, HSP, I: 119; and Petition of Peters Township, 1756, French and Indian Wars, 1756, Gratz Collection, HSP, case 15, box 18.

\textsuperscript{18}For Pennsylvania, see John Elder to Gov., Aug 4, 1763, Elder Papers, DCHS; and the various letters and reports in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, II: 384, 466, 623, 740, 753, 755; III: 377, 426-27. For North Carolina, see Fries, Records of Moravians, I: 230; Minutes, Jan. 18, 1760, Rowan County Court, NCDAH, II: 290; and Daniel A. Tompkins, History of Mecklenburg County and the
Populated by such independent-minded individuals, Scots-Irish communities were often filled with fighting and quarreling. Arguments, fisticuffs, and other forms of violence were routine occurrences for Scots-Irish men and women. No local gathering was complete without a heated discussion or brawl. Two men testified before the Rowan County, North Carolina, court in March 1764 that during a fight between Samuel Brown and John Oxford, "Brown cryed out he was bitt[.] Whereupon they was parted and the uper part of sd. Samuels left ear was off." Seven brawls involving members of Middle Springs Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania occurred at local fairs, estate sales, or other public events between 1743 and 1749.¹⁹

One exchange between two Pennsylvanians illustrates how easily any meeting of two Scots-Irishmen could deteriorate into seemingly pointless arguing and violence. During a house raising in 1743, the men paired off to notch the logs for the building's walls. In one such group, William Armstrong finished the first log far ahead of his

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¹⁹Minutes, Oct. 12, 1764, Rowan County Court, NCDAH, II: 549; Session Book, 1743-1749, Middle Springs Presbyterian Church Records, HSP; John Armstrong to Richard Peters, April 24, May 4, 1759, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, III: 621-22, 627-28; John Armstrong to unknown, July 8, 1758, Large Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Dreer Collection, HSP; Lancaster Court of Oyer and Terminer, Records of Supreme Court, PHMC; and Civil Action Papers, 1759-1775, Salisbury District Superior Court Records, NCDAH.
competitor, David Allen. Intending to gloat over his victory, Armstrong smugly walked over to Allen's still unfinished end of the log and crowed, "I have beat you."

His pride severely hurt, Allen mustered the best reply he could: "You have stinking breath."

"Stinking or not, I have beat you."

"You are a liar."

"Don't call me a liar or I will pull you down by the nose."

With that, the hair pulling, eye gouging, biting, and kicking commenced.\(^{20}\)

The Scots-Irish especially delighted in attacking one another's character and honor. Most arguments between Scots-Irish inhabitants inevitably deteriorated into exchanges of insults. Six cases involving verbal assaults occurred within the Middle Springs Presbyterian congregation from 1743 to 1749. In one instance, Daniel Smith spread a rumor that James Montgomery "had an old woman at the back of a ditch, [that] he would make a fool of her as fast as any of you, and that he was not fit to live among men or Christians." At a March 1771 meeting of Rowan County, North Carolina, Regulators, Robert Thomson

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denounced a local judge as a "Rascal, Rogue, Villain, [and] Scoundral."\textsuperscript{21}

Not surprisingly, Scots-Irish settlers argued over more substantive issues as well. Neighbors commonly battled with one another over access to markets. Cumberland County native Thomas Steel accused Samuel Patterson of building a fence across the road on which he and others traveled to "meeting house and market" in 1755. Sixteen years later, another group of the county's citizens complained that Thomas Patten's milldam blocked the Juniata River, which they used for "transporting their produce" to market. The General Assembly should, they advised, declare

the river a public highway and order Patten to tear down his dam.²²

Uncertain property titles and boundaries probably caused more disputes between Scots-Irish landowners after 1750 than any other issue. Placing their own independence above social harmony, each individual struggled to get the best land to provide the most comfortable living for his family. Pennsylvanian John Armstrong complained in 1761 that "near eight-tenths of my time is spent in hearing...and settling" conflicts among local freemen. The duplication of land grants by North and South Carolina in the territory in Mecklenburg County claimed by both colonies created numerous feuds among the region's Scots-Irish residents.²³

Entire Scots-Irish settlements even argued with one another over access to markets. In Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, and Mecklenburg County, North Carolina -- both counties with overwhelming Scots-Irish majorities

²²Petition of Thomas Steel, April 1755, Ephraim Steel Papers, Southern Historical Collection (SHC); MacKinney and Hoban, Votes and Proceedings, VIII: 6679-80, 6744-45, 7442-43, 7445, 7535; and Records of the Provincial Council, 1682-1776, 26 reels (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1966), B11: 2790/1253.

before the Revolution — communities fought bitterly over the location of county seats in the 1750s and 1760s respectively. In each county, the Scots-Irish citizens split into rival factions, each one wanting the town and its valuable markets closer to their own homes.\textsuperscript{24}

The rise of significant social distinctions among Ulster emigrants in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina after 1750 exacerbated this fraying of Scots-Irish society. Although the majority of the Scots-Irish remained in the lower and middling levels of backcountry society, a small but growing class of men managed to accumulate large estates. Between 1750 and 1775, this fledgling gentry embraced a lifestyle, social relationships, and interests that aligned them with affluent members of other national groups and sometimes brought them into conflict with their poorer countrymen.

An analysis of the tax lists for Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1771 and Rowan County, North Carolina, in 1778 reveals the emergence of these sharp social differences. The vast majority of Scots-Irishmen in twenty townships in Lancaster County in 1771 either owned no land at all or, at most, only a small parcel: 89 percent of the 975 Scots-Irish taxables in the twenty townships were

either landless or owned less than 200 acres. A significant minority of Scots-Irishmen, however, joined the ranks of the county's elite: 115 Scots-Irish freemen (11 percent of the total) owned over 200 acres. 25

The 1778 tax list for Rowan County, North Carolina, reveals a similar Scots-Irish social structure. As in Pennsylvania, most Scots-Irish taxables in Rowan owned estates worth less than 1,000 pounds. Sixteen percent of the county's 884 Scots-Irish tithables had estates valued at less than 100 pounds. Another 548 (62 percent) held property worth between 100 and 1,000 pounds. At the same time, a significant minority of the county's Scots-Irish residents had accumulated a considerable amount of wealth. One hundred and seventy-one men (19 percent) owned estates valued between 1,000 and 2,999 pounds, while another thirty-two (4 percent) were worth over 3,000 pounds. 26

As they enjoyed increasing amounts of prosperity, these men sought ways to show off their wealth. Most built large stone or clapboard houses that towered over the cabins of other Scots-Irish families. James Burd's two-story stone house in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, included a garret, cellar, and a separate kitchen building.


26 1778 Rowan County Tax List, Rowan County Tax Records, NCDAH.
with 588 feet of shelves in the pantry. Hezekiah Alexander integrated the Georgian architectural style into the design of his stone house in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. To complete the display, men like Burd and Alexander furnished their homes with ornate dinnerware and furniture imported from Philadelphia, Charleston, or even Europe.  

These Scots-Irish aristocrats also tried to imitate the lifestyle of elites in Philadelphia and Charleston. They wore the most fashionable clothes, held ostentatious dinners and balls, and adopted refined manners. While describing the eligible young ladies of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 1781, Erkuries Beatty praised Sally Semple as a "genteel person" who "dresses very genteel." Three years later, Benjamin Rush described a dinner at the home of Jonathan Montgomery in the same town as "plentiful -- elegant, and as well attended as any dinner I ever was at in a Gentleman's house in Philadelphia."  

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Besides mimicking their opulent lifestyle, the wealthy backcountry Scots-Irish cultivated social relationships with their urban peers. In Pennsylvania, James Burd, John Armstrong, and other frontier gentlemen formed close friendships with members of the provincial elite in Philadelphia. One ambitious merchant in Cumberland County even established economic and social ties with Patrick Henry, James Madison, and other Virginia piedmont planters. The prominent Alexander family in western North Carolina forged especially strong relations with Governor William Tryon, other royal officials, and wealthy residents of Edenton and Wilmington.29

As they embraced gentility, members of the Scots-Irish elite became increasingly conscious of their similarity to affluent backcountry residents of other national origins.


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This deepening realization, in turn, laid the foundation for greater integration in social affairs. The leading Scots-Irish, English, and German citizens of Lancaster County, for example, jointly formed the Juliana Library Company in 1759 to promote the ideals of "Virtue, Taste, and Literature" among them. The Alexanders and other Scots-Irish aristocrats in Mecklenburg County commonly associated with John Frohock, Edmund Fanning, and other wealthy Englishmen in western North Carolina.³⁰

While they developed closer ties with other elites, the Scots-Irish gentry also became increasingly aware of their divergence from other Ulstermen. Many wealthy Scots-Irishmen adopted condescending views of their poorer countrymen. They referred to the lower levels of society as, in the words of John Armstrong, "the Vulgar" and the

"ignorant and giddy crowd." Pennsylvanian Eleanor Campbell criticized the common wives in her neighborhood: "They can card and spin, milk their cows, and do all the drudgery of a family.... Tho' they have not the least notion of any thing that's genteel nor do their ideas ever extend further than how many cuts of yarn will make a yard of cloth, etc."\(^3\) \(^1\)

A thinly veiled satirical poem written by a Scots-Irish resident of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, in 1777 illustrates the rise of class consciousness among that county's elite. Describing a fictional election for general assemblymen in the county, the author portrayed the candidates as condescending patricians who sought to distance themselves from their social inferiors. Before the election, Squire Subtle privately refers to the crowd of voters gathered at the courthouse as

"a silly rabble rout

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who talk they know not what about

who by the nose like colts are led."

\(^{31}\)John Armstrong to James Wilson, Dec. 10, 1776, Armstrong, John Papers, Generals of the Revolution, Gratz Collection, HSP, case 4, box 11; John Armstrong to Gov. Penn, Feb. 7, 1768, in Minutes of Provincial Council, IX: 462-63; and Eleanor Campbell to Mrs. Ewing and Mrs. Yeates, Oct. 14, 1769, in Two Hundred Years in Cumberland County (Carlisle: Hamilton Library and Historical Association of Cumberland County, 1951), pp. 48-49.
Even while addressing what he called the "poor senseless throng," Subtle made little effort to mask his feelings of superiority:

"Although I move in higher spheres
Nor feel your little hopes and fears
My godlike mind can deign to bend
And sometimes to your needs attend."32

As they struggled to set themselves apart, these aspiring Scots-Irish gentlemen developed interests that diverged from those of other Ulster immigrants as well. Having made their fortunes and earned the respect of provincial elites, they became embarrassed and alarmed by their countrymen's continued lawlessness. As local social and political leaders, they struggled to restrain the rampant individualism of their unruly neighbors by imposing law and order. At times, these efforts led to sharp conflicts among Scots-Irishmen from different social backgrounds.

Affluent Scots-Irishmen frequently expressed fear and disgust in their correspondence at the lawless behavior of their fellow Ulster emigrants. In 1753, Pennsylvanian William Allen condemned Scots-Irish squatters as "a set of freebooters, who...upon any attempt to remove them by law rise up in bodies." After Cumberland County citizens

protested Philadelphia merchants' continued trade with Indians in the aftermath of the French and Indian War by destroying a pack train of goods, Robert Callender scowled, "If speedy measures are not taken to suppress these people I shall sell every foot of land I have in the county and go somewhere else, as I think no man's property is secure here as affairs are at present."33

Choosing the law and class over ethnicity, the Scots-Irish elite routinely assisted colonial proprietors and English land speculators in removing Scots-Irish squatters from their lands. In May 1750, James Galbraith, John Steel, and other Cumberland County leaders burnt dozens of cabins belonging to Scots-Irish colonists who had illegally settled on the Penn family's lands in the county. Abraham Alexander and his prosperous kinsmen served eviction notices to Scots-Irish families who had squatted on the English speculator Arthur Selwyn's extensive landholdings in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, in the 1760s.34


34Minutes of Provincial Council, V: 441-48; IX: 481-83, 506-7; James Burd to Six Nations, June 10, 1763, in Boyd, Susquehanna Papers, II: 254-55; and Memorial of Henry E. McCulloh, April 25, 1765, in Saunders and Clark,
The frequent eruptions of extralegal tumults among the backcountry Scots-Irish in both colonies occasionally led to direct, even violent, confrontations between the elite and mobs of common people. When the Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, rioters rescued the accused Indian-killer Frederick Stump from prison in 1765, "one of the armed men" physically took hold of John Armstrong and tried to pull him off the jail's front steps. Armstrong, in turn, "by violence pushed back the person" and regained his position blocking the door. After he led the party that captured Stump in the first place, Captain William Patterson thought "his life unsafe" in Cumberland County and made plans to move to Philadelphia.35

The Regulator Movement, in which angry citizens disrupted courts and assaulted local authorities to protest the corruption of local officeholders between 1768 and 1771, highlighted the social conflicts among the Scots-Irish in western North Carolina. Rowan County Regulators, including Scots-Irishmen such as James Hunter, James Graham, and Robert Thomson, briefly kidnapped and

35Minutes of Provincial Council, IX: 302, 450-51, 464 (quotes from 450-51); Thomas Wharton to Benjamin Franklin, Feb. 9, 1768, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XV: 40; Robert Callender to Joseph Shippen, Jr., April 22, 1771, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, IV: 413; Smith, Remarkable Occurrences, pp. 109-15; and John Penn to Thomas Penn, March 10, 1770, in Boyd, Susquehanna Papers, IV: 43-48.
imprisoned local Scots-Irish lawyers and magistrates like Waightstill Avery and others in 1771. That same year, a gang of drunken youths in neighboring Mecklenburg County ambushed a wagon belonging to Colonel Moses Alexander and destroyed gun powder that he was sending to supply Governor Tryon's army fighting the Regulators in Orange County.\(^{36}\)

In the aftermath of these confrontations, Scots-Irish leaders did not hesitate to prosecute and punish their countrymen for their insolence and illicit deeds. When the Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, "Black Boys" burnt his pack train of Indian trading goods in 1765, the prosperous local merchant Robert Callender enlisted the aid of a nearby British garrison to capture them. Prominent Lancaster Countians such as Thomas Forster and Samuel Johnston assisted in provincial authorities' pursuit of the renegade Lazarus Stewart and his gang of squatters in the Wyoming Valley in 1770 and 1771. Colonel Moses Alexander went to great lengths to arrest the young men who had destroyed his gunpowder during the Regulation.\(^{37}\)

\(^{36}\) Deposition of Waightstill Avery, March 8, 1771, in Powell, Regulators, pp. 358-60; John Frohock and Alexander Martin to Gov., in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VIII: 533-36; Petitions of Mecklenburg County, 1771, in ibid., IX: 57, 98-99; Deposition of James Ashmore, June 22, 1771, in Powell, Regulators, p. 487; and Tompkins, Mecklenburg County, II: 60-63.

\(^{37}\) Smith, Remarkable Occurrences, pp. 109-15; Samuel Johnston to Gov., Nov. 2, 1770, in Boyd, Susquehanna Papers, IV: 132-33; Samuel Simpson and Thomas Forster to James Tilghman and Joseph Shippen, Jr., Sept. 7, 1771, in ibid., pp. 243-44; Minutes of Provincial Council, IX: 486-
As Scots-Irish ethnic unity appeared to be disintegrating under the onslaught of individualism and social divisions, the backcountry's increasing ethnic pluralism threatened to erase their distinctiveness as well. As more English and Germans flowed into western Pennsylvania and North Carolina after 1750, they gradually mingled with a few of their new Scots-Irish neighbors. The combination of high population density, the hardships of the French and Indian War, and the Penn family's policy of toleration especially encouraged social integration in frontier Pennsylvania. Even in the relatively new settlements of western North Carolina, a limited amount of ethnic interaction occurred in the years before the Revolution.

Between 1750 and 1775, large numbers of German and English immigrants settled in previously Scots-Irish-dominated areas of the Pennsylvania backcountry. In the 1750s and 1760s, Christian Winiker, Ludwig Lindemuth, and other Germans purchased land in the Scots-Irish community in Donegal Township, Lancaster County. In fact, seventy-three Scots-Irishmen in the area sold their farms to Germans from 1750 to 1770. The Palatines even made significant inroads in Cumberland County, formerly a bastion of Scots-Irish settlement. Of the twenty-eight

87; and Tompkins, *Mecklenburg County*, pp. 60-63.
land warrants granted in the county in 1767, six went to Germans.\textsuperscript{38}

Although ethnic segregation prevailed in most of the region, European immigrants created a few mixed settlements in western North Carolina before 1775 as well. The neighborhood between the forks of the Yadkin River in northwestern Rowan County included Englishmen, Germans, and a small number of Scots-Irish. Several Rowan County tax districts in 1778 reflected these ethnically mixed settlements. Captain Morris's District, for example, contained 104 English, 50 Scots-Irish, and 20 German taxables. Members of all three national groups, similarly, comprised the 105 taxables in Captain Davis's District.\textsuperscript{39}

Rapidly growing towns such as Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and Salisbury, North Carolina, quickly became the most ethnically integrated areas in the backcountry. A surname


analysis of Lancaster artisans reveals a mixture of emigrants from all over Europe. In 1780, the town contained dozens of German, over thirty English, and at least ten Scots-Irish craftsmen. The original purchasers of lots in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, in 1763 included 15 Germans, 22 Englishmen, and 100 Ulstermen. Members of all three national groups settled in Salisbury between 1755 and 1762.40

As continued immigration and rising populations after 1750 brought ethnic groups throughout the backcountry physically closer, the shared experience of fear and turmoil during the French and Indian War encouraged social cooperation among them. Confronted by a common enemy, some English, German, and Scots-Irish inhabitants joined together to defend their homes. Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, leaders from all national origins established an ethnically integrated system of express riders that relayed warnings of impending attacks among the county's settlements. When rumors of Indian raids swept through Rowan County, North Carolina, refugees of all nationalities

fled to the fortified Moravian compound at Wachovia for shelter.41

Service in the frontier militia in both colonies during the war sometimes encouraged ethnic interaction. A small number of militia companies raised in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina contained members of all three national groups. Major James Burd's garrison at Fort Augusta in Pennsylvania, for example, included 20 men born in Ireland or Scotland, 6 natives of England, and 10 Germans. The officers of the First and Second Battalions of the Pennsylvania Regiment represented all three ethnicities in 1760. Similarly, 45 Scots-Irishmen, 24 Englishmen, and 2 Germans comprised one Anson County, North Carolina, militia company in 1755.42

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41 Minutes of Provincial Council, VI: 667; Fries, Records of Moravians, I: 154, 158, 180-81, 210, 229-32; Pennsylvania Gazette, July 21, 1763; Petition of Hanover Township, May 15, 1757, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, III: 158; and Petition of York County, Aug. 21, 1756, in Records of Provincial Council, B7: 128571.

Some Scots-Irish settlers expanded this atmosphere of interethnic trust and assistance after the war. Having gained a new respect for, and appreciation of, their fellow frontiersmen, they forged ties of friendship and interdependence with neighboring European immigrants. When he established a regular post to carry newspapers and letters from Philadelphia to Lancaster County in 1767, John Harris included both the English and German papers for his friends from all national backgrounds. Large numbers of "English and Irish neighbors" attended the funerals of prominent Moravians at Wachovia in Rowan County, North Carolina, during the 1760s and 1770s.⁴³

A few individuals even established more personal relations with the other American colonists around them. Some served as executors of English and German wills. In Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, twenty-one Scots-Irishmen handled the distribution of other European settlers' estates between 1750 and 1775; nine did so in Rowan County, North Carolina, during the same period. Others selected spouses with different national backgrounds. Pennsylvanian Seth Duncan married a young German woman in the 1750s, and

⁴³John Harris to James Burd, April 28, 1767, Harris-Fisher Family Collection, PHMC; Fries, Records of Moravians, I: 85-86, 94, 97, 109, 132, 270, 284, 361, 380 (quote from p. 361); Committee of York County to Pennsylvania Committee of Safety, Oct. 20, 1775, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, IV: 668-69; and the various petitions from backcountry inhabitants seeking pardons for former Regulators in 1771 in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, IX: 25-41, 93-95.
after her death twenty years later, he betrothed another "Dutch" woman. Anne McBride, of Rowan County, chose the German Frederick Fisher for her husband in the 1770s.44

Despite the rise of individualism, social divisions, and interethnic cooperation among backcountry Ulstermen after 1750, the unique Scots-Irish ethnic identity remained strong and vibrant before the Revolution. Although they frequently displayed individualistic attitudes, the Scots-Irish also retained a strong belief in communalism. This deep commitment to communalism prevented mid-eighteenth-century Scots-Irish society from completely unraveling. In fact, Ulster emigrants throughout the region maintained a remarkable amount of cohesion and distinctiveness in their social lives. They not only formed close-knit communities, but they also clearly distinguished themselves from others.

The Scots-Irish tempered their worship of the individual by recognizing his position within a larger community. The individual, they realized, could never truly stand on his own; he was always part of a group with


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whom he shared common characteristics — either blood, geography, or national heritage. This commonality, in turn, ideally led to harmony and peace among the community members. The individual had to avoid conflicts and disputes with relatives, neighbors, and countrymen. While refuting accusations of criminal behavior lodged against him, Pennsylvanian John Nicholaison insisted that he had "always endeavored to conduct himself so as to merit the goodwill of his neighbors." Cumberland County gentleman John Armstrong praised his neighbor James Blaine as a person, "with whom I do not remember ever to have heard of any controversy or contest."45

Presbyterian ministers frequently preached that men and women had a duty, in the words of Reverend David Caldwell of Buffalo Church in Guilford County, North Carolina, "to be useful in the world." They had to place the community's needs above their own interests and be ready to assist their neighbors at all times. Reverend John Steel, of Carlisle Church in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, reminded his parishioners that "a narrow, selfish spirit is contrary to the Christian temper." A

"public spirit," he continued, "and a heedship to promote the good of others, especially the public good, is required" of all people.⁴⁶

Individuals who achieved material success were especially obliged to help those who were less fortunate than themselves. Reverend Robert Smith, of Pequea Church in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, instructed his listeners in 1759 that "it is the common sense of mankind, that the indigent should ask favors of those that can grant, and from whom they expect relief." While gravely ill in 1783, North Carolinian Elizabeth Steel imparted her wisdom about living to her children. "Be charitable to the poor," she advised them, "and above all...love one another."⁴⁷

Scots-Irish colonists demonstrated this belief in communalism in many of their social relations after 1750. Although they established independent farmsteads, new emigrants from Ulster and migrants within the backcountry itself after 1750 continued their predecessors' practice of forming settlements of interrelated families. As vacant land grew scarcer in Pennsylvania, Scots-Irishmen began to complain that there were "no spaces left sufficient for a

⁴⁶Caldwell cited in Caruthers, David Caldwell, p. 267; and Rev. John Steel, "Sermon on Philippians 2:3 -- preached at Carlisle, 1766," Steel Sermons, PHS.

number of families to settle together." In 1755, Arthur Dobbs reported that the Scots-Irish inhabitants on his lands in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, "settled together." 48

Much of the social life in these emerging Scots-Irish neighborhoods revolved around communal activities. Because of the region's chronic shortage of labor, local farmers worked together to complete the various tasks on their farms. As Benjamin Rush observed in 1786, "their mutual wants create mutual dependence, hence they...associate for the purpose of building houses, cutting their grain, and the like." When personal disputes occurred, the entire community joined together to resolve them. Pennsylvanian Alexander Thomson informed his relatives back in Scotland that "if any differences are like to arise about roads and merches, they are amicably adjusted." 49

Scots-Irish-owned taverns played an especially important role in maintaining communal relations among

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Scots-Irish individuals. Every Scots-Irish neighborhood in the backcountry included an ordinary, in which the area's men gathered for fun and raucous frivolity. Disgusted by what he perceived as laziness, Benjamin Rush wished that Pennsylvania Scots-Irishmen would spend "less time in attending...taverns and more time in improving their farms." North Carolina's Salisbury District Superior Court fined Robert Johnston in 1764 for allowing a group of men to remain in his tavern all day and night, "tipling, drinking, and behaving themselves in a disorderly manner."\(^{50}\)

Local communities, moreover, served as safety nets for their residents. Neighbors routinely joined together to help one another in times of trouble. When Benjamin Morrison returned penniless to his Carlisle, Pennsylvania, home after serving in the Continental Army during the Revolution, the town petitioned the state government to grant him assistance. After government troops crushed the Regulator rebellion at the Battle of Alamance in 1771, Scots-Irish citizens from Guilford and Orange Counties

flooded the governor with petitions seeking pardons for friends who had joined the unsuccessful revolt.  

Surprisingly, Scots-Irish actions could often be both communalistic and individualistic at the same time. Because most Scots-Irishmen simultaneously held both sets of beliefs, they saw little conflict between them. Scots-Irish forms of recreation and celebration, for instance, reflected elements of both value systems. Neighbors gathered together at local social events such as fairs, estate sales, weddings, and funerals to visit one another and partake of some spirits. As they mingled together, however, individual quarrels inevitably erupted. In these instances, the personal fracases appear to have been integral aspects of the communal experience, instead of disruptions of social harmony. At an estate sale near Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, in July 1746, local men and women seemed more concerned with drinking and frolicking than with actually purchasing goods: William Jack "wrastled" with Adam Hoopes, John Rippey fought with Charles Cummins, Neil McClean struck Rippey, and Samuel Laird became intoxicated.  

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51Petition of residents of Carlisle, 1777, in File of Benjamin Morrison, Clemency Files, 1775-1790, Revolutionary Governments, 36: 307; various petitions from Guilford and Orange Counties, 1771, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, IX: 38-39, 84-87; Petition of neighbors of Joseph Wylie, 1770, Lamberton Collection, HSP, II: 5; and Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, pp. 207-8.

52Minutes, July 18, 1746, Session Book, Middle Springs
Scots-Irish actions during the crisis of the French and Indian War also illustrate this strange combination of individualism and communalism. While a number of Scots-Irish families refused to aid their neighbors and simply fled the area, many others remained and formed small groups for their own protection. One observer reported in 1755 that Pennsylvania’s backcountry inhabitants had begun to "assemble together at some house or little fort to keep a regular watch every night." That same year, the citizens of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, "for our mutual defense, do...unanimously promise to associate, to be aiding and assisting in keeping Night Watch" within the town.53

Because Pennsylvania's pacifist Quaker-dominated General Assembly refused to appropriate funds for the frontier's defense, the Scots-Irish on that colony's frontier banded together to build forts and raise their own military units. Following the "Plan for Defence" adopted by a meeting of local leaders, Cumberland County residents

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53 Pennsylvania Journal, Nov. 8, 1755; Certificate for Mutual Defense, Carlisle, July 12, 1755, in Two Hundred Years, pp. 24-25; William Maxwell to inhabitants of Pennsylvania, Nov. 3, 1755, Lamberton Collection, HSP, I: 25; and Elisha Sattor to Gov., April 5, 1755, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, II: 613.
constructed eight stockades and organized dozens of voluntary militia companies in 1754 and 1755. During the frequent Indian forays into the area, families huddled in the forts while the companies pursued the invaders. In between raids, groups of volunteers patrolled the county's frontier to prevent future surprise attacks.\textsuperscript{54}

The flight of thousands of refugees from their homes during the war tested the strength of Scots-Irish communal assistance networks. After repeated Indian raids in western Cumberland County, many of the area's inhabitants flocked to the county's two substantial towns -- Carlisle and Shippensburg. Hugh Mercer reported that over seven hundred people had "crowded together" in the latter village in 1757. Residents of these and other towns throughout the region struggled to "accommodate such numbers as crowd in among them." As one observer explained, "they cannot see any of them perish for want, while they are able to relieve them."\textsuperscript{55}


\textsuperscript{55}Hugh Mercer to James Burd, July 10, 1757, Shippen Family Papers, HSP, III: 5; Pennsylvania Gazette, July 21,
Although North Carolina's royal government provided much more assistance for its endangered frontier during the war, that region's Scots-Irish formed similar voluntary associations to defend their homes and families. Like their Pennsylvania counterparts, they organized militia companies and established plans, as the Rowan County Moravians reported, "to get together, in order to be safer from the Indians." In 1756, "the Irish" in the county formed a company to confront a band of Cherokees who had been marauding throughout the area, recover the goods they had stolen from the county's residents, and take the confiscated items to Salisbury so the rightful owners could claim them.\textsuperscript{56}

These communal networks transcended the social distinctions that had begun to develop among Scots-Irish settlers throughout the backcountry. Although their interests differed from those of their countrymen, the Scots-Irish gentry still commanded the respect, trust, and affection of other Ulster immigrants. James Patterson, of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, thanked John Armstrong for "the regard you always retain for me and my interest -- a

\textsuperscript{56}List of Officers of Rowan County Militia, 1754/1755, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, XXII: 311; Roster of Mecklenburg County Militia Companies, 1766, in ibid., XXII: 395-99; and Fries, Records of Moravians, I: 135, 166.
favour which I shall always with the most humble gratitude acknowledge." Pennsylvanian William Elliott regarded Ephraim Blaine as "the greatest benefactor I ever met" and even named his son after him.57

Scots-Irish men and women turned to their social leaders for guidance and assistance in times of difficulty. During the French and Indian War, Pennsylvanian John Armstrong reported that backcountry residents were "running upon me from every quarter for...help." Many also trusted their wealthy and influential neighbors to represent their interests in county courts or with provincial authorities. Scots-Irish elites frequently acted as intermediaries between common citizens and local and provincial governments. In 1774, for example, Patrick Ewing asked Ephraim Blaine and John Armstrong to obtain legal title and surveys for his uncle's lands in Cumberland County.58

In fact, during the French and Indian War, the Scots-Irish gentry used their contacts with provincial officials...

57 James Patterson to Col. John Armstrong, March 27, 1759, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, II: 722-23; and William Elliott to Ephraim Blaine, April 9, 1775, Blaine Papers, LC.

58 John Armstrong to Gov., June 6, 1764, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, IV: 176; Patrick Ewing to Ephraim Blaine, May 25, 1774, Blaine Papers, LC; William Elliott to Ephraim Blaine, April 9, 1775, ibid.; John Armstrong to President Wilson, Nov. 29, 1771, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, VI: 43-44; John Armstrong to William Peters, Oct. 14, 1765, Lamberton Collection, HSP, I: 59; and John Harris to James Burd, May 3, 1764, Harris-Fisher Family Collection, PHMC.
and coastal elites to advocate the backcountry's interests. Through letters and personal reports, they recounted the destruction and death wrought by repeated Indian raids, explained the region's defenseless position, and begged the government for protection. Writing in behalf of "our naked and much exposed frontier," John Armstrong and Thomas Wilson reported rumors of an imminent attack and requested gunpowder from government authorities in June of 1763. Eight years earlier, Adam Hoopes and John Potter had personally narrated "the ravages of the Indians" in Cumberland County to the Pennsylvania General Assembly. 59

Scots-Irish leaders held tremendous influence over their backcountry neighbors. Local Scots-Irish gentlemen could restrain their countrymen's individualism and unruliness better than anyone else. During both the French and Indian War and the Revolution, Scots-Irishmen insisted that local officers command backcountry militia units. When the governor appointed an outsider as captain of a Lancaster County company in 1763, the enlisted men and

subalterns refused to serve under him. While requesting permission to raise a battalion of militia in 1775, Cumberland County leaders recommended that local men be appointed as officers because only they could command the men's respect and prevent "discord."^60

In fact, instances of cooperation between Scots-Irishmen of different social status were more common than periods of conflict. A shared ethnic heritage quickly defused many of the confrontations between them. Despite their loud declarations of disgust and alarm, local Scots-Irish leaders often defended and justified their countrymen's extralegal actions and made only perfunctory efforts to prosecute them. When the Philadelphia elite and provincial authorities blamed the Scots-Irish for the massacre of friendly Indians in Lancaster County in 1763, backcountry Scots-Irishmen from all social backgrounds rallied to defend their countrymen's honor and reputation.

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John Armstrong, John Elder, and other leaders sent dozens of letters to government officials denying Scots-Irish involvement and even justifying the rioters' actions.\textsuperscript{61}

Scots-Irish participation in the Regulator Movement between 1768 and 1771 illustrates the continuing bond between Scots-Irish elites and commoners in western North Carolina. In Orange and Anson Counties, where Englishmen controlled the local gentry, large numbers of Scots-Irish individuals joined the Regulator ranks. Not only did the revolt begin in these counties, but it also displayed its most destructive and violent aspects in them. From 1768 to 1771, the common English and Scots-Irish citizens of both counties remained in almost constant rebellion, forcibly disrupting courts and assaulting local officials.

In Rowan and Mecklenburg Counties, however, the predominantly Scots-Irish elite cooperated with their Scots-Irish-majority constituencies to keep the upheaval to a minimum. Although many Scots-Irish residents joined the Movement and some instances of violence occurred in Rowan, Scots-Irish county leaders like Griffith Rutherford and

\textsuperscript{61}John Elder to Gov., Dec. 16, 1763, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, IV: 148-49; Benjamin Franklin to Richard Jackson, June 25, 1764, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XI: 239; and the various pamphlets defending the Paxton Boys and Scots-Irish Presbyterians in Dunbar, Paxton Papers. For other instances in which the Pennsylvania Scots-Irish elite defended their countrymen's actions, see Thomas Wharton to Benjamin Franklin, March 25, April 27, 1765, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XII: 94, 114-15; and Minutes of Provincial Council, IX: 431, 484-85.
Andrew Allison met with Scots-Irish Regulators in March of 1771 and negotiated a compromise which averted further turmoil. In Mecklenburg, the ruling Alexander and Polk families deftly dissuaded virtually all of their countrymen from joining the rebellion.\(^{62}\)

Scots-Irish gentlemen even played key roles in some instances of Scots-Irish extralegal activity. Magistrate William Forster encouraged a Scots-Irish mob to assault Philadelphia land speculators who were trying to survey lands in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Forster addressed the surveyors with "very offensive and opprobrious language, and took great pains to... provoke [the crowd] to a forcible opposition to" them. Thomas Polk and his kin, who were jockeying with the Alexander clan for social prominence in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, led a mob of squatters in attacking the Alexanders while they surveyed land owned by the English speculator Arthur Selwyn in 1765.\(^{63}\)

\(^{62}\)For the different development of the Regulator Movement in each of these counties, see the various documents reprinted in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VII: 710-856; VIII: 49-84, 156-57, 178, 245-79, 531-699; IX: 57, 98-99; and Powell, Regulators, pp. 74-75, 129-33, 187-89, 357-58, 502-3.

\(^{63}\)Minutes of Provincial Council, IX: 335; John Frohock to Edmund Fanning, April 27, 1765, in Powell, Regulators, p. 17; Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VII: 10-37; and Powell, North Carolina Biography, V: 112-13. For other examples of elites leading extralegal actions, see Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, IV: 219-20, 395-97; Smith, Remarkable Occurrences, pp. 110-14, 121-31; and Minutes of Provincial Council, IX: 292-93.
This social unity reinforced the ethnic cohesion and distinctiveness of Scots-Irish colonists in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Recognized as a separate national group by others, Scots-Irish immigrants tried to distance themselves from their English and German neighbors. Maintaining enduring ties with their homeland, they formed segregated settlements, practiced ethnic exclusivity in their social relations, and established unique social institutions as much as possible in the increasingly pluralistic eighteenth-century backcountry.

Despite increasing examples of social interaction among backcountry national groups after 1750, ethnic consciousness and prejudice remained strong before the Revolution. Most other colonial Americans continued to regard the Scots-Irish as a distinct group. English and German settlers identified Ulster emigrants as "Irish" or "Scotch-Irish." Pennsylvanian Benjamin Rush, for example, consistently referred to them as "Irish" in all of his writings. Germans in one Pennsylvania settlement alluded to a neighboring Scots-Irish family as "the Irish Johnsons." Arthur Dobbs explained that the inhabitants on his lands in western North Carolina were "what we call Scotch-Irish."64

64Butterfield, Letters of Rush, I: 333, 356, 421; Butterfield, "Rush's Journal," pp. 450-56; Egle, Notes and Queries, I: 13; Gov. Dobbs to Board of Trade, Aug. 24, 1755, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, V: 356; Matthew Rowan to Board of Trade, June 28, 1753, in ibid.,
More important, backcountry residents of other nationalities commonly perceived the Scots-Irish as inferior. Comparing them unfavorably to the Germans, many Pennsylvania Englishmen portrayed the Scots-Irish as lazy, uncouth, and filthy. Benjamin Rush, for example, frequently recorded the "very great" differences he saw between the Scots-Irish and Germans during his travels through the colony's backcountry. While the Palatines were "good and clean farmers," the Scots-Irish, he claimed, neglected to put glass in their windows, left tree trunks standing in their fields, failed to mend their fences, and refused to feed their cattle in the winter.65

Contemporaries painted a similar picture of the Scots-Irish in western North Carolina. Governor Arthur Dobbs sharply contrasted the Scots-Irish and German families living on his lands in the region. While describing the Germans as "an industrious people," he caustically depicted the Ulstermen's large families, primitive dress, and backward manners. Even the region's Germans looked down on their Scots-Irish neighbors. One Rowan County Lutheran minister advised his parishioners not to marry the "Irish" because they were "lazy, dissipated, and poor, [and] live

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in the most wretched huts and enjoy the same food as their animals." 66

Reciprocating these ethnic suspicions, the vast majority of Scots-Irish colonists kept to themselves as much as possible. Most emigrants maintained strong links with their friends and relatives back in Ireland and Scotland through correspondence. Many, like Pennsylvanian Alexander Thomson in 1773, wrote home to encourage former neighbors to join them in America. A few sent their sons to Scottish universities to receive their educations. John Houston, of Lancaster County, for example, attended the University of Edinburgh in the 1760s. One young Pennsylvanian even expressed a nostalgic "desire of seeing my father's friends in that part of the world." 67

Despite the increase of English and German settlers in Scots-Irish neighborhoods, Ulster immigrants continued to segregate themselves from other colonial Americans as much as possible. Whenever significant numbers of Germans moved


into their communities, according to the Lutheran minister Henry Muhlenburg, the Pennsylvania "Irish gradually withdraw, sell their farms to the Germans, and move" to predominantly Scots-Irish areas elsewhere in the backcountry. Moreover, new Irish emigrants continued to settle in neighborhoods already populated by their fellow countrymen. Of the twenty-nine land warrantees granted by the Penn family in the Scots-Irish segment of York County between 1750 and 1775, twenty-two went to Scots-Irishmen. 68

Scots-Irish geographical segregation remained even more complete in western North Carolina. The lower population density, greater availability of vacant land, and a policy of religious persecution implemented by the royal government after 1760 encouraged most Scots-Irish men and women to shy away from others. Contemporaries frequently remarked on Scots-Irish clannishness. The colony's governor reported in 1755 that the "Scots-Irish Presbyterians" on his lands in Mecklenburg County had "settled together." Anglican priest Reverend Theodorus Swain Drage claimed that "all the Scotch-Irish are clanned in one settlement together" in Rowan County. 69

68 Muhlenburg, Journals of Muhlenburg, II: 391; Land Warrantees in Manor of Maske, York County, reprinted in Cumberland and Adams, pp. 21-23; and Butterfield, "Rush's Trip," pp. 450-56;

69 Gov. Dobbs to Board of Trade, Aug. 24, 1755, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, V: 355-56; Rev. Theodorus Swain Drage to Benjamin Franklin, March 2, 1771, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XVIII: 41; Fries, Records
Scots-Irish individuals tried to separate themselves from other national groups -- especially Germans -- in many of their social activities as well. While stationed in Lancaster during the Revolution, Pennsylvanian Erkuries Beatty lamented that because most of the residents were "Germans...sociability [is] out of the question." Most of the militia units raised in the backcountry during the war reflected this ethnic segregation. When they instructed Lancaster County leaders to recruit two companies in 1758, Pennsylvania authorities stipulated that one should be German and the other "Irish.""70

Even in areas where Scots-Irish and Germans lived side by side, they maintained separate social lives. Each group had its own distinct gathering -- and resting -- places within the community. In Donegal Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Scots-Irish and Germans frequented taverns owned by their own countrymen. Ulstermen relaxed at the Bear Tavern, first built by Thomas Harris in 1745;

Germans imbibed at the Black Horse Tavern, opened by George Redesecker in 1757. Ethnically mixed Salisbury, North Carolina, had two separate cemeteries before the Revolution, one for Scots-Irish and Englishmen and the other for Germans.\textsuperscript{71}

Scots-Irish colonists especially practiced ethnic exclusivity in their most intimate social relations. Most chose fellow countrymen as spouses and executors of their wills. Of the 203 Scots-Irish men and women married by Reverend John Roan in Lancaster County from 1754 to 1775, 163 (80 percent) selected Scots-Irish spouses. In Rowan County, 246 of the 334 (74 percent) Scots-Irish people who received marriage licenses between 1753 and 1775 married within the ethnic group. Ulstermen served as executors in 183 of the 234 (78 percent) Scots-Irish wills recorded in Lancaster from 1750 to 1775; 113 of 131 (86 percent) did so in Rowan and Mecklenburg Counties during the same period.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{71}Klein, Lancaster County, I: 290; and Jethro Rumple, A History of Rowan County, North Carolina (Salisbury: J.J. Bruner, 1881), p. 156.

Finally, Scots-Irish families joined together to establish schools to pass their unique ethnic heritage on to their children. Virtually every backcountry Scots-Irish community contained a grammar school or classical academy. The members of Paxton Presbyterian Church in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, for example, collectively hired Joseph Allen to "teach our children to Read, Write, and Arithmetic" for five shillings apiece plus room and board. Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, citizens hired a small group of teachers who traveled between the county's nine schools, teaching a few months at each one.\textsuperscript{73}

Scots-Irish parents in both colonies sent their brightest sons to classical schools operated by Presbyterian ministers throughout the backcountry. Robert Harris, of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, for example, attended Reverend Samuel Finly's academy at West Nottingham, Maryland, in the early 1750s. Ephraim Brevard, Adlai Osborne, and other young men in western North Carolina...\textsuperscript{3-15.}

Carolina studied at Crowfield Academy in Rowan County in the 1760s. Many of these young scholars continued their classical educations at the Presbyterian-controlled Princeton College in New Jersey. Between 1757 and 1776, 58 natives of western Pennsylvania and North Carolina graduated from the college.\footnote{For examples of young Scots-Irish men attending classical academies, see the biographies of Princeton graduates in McLachlan and Harrison, \textit{Princetonians}, I: 51, 72, 341, 421, 569, 634, 643, 648, 651; II: 8-9, 42, 138-39, 231-32, 245, 266-67, 287-90, 317, 342, 345, 350, 386, 504-6, 520-22; III: 4-5, 25, 112-13. I have derived the number of backcountry Princeton graduates from the same biographies, which provide the individual's place of birth.}

Fearing that their great distance from Princeton made it too expensive for their neighbor's to attend the college, Scots-Irish leaders in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, even tried to found their own institution of higher learning. After receiving numerous petitions from the backcountry Scots-Irish, the North Carolina General Assembly granted a charter for the creation of Queen's College in Charlotte in 1771. Local men of influence quickly selected a Board of Trustees, hired a principal and teachers, and opened the school to students. When the King annulled the charter two years later, however, the college became simply another academy.\footnote{Act Founding Queen's College, 1771, in Saunders and Clark, \textit{Colonial Records}, VIII: 487-90; Petition of Board of Trustees, April 18, 1779, Liberty Hall Academy Paper, NCDAH; Tompkins, \textit{Mecklenburg County}, I: 72-73; and McLachlan and Harrison, \textit{Princetonians}, I: 445.}
This commitment to education set the Scots-Irish apart from other backcountry settlers. Neither the English nor the Germans founded as many schools in the region as the Scots-Irish. One Pennsylvania Lutheran minister attributed the "unbelievable progress" of Presbyterianism throughout the colonies to Ulster immigrants' unique dedication to learning. In fact, the Scots-Irish were the most literate people in the eighteenth-century backcountry. Seventy-seven percent of Scots-Irishmen signed their wills in Rowan County, North Carolina, from 1753 to 1775; only 61 percent of other county residents did so. In Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the Scots-Irish exhibited a 90 percent literacy rate between 1729 and 1770 while the county's total white male population only had a 63 percent rate.\(^7\)\(^6\)

On the eve of the Revolution, Scots-Irish society in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina, much like the economy, appeared to be moving in opposite directions. Just as they combined the seemingly contradictory ideals of subsistence and capitalism in their economic culture, the Scots-Irish maintained an often tenuous balance of individualism and communalism in their social lives. These contradictory social values, in turn, both threatened to

\(^7\)\(^6\)Muhlenburg, Journals of Muhlenburg, II: 295; Rowan County Record of Wills, NCDAH; Lancaster County Deed Books A–M, Record Group 44, Pennsylvania County Records, PHMC; and Alan Tully, "Literacy Levels and Educational Development in Rural Pennsylvania, 1729-1775," Pennsylvania History 39 (July 1972): 304.
destroy and helped to reinforce the unique ethnic identity that Ulster emigrants had brought from Ireland.

In many respects, the new American environment worked to erode Scots-Irish ethnic unity and distinctiveness between 1750 and 1775. The fluidity and openness of colonial backcountry society encouraged increasing numbers of Scots-Irish settlers throughout the backcountry to embrace individual freedom. Unfettered by societal constraints, they slipped easily into lives of uninhibited lawlessness and violence.

At the same time, the backcountry's growing prosperity and ethnic pluralism after 1750 worked to tear Scots-Irish society apart. The expansion of commercial production created a new class of affluent Scots-Irish gentlemen, whose interests increasingly diverged from, and sometimes clashed with, those of their poorer countrymen. As more Germans and Englishmen moved into Scots-Irish neighborhoods throughout the region, a significant minority of Scots-Irishmen began to mingle with them. By the Revolution, a few had begun to interact socially with other colonial Americans as much as with their fellow Ulstermen.

Despite the rise of these destructive social forces, however, the Scots-Irish struggled to preserve as much of their peculiar ethnic identity as possible. Although they became increasingly individualistic, most Scots-Irishmen retained a firm belief in communalism as well.
Establishing close-knit neighborhoods, they forged powerful bonds of interdependence and sociability that continued to transcend the deepening class barriers. This social unity, like the economic homogeneity, helped to preserve Scots-Irish ethnic solidarity and separateness. Closely linked to their homeland, the vast majority of Scots-Irish colonists continued to settle in ethnic enclaves and associate with their own countrymen as much as possible.
David Caldwell, the son of devout Ulster Scots Presbyterian immigrants, grew up in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, during the Great Awakening. Inspired by the spiritual revival around him, the young Caldwell determined to enter the ministry. After spending his early years saving money for his education by working as a carpenter, David began preparations for the ministry at the relatively late age of twenty-one. He studied Greek and Latin under local Presbyterian ministers and enrolled at Presbyterian-controlled Princeton College in New Jersey, graduating in 1761. Four years later, the Presbytery of New Brunswick ordained him as a minister.

Caught up in his countrymen's migration from Pennsylvania to North Carolina, the ambitious young clergyman joined a group of former Lancasterians who had settled in Rowan County, North Carolina, in 1766. Caldwell helped the settlers transplant the Presbyterian principles and institutions they had known in Pennsylvania. He guided
their organization of two Presbyterian churches -- Buffalo and Alamance -- and in 1768 became their minister. As the local religious leader, Caldwell instructed his parishioners in the fundamental Presbyterian doctrines, directed the strict moral discipline of their church sessions, and led them in the celebration of their cherished sacraments. In 1770, he even helped to found the first presbytery in the colony -- Orange Presbytery.

As the area's most educated resident, Caldwell exerted tremendous influence over his fellow countrymen. He not only established a "log college" to educate his congregants' sons, but after studying medicine on his own, served as the neighborhood physician. When a doctrinal dispute threatened to divide the two congregations, Caldwell's charisma and diplomatic skills quieted the conflict. During the early days of the Revolution, he convinced a number of former Regulators to join their neighbors in the fight against Britain. Throughout his fifty-year tenure at Buffalo and Alamance, Caldwell served as a symbol of unity within the Scots-Irish community.¹

Reverend David Caldwell's life illustrates the continuing importance of religion to Scots-Irish immigrants in the mid-eighteenth-century Pennsylvania and North Carolina backcountry. As Scots-Irish settlement spread throughout both colonies between 1730 and 1775, the Presbyterian Church followed closely behind. Virtually every new Scots-Irish community founded in these years organized a Presbyterian congregation and began a persistent search for a minister within a few years of its initial settlement. A growing number of American-born Scots-Irishmen, moreover, recognized the frontier's dire need for spiritual guidance and entered the ministry to fill the void.

The Presbyterian Church's continued growth throughout the frontier, however, unleashed forces that threatened to undermine the unique Scots-Irish ethnic identity. Presbyterian ministers' efforts to spark a spiritual revival among their congregants in the 1730s and 1740s resulted in a bitter doctrinal controversy among both the clergy and laymen that ultimately split the Scots-Irish -- as well as the entire American Presbyterian Church -- into two rival factions. While internal conflicts began to pull the Scots-Irish apart, the backcountry's tremendous religious pluralism began to erode their distinctiveness.

Inspired by William Penn's policy of religious toleration,

Presbyterians developed surprisingly friendly relations with many other backcountry denominations.

Despite the emergence of these forces, Scots-Irish Presbyterians struggled to preserve their position as a separate and unified religious entity in the colonial backcountry. They continued to re-create as many of the Presbyterian institutions, rituals, and doctrines that they had known in Ulster as possible in their new environment. Like their ancestors in seventeenth-century Ulster, they established church sessions, celebrated communion, and maintained a deep commitment to Calvinist theology. This common Presbyterian heritage not only helped to unite Scots-Irish Presbyterians, but also highlighted their differences with the region's other religious groups.

The ability to transplant Presbyterian practices and beliefs in the frontier provided a powerful reinforcement for Ulster immigrants' view of themselves as a distinct group of people. Presbyterianism, as it had done in Ulster, became the foundation on which the Scots-Irish constructed their unique ethnic identity. Virtually all Scots-Irishmen continued to belong to a Presbyterian congregation. The church and ministers, moreover, served as the center of most Scots-Irish communities. This commitment to a shared Presbyterian tradition was even strong enough to heal the doctrinal disputes that arose
within the church and to cause occasional conflicts with other colonial American denominations.

The growth of Scots-Irish Presbyterianism in the Pennsylvania and North Carolina backcountry between 1720 and 1775 coincided with a period of expansion and consolidation for all religious groups in colonial America. In every colony, governments and people took a renewed interest in religion. Faced with competition from other churches, many denominations launched aggressive campaigns of revival and reform. Although they all sought to inspire spiritual awakenings among their congregants, each church also nurtured its own unique principles and practices. This Great Awakening, ironically, led to considerable internal turmoil and conflict within many denominations.²

Scots-Irish Presbyterians in the backcountry probably experienced this seemingly contradictory process of renewal and division more than any other denomination. On the one hand, the church continued to grow and expand throughout the region. Everywhere the Scots-Irish settled after 1740, Presbyterian meeting houses quickly appeared. On the other hand, Presbyterian ministers' efforts to inspire a religious awakening among their parishioners in the 1730s

and 1740s resulted in a bitter doctrinal controversy among the clergy themselves, and ultimately, the laymen.

Presbyterianism remained vitally important to the Scots-Irish community and culture throughout the backcountry after 1740. Like the early Ulster immigrants in Pennsylvania before 1740, second- and third-generation Scots-Irishmen, along with new arrivals from Ireland, continued to found Presbyterian churches in each new settlement they created. Pennsylvania's rising population density led to the formation of at least ten more Presbyterian congregations on the colony's frontier between 1740 and 1775. The thousands of Scots-Irish colonists who migrated from Pennsylvania to North Carolina from 1745 to 1775 established another thirteen churches in that colony.³

Even with an extreme shortage of ministers throughout the backcountry, Scots-Irish neighborhoods went to great

lengths to keep their churches together. The rough living conditions of the frontier, the poverty of many backcountry congregations, and the overall scarcity of Presbyterian clergy throughout colonial America left many congregations in eighteenth-century western Pennsylvania and North Carolina without settled ministers for long periods of time. Despite these hardships, most frontier churches remained intact, maintaining log meeting houses and holding services whenever a traveling missionary came along.

Scots-Irish settlers' persistent efforts to overcome this severe shortage of clergymen best reflects the continuing importance of Presbyterianism. Vacant backcountry congregations maintained a steady flow of requests for ministers to the Synod and their respective presbyteries throughout the century. In 1763, several congregations "on the west side of Susquehanna River" in western Pennsylvania, for example, collectively petitioned the Synod for ministerial supplies. From 1765 to 1775, the vacant churches in the North Carolina piedmont sent at least twenty-two supplications for ministers to the Synod.

When the Synod and presbyteries proved unable to provide an adequate supply of ministers, backcountry

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residents joined together to recruit their own. Frontier ministers often selected the best and brightest young men in their congregations, taught them the basics of Latin, Greek, and moral philosophy, and enrolled them at Princeton. In fact, at least thirty-eight young men from western Pennsylvania and North Carolina graduated from Princeton and became ministers between 1750 and 1785. The citizens of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, were so determined to obtain ministers that they petitioned the royal government for permission to found their own seminary — named Queens' College. They even volunteered to levy a tax on all alcohol imported into the county to pay for the school's upkeep.5

The Presbyterian Church's continued expansion throughout the frontier, however, set in motion forces that jeopardized Scots-Irish ethnic unity. While attempting to ignite a religious awakening during the 1730s and 1740s, the Presbyterian clergy split into two conflicting factions over the best means of promoting the spiritual renewal. Inspired by the rising spirit of individualism in eighteenth-century America, a growing number of ministers

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-- known as New Lights -- embraced charismatic preaching styles, sensationalistic descriptions of hell and damnation, and emotional mass revivals to inspire their listeners. Other pastors -- called Old Lights -- rejected these new measures and continued to adhere to traditional, staid Presbyterian beliefs. After years of internal struggle, the New Lights seceded from the Synod of Philadelphia in 1741 and established their own Synod two years later.6

Because of William Penn's policy of religious toleration, the Old Light/New Light schism probably created more tension and conflict among the Scots-Irish in the Pennsylvania backcountry than among any other Presbyterians in colonial America. Without the common enemy of government interference or harassment to encourage unity among them, Pennsylvania Presbyterians broke into rival parties more easily than those in other colonies. Donegal Presbytery -- which comprised most of the colony's frontier -- suffered more internal strife during the Great Awakening than any other Presbyterian ecclesiastical body.

From 1730 to 1760, Scots-Irish ministers in the Pennsylvania backcountry joined both sides of the conflict.

When the New Lights seceded from the Synod in 1741, two ministers from the Presbytery accompanied them while the other six remained in the Old Light Synod of Philadelphia. Over the next twenty years, both parties expanded their spheres of influence within the region. The New Light Synod dispatched numerous missionaries to the frontier and ordained six new clergymen in the area. The Old Lights, trying to keep pace with their rivals, placed four new pastors in the region. By 1758, the Pennsylvania frontier contained eight New Light and ten Old Light ministers.7

The deepening rift among their ministers inevitably drew many Scots-Irish lay men and women into the debate. In four separate instances, congregations in Donegal Presbytery accused their ministers of doctrinal heresy or immorality during the schism. In the early 1730s, members of Nottingham Church in Chester County charged their minister, Reverend William Orr, of preaching false doctrines and immorality. The conflict became so bitter that only a committee of mediators from the Synod could settle the matter. The New Light members of Paxton Church in Lancaster County made a similar, unsuccessful attempt to


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indict their minister, Reverend John Elder, on charges of heresy.\textsuperscript{\textit{8}}

Other congregations in the Presbytery split into two separate churches -- one Old Light and one New Light -- during the controversy. The town of Carlisle, Cumberland County, for instance, contained both an Old Light and a New Light minister and congregation in the 1750s and 1760s. In Lancaster County, the neighboring congregations of Paxton and Derry each split into Old and New Light factions. The Old Lights followed Paxton's minister, John Elder, while the New Lights joined Derry's pastor, John Roan. As each of these New Light splinter groups formed their own congregations, they formally seceded from the Old Light Donegal Presbytery and joined the New Light Synod of New York.\textsuperscript{\textit{9}}


The thousands of Scots-Irish settlers who migrated from Pennsylvania to western North Carolina after 1750 carried the Old Light/New Light divisions with them. Throughout the 1750s, the same doctrinal conflicts that had divided ministers and congregations in Pennsylvania appeared in many of the fledgling churches of the North Carolina piedmont. In 1755, for example, Reverend Hugh McAden refused to assume the pastorship of Thyatira Church in Rowan County because the congregation had split into irreconcilable Old Light and New Light parties. When members of the Nottingham Company moved from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to Rowan County, North Carolina, in the 1750s, they established two distinct settlements and churches -- one Old Light (Buffalo Church) and the other New Light (Alamance Church).  

The Old Light/New Light schism was so divisive among backcountry Scots-Irish churches because it centered on conflicting interpretations of fundamental Calvinist theology. Old Lights retained the traditional Calvinist belief that God controlled man's salvation. An individual, they claimed, could do nothing to affect his own conversion. Reverend John King, of West Conococheague

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Church in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, warned his congregation "our salvation and acceptance with God is not to be ascribed to our own works, but to the divine mercy." In 1734, the Old Light-controlled Synod of Philadelphia instructed its ministers to teach their parishioners "the absolute necessity of the omnipotent influences of the divine grace to enable them to" receive salvation.11

Because God remained mysterious, Old Lights believed, an individual could never be certain of his salvation. Man could never know exactly whom God had saved and whom He had damned. Even if a person believed he had received God's grace, his status as a member of the elect was never definite. In 1741, for instance, a group of Old Light ministers -- including seven from the Pennsylvania backcountry -- complained to the Synod of Philadelphia that New Lights were "preaching and maintaining that all true converts are as certain of their gracious state as a person can be of what he knows by his outward senses."12

New Lights, by contrast, argued that individuals should actively participate in their own salvation. The elect, they insisted, brought about their conversion through regular meditation, prayer, and attending revivals


12Klett, Records of Presbyterian Church, p. 159.
as well as living "in the spirit of God." Once an individual underwent a conversion, moreover, he was assured of his salvation. As the Reverend James Latta, of Chestnut Level Church in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, explained, God had mercifully "revealed to us those mysteries that were hid from Ages and Generations." God, according to Latta, had forged a "solemn covenant" with man, through Christ, to save the members of the elect. This contract, he concluded, gave the elect a virtual guarantee of their salvation.  

New Lights' emphasis on personal conversion not only altered the Calvinist view of salvation, but it also replaced Presbyterianism's traditional communalistic nature with a new sense of individualism. According to New Light clergymen, the individual and his salvation, not the community and the elect, were the center of the Presbyterian church. This new evangelical theology greatly enhanced the power of the individual within the church. Even though God controlled the world, New Lights claimed,

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He allowed individuals to determine their actions -- to decide whether to accept or reject His gift of salvation. In the words of Reverend Robert Smith, of Pequea Church in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, men could "choose as freely, and pursue what they suppose makes for their own interest and satisfaction, as much, as if they were left entirely to their own management."\(^\text{14}\)

The New Light conversion experience also broke down the traditional communalistic nature of Presbyterianism by segregating the individual from the world around him. Ignoring the words and actions of others, the convert became "dead to the world by the cross of Christ." Instead, he directed his attention inward -- to the betterment of his own heart, soul, and mind. The true believer, according to Reverend James Latta, had "many unruly passions to be subdued, many evil habits to be rooted out, [and] many graces to be exercised and improved." All of this internal improvement left little time for communal rituals or worldly concerns.\(^\text{15}\)


Inspired by this new evangelical theology, many Scots-Irish Presbyterian laymen adopted rituals that focused on the individual as separate from the community. Devout men and women began to spend more time in private spiritual study and self-examination, instead of congregational rituals. As a young man in western North Carolina in the 1760s, John Barr spent a considerable amount of time praying, meditating, and reading by himself. During one day of especially intense self-doubt, he studied "'Guthrie's Trial of a Saving Interest'" during the day and after supper, "retired alone, resolving to spend the whole night in prayer."¹⁶

While the Great Awakening created internal divisions among Scots-Irish Presbyterians, the backcountry's tremendous religious pluralism gradually began to break down Scots-Irish ethnic uniqueness. William Penn's' ideals of religious freedom encouraged the Scots-Irish not only to tolerate other denominations, but to cooperate with them as well. Although they continued to see themselves as

different from other religious groups, Scots-Irish Presbyterians recognized that all Protestants shared the desire to worship God and that they all deserved the right worship in their own way. Interdenominational alliances became quite common in Pennsylvania by the Revolution. Even in North Carolina, where the established Anglican Church attempted to persecute dissenters, Presbyterians maintained their belief in religious liberty for all.

William Penn's policy of accepting all religious groups in his colony laid the foundation for Scots-Irish Presbyterian cooperation with other denominations. Even after Penn's death in the 1730s, his sons and the proprietary government continued to enforce a legal equality among all religious groups with no established church or government intervention in religious affairs. The governor and assembly consistently rejected any measure that appeared to favor one group over another. In 1757, for example, they turned down the Presbyterian Synod's request for the incorporation of a fund for aiding minister's widows and children on the grounds that it would give special privileges to the Presbyterians.\(^{17}\)

Accustomed to the long history of the established Church of Ireland's persecution of Presbyterians, the Scots-Irish quickly embraced the Penns' belief in freedom.

of conscience and made it their own. One emigrant proudly informed his friends back home about "the religious liberty which is enjoyed in this province in the most extensive manner." "We have," he wrote, "no religious establishment, but Christians of every denomination, [who] choose their own ministers." One group of backcountry Presbyterians praised the "Administrations of the Assembly" as having "long been marked with tenderness towards the Rights of Conscience."\(^{18}\)

This recognition of others' religious rights, in turn, led the Scots-Irish to maintain friendly relations with most of their non-Presbyterian neighbors. Although they clashed with the Quakers over political issues after 1755, Pennsylvania Scots-Irish Presbyterians, for the most part, lived in peaceful harmony with the Anglicans, German Reformeds, and Lutherans who settled around them. As one Scottish immigrant to the colony wrote in 1773, "so far as I know, the several sects live in good friendship with one another." When the Anglican Reverend Thomas Barton complained that dissenters were impeding his ministry in

the backcountry, he also pointed out that "the old
Presbyterian ministers and congregations in both counties
[Lancaster and Cumberland] have highly resented the
treatment I have met with, and have drawn up a handsome
paper in my favor."19

In fact, Scots-Irish Presbyterians commonly cooperated
with Anglicans, German Reformeds, and Lutherans in the
Pennsylvania backcountry. One Anglican claimed, in 1774,
that "Presbyterians love Churchmen (i.e., Anglicans) as
well as they love Presbyterians." When Benjamin Rush
visited York in 1784, he discovered that the town's
Anglicans and Presbyterians "live in great harmony with
each other and alternately hear each other's ministers
preach." In Waynesboro, Cumberland County, the
Presbyterian, German Reformed, and Lutheran congregations
shared a log cabin for their meeting house in the early
1770s. The Presbyterians and Lutherans in Reamstown,
Lancaster County, similarly used the same building for a
church and "free schoolhouse."20

19Wylie, "Alexander Thomson," pp. 324-25; and Thomas
Barton to Richard Peters, July 9, 1758, Society Collection,
Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).

20Edward Shippen to James Burd, April 11, 1774, in
Thomas Balch, ed., Letters and Papers Relating Chiefly to
the Provincial History of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia:
Crissy and Markley, 1855), p. 236; L. H. Butterfield, ed.,
"Dr. Benjamin Rush's Journal of a Trip to Carlisle in
1784," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 74
(October 1750): 454; Donehoo, Cumberland Valley, I: 399-
400; Klein, Lancaster County, II: 715; McLachlan and
Harrison, Princetonians, I: 118; II: 76; and Lily Nixon,
Because they shared a common commitment to Calvinist theology, relations between the Scots-Irish Presbyterians and the German and Dutch Reformed Churches in Pennsylvania were especially close. In 1757, the Presbyterian Synod proposed to open a classical school in Lancaster County where "some poor Dutch scattered in that neighborhood, may have their children taught gratis to read and write English." Several years later, the Synod even explored the possibility of an official union with both Reformed Churches. Although the plan was never adopted, the mere fact that it was considered demonstrates the harmony that existed between the denominations.21

Monetary contributions for the construction of Presbyterian meeting houses best illustrate the sense of cooperation and friendship that existed between Presbyterians and other denominations in the eighteenth-century Pennsylvania backcountry. When Carlisle Presbyterian Church in Cumberland County solicited donations for the construction of a new church building in 1759, members of virtually all of the religious groups in the area contributed. The names of German Lutherans and

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Reformeds such as Paul Isaac Vota, Frederick Shingle, and Michael Grats as well as English Anglicans and Quakers like James Moses, Jr., Godfrey Deal, and Thomas Mifflin appeared on the list of subscribers.²²

The Scots-Irish Presbyterians who migrated from southeastern Pennsylvania to western North Carolina after 1750 brought these ideals of religious liberty and toleration with them. A petition from Presbyterians in Tryon County to the governor in the 1770s explicitly stated their view of religious freedom. "We would by no means cast reflections upon our sister church," the petitioners wrote, "let them worship God according to their consciences without molestation from us. We ask on our part that we may worship God according to our consciences without molestation from them." Each denomination, they concluded, should pay its own ministers without benefit of tithes.²³

These immigrants initially found conditions in western North Carolina that closely resembled those of their former home. Although Anglicanism was the colony's established church, the frontier's unsettled nature and

²²"List of Subscribers for erecting a house of public worship at Carlisle, 1759," First Presbyterian Church of Carlisle Records, Dickinson College (DC), Box 2, pp. 27C-29C.

great distance from the colony's seat of government, combined with the lack of Anglicans in the backcountry, allowed Scots-Irish Presbyterians and other dissenters to circumvent the established church. Within this environment, the Scots-Irish duplicated the religious cooperation they had become accustomed to in Pennsylvania. Because of the shortage of Presbyterian ministers, many early Scots-Irish families in northwestern Rowan County attended worship services at the Moravian town of Bethabara. When the Presbyterian missionary Reverend Hugh McAden toured the region in 1755, he frequently preached to mixed crowds of "church people and...Presbyterians."^24

When the colony's royal government launched a campaign to enforce the establishment of the Anglican Church in the western counties during the 1760s, Scots-Irish Presbyterians sometimes used this pattern of interdenominational cooperation to strengthen their resistance to the established church. In the early 1770s, Tryon County Presbyterians joined the members of local German Reformed and Lutheran congregations to voice their opposition to the Anglican establishment in a petition to the governor. According to the embattled Anglican

missionary in Rowan County in 1771, Scots-Irish Presbyterians there "told the separate Baptists...that they are as legal congregations as the church of England, and have nothing to pay towards the support of the church."²⁵

Even while they fought desperately to prevent the placement of Anglican priests in their counties, Scots-Irish Presbyterians never lost sight of this ideal of religious liberty. During their efforts to remove the Anglican Reverend Theodorus Swain Drage in 1770 and 1771, Rowan County Presbyterians suggested a compromise that would have given both churches religious freedom. Scots-Irish leaders informed Drage that they would not oppose him if he agreed to live on voluntary subscriptions from local residents instead of the mandatory church tithes. "Having no objection as to me personally," Drage reported, "the Dissenters [said they] would subscribe to me liberally also."²⁶

Backcountry Scots-Irishmen made their commitment to religious toleration abundantly clear when they received the opportunity to help create North Carolina's new state

²⁵"Petition of Tryon County," North Carolina Papers; and Rev. Drage to SPG, Feb. 28, 1771, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VIII: 505.

government during the early years of the Revolution. They demanded that the state's constitution guarantee religious liberty for all Protestants. Presbyterian-dominated Mecklenburg County instructed its delegates to the North Carolina Provincial Congress to ensure that the document secured the "full, free, and peaceable enjoyment" of religion "to all and every constituent member of the state as their unalienable right as freemen." The representatives, they ordered, should "oppose the establishment of any mode of worship to be supported to the opposition of the rights of conscience."²⁷

Despite the rise of internal divisions and cooperation with other denominations, Scots-Irish Presbyterians in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina, like their ancestors in Ulster, struggled to remain a unified and separate religious entity. They clung tenaciously to the unique Presbyterian principles and practices that they had brought from Ireland. In fact, Scots-Irish men and women proved remarkably adept at preserving the same institutions, rituals, and doctrines that their parents and grandparents had forged in Ulster. Throughout the colonial period, this common Presbyterian heritage helped to pull

frontier Scots-Irishmen together and solidified their unique place among colonial American religious groups.

As they formed churches throughout the backcountry, the Scots-Irish re-created the powers and responsibilities of the church session. Like its counterpart in Ireland, the session, elected annually by the congregation, consisted of the most respected and pious men in the neighborhood. These elders, with the minister's guidance, maintained social and religious conformity and cohesion within the Scots-Irish community by strictly enforcing a rigid code of moral discipline among the parishioners. Through these representatives, the local community was able to establish its own rules of proper behavior, investigate alleged infractions, and punish deviants.28

In fact, the entire community commonly played an active role in carrying out the session's duties. Local citizens often reported their neighbors' sins to the elders and appeared as witnesses at their trials. In 1743, Andrew Culbertson complained to the elders of Middle Spring Presbyterian Church in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, that Samuel Leard had been drunk at a recent wedding.

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28Session Book, 1743-1749, Middle Springs Presbyterian Church Records, 1742-1749, HSP; Elizabeth Steele to Ephraim Steele, Jan. 22, 1778, Ephraim Steele Papers, Southern Historical Collection (SHC); Fields, John Cuthbertson, pp. 72, 96, 101, 105, 107, 121-22, 135-39, 143, 159, 168, 186, 190-94, 200-1, 211, 218-19; Rumple, Presbyterianism in Carolina, pp. 272-76; and Powell, North Carolina Biography, V: 446.
During the session's trial, Nathaniel Wilson and John Cummins testified that Leard was sick, not inebriated. When the elders found Leard innocent, Culbertson demanded a second hearing and presented three new witnesses who supported his accusation.\textsuperscript{29}

Even the punishments meted out by sessions reinforced a sense of togetherness among the congregants. An eighteenth-century backcountry Presbyterian's repentance of his sins was not just a matter between God and himself. It also involved the entire community. Minor sins required simply a private censure by the elders. More serious infractions like fornication and Sabbath-breaking, however, resulted in temporary suspensions from church membership until the sinner made a public admission of guilt and request for forgiveness before the congregation during Sunday worship service. Truly heinous crimes and repeat offenders received the ultimate penalty of indefinite suspension from church membership -- virtual ostracism from the community.\textsuperscript{30}

The session also helped to preserve social and religious unity by mediating conflicts that arose among members of the congregation. In 1742, the newly created session at Middle Springs Church outlined its procedures for settling "personal...debates." Disputants must, it

\textsuperscript{29}Session Book, Middle Springs Church Records, HSP.

\textsuperscript{30}Session Book, Middle Springs Church Records, HSP.
directed, employ "scriptural methods" to resolve an argument. The offended party should first meet privately with the offender. If this did not work, then they should enlist two or three neutral members of the community to meet with both parties. If this failed to reconcile the disputants, then the session would mediate the conflict. Following these guidelines, the elders appointed two local citizens to arbitrate a heated feud between Andrew Murphey and Robert McComb concerning "the lines between their plantations" in 1744.31

While they continued to transplant Ulster Scots Presbyterian institutions in their new homes, Scots-Irish settlers in the Pennsylvania and North Carolina backcountry also reproduced the worship practices and rituals they had known in Ireland. Devout Presbyterians in both regions commonly held daily devotions for their families, strictly preserved the holiness of the Sabbath, and participated in the sacrament of holy communion. By emphasizing the individual's place within the larger Presbyterian community, each of these rituals, especially the Lord's Supper, helped to strengthen Scots-Irish ethnic cohesion.

Presbyterian ministers frequently encouraged the fathers in their congregations to bring their families together for regular worship services in their homes.

31Session Book, Middle Springs Church Records, HSP.
These daily devotions not only reinvigorated family members' spirituality, but also reinforced the family's sense of togetherness. In a sermon delivered in 1773, Reverend John King reminded his listeners at West Conococheague Presbyterian Church in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, of the "reasonableness of family worship." Reverend Henry Pattillo, of Hawfields, Eno, and Little River Presbyterian Churches in Orange County, North Carolina, suggested that family devotions should consist of fifteen to twenty minutes of prayer, scripture reading, and hymn or psalm singing each day.32

Preserving the holiness of the Sabbath was an especially crucial ritual for Scots-Irish Presbyterians. In the words of Reverend Pattillo, Presbyterian principles "strictly forbid all secular labor, vain conversation, play, dissipation, and idle visits" on the Lord's Day. Good Christians, he instructed, should attend public worship and read "the scriptures, sermons, and other good books." Weekly Sunday services gave members the chance to come together and renew their place in the local Presbyterian community. Even congregations that lacked ministers strictly observed this practice. When his church in Rowan County, North Carolina, was without a pastor in the 1760s, John Barr spent his Sabbaths "in communion and

fellowship with God, without interruption from vain, wandering, and wicked thoughts."  

The most important ritual for Scots-Irish Presbyterians in the Pennsylvania and North Carolina backcountry was the sacrament of Holy Communion. Continuing a tradition begun by their ancestors in Ulster and Scotland a century earlier, hundreds, sometimes even thousands, of Presbyterians from several neighboring congregations gathered at one location twice a year to celebrate communion. Lasting five to seven days, these "holy fairs" marked the highlight of many Scots-Irish Presbyterians' religious lives. By bringing the entire Scots-Irish community together, communion enabled Presbyterians to revive not only their relations with God, but also their friendships and social ties with fellow countrymen.  

According to Presbyterian doctrine, the Lord's Supper represented the moment when the elect felt closest to God. An immensely solemn and austere occasion, communion became

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33Pattillo, Plain Planter's, pp. 26-27; Barr, Early Religious History, pp. 23, 45, 47; and Rev. James Lang, "Sermon on Daniel 5:27," Lang Sermons, PHS.

a time of spiritual regeneration and re-dedication to God. As Reverend Robert Smith reminded his congregants at Pequea Church in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, true believers "will behold his glory and beauty in the glass of ordinances." They would, he continued, "share of the sanctifying, comforting, and soul satisfying influences of his spirit for he will be there to dispense them." \(^{35}\)

Because communion was such a solemn occasion, Presbyterians spent a considerable amount of time preparing for the ceremony. Participants had to be in the proper frame of mind to experience the true beauty of God in the sacrament. Reverend Henry Pattillo explained that individuals had to approach the Lord's Table with a "deep sense of their lost conduct, by nature and practice -- with hungering and thirsting desires after righteousness -- with repentance, faith, and love to God and man -- And with a fixed resolution to devote themselves soul and body to God." One young Pennsylvanian recorded in his diary, "Lord's Day, arose in the morning...went to prayer, pray'd for the grace of God to enable me to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper,...before going to church I again implored the assistance of God that he would be present with me in a gracious manner." \(^{36}\)

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\(^{35}\)Rev. Robert Smith, "The Church Desiring Christ's Presence with His Ordinances," Robert Smith Sermon Notes, PHS.

\(^{36}\)Pattillo, Plain Planter's, p. 40; diary cited in
Communion, however, was more than simply a renewal of the elect's commitment to God. The partaking of the sacrament also reinforced the individual's sense of community with his fellow Christians. To ensure that only the truly regenerate participated in the ceremony, the elders held a special session on the Saturday before the feast. Every person who hoped to participate in the ceremony had to appear before the elders, confess their sins, demonstrate their piety and morality, and prove that they had lived peaceably with their neighbors during the preceding months. Those who passed this test received a small metal coin, which granted them admittance to the Lord's Table. This token symbolized not only the individual's worthiness to accept the elements, but also his membership in the community of saints.37

The solemn ceremony of the Lord's Supper on Sunday was the ultimate rite of community togetherness and provided a fitting culmination to the entire week long ritual. After a sermon and invitation from the minister, the elect gathered around a group of interlocking tables draped with white linen cloths. Elders moved from person to person collecting the tokens and making sure that no unregenerates

Schmidt, Holy Fairs, pp. 137-38. See also Barr, Early Religious History, pp. 26-33; and Smith, "Church Desiring Christ's Presence," Smith Sermon Notes, PHS.

37Schmidt, Holy Fairs, pp. 78-88; Westerkamp, Triumph of Laity, pp. 162-63; Fields, John Cuthbertson, pp. 76, 107, 121, 155; and Alexander, Hopewell Section, pp. 52-53.
corrupted the austere rite or violated the spiritual community. Once everyone was seated, the minister and elders distributed the sacred bread and wine, of which the elect partook as a group.\textsuperscript{38}

Scots-Irish Presbyterians on the Pennsylvania and North Carolina frontiers -- even though they did not always agree on its details -- continued to embrace the same Calvinist theology they had espoused in Ulster. For Scots-Irish men and women in both regions, theological issues played a pivotal role in their religious lives. In their calls for ministerial candidates, Presbyterian congregations declared their belief in the "whole doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Church of Scotland, as...exhibited in...the Westminster Confession of Faith, catechisms, and propositions concerning church government and ordination of members."\textsuperscript{39}

One group of Scots-Irish colonists even adhered to the traditions and beliefs of the radical Covenanting Presbyterians who had led the seventeenth-century Scottish rebellion against English rule. As direct descendants of the original Scottish church, these Covenanters claimed that the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643 still bound

\textsuperscript{38} Schmidt, Holy Fairs, pp. 88-93; Fields, John Cuthbertson, pp. 107, 121, 155; and Alexander, Hopewell Section, pp. 52-53.

Scots-Irish Presbyterians in eighteenth-century America. In fact, one Covenanter congregation in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, held an elaborate ceremony on November 11, 1743 to commemorate the Covenant's anniversary and re-dedicate themselves to its ideals.40

Covenanters continued their ancestors' belief in the strict separation and equality of the church and state. God was the only "Head and lawgiver of the Church,...not civil magistrates or King." Any church that accepted the civil power over that of the church was not the "true church" of God. Based on this doctrine, Covenanters rejected both the Anglican Church and the English government. When Anglicanism had received its position as the established church of England, they reasoned, it had also accepted the King, instead of God, as its leader.41

Although Covenanters comprised only a small minority of backcountry Presbyterians, virtually all Scots-Irish settlers took their church's doctrine very seriously -- as the intensity of the Old Light/New Light schism in the backcountry illustrates. Lay men and women demonstrated a remarkably high level of knowledge about Presbyterian

40Alexander Craighead, A Renewal of the Covenants, National and Solemn League; a Confession of Sins, and Engagement to Duties, and a Testimony as They Were Carried Out at Middle Octorara in Pennsylvania, Nov. 11, 1743 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1743), pp. xix-xxx; and Pequea United Presbyterian Church Paper, PHS.

41Craighead, Renewal of the Covenants, pp. xxxiv-xxxix; and Craighead, Reasons, pp. viii, 44.
dogma. Regular periods of instruction in church theology and practices led by the minister ensured that congregants understood their church's fundamental principles. Reverend John Steel, of Silver Springs Church in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, divided his congregation into a series of districts. Several times a year, he met with the residents of each district and catechized the head of every family. Reverend Samuel McCorkle instituted a similar system of catechization at Thyatira Church in Rowan County, North Carolina.42

One Presbyterian minister in the North Carolina backcountry even wrote a catechism for families in his congregations. In 1787, Henry Pattillo published The Plain Planter's Family Assistant, which contained an extensive catechism instructing children in the fundamentals of Presbyterian theology. By spending "half an hour daily" studying the nearly one hundred questions and answers in the catechism, he wrote, a youth could become well versed in his church's doctrine within a month.43

Presbyterian ecclesiastical institutions went to great lengths to ensure that the ministers and laymen under their care were properly educated in church doctrine. The Synod insisted that ministers possess a thorough knowledge of not

42Nevin, Churches of the Valley, pp. 72-73; Rumple, Presbyterianism in Carolina, p. 56; McCall, "Serving God," pp. 94-95; and Barr, Early Religious History, p. 24.

43Pattillo, Plain Planter's, pp. iv, 29-44.
only the scriptures and theology, but also classical languages and moral philosophy. During his year long examination period before the Presbytery of Hanover in North Carolina, Henry Pattillo preached several sermons on various Biblical texts and gave recitations in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. Moreover, the Synod required ministers to "discharge [their] duty towards young people and children of [their] congregations, in a way of catechizing and familiar instruction." When Orange Presbytery in western North Carolina instructed its ministers to supply the area's vacant congregations, it advised them to "catechize the people" as well as preach.4

Ulster immigrants' continued commitment to Presbyterianism not only drew the Scots-Irish together, but it also helped to distinguish them from other denominations in colonial America. Few other denominations founded church institutions that resembled those of the Scots-Irish Presbyterians. Although the Quakers, Baptists, German Reformeds, and Lutherans established regional associations of ministers and congregations, none was as powerful as the Presbyterian presbyteries and synod. Most other churches lacked sufficient ministers or laymen to create such a highly centralized ecclesiastical hierarchy. Scots-Irish church sessions set them apart from others as well. Only

"Rachal, "Minutes of Hanover," pp. 67-68; Stone, Orange Presbytery, p. 236; Klett, Records of Presbyterian Church, p. 110-11; and Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, p. 251.
the Quakers created a similar institution for enforcing morality and harmony among local congregations.45

Scots-Irish Presbyterians' practice of celebrating Holy Communion was also unique among backcountry religious groups. Although all denominations, of course, celebrated communion in their own way, Presbyterian ceremonies lasted much longer and were more intense. By combining their traditional Scottish and Ulster "holy fairs" with evangelical revivals on the eighteenth-century American frontier, Scots-Irish Presbyterians created an entirely new method of observing the sacrament. They transformed the sacrament from a simple Sunday service into a weeklong commemoration of Christians' love for and relationship with God and one another.46

Finally, Presbyterians' insistence on a highly educated ministry, as well as their belief in Calvinist theology distinguished them from other backcountry denominations. While many churches had formal ministers like the Presbyterians, uneducated and untrained lay ministers led the region's Quaker and Baptist congregations. At the same time, only the German Reformed


46Schmidt, Holy Fairs; and Westerkamp, Triumph of Laity.
Church in the backcountry shared Presbyterians' commitment to specific Calvinist principles. All the other denominations held beliefs and doctrines that differed significantly from those of Presbyterians.  

Scots-Irish settlers' re-creation of Presbyterian institutions, rituals, and doctrines provided the strongest foundation for the preservation of their unique ethnic identity in eighteenth-century western Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Presbyterian religion was arguably the most visible distinct characteristic of the backcountry Scots-Irish. Ulster immigrants observed strict ethnic exclusivity in their religious practices, just as they did in their economic and social activities. The church served as the center of Scots-Irish settlements while their ministers became highly influential community leaders. This religious cohesion was even powerful enough to overwhelm the bitter Old Light/New Light divisions and to cause the Scots-Irish to occasionally clash with other backcountry religious groups.

Contemporaries in colonial America frequently identified the Scots-Irish as Presbyterians. Whenever English or German residents of Pennsylvania and North Carolina referred to Ulster immigrants in the backcountry as "Irish" or "Scotch-Irish," they invariably added

47Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, pp. 98-127, 166-80; and Bonomi, Under the Cope of Heaven, pp. 40-82.
"Presbyterian" to the description. While reporting Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, citizens' illegal destruction of trading goods bound for the Indians in the Ohio Valley in 1765, one irate Philadelphia Quaker merchant blamed the "Irish Presbyterians." North Carolina's royal governor described the settlers on his lands in Mecklenburg County in 1755 as "what we call Scotch-Irish Presbyterians."  

The Scots-Irish themselves clearly identified with the Presbyterian Church. There is very little evidence of Scots-Irishmen converting to other religions. The few who did were members of the small but growing Scots-Irish elite, such as James Burd in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, who joined their fellow backcountry gentry in the Anglican Church. In fact, many members of other denominations blended into backcountry Presbyterian congregations. A Church of England missionary complained in 1746 that many Lancaster County Anglicans were "very much fallen off from their principles" because the area was "so overrun with Presbyterians." Waightstill Avery, who had been raised as a Congregationalist in Massachusetts, became a member of the local Presbyterian church after he

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moved to Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, in the late 1760s.⁴⁹

Scots-Irish settlers clearly preferred the company of other Presbyterians instead of members of other denominations. When a battalion of Scots-Irish men from the Pennsylvania backcountry embarked on a campaign against the French and Indians in 1758, they requested permission to select "a chaplain of the same principal and denomination with themselves." During the Revolution, Lieutenant James McMichael of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, reported that the inhabitants near his regiment's camp in New Jersey were "all professors of the Presbyterian religion, which renders them to me very agreeable."⁵⁰

In many Scots-Irish neighborhoods, the Presbyterian church and the community were synonymous. The majority of the area's residents usually belonged to the Presbyterian church. Prominent local social and political leaders


frequently held offices within the congregation. The elders at Upper West Conococheague Presbyterian Church in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, in 1767 included local justices of the peace like William Maxwell and William Smith. In Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, such important citizens as John McKnitt Alexander, Waightstill Avery, and Thomas Polk served as elders of their congregations.\(^{51}\)

In fact, the Presbyterian Church was commonly the center of the Scots-Irish community. The local meeting house often served as the focal point and gathering place for the entire neighborhood. Any important meeting or discussion that involved the entire settlement was held in the church. Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, citizens gathered in the Carlisle Presbyterian Church to draft resolves proclaiming their opposition to the British government's sanctions against Boston in 1774. When the Penn family wanted to inform the Scots-Irish settlers in Donegal township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, about

\(^{51}\)For congregations as communities, see the following lists of members of specific congregations: "Members of Donegal Presbyterian Church, 1776," in William H. Egle, ed., Notes and Queries: Historical, Biographical, and Genealogical Relating Chiefly in Interior Pennsylvania, Fourth Series (Harrisburg: Harrisburg Publishing Co., 1893): I: 182-229; List of Pewholders, 1768-1800, Rocky Spring Presbyterian Church Records, HSP; and the description of Fourth Creek Presbyterian Church in Rowan County, North Carolina in Rumple, Rowan County, p. 262. For prominent leaders as elders, see Nevin, Churches of the Valley, p. 40; and McCall, "Serving God," pp. 71-72.
their terms for the payment of overdue land fees and quit rents in 1738, they had the local Presbyterian minister read a letter during Sunday service and posted proclamations on the door of the meeting house.52

The influence and authority that Presbyterian ministers held within the local community best reflects the importance of Presbyterianism to the Scots-Irish. Clergymen fulfilled a variety of crucial roles within Scots-Irish settlements. As the most educated person in many frontier neighborhoods, they often became schoolmasters and physicians. Most conducted grammar schools or academies in their homes for the education of their parishioners' children. At least eleven ministers in the Pennsylvania backcountry and another five in western North Carolina founded schools between 1730 and 1775. Reverend Joseph Alexander, of Sugar Creek Church in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, for example, prepared over fifty young men for the ministry, law, or medicine at his school between 1767 and 1773. A few pastors, such as David Caldwell, of Alamance and Buffalo Churches in

52"Minutes of Meeting on the Boston Port Bill, 1774," in Two Hundred Years in Cumberland County (Carlisle: Hamilton Library and Historical Association of Cumberland County, 1951), pp. 49-50; Samuel Blunston to Richard Peters, March 25, 1738, Lancaster County Papers, 1728-1816, HSP, I: 22; Blunston to Thomas Penn, January 3, 1736, Lancaster County Papers, HSP, I: 12; and John Harris to James Burd, February 3, 1768, Harris-Fisher Family Papers, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC).
Guilford County, North Carolina, even studied medical books in their spare time and acted as the neighborhood doctor.⁵³

Ministers often became more than simply spiritual leaders for their parishioners. They usually wielded tremendous social and political power among their neighbors as well. One resident of Lancaster County informed Pennsylvania's governor that in Paxton and Donegal townships, the local Presbyterian minister's "word is the same as that of the Justices, as they act in conjunction in such affairs." When the prominent citizens of neighboring Cumberland County held a "General Council" to discuss defensive measures against the French and Indians in 1755, they elected Reverend John Blair, pastor of the local Presbyterian churches, as president. During the Regulator Movement in the North Carolina backcountry in 1768, a public letter from four local Presbyterian ministers pledging their loyalty to the governor convinced most Presbyterians in the region not to join the rebellion.⁵⁴


Presbyterian ministers often acted as mediators between their communities and provincial authorities. Reverend James Anderson, for example, represented his congregants in Donegal township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in their dispute with the proprietors concerning the payment of overdue land fees and quit tents in the 1730s. Virtually all communication between the two groups traveled through Anderson. He wrote the petition and cover letter from the settlers to the Penn's agents requesting lenient terms in 1735. When the proprietors sent the outline of their repayment plan to the Donegal residents, Reverend Anderson read and explained the letter at Sunday worship service.\(^5\)


\(^5\)Petition of Inhabitants of Donegal to Thomas Penn, June 26, 1733, and Rev. James Anderson to William Allen, June 15, 1733, Penn-Physick Papers, Penn Papers, HSP, 6: 27-29; Samuel Blunston to Thomas Penn, Jan. 3, 1736, Lancaster County Papers, HSP, I: 22; James Steel to James Anderson, March 6, 1735, James Steel Letter, PHS; and James Logan to James Anderson, March 5, 1730 and Oct. 23, 1730, James Logan Letterbooks, Logan Family of Stenton Papers, HSP, 4: 228, 321.
Recognizing the ministers' influence, provincial authorities often appointed them to local political offices and used them to mold political opinion within Scots-Irish settlements. During the French and Indian War, Pennsylvania's governor chose Reverend John Elder, of Paxton Church in Lancaster County, to lead the local militia company. When a party of local Scots-Irish men massacred a group of friendly Indians in 1764, the Governor instructed Elder to "use your best endeavours to discourage and suppress all [future] insurrections." In the early months of the Revolution, the Continental Congress dispatched four Presbyterian ministers to western North Carolina to convince the Scots-Irish settlers there to join the American cause.56

When hostilities broke out between the colonies and Britain in 1775, Presbyterian ministers commonly led their congregations into the fray. Many preached emotional sermons encouraging their listeners to fight the British. Others like John Craighead and John Woodhull, of Pennsylvania, and John DeBow and James Hall, of North

Carolina, joined the colonial armies as chaplains. In 1775, Reverend Robert Cooper of Middle Springs Presbyterian Church in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, exhorted his male parishioners to join the continental army in a sermon entitled "Courage in a Good Cause." Similarly, Reverend David Caldwell advised his congregants at Alamance Church in Guilford County, North Carolina, to take an active role in protecting their freedom from British usurpation in a sermon entitled "The Character and Doom of the Sluggard."  

Scots-Irish colonists' common Presbyterian heritage was so strong that it even overwhelmed the bitter doctrinal dispute that erupted between Old Lights and New Lights in the 1730s and 1740s. After seventeen years of division, the rival synods re-united in 1758, affirming their shared commitment to Calvinist theology and presbyterian church government. Although the differences concerning salvation and revivals persisted, Old Lights and New Lights confirmed their joint membership in one Presbyterian Church. When ministers and laymen in the Pennsylvania backcountry still refused to sit in the same presbytery after 1758, the re-united Synod simply divided them into two different

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associations — one predominantly Old Light and the other New Light.\textsuperscript{58}

As Presbyterian ministers settled their differences, they strove diligently to reconcile the fractures within their congregations. Although some backcountry churches remained split apart for the remainder of the century, many others followed the Synods' example and re-united in the 1760s and 1770s. When Reverend William Foster took over Upper Octorara Church in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1768, he re-joined the congregation's Old and New Light factions. Reverend David Caldwell accomplished a similar feat when he assumed the pastorship of the divided congregations of Buffalo and Alamance in Rowan County, North Carolina, that same year.\textsuperscript{59}

One important result of this reunification process was the integration of New Light ideas into traditional Presbyterian rituals. After the reconciliation, many Scots-Irish Presbyterians displayed a mixture of New Light and Old Light beliefs. Many men and women, for instance, added the New Light emphasis on private study and self-examination to their traditional communion rituals. Personal reflection had always been a crucial part of the

\textsuperscript{58} Klett, Records of Presbyterian Church, pp. 292, 347-50, 356-60, 384-85, 461; and Nevin, Men of Mark, pp. 63, 74.

\textsuperscript{59} McLachlan and Harrison, Princetonians, I: 451; Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, pp. 25-26; and Stone, Orange Presbytery, p. 15.
elect's preparation for the Lord's Supper. After the Great Awakening, however, private meditation became almost as vital as the sacrament itself. One anxious young North Carolinian spent an entire week before the communion service in virtual seclusion, reading Scripture and religious books, praying earnestly, and examining the state of his soul.  

Scots-Irish settlers' insistence on retaining their common Presbyterian institutions, rituals, and doctrines sometimes even undermined the religious cooperation they had developed with other denominations. Although Presbyterians usually lived harmoniously with other religious groups in eighteenth-century western Pennsylvania and North Carolina, they reacted with hostility when another denomination's actions appeared to threaten their religious practices. Scots-Irish immigrants' intense hatred of any church establishment especially led them into conflicts with other religious groups in colonial America, particularly in North Carolina. 

With vivid memories of their ancestors' long struggle against persecution by the Church of Ireland, the Scots-Irish remained fearful of any alteration in Pennsylvania's policy of toleration. When some provincial leaders unsuccessfully proposed changing the colony from a

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60 Barr, Early Religious History, pp. 26–33; and Schmidt, Holy Fairs, pp. 137–38.
proprietary to a royal government in the 1760s, Presbyterians whipped up the opposition "by frightening" them with the "bugbears of bishops and tythes." Driven by these fears, the Scots-Irish occasionally clashed with the region's Anglican clergy. One Anglican missionary in Lancaster County complained in 1758 that he had encountered numerous "discouragements and opposition...in the discharge of my duty in this place." "Both the Church and I," he reported, "have been greatly insulted."61

In North Carolina, the royal government's aggressive enforcement of the establishment of the Anglican Church in the 1760s turned Scots-Irish fears into reality and shattered the religious tranquility that had previously existed on the colony's frontier. Following instructions from the Crown and royal governor, the General Assembly passed an act requiring local Anglican vestries to collect tithes for the support of Anglican priests and placing stiff penalties on dissenters who tried to obstruct the vestries' work in 1764. Two years later, the Assembly enacted additional legislation expressly forbidding Presbyterian ministers and magistrates from performing marriages and other ceremonies.62

61Benjamin Franklin to Richard Jackson, March 31, 1764, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XI: 150; Thomas Barton to Richard Peters, July 9, 1758, Society Collection, HSP; and John Armstrong to unknown, July 8, 1758, Large Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Dreer Collection, HSP.

62"Act on Vestries, 1764," in Saunders and Clark,
Determined to defend their unique religious practices, the colony's Scots-Irish launched a campaign to counteract this new policy of persecution. Scots-Irish residents from virtually every western county petitioned the governor for the restoration of their religious freedom. In 1769, Presbyterians from Orange and Rowan County, for instance, asked Governor William Tryon to repeal the act "prohibiting dissenting ministers from marrying." The following year, Tryon County Scots-Irishmen protested the acts establishing Anglican vestries and empowering them to collect tithes. While their constituents flooded the governor with petitions, backcountry Scots-Irish representatives, such as Thomas Polk of Mecklenburg County, unsuccessfully introduced legislation in the General Assembly to rescind the discriminatory acts.\(^63\)

Scots-Irish Presbyterians even resorted to threats of extralegal action. Taking advantage of the on-going Regulator revolt against corrupt local officials, they expanded the rebels' demands to include disestablishment. Many Scots-Irish requests for an end to the persecution contained thinly veiled threats. Acutely aware that

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Governor Tryon desperately needed all the support he could muster among backcountry inhabitants in his effort to suppress the Regulators. Presbyterians offered to exchange their loyalty for redress of their grievances. If the governor did not agree to concessions, however, they promised, as one Anglican minister reported, to "be worse Regulators than the others."  

The government's campaign to enforce the established church severely strained Scots-Irish Presbyterians' previously amicable relations with the Anglican laymen and ministers who lived and worked in the backcountry. As the colony's royal governor explained to Crown officials in 1774, "Distinctions and animosities have immemorially prevailed in this country between the people of the established church and Presbyterians on the score of the difference of their unessential modes of Church Government, and the same spirit has entered into or been transferred to most other concerns."  

Backcountry Presbyterians went to great lengths to evade the establishment of Anglicanism in their counties. The Vestry Act required landholders in each county to elect

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members of the local vestry annually to collect the tax that supported the parish minister and church. In virtually every backcountry county, the numerically superior Scots-Irish controlled the vestry by electing members of their own congregations to the vestry. These candidates, in turn, declined the office. With the duly elected vestrymen refusing to serve, the Anglican Church's governing body essentially ceased to exist, tithes went uncollected, and priests failed to receive their salaries throughout the region.

In Mecklenburg County, Scots-Irish Presbyterians' grip on the vestry was so tight that no Anglican missionary even dared to set foot in the county. While explaining why he had not settled in Mecklenburg as intended, the Anglican Reverend James Reed reported that the county's residents evaded the Vestry Act by electing the "most rigid dissenters for Vestrymen who would not qualify." According to another missionary, "the inhabitants...are entire dissenters of the most rigid kind...[who] were in general greatly averse to the Church of England -- and...were determined to prevent its taking place there, by opposing the settlement of any Ministers...amongst them."66

Hoping to deter the placement of an Anglican minister in their parish, Presbyterians in newly created Guilford

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County followed similar measures in the early 1770s. They elected their own representatives, who, of course, refused to take office, to the vestry. By 1773, the royal government had become so tired of the dissenters' actions in the county that they dissolved the previously-elected, Presbyterian-controlled vestry and enacted legislation stipulating that only Anglicans could serve on the parish vestry.67

The most violent conflict between Scots-Irish Presbyterians and Anglicans occurred in Rowan County. When Governor Tryon attempted to assist the county's fledgling Anglican congregation by appointing Reverend Theodorus Swain Drage to the parish in 1770, the local Presbyterians employed all their resources to impede his efforts to organize the local Anglicans. Like their colleagues in Mecklenburg and Guilford, Rowan's Scots-Irish population had dominated the parish vestry for years. At the first election after Drage's arrival, they again elected their own elders to the vestry, who naturally refused to accept the positions. When the Anglicans who had been nominated, but defeated in the election, briefly formed their own unofficial vestry, the Scots-Irish leaders, after a heated

exchange between the two parties, forced the body to disband.\textsuperscript{68}

For the next four years, Scots-Irish Presbyterians in Rowan County continued to prevent Reverend Drage from electing an Anglican-controlled vestry and organizing the local Anglican congregation. Each year, Presbyterians dominated the vestry, refused to collect tithes, and left the embattled priest without a salary. Frustrated, exhausted, and virtually impoverished by the constant struggle, Drage finally abandoned Rowan County and its fledgling Anglican church in 1774.\textsuperscript{69}

Surprisingly, the royal government's policy of religious discrimination after 1760 dramatically altered Scots-Irish Presbyterians' relations with other backcountry denominations as well. Although the persecution encouraged some dissenters to join forces in their resistance to the established church, it also created an atmosphere that fostered conflict and jealousy among the various churches in the region. One denomination's perception that another had received more privileges than the others inevitably resulted in tension and animosity between them. When the

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\textsuperscript{68}Rev. Drage to SPG, Feb. 28, 1771, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VIII: 503-5; Drage to Gov. Tryon, May 29, 1770, in ibid., VIII: 202-9; Drage to Gov. Tryon, March 13, 1770, in ibid., VIII: 179-80; and Drage to Benjamin Franklin, March 2, 1771, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XVIII: 41.
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\textsuperscript{69}Rumple, Presbyterianism in Carolina, p. 82.
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Assembly temporarily allowed Presbyterians to perform marriages and approved the founding of a Presbyterian-controlled seminary in Mecklenburg County at the height of the Regulation in 1770 and 1771, the Baptists and Quakers objected loudly.  

Backcountry Presbyterians often displayed such religious envy themselves. The Scots-Irish political elite in Mecklenburg County, for example, tried to discredit a German rival by circulating false rumors among their Presbyterian constituents that he had attempted to have the local German Lutheran pastor appointed the county's established minister. In 1768, three local residents testified that Colonel Moses Alexander and Captain Thomas Polk had publicly claimed that Martin Pfifer had introduced a bill into the assembly to "get a minister to preach to his people and have his pay lifted by a county tax annually."

When the government permitted the Moravians in northern Rowan County to bypass the Anglican establishment by granting them their own separate church parish in 1770,

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Scots-Irish Presbyterians and other dissenters in the area became irate. Jealous of the Moravians' apparent special privileges, neighboring dissenters used the Regulator Movement to threaten the Moravians. In 1772, one Moravian leader reported to his superiors in Germany that "many of our neighbors are bitter against us."

At the outbreak of the Revolution, the Presbyterian Church continued to provide a strong cultural bond among Scots-Irish immigrants in the Pennsylvania and North Carolina backcountry. Communalism and unity clearly outweighed individualism and faction within the church. These unique religious traits served to reinforce the sense of solidarity Scots-Irish immigrants' already felt based on their common Ulster origins. This shared commitment to Presbyterianism both set them apart from others and brought all backcountry Scots-Irish settlers together. Throughout the colonial period, Presbyterianism provided the foundation for the distinctive Scots-Irish culture and community that emerged on the Pennsylvania and Carolina frontiers.

At the center of this Presbyterian unity lay Scots-Irish settlers' efforts to transplant their traditional Presbyterian principles and practices in their new American homes. Scots-Irish Presbyterians in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina successfully re-created the

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72 Fries, Records of Moravians, II: 678, 755.
ecclesiastical organization, worship customs, and theological tenets that their ancestors had struggled for decades to establish in northern Ireland. These efforts played a key role in uniting Scots-Irish Presbyterians throughout the backcountry and distinguishing them from other denominations in colonial America.

Despite the continuing strength of this common Presbyterian heritage, the tremendous ethno-religious pluralism of the American frontier threatened to undermine Scots-Irish religious unity and distinctiveness. Ministers' attempts to ignite a revival among their parishioners in order to keep pace with other backcountry churches in the 1730s and 1740s unleashed a heated doctrinal debate that temporarily split Scots-Irish Presbyterians into two conflicting factions. William Penn's policy of toleration, meanwhile, encouraged the Scots-Irish in both colonies to cooperate with as many of their religious neighbors as possible.
On March 6, 1765, a party of Cumberland County men -- dubbed the "Black Boys" because of their blackened faces -- rushed out of the Pennsylvania wilderness and ambushed a pack train of trading goods bound for the Indians in the Ohio Valley. Two months later, the same men confiscated the horses of another train. Believing that the cargoes contained knives and other weapons, which the Indians could use to kill more frontier settlers, the rioters employed republican rhetoric to justify their illegal behavior. The Philadelphia merchants who owned the goods, they claimed, were undermining the public good by selling weapons to tribes who had recently been the colony's enemies.

Immediately after each incident, the merchants and drivers who were in charge of the pack trains enlisted the aid of the British garrison at nearby Fort Loudoun to capture the vigilantes. During the May attack, detachments of the 42nd Regiment of Highlanders exchanged musket fire with the "Black Boys," slightly wounding one and capturing
a number of others. Under pressure from local residents, the fort's commander, Lieutenant Charles Grant, released the captives after a few days, but confiscated their weapons to deter them from engaging in any future ambushes.

Incensed at what they saw as a violation of their constitutional right to property, a mob of local citizens marched on the fort, briefly surrounded it, and kidnapped Lieutenant Grant. Only Grant's promise to return the guns defused the situation. After a tense summer, during which Grant refused to honor his promise, the crowd of local inhabitants again laid siege to the fort in November. This time, they maintained a constant barrage of musket fire over the soldiers' heads for two days and nights, stopping only when Grant agreed to give the muskets to a neutral party in anticipation of returning them to the rightful owners.¹

The actions of the Cumberland County "Black Boys" during the Sideling Hill Affair perfectly illustrate the political culture that Scots-Irish immigrants created in eighteenth-century western Pennsylvania and North Carolina. As the Sideling Hill Affair so aptly demonstrates, Scots-Irish political values, like those of other colonial Americans, contained both republican principles and a deep commitment to individual liberty. Building on the political attitudes they had forged in Ulster, the Scots-Irish upheld the ideals of virtue and the public good while demonstrating a willingness to use extreme measures to preserve their natural rights.

Imbued with these values, the Scots-Irish continued to participate actively in backcountry politics between 1750 and 1775. Accustomed to political discrimination in Ireland, Ulster immigrants reveled in the political freedom afforded them in their new homeland. In both Pennsylvania and North Carolina, they appear to have taken a more active role in county government than other backcountry settlers, particularly the Germans. An emerging elite of wealthy and influential Scots-Irishmen even gained significant power within the provincial governments of each colony. By the Revolution, the Scots-Irish dominated the political arena in many parts of the backcountry.

The political freedom they experienced in the new American environment, however, like the new economic, social, and religious conditions they encountered, threatened to undermine Scots-Irish immigrants' unique ethnic identity. Internal conflicts between various groups of Scots-Irishmen who emphasized different aspects of their political culture threatened to undermine Scots-Irish unity. More important, Scots-Irish settlers' growing realization of their political similarity with other backcountry residents began to erode their ethnic distinctiveness as well.

Despite these occasional internal conflicts, Scots-Irish colonists, as they did in every other aspect of their lives, remained remarkably united in their political affairs. Drawing on their common Ulster heritage and their shared political beliefs, the Scots-Irish formed a powerful, cohesive bloc in backcountry politics. While Scots-Irish voters consistently demonstrated their preference for public officials who shared their cultural origins, Scots-Irish politicians used their influence to represent their countrymen's interests. This political clannishness, in turn, frequently brought the Scots-Irish into political conflicts with other ethnic groups, especially those who controlled the provincial governments of each colony.
Eighteenth-century British North America contained a wide variety of political cultures. Each region, social class, and immigrant group had its own unique set of political beliefs. Despite this diversity, however, the vast majority of colonial Americans shared similar political values. Depending on their geographical location, social status, and national origins, all American colonists espoused some combination of classical republicanism and liberalism. Unaware of the contradictions between the two philosophies identified by modern scholars, most Americans pursued the ideals of virtue and the public good while jealously guarding their individual liberty and natural rights.²

Scots-Irish immigrants in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina fashioned their own version of this hybrid political culture between 1750 and 1775. On the one hand, they envisioned an ideal society where the people, united by altruism and a common concern for the public good, governed themselves through selfless representatives. On the other hand, the Scots-Irish became seemingly obsessed

with the political individual and the preservation of his natural rights and freedoms.

Virtually all Scots-Irish settlers embraced republican principles. They believed that a self-governing republic was the ideal polity. All men over twenty-one years old who owned land, they insisted, should play active roles in the government, either by attending local political meetings or electing representatives who ruled in the people's name. When Pennsylvania's revolutionary legislature limited the franchise to men who had sworn an oath of allegiance, York County citizens protested that it violated the right of every "freeman" to vote. This belief in self-governance was so strong that Scots-Irish militiamen during the French and Indian War refused to serve under officers whom they had not elected themselves.3

The governments that Scots-Irishmen helped to create in Pennsylvania and North Carolina during the early years of the Revolution best illustrate this devotion to self-governance. Residents of counties in both colonies selected Committees of Safety to conduct local government affairs between 1774 and 1776. On July 12, 1774, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania's citizens chose thirteen prominent men to serve as their Committee of Correspondence. When each colony drafted a new constitution in 1776, the backcountry Scots-Irish vigorously advocated the implementation of republican ideals. Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, for example, instructed its delegates to the state's constitutional convention to "establish a free Government under the authority of the People."

Many Scots-Irish men and women expressed a commitment to the republican ideal of a virtuous society. Because

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self-government was possible only if freemen subordinated their own interests to the public good, Scots-Irishmen throughout the region sought to display this selflessness in all of their public actions. Reverend David Caldwell, of Rowan County, North Carolina, for instance, denounced individuals whom he termed "sluggards" for failing to be "useful in the world" and not contributing to "the welfare of the community." When one group of Pennsylvanians protested the voting record of their assemblymen in 1778 in a public letter to their neighbors, they claimed to be acting "with a view to the public good, without any other motive." 5

The Scots-Irish especially expected their representatives to place the common good above their own concerns. In the words of one North Carolina poet, government officials had to "make private ends to public yield." Rev. Caldwell reminded his North Carolina congregation in 1775 that citizens placed power "in the


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hands of the supreme magistrate to be exercised for the
civil good." Another Presbyterian minister that same year
agreed that "civil rulers should universally and
interruptedly act for the common good." In their
instructions to their delegates to the North Carolina
Provincial Congress of 1776, Mecklenburg County citizens
directed that they should support every "motion and bill"
that "appear[s] to be for public utility."*

In fact, many backcountry Scots-Irish political
leaders claimed to be following the precepts of classical
virtue in their official duties. After helping to capture
an accused Indian killer in Cumberland County,
Pennsylvania, in 1768, local magistrate William Patterson
insisted that his actions had been "directed to the service
of the frontiers," not personal gain. Prominent men such
as Richard McAllister and William Irvine willingly
sacrificed their families' welfare to serve in public

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office. Although he complained that "my whole time is consumed to the prejudice of my family and [I] am not able to support it," McAllister, who held numerous official posts in York County, Pennsylvania during the Revolution, reassured state authorities that "I am and always have been willing and desirous to do everything in my power for the good of the country."  

While they aspired to the creation of a self-governing republic and virtuous society, the Scots-Irish also placed great emphasis on the importance of natural rights and liberties. Heavily influenced by the Scottish Enlightenment philosophies they learned in Scottish universities and Princeton College, Presbyterian clergy and other classically trained elites imparted the ideals of individual freedom to their countrymen. As Reverend Robert Cooper, of Middle Springs Church in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, instructed his listeners in 1775, "There are certain rights derived from the God of nature which no man can transfer to another." That same year, Reverend John King, of West Conococheague Church in the same county,

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reminded his congregants of the need for guarding their "natural and sacred rights."  

Inspired by their ministers and other political leaders, many Scots-Irish men and women espoused the ideals of natural and constitutional rights. While writing to friends back in Scotland, Pennsylvanian Alexander Thomson praised the numerous freedoms, such as owning a gun and hunting wild game, that he enjoyed in his new home. When Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, citizens protested the proposal of certain acts in the colonial assembly in 1764, they claimed that the bills would "deprive [them] of the rights of British subjects." Ten years later, the same freemen condemned the Boston Port Bill and other Parliamentary measures as "subversive of the Rights and Liberties...of all...the British Colonies."  

The inhabitants of Mecklenburg County best illustrate the prevalence of liberal attitudes among the Scots-Irish.

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in western North Carolina. In 1769, the county's Presbyterians, in a petition to the royal governor protesting the colony's Anglican establishment, declared themselves "entitled to have and enjoy all the rights and privileges of his Majesties subjects." These same citizens, seven years later, instructed their delegates to the Provincial Congress to ensure that the new state government rested on the following political maxim: "principal supreme power is passed by the people; the derived power by the servants which they employ."

In these resolutions, petitions, and sermons, Scots-Irish colonists, building on the political culture fashioned by Ulster Scots ministers and intellectuals in early eighteenth-century Belfast, outlined a radical ideology that placed individual liberty above loyalty to the government. As Reverend David Caldwell explained, government was "a compact between the rulers and the people," in which the people agreed to surrender some of their liberties to maintain social order. Despite sacrificing a few freedoms, the people still retained certain inalienable rights such as trial by jury, freedom of conscience, and the ownership of property.\(^\text{11}\)

\(^{10}\)Mecklenburg Petition for the Repeal of the Vestry and Marriage Acts, 1769, in "Journal of Avery," p. 257; and Mecklenburg County Instructions, 1776, in ibid., pp. 259-60.

\(^{11}\)Rev. Caldwell cited in Mark Francis Miller, "David Caldwell: The Forming of a Southern Educator," (Ph. D.
Any loss of these liberties resulted in slavery. Indeed, slavery became the watchword for Scots-Irishmen throughout the backcountry in the years before the Revolution. Virtually every Scots-Irish public pronouncement included dire warnings of governmental plots to steal the people's freedom and enslave them. Presbyterian sermons, like the one preached by Reverend David Caldwell in 1775, denounced those who failed to protect their rights as "sluggards." Scots-Irish petitions and resolutions declared their willingness to exert themselves "in defence of...liberty against the tyranny of a cruel and desolating enemy."\(^1\)\(^2\)

Recalling the arguments their Ulster ancestors had used against the Anglican establishment in Ireland, the Scots-Irish claimed that because their rights were derived from God and natural law, they took precedence over loyalty to the government. In the words of Reverend King, "all obedience is limited by the laws of God." When tyrants violated these laws by usurping the people's rights, the people were obligated to overthrow them -- preferably by

\(^1\) Caldwell, "Character and Doom," pp. 273-84; and Petition of Cumberland County militia, 1776, in Linn and Egle, Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, XIV: 487.

\(^2\) Caldwell, "Character and Doom," pp. 273-84; and Petition of Cumberland County militia, 1776, in Linn and Egle, Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, XIV: 487.
peaceful means, but with force if necessary. Reverend Robert Cooper advised his countrymen in 1775 that "civil rulers" who were "guilty, not only of cruelty, but of ingratitude and perfidy...deserve punishment, and it is sometimes necessary to remove them as intolerable nuisances."\(^{13}\)

While much of this radical ideology resembled that of other colonial Americans on the eve of the Revolution, the Scots-Irish seem to have been more willing to act on these ideals than others. A deep devotion to republican virtue and an obsessive love of individual liberty was common to European immigrants throughout the British colonies after 1750. Scots-Irish men and women, however, put these principles into practice earlier and more often than other colonists, particularly their German and English neighbors in the backcountry. Long before the Boston Tea Party, the Scots-Irish had resorted to violence to protest government usurpation of their rights.\(^{14}\)

Scots-Irish settlers played leading roles in virtually every extralegal protest movement that occurred in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina between 1750 and 1775. The Pennsylvanians who fired on the British troops at Sideling Hill and Fort Loudoun in 1765 consisted almost exclusively

\(^{13}\)King, "Sermon preached at West Conococheague," pp. 92-93; and Cooper, "Courage," p. 36.

\(^{14}\)See fn #2 above.
of Scots-Irishmen. Although this incident was not, as many nineteenth-century historians claimed, the opening volley of the American Revolution, it was one of the earliest examples of colonial Americans forcibly opposing perceived government oppression. The Cumberland County "Black Boys" openly resisted the soldiers' efforts to arrest them because they believed the use of military force and the confiscation of their muskets violated their constitutional rights.\(^{15}\)

A year earlier, several hundred Scots-Irish residents of neighboring Lancaster County -- along with a few English and Germans -- had organized an armed march on Philadelphia to denounce the government's apparent disregard for backcountry settlers' rights. Hoping to intimidate the provincial elite, they threatened to invade the city and capture public officials. Once outside the city, however, cooler heads prevailed and the mob peacefully drafted a "Remonstrance" outlining their grievances, which two representatives delivered to the governor and assembly. Declaring that "we have an indisputable title to the same privileges and immunities with his Majesties other subjects who reside in the interior counties," the marchers accused the government of violating their rights to equal representation and trial by jury.\(^{16}\)

\(^{15}\)See fn #1 above.

\(^{16}\)MacKinney and Hoban, *Votes and Proceedings*, VII:
Scots-Irish immigrants in western North Carolina engaged in extralegal demonstrations as much as their countrymen in Pennsylvania. Although members of all of the region's national groups participated in the riots, Scots-Irish inhabitants played a significant role in the Regulator Movement in Orange, Anson, and Rowan Counties between 1768 and 1771. Protesting the "tyranny and oppression" of corrupt county officials, they forcibly disrupted county court sessions and assaulted magistrates and other local officers.\footnote{Quote from Petition of Citizens of Rowan and Orange Counties, Oct. 4, 1768, in Powell, Regulators, p. 189. See the numerous other petitions, letters, and depositions concerning the Scots-Irish role in the Regulation in ibid., pp. 277-80, 356-60, 74-75, 362-63; and William L. Saunders and Walter Clark, eds., Colonial Records of North Carolina, 26 vols. (Various places: various publishers, 1886-1905), VI: 707-16, 731-37, 758, 773-82, 806-17, 842-57, 864, 874; VIII: 49, 64-84, 178, 245-79531-36, 698-99.}

Even the Scots-Irish who did not openly join the rebellion used the turmoil to reclaim other rights they believed the royal government had taken from them. During the height of the Regulation, Scots-Irish Presbyterians throughout the backcountry flooded the governor and colonial assembly with petitions declaring themselves "highly injured and agrieved by" the recent acts establishing the Anglican Church in the colony. Demanding the restoration of their constitutional "rights [and]
privileges," they subtly threatened to join the revolt if their grievances were not addressed. After specifically pointing out that there were "about one thousand freemen of us...able to bear arms," Mecklenburg's citizens concluded their request by declaring that "we shall be ever more ready to support that government under which we find most liberty."18

Imbued with these values of republicanism and individual liberty, the Scots-Irish continued to play an active role in the politics of western Pennsylvania and North Carolina between 1750 and 1775. In fact, Scots-Irish colonists probably participated in local government more than their backcountry neighbors, especially the Germans. Scots-Irishmen, particularly the emerging class of affluent gentlemen, held a considerable number of political offices while gaining increasing influence within the provincial government during and after the French and Indian War. By the Revolution, the Scots-Irish dominated politics in many backcountry communities.

Like the initial Ulster immigrants in southeastern Pennsylvania in the 1720s and 1730s, Scots-Irish settlers throughout the region continued to express a strong desire to participate in local politics. The Scots-Irish residents of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, for example,

split into bitter factions over the location of the county courthouse in 1750 with each group wanting the local seat of government closest to their own neighborhood. As western North Carolina's population grew in the late 1740s and 1750s, Scots-Irish inhabitants, complaining of the "great hardships they undergo in travelling great distances to the court house," sent dozens of petitions to the colonial assembly requesting the creation of new counties.  

Taking advantage of the political freedom they had been denied in Ireland, the Scots-Irish took an active part in the political life of western Pennsylvania and North Carolina after 1750. Scots-Irish freemen consistently turned out in large numbers to vote in annual county elections. Even during the turmoil of the French and Indian War in 1756, the Scots-Irish citizens of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, according to one local leader, "who had abandoned their places and gone to York came all back at our election." In 1784, Benjamin Rush complained that

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Pennsylvania Scots-Irishmen spent more time "attending Constitutional meetings" than "in improving their farms."\(^{20}\)

The description of a fictional Mecklenburg County election in a satirical poem written by an anonymous local resident in 1777 illustrates the active political participation of the Scots-Irish in western North Carolina. Openly admitting that he copied his portrait of the campaign from the actual Mecklenburg election of 1777, the author humorously portrayed the entire community's raucous involvement in the campaign. On election day, he wrote:

"Mecklenburg's fantastic rabble
Renown'd to censure, scold, and squabble
At Charlotte met in giddy counsel
To lay the constitution's ground-sill
By choosing men most learn'd and wise."\(^{21}\)

In fact, the Scots-Irish were more politically active than other European immigrants in the backcountry. Scots-Irishmen held more government offices in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina counties than any other ethnic group. The significant proportion of Scots-Irish in the region's total population partially explains this trend. In Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, for example,


where the Scots-Irish comprised roughly 75 percent of the population in 1771, exactly 76 percent of the county officeholders -- including the coroner, tax collector, magistrates, and assemblymen -- had Scots-Irish surnames.\textsuperscript{22}

The Scots-Irish percentage of local government officials, however, was consistently high even in areas of the Pennsylvania frontier where they comprised a smaller portion of the total population. Although only 25-30 percent of Lancaster County's taxables in 1771 were Scots-Irish, almost half (48 percent -- 31 of 64 individuals) of the county's justices of the peace in 1752, 1761, 1764, and 1770 were Ulstermen. They constituted 42 percent (5 of 12 men) of the county's sheriffs and coroners between 1754 and 1775 as well. Similarly, in neighboring York County, the Scots-Irish comprised only 30-35 percent of the population, but 62 percent of the county's magistrates in 1764, 1771, and 1774.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{22}Based on a surname analysis of the lists of Cumberland County sheriffs, coroners, tax collectors, treasurers, justices of the peace, and assemblymen, 1750-1775, in Linn and Egle, \textit{Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series}, IX: 806-10.

A surname analysis of officeholders in Mecklenburg and Rowan Counties reveals a similar pattern in western North Carolina after 1750. Majorities of Scots-Irish in the total population led to Scots-Irish domination of political positions in some areas. In Mecklenburg, where roughly 70-75 percent of the population consisted of Scots-Irishmen, 67 percent of the county's assemblymen between 1764 and 1778 had Scots-Irish names. In other counties with smaller percentages of Scots-Irish, however, they still retained considerable influence over local government. Despite comprising only 42 percent of Rowan County's taxables in 1778, Scots-Irishmen held 63 percent of the county's magistracies from 1764 to 1768 and 50 percent of the constable positions between 1754 and 1768.24

Members of other ethnic groups frequently commented on this Scots-Irish domination of politics in western North Carolina. In March 1771, Rowan County's embattled Anglican priest, Reverend Theodorus Swain Drage, complained that the "Scots-Irish...had interest enough to get the County Town adjacent [to their settlement], but no way a proper place,

with respect to the dimensions of the county, and not recommended by its extraordinary scitation." "The Government of the County," he concluded, "was intrusted in them [the Scots-Irish] exclusive of all others."25

The Scots-Irish dominance of backcountry public affairs was especially pronounced in the military units raised on the Pennsylvania and North Carolina frontiers during the French and Indian War. Virtually every company organized in the regions contained a majority of Scots-Irishmen. Of the 234 recruits enlisted in western Pennsylvania between 1757 and 1759, 165 (71 percent) were Scots-Irish. In Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the Scots-Irish held 21 of the 27 (78 percent) officer's commissions in that county's nine militia companies in 1759. Similarly, over half (58 percent) of the officers in the seven Rowan County, North Carolina, companies in 1755 had Scots-Irish surnames.26

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The emergence of a Scots-Irish social and economic elite throughout the backcountry after 1750 played a key role in this Scots-Irish political dominance. As their wealth and social stature grew, these men gained significant political power as well. Many held numerous positions within the local county governments. Robert McPherson, for example, served as York County, Pennsylvania's auditor, commissioner, sheriff, assemblyman, and militia colonel throughout the 1760s. Similarly, Griffith Rutherford held the positions of militia captain, deputy surveyor, magistrate, sheriff, and assemblyman at various times in Rowan County, North Carolina, between 1760 and 1775.27

As they gained local power and influence, the Scots-Irish gentry also began to take a leading part in provincial politics in both Pennsylvania and North Carolina. In Pennsylvania, the crisis of the French and Indian War on the frontier provided ample opportunities for prominent local men to expand their political influence to the colonial level. As officers in the Pennsylvania militia, many Scots-Irishmen earned the trust and respect of the colony's governor and other provincial authorities.

John Armstrong, of Cumberland County, distinguished himself by leading a successful assault on the Delaware stronghold of Kittatinning in western Pennsylvania in 1758. Attaining the rank of colonel, Armstrong frequently provided advice to the governor concerning Indian and military affairs during the war.28

Provincial officials entrusted backcountry Scots-Irish leaders with important diplomatic and military matters throughout the war. In essence, the Scots-Irish elite became the colony's representatives on the front lines of the bitter conflict with the French and Indians. When British General Braddock ordered Pennsylvania authorities to build a road through the colony's frontier during his fateful campaign against Fort Duquense in 1755, the governor commissioned four Cumberland County Scots-Irishmen

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James Burd, John Armstrong, William Buchanan, and Adam Hoopes to oversee the road's construction.\textsuperscript{29}

Because they had extensive contact with Indians before the war, the Scots-Irish frequently conducted Pennsylvania's negotiations with both friendly and hostile tribes during the war. They represented the colony in numerous treaty conferences at Lancaster, Carlisle, and other backcountry locations between 1754 and 1763. John Armstrong, his brother William, and Hugh Mercer met with Cherokee warriors, who had marched from North Carolina to assist the Pennsylvanians in their fight against the Delawares, at Fort Frederick, Maryland, in 1757. As commander of Fort Pitt in western Pennsylvania from 1758 to 1763, Colonel Mercer negotiated several treaties with Indians from the Ohio Valley that helped to bring peace to the frontier.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{29}Minutes of Provincial Council, VI: 318, 323-24, 368-69, 377-79; Richard Peters to Gov., May 17, 1755, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, II: 313; Minutes of meeting of road commissioners, May 20, 1755, in ibid., II: 320-21; and Richard Peters to James Burd, July 3, 1755, in Balch, Letters and Papers, pp. 43-44.

Although the war caused less turmoil in western North Carolina, it still provided opportunities for frontier Scots-Irish leaders to attain influence in colonial affairs by demonstrating their competence and loyalty to royal authorities. When Cherokees attacked settlements along the Broad and Catawba Rivers in Mecklenburg and Anson Counties in July 1756, Alexander Osborne, Moses Alexander, and Charles Harris dispatched letters to Governor Arthur Dobbs reporting the casualties and damages. In response, the governor commissioned Osborne and Alexander to "make complaints to the Chief Sachems of the Cherokee and Catawba Nations when any murders robberies or depredations are made by any of their people upon the English."  

After the war, prominent Scots-Irishmen in both colonies continued to conduct Indian affairs on the frontier. After Indians from the Ohio Valley again attacked Pennsylvania's backcountry settlements during the Revolution, the new state government turned to John Armstrong for advice. When rumors of renewed Cherokee hostilities spread through western North Carolina in 1772, the governor immediately gave Colonel Griffith Rutherford and Martin Armstrong permission to enlist volunteers in Rowan and Surry Counties.  


32 John Armstrong to President of Congress, July 22, 1778, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, VI:
This deep involvement in backcountry politics, however, threatened to undermine the unique ethnic identity that Scots-Irish immigrants had brought from Ireland. The newfound political freedom inevitably led the Scots-Irish into occasional internal political conflicts after 1750. The failure of some Scots-Irish individuals to live up to the ideals of republican virtue resulted in occasional clashes between those who were focused on their own interests and those who placed the public good above all else. At the same time, the latent contradictions between republicanism and individual liberty sometimes led to sharp disputes, and even violent confrontations, over whether a harmonious society or personal freedom mattered most.

Scots-Irish settlers throughout the backcountry realized all too often that practicing the virtues of republicanism was not as easy as preaching them. They occasionally neglected to exhibit the selflessness required of republican citizens. The backcountry Scots-Irish who strove to achieve the ideals of disinterestedness sometimes clashed with those who did not. During both the French and Indian War and the Revolution, frontier Scots-Irish leaders complained that their countrymen's greed hampered their

efforts to enlist recruits for the local militia. In 1756, James Burd, for example, reported that his Lancaster County neighbors refused to join the army unless they received "Advance Money." 33

More often than not, however, Scots-Irish officeholders were the ones who gave in to the temptations of avarice and power. In the execution of their official duties, they often failed to subordinate their own interests to the public good. In 1751, the "Grand Jury of Cumberland County," Pennsylvania, protested the "large fees granted to sheriffs, attorneys at law, clerks, constables, and other officers." The exorbitant fees, they complained, led "to the ruin of many poor families." Nineteen years later, Lancaster County residents accused their county assessors and commissioners of stealing public funds "by various arts and means, unbecoming the elected officers of a free people." 34


The most notorious confrontation between corrupt officials and the backcountry Scots-Irish, of course, was the Regulator Movement in western North Carolina between 1768 and 1771. Angered by the extortionate fines and taxes levied by their county officeholders, many inhabitants of Orange, Anson, and Rowan Counties, after unsuccessfully attempting to recover their money through law suits, revolted against their corrupt local governments. From 1768 to 1771, residents of the three counties forcibly disrupted county court sessions and assaulted magistrates, clerks, lawyers, and other government officials. In 1771, the Regulators even confronted an army of militia from the coastal counties led by Governor William Tryon at the Battle of Alamance.

Although the Regulation involved members of all three ethnic groups -- English, Germans, and Scots-Irish -- in western North Carolina, the rebellion frequently pitted Scots-Irish county officials against their fellow countrymen. In Rowan County, where Ulster immigrants comprised a significant proportion of the local elite, Scots-Irish Regulators threatened and harassed many prominent Scots-Irishmen. When county sheriffs such as Andrew Allison and Thomas Locke tried to collect county and provincial taxes between 1769 and 1771, many Scots-Irish residents accused them of embezzling previous tax collections and refused to pay.
Even in Orange and Anson Counties, where the officials were primarily English Anglicans, the movement split the Scots-Irish. Most locally prominent Scots-Irishmen in these and other backcountry counties supported the government while many from the middling and lower levels of society joined the Regulation. The signatures of Scots-Irishmen appear on dozens of Orange County petitions both praising and condemning the Regulators. The Presbyterian congregations of Alamance and Buffalo in the same county divided over the issue: James Hunter, John Gillespie, and other members joined the revolt while the minister, Reverend David Caldwell, and others remained loyal to the government.  

Scots-Irish settlers' willingness to use extralegal means to defend their individual liberties occasionally caused conflicts among them as well. While one group placed the preservation of their natural rights above all else, others emphasized the need for a harmonious and virtuous society. When the "Black Boys" of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, destroyed Indian trading goods at Sideling Hill and fired upon British soldiers at Fort Loudoun in 1765 to protest a perceived violation of their freedom, the local Presbyterian minister, Reverend John King, chastised them for showing such little "regard to the peace and good order of society." While he agreed that the government's actions were wrong, King reminded his listeners that "oppression itself will not justify opposition by force." 36

The forcible rescue of an accused Indian killer in Cumberland County three years later best illustrates this internal political conflict among the Scots-Irish. Convinced that the governor and Supreme Court intended to deny Frederick Stump his constitutional right to a fair


36 For details on the "Black Boys," see fn #1 above. Rev. King's sermon cited in Nevin, Churches of the Valley, pp. 84-88.
jury trial by prosecuting him in Philadelphia instead of Carlisle, a mob of local residents violently broke Stump out of jail in February 1768. County leaders, even though they privately sympathized with the mob's fears, immediately expressed outrage at what they considered such a blatant disregard for the public good. In the words of John Armstrong, the rioters had forfeited "the benefit of that seasonable protection and relief they have always a right to expect" from the government.37

While internal political conflicts threatened to pull the Scots-Irish community apart, the similarity of Scots-Irish political values to those of other backcountry settlers also began to erode their ethnic distinctiveness. As they became more involved in backcountry politics, some Scots-Irishmen realized that other European immigrants shared their deep commitment to republicanism and individual liberty. This realization, combined with the turbulent political atmospheres of both colonies after 1750, encouraged the Scots-Irish to develop tentative political alliances with some members of other ethnic groups.

The emergence of factional politics in Pennsylvania during the 1750s and 1760s necessitated the formation of political alliances among various ethnic groups. As the colony polarized into two rival factions -- known as the proprietary and the Quaker parties, the backcountry Scots-Irish began to cooperate with those frontier inhabitants who shared their political values and interests. In 1764, William Allen reported that the proprietary party was "composed chiefly of Presbyterians, one half of the Church of England, and...the Lutherans and Calvinist Germans." The German Lutheran minister Henry Muhlenburg agreed, explaining that "the English of the High Church [Anglicans] and the Presbyterian Church, the German Lutherans, and German Reformed" supported the proprietors.38

In the ethnically diverse backcountry, these political alliances forced the Scots-Irish to cooperate with some of their English and German neighbors. During every election for county and provincial offices, backcountry proprietary party leaders of all national origins struggled to create a ticket that represented each of the ethno-religious groups that comprised the faction. Each year, the party's slate of candidates contained a mixture of English, Scots-Irish,

and Germans. In Lancaster County, Scots-Irish and English party organizers especially courted the German Reformed and Lutheran vote by including prominent Germans such as Adam Simon Kuhn and Emmanuel Carpenter on their ticket.\textsuperscript{39}

In North Carolina, the royal government's effort to strengthen English Anglican political power in the backcountry similarly encouraged temporary alliances between Scots-Irish, English, and German dissenters. English Baptists and Quakers as well as German Lutherans and Reformed occasionally joined the Scots-Irish in protesting the colony's Anglican establishment. A 1769 petition from Tryon County calling for the repeal of acts discriminating against non-Anglicans contained both German and Scots-Irish signatures. Scots-Irish Presbyterians and English Baptists worked together to counteract the growing power of Anglicans in Rowan County in 1770 and 1771.\textsuperscript{40}


\textsuperscript{40}"Petition of Tryon County inhabitants, [1771]," in The Draper Manuscripts, Series KK: North Carolina Papers, reel 93; and Rev. Drage to SPG, Feb. 28, 1771, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VIII: 505.
Despite these political threats to their ethnic identity, the Scots-Irish struggled to preserve their unity and distinctiveness in the political realm. Commonly voting as a bloc, they insisted that their public representatives should be Scots-Irishmen like themselves. These Scots-Irish leaders, in turn, used their growing political power to represent their fellow countrymen's interests. This political cohesion led the Scots-Irish to clash with many of the other European immigrants around them, especially those who controlled the provincial governments of each colony.

As they did in their economic, social, and religious lives, the Scots-Irish displayed a high degree of ethnic exclusivity in their political actions. Time after time, they clearly demonstrated their preference for local government officers who shared their own national heritage. After a "very capable" young "Dutchman" was elected sheriff of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in 1764, "the Irish Presbyterians being disappointed in not having one of themselves elected to that office, refused to serve on either grand or petty juries, tho' regularly summoned by the sheriff, because he was a Dutchman." When he tried to serve a warrant "on one of those people, [the sheriff] was violently assaulted, had both ears of his horse cut off, and was obliged to fly to save his life." 41

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41 Joseph Galloway to Benjamin Franklin, Nov. 23, 1764,
The ethnicity of township and county officeholders in Scots-Irish settlements reflected this ethnic exclusivity. In areas with significant Scots-Irish populations, the local officials were almost always Scots-Irish. Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, for example, where the Scots-Irish comprised virtually three-fourths of the population in 1775, the vast majority of county justices of the peace had Scots-Irish names: 47 of the 67 (70 percent) total magistrates in 1750, 1757, 1764, and 1771. In the Lancaster County townships that contained sizable numbers of Scots-Irish, the constables, overseers of the poor, and road supervisors were also generally Scots-Irish. Upper Paxton township included 26 Scots-Irish officers out of 39 total (67 percent) from 1769 to 1776; Hanover Township had 69 out of 125 (55 percent) between 1759 and 1785.\(^{42}\)

A surname analysis of the county and district officeholders in western North Carolina reveals a similar pattern of ethnic segregation. The county magistrates of Scots-Irish-dominated Mecklenburg County were consistently Scots-Irishmen. All of the county's justices in 1774, for

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example, had Scots-Irish names. In more ethnically mixed
Rowan County, districts that included significant numbers
of Scots-Irish residents commonly had both a Scots-Irish
constable and justice of the peace. John Brandon and
William Patton, for instance, served as magistrate and
constable respectively in the Rutherford District in
1768.43

As they gained influence with provincial authorities,
the burgeoning Scots-Irish political elite ardently
represented their fellow countrymen's interests in the
colonial governments. During the crisis of the French and
Indian War, Scots-Irish leaders in both colonies used their
positions to help their suffering brethren on the frontier.
They personally delivered dozens of petitions from their
constituents to the governors and assemblies, pleading for
relief from the Indians' wrath. As assemblymen, they
consistently voted in favor of bills appropriating
additional funds and raising troops to defend their
homes.44

43Briscoe, Mecklenburg Court Minutes, pp. 1-20; and
Minutes, July 1754, July 1761, July 1762, July 1763, July
1764, July 1765, July 1767, July 1768, Rowan County Court,

44Minutes of Provincial Council, VI: 670; MacKinney
and Hoban, Votes and Proceedings, V: 3690-3701, 3726-28;
VI: 5233-34; VII: 6962; William Thompson to Gov., June 19,
22, 1774, in Hazard, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series,
IV: 521-22, 526; Petition of Cumberland County, 1754,
Conorroe Papers, HSP, 10:60; Edward Shippen to James Burd,
Aug. 23, 1757, in Balch, Letters and Papers, p. 94; John
Harris to James Burd, May 3, 1764, Harris-Fisher Family
These prominent men often served as intermediaries between their countrymen and the provincial government. Scots-Irish settlers' willingness to employ extralegal measures to defend their natural rights often forced Scots-Irish leaders to broker compromises between their angry neighbors and colonial officials. When the "Paxton Boys" massacred a number of Indians in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1763 and organized a protest march to Philadelphia, John Armstrong and John Elder played key roles in negotiating a peaceful solution to the crisis. Balancing demands from the governor for the murderers' arrest with sympathy for their countrymen's frustration, Elder tried to dissuade the mob from killing the Indians in the first place while Armstrong met with the marchers in Philadelphia and convinced them to leave peaceably.45

The growth of the Regulator Movement among Scots-Irish inhabitants between 1768 and 1771 sorely tested the diplomatic skills of Scots-Irish elites in western North Carolina. As violence escalated in Orange County during

1768 and 1769, Scots-Irish leaders throughout the region struggled to redress their countrymen's grievances while still maintaining their loyalty to the government. The area's four Presbyterian ministers wrote an open letter condemning the corrupt officials' abuses, but exhorting their parishioners to restrain their anger and frustration.\footnote{Letter from Presbyterian Pastors to the Presbyterian Inhabitants of North Carolina, Aug. 1768, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VII: 813-16; Regulators' Advertisement #7, April 25, 1768, in ibid., VII: 716; and Petition of Orange County, Dec. 1768, in ibid., VII: 874.}

When violence threatened to erupt in Rowan County in 1770, the local Scots-Irish officers, led by Griffith Rutherford and others, tried desperately to reach a peaceful solution. After meeting with Scots-Irish leaders of the Regulators, Rutherford, Andrew Allison, and other county officials agreed to repay the money they had supposedly extorted from the people. The following year, Rutherford, while still openly supporting the governor, again helped to prevent further bloodshed by convincing General Hugh Waddell, who commanded a contingent of backcountry militia loyal to the government, from attacking a superior force of Regulators along the Yadkin River during Governor Tryon's Alamance Campaign.\footnote{Minutes of Rowan County Regulator Meeting, March 7, 1771, in Powell, Regulators, pp. 357-58; John Frohock and Alexander Martin to Gov., March 18, 1771, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VIII: 533-36; Joshua Teague, James Hunter, et al. to Harmon Husbands, Sept. 14, 1769, in}
This Scots-Irish political cohesiveness frequently brought the Scots-Irish into conflicts with other ethnic groups. The limited political cooperation that Scots-Irishmen achieved with some Englishmen and Germans was greatly overshadowed by their bitter clashes with the other ethno-religious groups who controlled the provincial governments of the two colonies. In Pennsylvania, while the Scots-Irish united with Anglicans and German Lutherans and Reformeds, they also engaged in a bitter factional struggle with the ruling Quaker party and its allies. In North Carolina, their aggressive opposition to Anglicans also led them into clashes with other dissenting groups as well.

Pennsylvania politics became increasingly fractious after 1740. As the Penn family gradually drifted away from their father's Quaker principles, the colony split into rival political factions. The now Anglican Penns and their supporters coalesced into what became known as the proprietary party. Quakers who continued to uphold the religious ideals of pacifism formed their own faction that contemporaries named the Quaker party. Not surprisingly, the proprietary group controlled the governorship and all

ibid., VIII: 68-70; and Powell, North Carolina Biography, V: 275-76.
of the appointed posts in the colonial government while the Quakers and their allies dominated the General Assembly.\textsuperscript{48}

The backcountry Scots-Irish, particularly the increasingly influential elite, inevitably became drawn into this bitter political rivalry. The continued strength of Scots-Irish ethnic identity, the timing of the political division, and the conditions of the backcountry at the time all heavily influenced Scots-Irish participation in the political debate. As they had done in the relatively stable political atmosphere of the 1730s and 1740s, the Scots-Irish joined the fray as a bloc, with all former Ulstermen choosing the same side. More important, the fact that the factionalism developed in the midst of the French and Indian War, when the frontier was being ravaged by continuous Indian raids, determined which group the Scots-Irish would support.

As they watched their neighbors slaughtered and abducted and their homes and crops burnt in 1755 and 1756, the backcountry Scots-Irish naturally turned to the

provincial government for help. Over the next several years, they flooded the governor and general assembly with petitions reporting their "defenceless state, and beseeching the government to enable them to defend themselves and their families." Believing that protecting citizens from enemy attacks was central to a republican government's duty to serve the public good, they fully expected the assembly to appropriate money to build forts and pay soldiers, to enact a militia bill, or at the very least, to provide them with sufficient arms and ammunition.49

Much to the Scots-Irish settlers' amazement, the provincial government seemingly ignored their pleas for assistance. Governor Robert Hunter Morris appeared to respond positively, even to the point of making a personal visit to the embattled frontier during which he approved the construction of private forts and the organization of unofficial militia companies. The Quaker-controlled Assembly, however, consistently refused to appropriate funds for the region's defense or enact a militia bill. As animosity between the two political factions deepened,

their pointless political wrangling ensured that little public aid ever reached the frontier.

As provincial authorities did nothing to defend the backcountry, the Scots-Irish became increasingly frustrated with the government, especially the Assembly. One Cumberland County resident reported that "the people of this county is enraged ag't the Assembly almost to distraction." Another asked, "how long will those in power by their quarrels suffer us to be massacred?" By 1757, many Scots-Irishmen had lost faith in their legislators' virtue. As John Elder informed one proprietary official, "it is well known that Representations from the back inhabitants, have but little weight with the gentlemen in power, they looking on us, either as uncapable of forming just notions of things, or as biased by selfish views." 50

Because the dominant Quakers' pacifist beliefs were the principle stumbling blocks to the passage of defense measures in the Assembly, the Scots-Irish blamed them for the terrible death and destruction they suffered during the war. According to Benjamin Franklin, most Scots-Irishmen believed that the Quakers had gained the Indians' "friendship by presents, supplying them privately with arms

and ammunition, and engaging them to fall upon and murder the poor white people on the frontier." One rumor that circulated through Scots-Irish settlements alleged that when word of the initial Indian attacks reached the Assembly, one Quaker member reputedly said that there were only some "Scotch-Irish killed, who could well be spared." 

The governor's personal visit and the Assembly's continued obstinacy throughout the war pushed the Scots-Irish into the proprietary party. As they placed blame for their troubles on the Quakers, Scots-Irish men and women began to participate in the colony's political factionalism. Scots-Irish-dominated Cumberland County, for example, sent representatives to the Assembly who were staunch proprietary supporters. In 1756 and 1757, in fact, the county even elected three non-residents — William West (an Anglican merchant in Philadelphia), William Allen (the Chief Justice of the colony's Supreme Court), and Colonel John Stanwix (a British officer stationed in the

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51Benjamin Franklin to John Fothergill, March 14, 1764, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XI: 101-2; second quote cited in George W. Frantz, Paxton: A Study of Community Structure and Mobility in the Colonial Pennsylvania Backcountry (New York: Garland, 1989), p. 33; Minutes of Provincial Council, IX: 462; George Croghan to Benjamin Franklin, Dec. 12, 1765, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XII: 397; John Harris to Gov., Oct. 20, 1755, Harris-Fisher Family Collection, PHMC; and John Harris to James Burd, May 3, 1764, Harris-Fisher Collection, PHMC.
backcountry) -- to the legislature to solidify their connections with that party.52

The re-igniting of Indian hostilities during Pontiac's Rebellion in 1763 brought Scots-Irish anger and frustration to a fever pitch. Scots-Irish men and women not only hated all Indians, but also the Quakers whom they accused of aiding and abetting "the savage foe." In December 1763 and February 1764, this animosity exploded in the Paxton Boys Massacre and subsequent protest march on Philadelphia. On the morning of December 20, a party of Lancaster County Scots-Irishmen -- dubbed the "Paxton Boys" -- brutally murdered a small settlement of Conestoga Indians on proprietary land. The following day, they killed the survivors, whom authorities had locked in the county guardhouse for the Indians' protection.53


A month later, the county's Scots-Irish residents organized an armed march to Philadelphia to kill friendly Indians whom the government was protecting there and to protest the Assembly's apparent lack of concern for the frontier inhabitants' welfare during the war. Once outside Philadelphia, cooler heads convinced the mob of approximately 300-400 backcountry inhabitants -- comprised primarily of Scots-Irishmen, but also of English and Germans -- to refrain from murdering any more Indians. Instead, they presented "Remonstrances" to the governor and Assembly detailing their opposition to the Quaker's perceived coddling of hostile Indians.\textsuperscript{54}

In the aftermath of the Paxton Boys incident, the deep animosity between the backcountry Scots-Irish and the Quakers escalated into an open political war. A torrent of political pamphlets and other propaganda poured from both sides in the months following the massacre. Benjamin Franklin reported in March 1764 that "a bitter enmity has arisen between the Presbyterians and Quakers; abusive pamphlets are every day coming out on both sides." Quakers and their political allies blamed the entire massacre solely on the Scots-Irish.\textsuperscript{55}


\textsuperscript{55}Benjamin Franklin to Richard Jackson, March 14, 31, 1764, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XI: 107, 150; John R. Dunbar, ed., The Paxton Papers (The Hague: Martinus
Stung by this verbal assault on their character, Scots-Irish throughout the colony joined together to refute the Quakers' accusations. Reverend John Elder, of Paxton Presbyterian Church in Lancaster County, informed provincial authorities that "the minds of the inhabitants are... exasperated against the Quakers... for the singular regards they have always shown to Savages." Ben Franklin, who was quickly emerging as the leader of the Quaker forces, complained that "the mob being Presbyterians, the whole posse of that sect, priests and people, have foolishly thought themselves under a necessity of justifying as well as they could their mad and bloody brethren." 56

As the tension between the two groups mounted, the hatred sometimes turned into open violence. In September 1768, for example, a party of 20-30 Scots-Irishmen, led by a man named Porter, invaded the home of the Quaker William Reynolds in the West Nottingham settlement of Chester County. "Disguised with handkerchiefs about their heads," they committed "some outrages" on Reynolds and his family, allegedly beating his wife nearly to death. When Reynolds

Nijhiff, 1957); and Franklin, A Narrative of the Late Massacres in Lancaster County of a Number of Indians... [Jan. 30, 1764], in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XI: 50-56.

pressed charges against Porter in the county court, Porter's brother Robert attacked Reynolds "for his unjust charge against his brother." As one observer commented, the incident left "both Presbyterians and Quakers...as hot as party feuds and disappointed rage can make them." 57

For the remainder of the 1760s and early 1770s, the Scots-Irish provided the proprietary party's primary support throughout the colony. When Franklin and the Quakers tried to convince the king to revoke the Penn family's charter and make Pennsylvania a royal colony in the late 1760s, the Scots-Irish comprised the bulk of the opposition. As one contemporary explained, the Scots-Irish "opposed this upon finding they were less loosers by proprietary than royal government." In the General Assembly, backcountry Scots-Irish representatives such as John Montgomery and David McConaughy consistently led the efforts to block Franklin's appointment as the colony's agent in London and to defeat his proposals for changing the colony's government. 58


58 Ezra Stiles, "Memoir and Conjecture, [May 1, 1769]," in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XVI: 123; "Protest Against the Appointment of Benjamin Franklin as Agent," Nov. 1, 1764, in ibid., XI: 408-12; Benjamin Franklin to Richard Jackson, July 12, Sept. 1, 1764, in ibid., XI: 256, 327; Franklin, "Remarks on a Late Protest Against the Appointment of Mr. Franklin as Agent of this Province," Nov. 5, 1764, in ibid., XI: 434; Franklin to John Ross, Feb. 14, 1765, in ibid., XII: 67-68; Charles Thomson to Franklin, Dec. 18, 1764, in ibid., XI: 524; Minutes of
Within the backcountry, the Scots-Irish, particularly the increasingly influential elite, played a key role in the proprietary party's electoral success. During the annual county and provincial elections, prominent Scots-Irishmen cooperated with local organizers as well as party leaders in Philadelphia to draft party tickets to oppose the Quaker candidates. James Burd corresponded with a variety of county and colonial party leaders throughout the late 1760s and 1770s to create annual party tickets in Lancaster County. During the 1764 campaign, for example, Philadelphia merchant Samuel Purviance sent Burd a list of the citizens that Philadelphia leaders thought best capable of defeating "the powerful party" of Quakers in the county.59

Although politics in North Carolina never became as fractionalized as those in Pennsylvania before the Revolution, the Scots-Irish on the colony's frontier still clashed with other ethnic groups in political affairs as much as their countrymen in Pennsylvania. In western North Carolina, the royal government's effort to expand Anglican


dominance into the backcountry after 1760 ignited a bitter political battle between the Scots-Irish and the English Anglicans. This official policy of persecution, in turn, created smaller political rivalries among the region's other ethnic groups.

After 1760, North Carolina's royal government, under orders from the Crown, launched an aggressive campaign to strengthen English Anglican political power in the colony's backcountry counties, where Scots-Irish and German settlers had long held political sway. Throughout the decade, the governor and general assembly strove to reduce Scots-Irish and German local influence and place more county government offices in the hands of Anglicans. While the governor appointed as many Anglicans to county government posts as possible, the assembly sharply curtailed the power of local dissenting magistrates and created church vestries that were supposed to provide Anglicans with additional local influence.60

As Anglican political power gradually grew in many backcountry counties, Scots-Irish settlers -- along with a few English and German dissenter allies -- launched an equally aggressive counterattack. They sent dozens of petitions to the governor and assembly demanding the return

60 Gov. Dobbs to SPG, March 29, 1764, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, VI: 1041; Act on Vestries, 1764, in ibid., XXIII: 603; and Act Amending the Act on Marriages, 1768, in ibid., XXIII: 672-74.
of their previous freedoms. Declaring themselves "entitled to have and enjoy all the rights and privileges of his Majesties subjects," the Scots-Irish petitioners protested the government's policy of favoring English Anglicans. At the same time, backcountry Scots-Irish representatives unsuccessfully introduced bills into the assembly repealing the discriminatory legislation.  

Within the backcountry itself, the Scots-Irish struggled to preserve their dominance of county governments. In Rowan, Mecklenburg, and Guilford Counties, the numerically superior Scots-Irish freemen openly resisted efforts to place Anglican clergymen in their neighborhoods and ensured that the newly created vestries remained impotent by electing only Scots-Irish Presbyterians to the positions. Moreover, they actively sought to remove, through whatever means necessary, as many of the newly appointed Anglican magistrates as possible. In Rowan, for example, the Scots-Irish residents conspired to indict one of the county's two Anglican justices on supposedly false charges of extortion in 1771.  

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62 Rev. Theodorus Swain Drage to Benjamin Franklin, March 2, 1771, in Labaree, Papers of Franklin, XVIII: 42; Gov. Martin to Earl of Dartmouth, Nov. 4, 1774, in Saunders and Clark, Colonial Records, IX: 1086; Rev. James Reed to SPG, July 20, 1766, in ibid., VII: 241; Rev. Andrew Martin
The royal government's adoption of a divide and conquer policy extended this political conflict to other national groups as well. An astute politician, Governor William Tryon, knowing that the appearance of governmental favoritism toward one group would incite jealousy among the others, made false offers of concessions to the backcountry's most powerful national group -- the Scots-Irish. With Tryon's tacit approval, the Assembly enacted legislation permitting Presbyterian ministers to conduct marriages and granting a charter for the establishment of a Presbyterian-controlled college in Mecklenburg County.63

As Tryon intended, this display of governmental favoritism drew the Scots-Irish into conflicts with other backcountry settlers. The Quaker Hermon Husbands accused the Scots-Irish of conspiring with the governor to dominate the other ethno-religious groups in the region. He condemned the unusual amount of patronage the governor gave to Scots-Irishmen as well as the assembly's acts granting them special privileges as blatant attempts to buy their loyalty. The governor, Husbands fumed, "gives commissions making one Col. Alexander, and another Capt. Alexander,

another Alexander, Esq., Justice of the Peace...that they might be ready tools of the Junto." The Scots-Irish, he concluded, were "poor, ignorant people, dependent on Esq. such a one [and] Col. such a one."\(^{64}\)

By the Revolution, Scots-Irish political culture, like their economic, social, and religious beliefs, remained a powerful source of unity for Ulster immigrants in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Reinforcing their already strong ethnic identity, the Scots-Irish political values of republicanism and natural rights provided a strong bond that tied all Scots-Irish settlers together. Building on the political culture they had formed in Ireland, the Scots-Irish upheld the ideals of virtue and the public good while demonstrating a willingness to go to great lengths to protect their individual liberties.

Taking advantage of the political freedom they found in their new homeland, the Scots-Irish played an important role in backcountry politics in the years before the Revolution. In both Pennsylvania and North Carolina, they seem to have participated in politics more than their English and German neighbors. In fact, the Scots-Irish

\(^{64}\)Husbands, "Fan for Fanning," pp. 348-49. For other ethnic groups showing resentment towards the Scots-Irish, see the depositions of Benjamin Wallace, John Dellinger, and John McGinty, in Brent Holcomb and Elmer O. Parker, eds., Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1763-1779 (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1979), pp. 205-6.
dominated local government positions in many areas of the backcountry by 1775. An emerging elite of prosperous and influential Scots-Irishmen even began to attain significant power within the provincial governments of each colony.

Drawing on their powerful ethnic identity and their shared political beliefs, Scots-Irish colonists maintained a remarkably high degree of ethnic unity in their political affairs. In both colonies, the Scots-Irish engaged in political activity as a unified bloc. Scots-Irish voters insisted that their representatives in government share their national origins. Those representatives, in turn, used their political influence to defend and enhance their countrymen's interests. This political cohesion inevitably led the Scots-Irish into bitter conflicts with other European immigrants, particularly those who controlled the colonial governments.

Despite this continued political unity and distinctiveness, however, the new political atmosphere of colonial America gradually began to pull the Scots-Irish community apart. In their haste to enjoy their newfound political freedom, Scots-Irish colonists occasionally engaged in sharp conflicts among themselves. More important, the factional politics of both Pennsylvania and North Carolina, combined with their realization of the similarity of their own political values to those of other colonial Americans, encouraged them to form alliances with
other backcountry settlers who shared their political interests.
CONCLUSION

THE POWER OF ETHNICITY

Eighteenth-century British North America was a land of immigrants. For much of the century, ethnicity and culture provided the primary organizing forces in the American colonies. Germans, Dutch, Swedes, and other groups all brought their own distinct ways of life to the New World. Even the English settlers, although they shared the same ethnic heritage, were divided into dramatically different cultural groups according to the region of the country in which they originated. Each of these national groups established separate ethnic enclaves in which they re-created as much of their traditional cultures as possible.¹

The Scots-Irish in the backcountry illustrate the continuing power of ethnicity in eighteenth-century America better than any other group of people. The Scots-Irish arguably had a stronger sense of distinctiveness at the time of their arrival in Pennsylvania and North Carolina than any other immigrants in colonial America. Their century-long battle against native Irish resentment and English persecution had steeled their resolve to maintain a separate and autonomous way of life. Recognizing the importance of ethnic unity in a volatile environment, they had forged a unique culture that distinguished them from the English and Irish in all aspects of life. As thousands of Ulster Scots migrated to America during the eighteenth century, they brought this powerful identity with them.

From the moment the first Ulster emigrants disembarked at Philadelphia in the 1710s, however, the new American environment forced significant alterations in their view of

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themselves and their relations with others. Confronted by the tremendous ethnic pluralism of colonial Pennsylvania, the Scots-Irish expanded their identity to include the small number of native Irish and Anglo-Irish -- people whom the Ulster Scots had purposely avoided in Ireland -- who had also emigrated from Ulster. Virtually every Scots-Irish community throughout the eighteenth-century backcountry included a mixture of Ulster Scots, native Irish, and Anglo-Irish residents. By the Revolution, Ulster Scots in America were identified as "Irish" as much as "Scots-Irish."

The continuing pluralism, rising population, and economic development of western Pennsylvania and North Carolina after 1750 further eroded Scots-Irish ethnic unity and uniqueness. As the backcountry's abundant land, fertile soil, and increasing prosperity allowed the formation of a small, but rapidly growing, Scots-Irish elite, sometimes sharp class distinctions and conflicts emerged among Ulster immigrants. Accumulating wealth and influence, the Scots-Irish gentry embraced economic and social ideals that differed significantly from those of their poorer countrymen.

The growing prevalence of individualism among Scots-Irishmen exacerbated this gradual disintegration of Scots-Irish society. The still relatively sparse settlement, weak authority of local government, and extensive
geographical mobility in the eighteenth-century backcountry transformed the traditional Scots-Irish desire for personal independence into a celebration of the individual and his ability to stand apart from society. Scots-Irish settlers throughout the region consistently placed their own interests above those of the community.

This individualism, in turn, sparked religious and political conflicts among the Scots-Irish. New Light ministers' radical new assertion that the individual could affect his own salvation ignited a fierce battle among Scots-Irish Presbyterians and ultimately split the Synod of Philadelphia in half. The rising spirit of self-interest heightened tensions between the contradictory components of Scots-Irish political culture as well. The inclination of some Scots-Irishmen, particularly local public officials, to place their own interests above those of the people unleashed a series of violent demonstrations by their countrymen, who continued to uphold the ideals of republican virtue and self-sacrifice.

While internal divisions threatened to pull the Scots-Irish community apart, the backcountry's tremendous ethnic pluralism slowly began to break down Scots-Irish distinctiveness. The Scots-Irish residents of western Pennsylvania and North Carolina underwent a gradual process of assimilation. This process, however, was not the "Anglicization" that occurred in other parts of colonial
America. There was no dominant English culture in the backcountry into which the Scots-Irish and other minority groups could blend. Instead, assimilation in the eighteenth-century backcountry involved a number of initially suspicious and distrustful ethnic groups gradually learning to tolerate, and even interact, with one another.²

The settlement of increasing numbers of Germans and Englishmen in previously Scots-Irish neighborhoods, particularly in Pennsylvania, after 1750 brought more Scots-Irishmen into contact with other backcountry immigrant groups for the first time. The crisis of the French and Indian War between 1754 and 1763 deepened the limited interaction that was developing in these increasingly integrated communities. Forced to seek the assistance of their German and English neighbors in the

²My view of assimilation differs dramatically from that of most other historians, of colonial America, who write in terms of "Anglicization." See Breen, "Creative Adaptations"; Butler, Huguenots; and Balmer, Perfect Babel of Confusion. The evidence from the backcountry Scots-Irish clearly does not fit that model. Instead, I agree with the conclusions of Daniel Thorp and Joyce Goodfriend that assimilation involved a gradual process of various immigrant groups coming to terms with and learning to accept one another while still retaining much of their ethnic identities. See Thorp, Moravian Community; and Goodfriend, Before the Melting Pot. My work, however, takes their interpretations one step further by suggesting that the Scots-Irish and other backcountry colonists, while still remaining ethnically distinct before the Revolution, had began to form a loosely unified society based on a growing recognition of the similarity of their fundamental values, attitudes, and behavior.
face of a common foe, many Scots-Irish settlers began to shed their suspicions and fears of others. Building on this wartime cooperation, a small, but growing, number of Scots-Irish colonists engaged in business transactions, recreational activities, and even matrimony with their neighbors.

This increasing interaction with other immigrant groups led growing numbers of Scots-Irish to recognize their basic similarities with other colonial Americans. Economic relations with the English and Germans taught them that others shared their intense desires for personal autonomy, land ownership, and commercial production. In Pennsylvania's atmosphere of tolerance, many Presbyterians developed an appreciation of other denominations' aspirations for religious liberty. Even under the weight of an established church in North Carolina, they preserved this commitment to freedom of conscience. Finally, the rise of factional politics in Pennsylvania and the North Carolina government's campaign to strengthen Anglican power caused them to realize others' devotion to republicanism and individual liberty.

Despite the rise of internal conflicts and the slow process of assimilation, the Scots-Irish struggled to preserve as much of the identity and culture that they had known in Ulster as possible. Indeed, they proved remarkably adept at transplanting many of their traditional
beliefs, customs, and institutions in the Pennsylvania and North Carolina backcountries. Taking advantage of William Penn's policy of toleration, the initial Ulster immigrants in Pennsylvania between 1715 and 1750 quickly established their own ethnically exclusive settlements and Presbyterian churches on the colony's frontier. In fact, the proprietor's official acceptance, by giving them the opportunity to purchase land and hold political office, enabled the Scots-Irish to achieve more independence and cohesion than they had attained in Ulster.

Even the movement of thousands of second-generation Scots-Irish settlers from Pennsylvania to western North Carolina between 1745 and 1775 could not destroy this powerful Scots-Irish ethnic awareness. As Pennsylvania's rising population made land increasingly scarce and expensive after 1740, many young Scots-Irishmen, following their parents' example, embarked on the long overland journey in search of social and economic independence. Despite the great distance, however, Scots-Irish inhabitants in North Carolina remained amazingly well connected with their former Pennsylvania homes. Through economic transactions, kinship ties, the Presbyterian church structure, and a surprising amount of correspondence and personal visits, the Scots-Irish in the two colonies remained unified throughout the colonial period.
More important, Scots-Irish culture in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina developed in very similar fashion after 1750. Although they encountered slightly different conditions, the North Carolina Scots-Irish retained virtually every aspect of the culture their parents had created in southeastern Pennsylvania in the 1720s and 1730s. Determined to preserve their distinctiveness and uniformity, Scots-Irish throughout the backcountry were virtually identical in their economic, social, religious, and political values and behavior between 1750 and 1775.

Scots-Irish settlers in the two colonies shared an economic culture, centered on an intense desire for personal independence, that included a mixture of both entrepreneurial and non-capitalistic values. Scots-Irish immigrants, accustomed to commercial production in Ulster, had expected to engage in market agriculture from the moment they disembarked in Philadelphia. The rapid rise of population, growth of towns, and development of a transportation infrastructure in the backcountry after 1750 provided them with the opportunity to do so. Despite their commercial-orientation, however, the Scots-Irish, just as they had done in Ireland, retained their traditional emphasis on self-sufficiency by cultivating much of their family's subsistence on their own land.
A similar balance of seemingly contradictory ideals characterized Scots-Irish social values as well. Ulster immigrants on the Pennsylvania and North Carolina frontier displayed both individualistic and communalistic attitudes. On the one hand, many Scots-Irishmen, influenced by the frontier's physical openness, sparse population, and high degree of geographical mobility, exhibited a selfish disregard for others. In fact, lawless, violent, and contentious behavior seemed to be more prevalent among the Scots-Irish than any other group in the eighteenth-century backcountry. On the other hand, they struggled to create close-knit communities, in which they joined together to perform the tasks of daily life and collectively celebrate its special moments.

Calvinist doctrine and Presbyterian institutions and rituals provided the strongest cultural link between the Scots-Irish in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Scots-Irish men and women in both colonies continued to observe the same Presbyterian practices that they had known in Ulster. They duplicated the presbyterian ecclesiastical structure -- from congregations and sessions to presbyteries and synod -- that their ancestors had formed in Ireland. Moreover, the important Presbyterian rituals of daily family worship services, personal religious study, and especially the sacrament of Holy Communion served as
the centerpiece of religious life for Scots-Irish colonists throughout the backcountry.

Finally, a common political culture based on a combination of classical republicanism and natural rights philosophy emerged among the Scots-Irish residents of Pennsylvania and North Carolina after 1750. Drawing on the political theories espoused by their Ulster ancestors, the Scots-Irish envisioned a perfect society and polity governed by the ideals of virtue and the public good. At the same time, they exhibited a virtual obsession with individual liberty and its protection from government usurpation. Indeed, Scots-Irishmen seemed to be more willing to use extralegal force to oppose any perceived tyranny and oppression than other backcountry settlers. Imbued with these ideals, Scots-Irish freemen actively participated in the politics of both colonies, even to the point of dominating local government in many areas of the frontier.

This cultural homogeneity provided the foundation for the continuing strength of the Scots-Irish ethnic identity in the eighteenth-century American backcountry. By highlighting Ulster immigrants' differences with other colonial Americans, it reinforced the bonds of commonality they already felt based on their shared national heritage. By helping to minimize the social and economic distinctions that arose among Scots-Irish settlers, this cultural
uniformity promoted unity and cohesion within the Scots-Irish community. Throughout most of their nearly six decades of settlement in the American wilderness, the Scots-Irish retained a remarkably high level of ethnic awareness.

Scots-Irish relations with their backcountry neighbors best illustrates the continuing strength of their ethnic identity. In virtually every aspect of their lives, Scots-Irish men and women sought to distance themselves from other European immigrants. They consistently demonstrated a preference for their fellow countrymen not only in their settlement patterns, but also in their economic, social, and political actions. Scots-Irish settlers in Pennsylvania and North Carolina observed a rigid policy of ethnic exclusivity in their neighborhoods, business transactions, recreational activities, and marriages. Even in politics, they voted as a bloc and insisted that local public officials share their cultural and national background.

When the Scots-Irish interacted with other backcountry residents, their strong ethnic awareness frequently led them into violent conflicts. Scots-Irish squatters and small landowners in both Pennsylvania and North Carolina commonly joined together to assault English speculators who tried to claim their lands or collect quitrents in the backcountry. The royal government's efforts to enforce the
establishment of the Church of England in western North Carolina after 1760 resulted in a religious and political struggle between Scots-Irish Presbyterians and the ruling English Anglican elite. In Pennsylvania, the Scots-Irish became embroiled in a bitter political quarrel with the ruling Quaker faction over defense and Indian policies during and after the French and Indian War.

On the eve of the Revolution, ethnicity continued to determine many of the Scots-Irish immigrants' actions in western Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Their sense of themselves as a separate people within the polyglot eighteenth-century American backcountry remained quite powerful. They still saw themselves as Scots-Irishmen (or, more commonly, Irishmen) more than Pennsylvanians, North Carolinians, Britons, or Americans.
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Candidate:                   Kevin L. Yeager

Major Field:                History


Approved:

Date of Examination:        Sept. 29, 2000

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School