

THE SCOTTISH TRADITION of SELF EXILE

George Shott, PC Post 1298

“For a nation whose chief export has been her men, women, children, Scotland has had little success in founding colonies of her own under the Scottish flag. In colonizing, as in fighting foreign wars, the Scots had to exercise their considerable talents under banners other than their own white cross of St. Andrew.”

I recently obtained a book title, “Scotland Farewell The people of the *Hector*”, by Donald MacKay. It is a fascinating story of the 1763 voyage of the ship *Hector* from Loch Broom, Scotland carrying 189 Scottish families to what is now Nova Scotia. Having been born and raised in Nova Scotia, I had known that the Scots had a large impact on the settlement of the province, but so did the French and English. Indeed, I had been an archaeologist at Fortress Louisbourg, Cape Breton.



The Dutch-built brig *Hector*

I now realize that the arrival of the *Hector* was to transform the history and development of Nova Scotia. I am not going to tell that story in this article, but discuss why this event happened in the story of the Scottish character. I knew I could not properly do justice to summarizing Donald MacKay’s “Introduction” to his book. Much damage was done to Scotland after Culloden and the subsequent Highland Clearances and a second impactful pogrom in the 19th Century. Each of these enactments forced thousands upon thousands of Scots to immigrate mainly to the New World and colonies. Many others went to do what they did best – fight.



Scottish settlers coming ashore from the *Hector*

So here is Donald MacKay’s insightful account of the many migration of Scots to foreign shores beginning as early as the 15th Century. Scots had the habit of going abroad to serve in the armies of the Continent such as when the Earl of Douglas took 7,000 men to France in the 15th century to fight for Charles VII against the invading English.

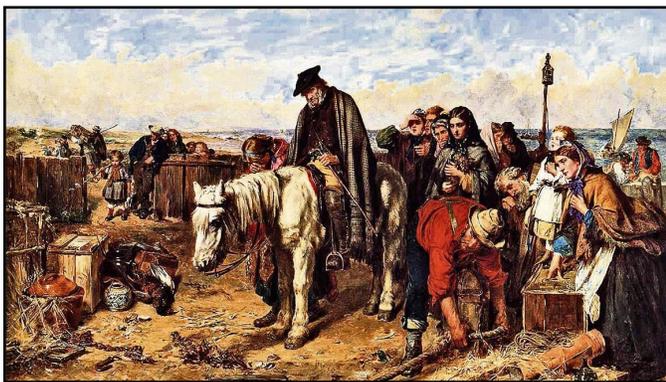
By the 17th century, Scottish mercenaries had become a tradition on the Continent exported under license fighting for Protestant kings and some for Catholic. The clan MacKay supported the Protestant Reformation, In 1626, Donald MacKay raised 3,000 men and 36 pipers to serve the Protestant cause in the Thirty Years War under Christian IV, King of Denmark, and then in the Scots Brigade under Gustav Adolphus, King of Sweden followed with a war against “the Roman Emperor and the Catholic League in Germany”. There were 10,000 Scots in the Swedish army and about the same in the French forces. Fewer Scots served in the Netherlands, Russia, and other countries. Interestingly, there was an understanding that should Scots meet Scots on opposing sides, they would not fight each other.

Scots were not exclusive to Europe. In 1598, Scottish writer Fynes Moryson stated that artisans and traders were “flocking in great numbers into Poland.” There were so many, 30,000 in one report, that King Stephen Batory granted them land at Cracow. The tradition of self-exile had begun. In the early 1600s, King James VI, began to settle 50,000 predominantly Lowland Protestant Scots to Northern Ireland as a counterweight to the Irish Catholics. Later these Scots-Irish flocked to the North American colonies by the tens of thousands. A few years after the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, Sir William Alexander took possession, under a royal charter, of land between the St Croix River and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. He called the colony ‘Nova Scotia’ thinking it fitting there should be a New Scotland. The Knights Baronet of Nova Scotia received 10,000 acres. Two short-lived colonies were established until it became Acadia. Many of the Scots returned home. It would be one hundred and fifty years before another shipload of Scots returned to Nova Scotia aboard the *Hector*.

Scottish colonies were founded in New Jersey and South Carolina, in the 1680s. Their greatest effort came late in the 1690s, by establishing a trading colony on the Isthmus of Panama. Called New Edinburgh, it was doomed from the start not only for its location, but in opposition with the English and, militarily, from the Spanish. Before the disaster ended, 2,000 Scots were lost from drownings at sea, disease, and battle. Scotland lost hundreds of thousands of pounds; almost half of Scotland’s wealth. The Act of Union, 1707, Scotland lost the right to colonize abroad. During the Highland Clearances, emigration was to swell and peak in

the 19th century.

In the 1650s, Scots are coming into the American colonies as legal immigrants and as banished as criminals or political prisoners. After Cromwell defeated the



“The Last of the Clan” by Thomas Faed, 1865

Scots and imposed a military government, 1,000 political prisoners were shipped to New England and Virginia. Similar to the settling of Australia, the colonies became dumping grounds for criminals sentenced from seven years to life. During the Highland famine of 1740, families were selling their sons for one shilling. Peter Williamson, 11 years old, was shanghaied in Aberdeen and sold for 16 pounds in the colonies. Scottish jails were a part of a way station system where authorities turned a blind eye to the trafficking of young boys to the New World. Sir Alexander MacDonald of Sleat and his brother-in-law, MacLeod of Dunvegan, shipped 100 of their own clansmen to Pennsylvania. Serfdom was common, in the coal mines of Scotland until 1800.

After 1730, there were Scots in most of the 13 colonies as far south as Georgia, where 100 mercenaries, from Sutherlandshire, were sent to guard the southern frontiers against Spanish Florida. The Scots' favorite colony was North Carolina encouraged by the Scottish-born Governor, Gabriel Johnson.

The largest number of Scottish settlers to America came in the hundreds through deportations or immigration with the collapse of Scotland and its culture with their defeat at Culloden in 1746. Thirty years later with the advent of the American revolution, it is surprising, given their treatment by the English, Scots declined to join the rebels, but signed up by the thousands in the



King's Royal Highland Emigrant's Regiment to fight men who had less cause than they to hate the House of Hanover. Three thousand Highlanders were raised for the king in North Carolina including middle-aged men who had fought the English as lads at Culloden.

Officer of the King's Royal Highland Emigrant's Regiment

In summary, the Scots left their homeland and came to different countries for many reasons; frequent famine and blights of previous years, recent population increases intolerable rent increases, trouble with the law, the hunger of landless men to own land of their own.

Many came from the Forfeited Estates of land seized by the Crown after 1746. Ready to take their chance in new lands and opportunities. The Scots could handle it!

Sources:

Image: *Hector*, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/hector

Image: ‘The Last of the Clan’, “Scottish Immigrants to America”, John Simkin, Jan 2020, spartacus-educational.com

Image: Highland Officer, *m.facebook*, 84th (King's) Royal Highland Emigrant's Regiment.

Image: Scottish settlers coming ashore, *Scotland Farewell*

MacKay, Donald. *Scotland Farewell: The People of the Hector*, National Heritage/Natural History, Inc., Toronto, ON, 1998



Grand Junction, Colorado

Left: National Councilor, Doug Kenyon visits with WWII and Korea veteran from Clan Gunn at Grand Valley Highland Games.

Right: Husband and Wife veterans stop by and visit Doug Kenyon at the SAMS Tent, Grand Valley Highland Games.

I gave out about 10 Applications and six pages of Guest Log with emails. I plan on starting an email blast for the Grand Junction and surrounding areas. I might also be attending the Moab Games in Utah in October.

There are SAMS members there, but far from Salt Lake City. Post 1847 PC Connie Carlson has cut them loose to form a separate unit. But discussions seem to feel combining with Grand Junction and Southwest Colorado might be workable. Disappointed no one from the Denver side made it to the Games.

